



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP

Monday 17 November 2025

MEMBERS

Ms Helen Burnet (Chair)
Mr Verney (Deputy Chair)
Hon Josh Willie
Ms Kristie Johnston

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Mr George
Ms Brown
Dr Woodruff

IN ATTENDANCE

HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF MP

Premier.

Ministerial Office Representative

Ned Whitehouse

Chief of Staff, Ministerial Office

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks

Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Shane Gregory

Associate Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Lisa Howes

Chief Governance and Risk Officer

Mathew Healey

Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery

Courtney Hurworth

Chief Reform Officer, Keeping Children Safe

Amanda Russell

Deputy Secretary, State Service Management Office

Melissa Gray

Deputy Secretary, Policy and Reform

Jessica Radford

A/CEO, Brand Tasmania

PUBLIC

The Committee met at 8.00 a.m.

CHAIR - (Ms Burnet) - I welcome the Premier and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the Premier to introduce everybody at the table for the benefit of Hansard.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much, Chair. To my right I have Kathrine Morgan-Wicks, the Secretary. To Kath's right, Shane Gregory the Associate Secretary, to my left, my Chief of Staff Ned Whitehouse. I will introduce others as they come to the table. Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Thank you. The time scheduled for the Premier is four hours. And we will take a break around 10.00 a.m. for 10 minutes. I want to keep it to time as much as possible. Questions should be directed to the Premier. The resolution of the House provides for a minister to provide additional information to a committee, either later that day or in writing as an answer to a question taken on notice which, of course, has to be written. To submit that question on notice, the member must first ask their question to the minister and the minister must indicate they will take it on notice, and so the question is then put in writing and handed to the Committee Secretary, then, so it can be included in correspondence to the minister for answer.

I remind you that the microphones are sensitive, so I ask you to be mindful of Hansard and be careful when moving your folders, documents and water glasses around the table. It is difficult for Hansard to differentiate when people are talking over each other, so I ask that members speak one at a time, and keep that respect.

As Chair, I will be looking to ensure the fair and appropriate conduct of proceedings today and for this week in this room, and ask that all participating members do the same.

Premier, would you like to make a brief statement?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I emphasise the word 'brief' there, Chair. Thank you very much. I would like to make a brief opening statement and, for the benefit of new members, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) is the central office for government. They also provide services directly to the community through Service Tasmania.

Along these lines, and as part of a continuous improvement focus, DPAC has completed a governance review to improve the delivery of services to the Tasmanian community through the alignment of similar functions, and providing a simple, clearer structure to aid engagement with the community and our stakeholders. The review has delivered a contemporary departmental structure to deliver on key priorities for the Tasmanian government and our community:

- Machinery of government changes to better align functions and services, including the State Planning Office, Regional Partnerships and Homes Tasmania transferred to the Department of State Growth to strengthen the ongoing ability of the state to engage in regional planning, partnerships and growth.
- Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania transferred to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, as the core functions are primarily

PUBLIC

operational and include the delivery of regulatory assessment and advice and programs to support the protection, management and understanding of tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage.

- Strengthen governance committees to drive accountability and the stabilisation of senior leadership structure, to provide certainty for staff and key stakeholders.

The department has also progressed internal work to strengthen budget development, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

I will also highlight an example of progressing key initiatives - the delivery of People Central, a single integrated human resource information system (HRIS) to manage all people working for the state service. People Central will replace Empower and more than 40 legacy systems with a single integrated system, making HR processes simpler, more consistent and easier for staff and managers. We will also reduce manual processes and admin burden, freeing frontline managers to focus on delivering services to Tasmanians.

I will also highlight a few major initiatives that our department has been involved with this year:

- The Change for Children Strategy, Tasmania's 10-year strategy that outlines our commitment to uphold the rights of children by preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse across government and community settings. Leading the reform agenda, which has included the delivery of the commission of inquiry recommendations, the expanded Tell Someone community awareness program and the establishment of the child sexual abuse Victim-Survivor Advisory Group.
- Supporting communities affected by natural disasters and managing recovery grants this year relating to the September 2024 severe weather event and the February 2025 west-coast bushfires.
- Delivering the government's agenda in fostering supportive communities.
- A Respectful, Age-Friendly Island: Older Tasmanians Action Plan 2025-29; and
- Embracing Diversity, Fostering Belonging: Tasmania's Multicultural Action Plan 2025-29, also demonstrate our ongoing commitment to inclusion and respect for all Tasmanians.

Most recently, we have announced the development of a nation-leading redress scheme for historic forced-adoption practices and the national first compensation scheme for people previously convicted of homosexuality offences.

PUBLIC

The department is also progressing government transformation required under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and on Friday this week, Tasmania is hosting the National Joint Council meeting of all Aboriginal Affairs ministers and coalition of peak Aboriginal leaders at Piyura Kitina/Risdon Cove in Hobart. This is a great opportunity for people right across Australia to be on Aboriginal land and experience the rich Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and business, with the Palawa Business Hub being showcased at a welcome event on Thursday night. This budget commits funding of \$800,000 over four years to the hub to support and grow Aboriginal community-controlled enterprise on our land.

The department also supports me in the role of Chair of the Council for the Australian Federation (CAF) in 2025. I'm honoured to be the Chair this year as the Tasmanian Premier. CAF has been focused on key negotiations with the Australian Government to give effect to the health and disability commitments made at National Cabinet in December 2023. We're all fighting to ensure the federal government meets the commitments it made at that Cabinet in December 2023. The Commonwealth committed to fund 42.5 per cent of public health costs by 2030 and 45 per cent by 2035. In return, states and territories agreed to support reforms to get the NDIS back on track, including jointly designing and funding additional foundational supports. The current offer from the Australian Government falls well short of the National Cabinet commitment. States and territories remain anchored to the National Cabinet deal and the government does not come even close to that deal, unfortunately as yet, but we look forward to further negotiations.

Over the next five years the Australian Government is underfunding Tasmania's public hospitals in the order of \$673 million. Over a 10-year period, the level of underfunding is a staggering \$2.8 billion. Instead of the Commonwealth reaching 42.5 per cent of the public hospital cost by 2030, their contribution may not even reach 35 per cent, which, of course, is concerning. For Tasmania, this would be the equivalent of 1.2 million emergency department presentations, 128,000 elective surgeries, or 4.5 million outpatient services, and this is not acceptable to Tasmania. We will continue to work in good faith with the Commonwealth to reach a positive outcome on health funding for Tasmania and provide certainty to people with disability regarding Commonwealth changes to the NDIS and the establishment of foundational supports.

Most recently, I released a discussion paper so that Tasmanians can have their say on how ministerial diaries are disclosed. This is part of our commitment to delivering increased transparency for Tasmanians through initiatives like the independent RTI review and the RTI uplift project. We're building a stronger, more transparent public sector that earns and maintains the trust of Tasmanians.

And last, I table the change for children's strategy - Change for Children Tasmania's 10 year strategy for members. Thank you, Chair, and I welcome members questions.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, last week you said TT-Line's shareholder ministers were first informed of TT-Line's insolvency on the 21st of July, but the Auditor-General hadn't referred the company to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) at that stage. What date did the Auditor-General refer the company to ASIC?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got this letter here, as well that I gave you over the weekend. I also like to, in the process, table a letter to the shareholder ministers from the Chair, Ken Kanofski as well.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - Is this in response to the questions on notice that you took in the parliament last week?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right, yeah, I believe you got a copy over the weekend.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, yesterday.

Mr ROCKLIFF - 31 July, I believe, Mr Willie, the Auditor-General provides a copy of the Section 11 notice sent to the ASIC to the TT-Line Chair and CEO. I do believe, at this stage, that there has not been a reply from ASIC.

Mr WILLIE - Were you informed on 31 July 2025 as well?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's the timeline I have, yes.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, the Auditor-General referred TT-Line's insolvency to ASIC because he's obligated to under the *Corporations Act*.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If he has a suspicion, yes, that's correct.

Mr WILLIE - You've had no communication from ASIC. Have you reached out to ASIC at all to try and understand what their intentions are?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr WILLIE - Why not?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's a matter for TT-Line, and I don't involve myself directly with ASIC. I know our secretary has some experience with these matters particularly, but TT-Line is a government-backed business. There's no way, in a month of Sundays or a snowball's chance in hell, that this government is going to let TT-Line fall over, seriously. We haven't heard from ASIC - is my understanding, and I can only assume that they have strong confidence that the TT-Line's future is secure, particularly because the government will not let it fall over because it's a government business.

Mr WILLIE - Don't you agree it's a serious matter when the Auditor-General of Tasmania refers a state-owned company to ASIC for investigation because they're concerned about a breach of the *Corporations Act*?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Auditor-General is within their rights to, if they have a suspicion, for that referral. That's my understanding, and the Auditor-General's doing their job. We've provided some information as well around the fact that TT-Line have had their independent advice, as well, to suggest that they are good.

Mr WILLIE - You just told the committee that the government found out about the ASIC referral on 31 July. When did you request TT-Line's advice regarding their solvency?

Mr ROCKLIFF - TT-Line provided written advice to shareholder ministers, which includes TT-Line's letter to the Auditor-General sent on 29 July 2025 by Alan Mitchell. That was on 30 July 2025 - my timeline.

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, on 15 November 2025, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE) issued a notice to rock lobster fishers south of the Channel to -

Mr ROCKLIFF - D'Entrecasteaux, yes. It's hard to say.

Dr WOODRUFF - That's right, and south, to prohibit the fishing of rock lobsters, and that is, in their words, to 'safeguard industries' export market'. They don't mention florfenicol. What else could it be? Can you confirm that the reason that notice was provided was because of florfenicol that's being used by salmon companies?

Mr ROCKLIFF - To the best of my knowledge, yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If I'm otherwise advised, but that's correct. I want to also state very clearly that when it comes to florfenicol and the safety of fish, it is safe to eat the fish and it's safe to swim.

The export market, as you know, Dr Woodruff, is a very, very sensitive market and all primary producers, whether it be cherries or beef, or whatever the case may be, have to be extra vigilant, I suppose, and sensitive to the markets. In the case of rock lobster, there's been heightened sensitivity over the course of the last five years, as you well appreciate, leading into COVID. You might need to be mindful of those sensitivities, so it's that extra precaution, if you like.

Dr WOODRUFF - The fact is the Director of Public Health has said, 'It is advised not to eat the fish for 21 days, if you catch them, to avoid antibiotic residue.' That's what he says. This is the reason that salmon are withheld for consumption for a period of time, so that consumers at the supermarket do not eat fish that has antibiotics in them, but Tasmanians recreational fishers are not being given that same protection. Why are you not being honest with Tasmanians about that fact? Why is there no information at all on the government's website that says not to fish for rock lobsters? There is nothing on the Fishing Tasmania or NRE Marine Resources websites at all about this situation. Why is your government withholding information from Tasmanians about what is really going on?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would not characterise it as that at all. There has been no withholding of information, as I understand it. There has been a transparent process around this. It is safe to fish, eat and swim, and the sensitivity around the rock lobster in the south in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel is an extra precaution for export sensitivity, as I understand it.

Dr WOODRUFF - Rock lobster fishers and recreational fishers are locked out of those waters. What will it take for you to stand up to the salmon industry and stop them polluting the waters and actually make them make the changes they need to make to stop dumping antibiotics into the waters?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, this is regulated through the Commonwealth, as I understand it. Without having a brief in front of me, to the best of my knowledge it is regulated through the Commonwealth and they provide the approval.

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, but they've been locked out and it is your state. You are in charge. You're in charge of the regulations. You can require salmon companies to destock or fallow their pens when they've got disease instead of dumping antibiotics into the water. You are choosing to prioritise a multinational company over the marine environment and recreational fishers and now the rock lobster industry. What next?

Mr ROCKLIFF - These matters are looked at. Animal welfare is of heightened importance, as is production as well, and these are matters, as with any primary industry, done with the utmost precaution and evidence and science behind it. We were formally advised last week that the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), the independent federal regulator, had approved an emergency permit for florfenicol in Tasmanian salmon farms.

In regard to potential risks to recreational fishers, I note the advice provided by the Director of Public Health on the health website. Florfenicol is an antibiotic used in many countries for veterinary medicine, agriculture and aquaculture, including salmon farms. When farmed salmon are treated with florfenicol in medicated feed, wild fish nearby may also eat some of this feed. There are no reports of adverse human health effects from exposure to traces of florfenicol in meat or fish. However, recreational fishers may choose to avoid exposure to antibiotic residues in the fish that they catch and eat.

There are no public health restrictions on recreational fishing within three kilometres of a treated lease. There are those who want to twist the matters, but they are the facts and this advice is cautionary, not mandatory. I note the industry has developed world-leading feed management systems that minimise feed wastage and reduce the likelihood of wild fish consuming treated pellets. The government will continue to take expert advice from Dr Veitch and Public Health on this matter.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, on 28 October last year you stood side by side with Steve Old of the Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) and announced that you were winding back your nation-leading mandatory precommitment card commitment. You announced on that day that there was a Deloitte report being conducted and that report would be released very soon. That was almost 13 months ago. Premier, your version of 'very soon' is very different from mine. Where is this report, what does it say, and when will it be released to the public?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, to the broader matter of harm minimisation, I agree with you more broadly that we need to take this very seriously, which we do. I also wrote to all first ministers across the country saying that we need a national approach to this matter. It so happens that Tasmania has the lowest density of electronic gaming machines of any state that allows gaming outside of casinos, the lowest spend per capita on electronic gaming machines and the lowest prevalence of problem gambling as well. That's not discounting, of course, the harmful effects of gambling more broadly and those with addiction, who we always need to support.

In line with previous announcements, we're developing a range of harm-minimisation measures to reduce harm from EGMs, while development of a mandatory precommitment card-based gaming system is deferred. This includes facial recognition technology -

Ms JOHNSTON - I asked about the Deloitte report, Premier.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - and other emerging technologies which are now in use in other states and can improve harm reduction outcomes in Tasmania.

I am advised the Department of State Growth entered into an agreement with Deloitte to develop a report into the social and economic impact of electronic gaming machine reform use in Tasmania. I am advised that the report has yet to be received by the government and as previously committed, the report will be released when it's received.

Ms JOHNSTON - Has the government received a draft report, Premier? You said back on 28 October last year that the report would be released very soon. Has the government received a draft report and, if so, how many versions of the draft report have you received?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to take that on notice.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, can we go back to salmon, please? I'm trying to work out why it is that crayfish with antibiotic residue in it is unsafe to export to China and Japan, yet your government seems to think it's perfectly safe to sell it and for Tasmanians to consume it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr George, for the question; I know you're interested in this matter. The commercial rock lobster season opened on 15 November. Given existing export controls in a number of overseas markets, an area to the south of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel has not been reopened to the commercial rock lobster fishery. This is a short-term precautionary measure to safeguard the industry's export market access. Seafood caught in this area is safe to eat and health advice in relation to florfenicol remains unchanged. There was no evidence of adverse human health effects from exposure to traces of florfenicol in meat or fish. This is a matter for safeguarding export market access given the sensitivities, as you'd well appreciate, in certain parts of our export market.

Mr GEORGE - How can you be sure it's short term? What evidence do you have that it's going to be short term? What evidence do you have that it's not going to have to be expanded as disease spreads in the fish farms over summer in other areas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We certainly don't want a repeat of last summer, Mr George, we can certainly all agree on that. This is for Public Health, of course, and the evidence and information that they provide to the public around health and safety of consumption, and I will be guided by the experts and their evidence in relation to these matters.

Mr GEORGE - But you said it would be short term -

CHAIR - We will go to the next question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that it's a short-term precautionary measure.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, when specifically were you first informed that TT-Line was insolvent? What date?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I met with the shareholder ministers around 21 July from memory, so it must have been around that time.

Mr WILLIE - No, I want the date.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, around that time. It might have been 21 July.

Mr WILLIE - I'm happy for you to take it on notice, but I'd like the date, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - 21 July.

Mr WILLIE - And who told you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Either one of the shareholder ministers, or - I can't recall exactly who first informed me.

Mr WILLIE - I'm happy for you to check your records.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Happy to, yes.

Mr WILLIE - You will take that on notice?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr WILLIE - What specifically was the Auditor-General's concern when he referred the matter to ASIC, and are you able to provide the wording of his referral?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not to my knowledge, no. My best recollection of your first question was the treasurer of the time, Guy Barnett, informed me then, but as to the exact wording of the referral, Mr Willie, I can take that on notice.

Mr WILLIE - When did Treasury advise the government that TT-Line would require cash support from the state government to continue operating?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Incidentally, the Auditor-General is appearing with the Treasurer.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. We will be asking him questions, too.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good. That's the person to ask.

On 25 July, Mr Willie, the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation (TASCORP) wrote to shareholding ministers outlining the liquidity issues facing the company and advised that, subject to the receipt of written confirmation, the maximum amount guaranteed by the state, it had approved a temporary increase in the VRP loan facility limit from \$990 million to \$1.4 billion until the 31 October 2026, and maintenance of the \$45 million working capital facility. 25 July, from my recollection.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, that's the increase in the loan facility. I'm asking when Treasury informed the government that there would need to be a cash injection from the state government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can take that on notice. That's a question for the Treasurer.

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, now that the commercial rock lobster market is at standstill because of florfenicol that salmon companies are using - what else? What's next? What about the abalone market?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, again, also a sensitive market, as you know, as they both are - and important markets for Tasmania, not only with the economic activity that's generated, but also our brand. That's why we need to ensure that this short-term precautionary measure is there to safeguard Tasmania's brand and, indeed, the relevant industry, as well.

Dr WOODRUFF - So, there is a risk, it sounds like. Have you been in conversations with the abalone industry about the potential risk to their market?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I haven't personally -

Dr WOODRUFF - No - has anyone in your government been, then?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Minister for Primary Industries, who I spoke to yesterday, I know has had conversations with the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) and Julian Harrington and the salmon industry, and I believe other stakeholders as well. That's a question for Mr Pearce, but I know he's been speaking to Julian Harrington, as I understand it, from TSIC.

Dr WOODRUFF - I mean, you said it's a sensitive market.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes. I mean, it's sensitive for a reason -

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right.

Dr WOODRUFF - because it's about antibiotic residues, and people are sensitive about antibiotic residues. Recreational fishers in Tasmania have a right to know where and when salmon farms are putting florfenicol into their waters. Why is your government still refusing to provide proper public information to people? It's not available to anybody at boat ramps. There are no QR codes for people to be able to get information in real time about where this is being used. We know salmon companies are using it now at many pens all across the place, but people don't know when it's safe to fish. Will you commit to making that information available to people now, especially before Christmas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're right, it's important to ensure that the community are informed, which is why there's been very clear information from the Director of Public Health, Mr Veitch, around the safety of florfenicol. It's used in other countries, as I've said today as well, and in terms of safety - to fish, to eat the fish, and to swim.

Dr WOODRUFF - You didn't answer the question. Will you make that information - why is it okay to look after international markets and not okay to look after Tasmanians? They just want information about what's going on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that there is information.

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - There's actually not. There's no local information - Sally Doyle, the mayor of the Huon Valley Council made that point very strongly. There is no information available. There's still nothing on your department's fishing web page. There's nothing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Alright. My understanding is that there are live maps around the information, as well. I'm happy to cross-reference and see what information is available where the gaps are, Dr Woodruff, if you like. No-one's wanting to hide anything. We want this to be open and transparent and ensure that not only industry - and I talk of the rock lobster industry, the abalone industry you've raised as well - but also that the community have confidence as well. It's very important.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Can you commit to sitting down with me and having that conversation or the appropriate person, not you, maybe.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, there are the appropriate authorities around these matters of public health -

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, just to make sure we've actually -

Mr ROCKLIFF - the EPA and matters. I'm happy for you to list some concerns to me that you have and I'm happy to see how information can be best made available to the community. What is important is that the message from Public Health is that - safe to fish, safe to eat the fish and safe to swim.

Ms JOHNSTON - In your answer before, Premier, you indicated that the Deloitte report was still, perhaps, in draft format. It's hard to believe that Deloitte has taken over 13 months to complete what should be a relatively simple economic impact assessment report. Have you communicated at all with Steve Old or anyone else from the THA in relation to the draft version or versions the Deloitte report? Have you written to Steve Old from the THA about any election commitments regarding mandatory pre-commitment cards?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will seek the correspondence I've written to Hospitality Tasmania if you would like. I don't recall speaking to Mr Old about these matters. There are other matters we've been talking about, but not matters around Deloitte.

Ms JOHNSTON - Are you taking that on notice - any correspondence?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of correspondence -

Ms JOHNSTON - To the THA in relation to election commitments around gambling and pokies?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, around the industry more generally, there's lots of areas -

Ms JOHNSTON - and the precommitment card?

Mr ROCKLIFF - that we supported Hospitality Tasmania with, in the past, including small grants -

PUBLIC

Ms JOHNSTON - But specifically in relation to gambling, pokies and precommitment cards.

Mr ROCKLIFF - including worker safety and frontline worker safety. There're a range of areas, but I'm happy to dig out the correspondence if you'd like, Ms Johnston.

Ms JOHNSTON - Will you table that correspondence if that correspondence exists?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yeah.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, can we go back to salmon, please?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr GEORGE - What measures did the government take to discuss or notify other marine industries like rock lobster, abalone, oyster farms, and so on, before the use of florfenicol was introduced to our waterways? What warnings, what discussions were had with other industries?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a good question and it's a question that I know the Minister for Primary Industries would have some information on, given it's their responsibility, and NRE Tas as well. I can't detail the discussions. I know there's been engagement with the minister and the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council. Beyond that, it's probably a direct question for the Minister for Primary Industries.

Mr GEORGE - Can we go back to this claim of yours that the closing of the rock lobster area south of the channel is only short-term? There's already some scientific investigation going on. How do you know it's short-term? It's quite possible, is it not, that you're going to find antibiotic residue in the rock lobsters as a result of the dosing of diseased fish?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Mr George. Look, can I say that we expect this as a short-term precautionary measure, but I take your question at face value. The production of export fish and fish products in Tasmania is very highly regulated through the Commonwealth and the state legislation. State legislation applies right across the food supply chain, from production right through to processing and the sale of fish products in Australia. Commonwealth legislation applies to the production and export of fish and fish products from Australia. If fish are successfully treated with antibiotics, they must be held for a calculated period before they can be harvested for human consumption. This period is defined by the APVMA permit and allows for the depletion of antibiotic residue to levels below Australian food safety standards and they would be perfectly healthy to eat. As I say, I am advised it's a short-term measure and precautionary, given the sensitivities of the export market.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, Keeping Children Safe - we've seen some issues on the mainland and I know there are around 191 recommendations from the commission of inquiry. Are you able to outline some of the major legislation and critical changes made to date going forward?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Vermev, and that is correct, there are 191 recommendations to implement when it comes to the commission of inquiry. Last Friday the latest COI quarterly progress report was released which shows that 57 of the

PUBLIC

191 recommendations are completed. All information is available on our website, Keeping Children Safe. However, for the committee today, the team in my department have helpfully put together a summary which highlights some of the major actions that have been put in place over the past couple of years since the COI's final report, and I will table that summary now.

I was heartened by the comments of the Implementation Monitor in his first annual report when he said he has witnessed considerable change firsthand, not only in legislation, policy and programs but also culturally. He also said that Tasmania is truly leading the nation in its child safety reform agenda. There's been a huge amount of work done already but there is of course much more to do, as I know you and everyone at the table knows.

I am very proud of not only of child reform team in my own department, but all of those working across all our agencies as a whole-of-government, whole-of-community responsibility, as you would know, Mr Vermeij, because their work is significant, meaningful, and it will make a difference.

We've already delivered a suite of major legislation, including establishing Tasmania's first Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor, made criminal law reforms to strengthen protections for children, as well as expanding access to special protections in court, and of course we're progressing legislation through the parliament to establish a new Commission for Children and Young People.

For victim/survivors, we've expanded the Victims of Crime Service and addressed delays and applications for assistance. We are listening to children and young people through the voices of Tasmanian youth, and I was pleased to meet with Isabelle, the children's commissioner, just the other day to talk about these and other important matters concerning her very good work, with a dedicated forum established and funded for the ongoing input from those who matter most. We have a dedicated Safeguarding in Schools unit to support prevention and risk identification and we're helping teachers and school staff with ongoing training.

In Health, updated mandatory child safeguarding training is being delivered to all staff, contractors and volunteers and Tasmania Police has introduced specialists training for officers responding to child sexual abuse. The summary also provides details of how we are strengthening oversight in our complaints system to ensure concerns are acted on quickly and consistently. I've just tabled the summary. Thank you very much for your question.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, during the election I wrote to you requesting a briefing from Treasury off the back of our Pre-Election Financial Outlook (PEFO) report which stated that there remains uncertainty in relation to TT-Line's ability to service the debt funding requirements, so alternative options including additional funding support are likely to be considered by the government. I've received a letter from the Acting Secretary, James Craigie, saying that consultation between heads of agencies and non-government parties may occur during the caretaker period under strictly controlled conditions. Leaders of non-government parties may make a request for consultation with agency staff through the Premier. That request was then made and you denied the the briefing request. This is off the back of TASCORP and the company making statements in the lead-up to the election about the financial situation of the company and the company running out of finances in September. Why did you deny that briefing during the election?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, Mr Willie. By convention, during the period preceding a general election for the House of Assembly, the government assumes a caretaker role. Successive governments have followed a set of practices known as caretaker conventions, which aim to ensure their actions do not inappropriately bind an incoming government and limit its freedom of action. The caretaker conventions support the principle of responsible government, recognising that the executive is not accountable to the parliament in the usual way during the caretaker period.

While government business continues as it applies to ordinary matters of administration, the caretaker conventions do affect some aspects of executive government. In summary, the convention is that the government avoids making major policy decisions that are likely to commit an incoming government or limit its freedom to act, making or renewing significant appointments, entering into major contracts or agreements, or approving a major variation or termination of a major contractor.

If circumstances require the government to make a major policy decision during the caretaker period that would bind an incoming government, the relevant minister, after agreement with the Premier, would usually consult with the relevant opposition spokespeople beforehand. The requirement to consult does not require the government to obtain endorsement of non-government parties.

On 12 June, the Secretary of DPAC formally wrote to heads of agencies, CEOs, board chairs of GBEs and SOCs (state-owned companies) and political leaders, enclosing the caretaker convention guidelines and outlining their responsibilities. The Secretary also notified their counterparts in other jurisdictions that Tasmania had entered caretaker mode. On 13 June, I wrote to ministers in the caretaker government providing them with a copy of the caretaker guidelines, and DPAC provided ongoing advice to agencies throughout this time, responding to 77 requests for guidance on applying the caretaker guidelines. There was a range of topics these queries covered, as I understand it, but I've listed the areas around caretaker and we upheld the caretaker conventions appropriately.

Mr WILLIE - Clearly the company was on the brink of insolvency and a decision was required. Did you delay that decision because there was an election?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr WILLIE - Did you deny the briefing because you were worried that it would reveal the desperate situation of TT-Line's finances?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was no decision to be made, as I understand it.

Mr WILLIE - Well, the company was clearly on the brink of insolvency and you didn't make a decision because it was politically inconvenient at the time, and then on 21 June the government was informed that the Auditor-General had determined that the company was insolvent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't agree with the premise of your question, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - It's a fact.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - We followed caretaker conventions.

Mr WILLIE - During the caretaker conventions post the election, I received a phone call from the then treasurer, Guy Barnett, who informed me that he had increased the loan facility for TT-Line that morning from \$990 million to \$1.4 billion.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think I've said that, haven't I?

Mr WILLIE - Yes. During that conversation he did not reveal the Auditor-General's determination around insolvency for the company. Why?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I can't speak for the treasurer and I don't have any information around exactly the conversation you had.

Mr WILLIE - Would you agree that that's a critical piece of information?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sure of the context of the question Mr Willie, honestly.

CHAIR - We will move to the next question.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, Christmas is an important family and friend time, and you often talk about safeguarding Tasmania's traditions. Going out fishing with your friends and family and people who come from interstate is a big part of that. Will you prohibit salmon companies from using florfenicol in southern waters from 1 December so that people can choose to have a Christmas catch feed that does not have antibiotic residues in it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I won't - no, I won't. I will allow the relevant authorities to make those decisions based on evidence and data.

Per your first question, my understanding is the list has live overlay, so everyone is able to see matters pertaining to florfenicol. I also understand that 43,000 rec fishers have been contacted and again, the fish is safe to fish and safe to eat.

Dr WOODRUFF - I have your Fishing Tas app open. It has zero information about florfenicol - nothing. Absolutely no advice. Your government's app to fishers in Tasmania about the rules; it has nothing on there. I can guarantee that the residents of Huon and the Channel do not have access to LISTmap, and that the LISTmap does not have the date that the antibiotic was dumped, and where. I guarantee you that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

Dr WOODRUFF - Again, when commercial fishers are trying to catch and sell for the Christmas market, people will be asking them, 'Does this fish have florfenicol residues in it?' If it was within 21 days, they will have to say, 'Maybe.' Will you stop salmon companies dumping an antibiotic that will lock out commercial and rec fishers from those areas across the Christmas period?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Dr Woodruff, there's a reason why we have relevant authorities in a range of areas with the expertise to make these decisions, so -

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - You're in charge, though. You said you'd put the industry on notice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're the first -

Dr WOODRUFF - You're in charge. This is an absolute catastrophe that's unfolding here, and you can do something about it.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, can we hear the Premier's answer, please?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's information on the Public Health website, the EPA website, NRE website, and through social media. The NRE has a frequently asked questions page as well. I'm sure you would appreciate, and at times you've criticised me, and perhaps other ministers, for intervening on certain decisions on whatever the case may be at the particular time. We have to let the science, and the authorities, with their evidence and data, regulate the industry. Industry is far more heavily regulated than it was 10 years ago. I don't doubt there will be continuous improvement, and I speak to you regularly about that, as with Mr George as well. You're quite right to raise these questions. I'm concerned about the impact on the export industry, I must say.

Dr WOODRUFF - Are you concerned about the impact on rec fishers, too?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm concerned about the information, the public narrative that you're prosecuting when the public health -

Dr WOODRUFF - Hold on, it's not me. Its Recfishtas, it's TARFish, it's everyone I speak to in the Huon at the shops, in the Channel. It's not just me. We're just here letting you know how people feel.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

CHAIR - We will move on to -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand how people feel, and if there's more information that we can provide the community, including industry and rec fishers, then I'm more than happy to investigate that and see what we can provide.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, in answer to my first question, I think you recognise that gambling does cause harm.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do.

Ms JOHNSTON - I hope that we can both agree that it is a harmful product and it needs a Public Health response, just like we do with cigarettes, for instance. Is your government considering a ban on gambling advertising in any state-owned or state-funded sporting facility? Will you consider such as a Public Health measure to try and protect particularly vulnerable Tasmanians who want to engage in a healthy activity?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My understanding is that no, we haven't instigated a ban. You have raised this with me and I've taken it on notice. You've raised it in the parliament as well, and

you've raised it here today. I'm not ignoring your request, by any stretch of the imagination, but there's no policy that's been formalised in this matter.

Ms JOHNSTON - Is this something that you would be progressing? I noticed on sport and rec websites, for instance, there's no information regarding the harms that gambling causes and the link with sporting activities. Is that something you would be progressing as a matter of urgency, given the prevalence of gambling within the sporting industries?

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I understand it, Ms Johnston, the prevalence of gambling when it comes to animals and racing is lessening, and the prevalence of gambling when it comes to sport is increasing. That's the information I have.

Ms JOHNSTON - Even more reason why action needs to be taken.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's information that I've been briefed on, and I hope I am correct in that, but that is certainly my takeout from the briefing I had a little while ago. If there are ways that we can - in whatever forum - advise of the harmful effects of gambling addiction, then I am happy to consider that, yes.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, your department doesn't say that florfenicol is safe for humans.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry Mr George, you are talking about NRE Tas?

Mr GEORGE - I am talking about the Department of Health advice that says, 'There are no known health impacts.' Well, we know perfectly well that 'no known health impacts' doesn't mean that there aren't any - it means that they're unknown.

Florfenicol is banned from commercial use in US waterways because of concerns for human health. We know that 30 per cent of Tasmanian salmon sold in supermarkets around Australia is antibiotic-resistant, and we know that the World Health Organisation describes antibiotic resistance as one of the world's great health challenges. Why are you downplaying the potential impact on humans and on our waterways to defend the salmon companies' use of florfenicol in highly diseased fish farms?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Mr George. I don't believe I'm downplaying it, I am just stating the information that's in front of me. If I've quoted the Director of Public Health correct on the Health website, it says:

There are no reports of adverse human health effects from exposure to traces of florfenicol in meat or fish. However, recreational fishers may choose to avoid exposure to antibiotic residues in the fish that they catch and eat.

There's also lots of information on the Fishing Tasmania website, I'm informed, as well, which I believe I've referred a bit to in the NRE website. I'm not downplaying it, I'm just stating what the evidence is and what the authorities are saying, is my answer.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, AI - and I'm certainly finding out a lot about that in my new role - is with us, whether we like it or not. I imagine that with the public service, there is more being used across the board. Having that increasing productivity, is it better delivered to

PUBLIC

Service Tasmania, and how is the government taking that digitalisation service? How is that being better used within public service? What are your views on that delivery?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. It is rapidly evolving, of course, and it's great to see investment in Tasmania, incidentally, in the north, around AI data centres and the like. You may have heard the federal Finance Minister, Katy Gallagher, recently speaking about the use of AI in the Australian public service, and the government's desire to see it widely taken up and, to quote the minister, 'take hold of the opportunities that AI presents.'

It does present enormous opportunities for Tasmania as well. In fact, surveys have found real productivity benefits, saving up to an hour a day, in some cases, and we want to take advantage of that and get on board. During the year, work was completed on the national AI assurance framework, and our government has published guidelines for responsible AI use, developed a future policy roadmap, as well as contributing to ongoing national AI regulation discussions.

In terms of digitisation, we now have 132,000 customers with a MyService digital account with Service Tasmania. We have over 90,000 TasALERT users on the new app and we have 7500 network users across our Tasmanian government radio network. The project has won a major national award - congratulations, team - and Tasmania is the only jurisdiction globally with all emergency services on a single platform.

Work continues on the Human Resources Information System, as I alluded to in my opening speech, a whole-of-government platform for our employment processes. The government's investment in the digital health transformation is already leading to improved patient outcomes and that continues. Justice Connect is focusing on a major digital transformation as well of the state's justice system and we're also working on a fisheries digital transmission project, as well as delivering eCabinet.

A statewide Parks online booking system is being delivered, a modern online platform for booking campsites, park passes, walks and tours in Tasmanian parks and reserves, with an anticipated launch date in 2026. There's a lot we can talk about in this particular area, but I will table the data and digital government highlights report for 2024-25 so all members can read it for themselves.

Mr WILLIE - I was saying earlier, Premier, that the former treasurer called me in the caretaker period post the election and omitted to say that the Auditor-General had determined that TT-Line was insolvent. Do you agree that was a critical piece of information that was missing from that phone call?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to comment on what the former treasurer may or may not have said; that was a conversation between you both. The former treasurer rang you because it was the right thing to do.

Mr WILLIE - And he neglected to tell me that the Auditor-General had determined that the company was insolvent. You know what this looks like, Premier? It looks like you denied a briefing during the election campaign because you were worried it would reveal the insolvency of TT-Line's finances. You sought to cover it up for three months and -

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I just don't accept the premise of your question. We had advice suggesting -

Mr WILLIE - I haven't asked it yet.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it was the big opening gambit.

Mr WILLIE - Who denied the briefing in the election campaign? Was that your decision?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There was no advice suggesting what you're speaking of, there was no decision to be made and caretaker conventions were followed.

Mr WILLIE - Clearly the company was on the brink of insolvency and you were delaying a decision because it was politically inconvenient.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No way would a government let a government business be insolvent - come on.

Mr WILLIE - What drove the timing of the public announcements around TT-Line's finances? Was it political considerations or the financial health of the company?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't accept the premise of your question and the way you're twisting things. We provided the information when required.

Mr WILLIE - It looks like a massive cover-up, because post the election we get a phone call and suddenly the loan facility needs increasing - very convenient that it was post the election - and then we find out three months later that the Auditor-General had determined that the company was insolvent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's your spin on it all. I don't agree with that.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, TT-Line said it required a bailout of \$100 million to meet its financial commitments. Why was it only provided \$75 million in the Budget?

Mr ROCKLIFF - TT-Line can request more, but \$75 million is provided.

Mr WILLIE - Why was only \$75 million provided?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because that's the figure.

Mr WILLIE - That's not the figure that they requested.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The figure that was provided was \$75 million.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, yesterday there was a packed meeting at Eaglehawk Neck on the Tasman Peninsula of locals who have long been concerned about the industrial fish farming that's happening at Long Bay. When Long Bay was first announced as a place for salmon farming people were absolutely shocked. It has a very poorly flushed area and it has been seriously degraded over the years. You said you'd put the industry on notice, and of all

PUBLIC

places, this stands out starkly as one where salmon farming should never have started, let alone continue. Will you put the company on notice to move out of Long Bay?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The companies make decisions in terms of where they would like to farm. It is a huge planning process and a lot of community consultation takes place throughout the process. It's very intricate, detailed, time-consuming and thorough. I'm not going to dictate matters of direction across the table now which were other people's responsibility in planning processes. What we have on the table, though, is a study to look at the future of salmon farming. I want salmon farming to continue. I value the industry. Others have a different view in terms of where they see the future of the industry, but I support its strong future and also support continuous improvement.

The matters the community raises are food for thought when it comes to how we can build community confidence in salmon farming and maintain its social licence. It is a very valuable industry, we want to see it continuously improve and ensure that the community understands the value of salmon farming, but salmon farming also has to be maintained with high regulation. We've improved regulations over the course of the last decade to ensure that its social licence is maintained. There are always learnings. There was a very big learning with the mass mortality event last summer and no doubt we'll continue to navigate what is a complex system, as are all farming systems.

Dr WOODRUFF - So when you said that you seriously intended to put the salmon industry on notice -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I said that in March this year.

Dr WOODRUFF - did you just mean that there will be a review undertaken that may take years into the future, despite all the things that are happening that are critical and could tip us over into a sort of marine crisis that we're seeing in South Australia? Do you mean that you will make no changes to the regulations that will require salmon companies to change their practices such as polluting, killing dolphins, killing cormorants, killing seals - the horrors that we're seeing every day - people being locked out of their waters for fishing and commercial industries. Are you actually saying as Premier of Tasmania that you will do nothing about that and you're just going to wait for two years for a review to be done?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I'm not saying that.

Dr WOODRUFF - So what are you doing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're characterising the industry in an extraordinarily bad light with your language, whereas the industry does a lot of good for regional communities with employment and building social capital in the communities as well. I will tell you why I don't accept what you're saying in terms of two years and nothing's going to happen. Over the last 10 years we have consistently improved the regulation, the monitoring, the penalty provision and the independent oversight of the industry. There were significant reforms when I was primary industries minister because I was concerned about the need for the industry to continually improve when it comes to regulation and monitoring and to strengthen the penalty provisions around marine debris and other matters I have mentioned before.

PUBLIC

In 2014 we inherited the salmon situation where the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment - now NRE Tas - was both the regulator and the monitor, if you like. We've separated that out in terms of the EPA to ensure that independence and there's been continuous improvement along the way. We've had two salmon plans in between which point to continuous improvement, and with this study moving forward there will be findings, there will be recommendations and there will be community consultation around that to further improve the industry, for the community, for the environment, for the industry itself, no doubt, and for the community acceptance of the industry moving forward.

Dr WOODRUFF - Regulations have changed, I accept that. But they're not proportionate to the harm that's being caused. Because while the regulations have changed, the industry has massively scaled-up and is going into places they promised they would never be, like Brabazon Point. In 2019, the Chair of Tassal promised to get out of Brabazon Point in the Huon River, still there today. They're not actually changing, and you need to step in and stop the harm so that industry continues, it must be checking the damage that's being done. That means getting out of Long Bay, getting out of Brabazon Point, stopping the dolphins being killed. These are the things. Will you commit to looking at those things?

Mr ROCKLIFF - With respect, we have stepped in terms of the study moving forward, an independent study as well. We've continually stepped in, if you like, as the examples I've just given you. We have the relevant authorities in the EPA, that keeps the industry accountable. It's not in the industry's interest to not be accountable. The industry, when it comes to its production, when it comes to animal welfare, when it comes to environment, when it comes to a whole range of matters - it's not in their interests to ignore community concerns and indeed, regulation as well, and so that's why they've been very, very innovative in the last 10 years.

Not only has the regulations, in my view, at least tried or kept pace with community expectation, but also the industry themselves have invested enormously in research and development, in innovation. As a result of that, there are a number of small, medium and large businesses that are the beneficiary of that when it comes to some of the matters pertaining to net construction and underwater cameras. The other day I went to a place in Kingston with Ms Petrusma where the underwater robots actually identified the holes in the nets and then fixed them, sewed them together.

Dr WOODRUFF - 45, relevance.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm just highlighting the innovation, this is extraordinary and a very proud couple -

Dr WOODRUFF - If they were really concerned about transparency, why did the industry kick back so loudly on having a review of their practice?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - I will pass it over.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, perhaps through you, to the head of the public sector, Ms Morgan-Wicks. The significant increase in workers compensation claims is singled out for

special mention in the budget speech delivered by the Treasurer. It's also mentioned that there is considerable increase in the cost of managing workers compensation claims, particularly relating to mental health related claims. What portion of workers compensation claims have a purely psychological component, and of those, are you able to break those claims down by department, please?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I will refer to Ms Morgan-Wicks in just a moment. But, building a culture of safety at work, including the management of hazards and improving injury outcomes, is a top priority, of course, for us all. We're committed to proactive measures and interventions that support the physical and mental well-being of our employees. These initiatives are both coordinated through the whole of service approaches, and tailored by individual agencies and implemented across state service agencies. In the event of illness or injury, we're committed to ensuring appropriate carers and supports accessible for employees. In the 12-month period to the 30 June 24, there were 1719 workers compensation claims recorded in the State Service, which is an increase of 46 claims, or 2.75 per cent from the previous 12 months.

Pertaining to your question, the cost of these payments firstly was \$113.6 million. This is an increase of \$28 million, or 33 per cent from the previous 12-month reporting period. There were 468 mental stress claims during the period to 31 March this year, which represents a 1.31 per cent increase in the State Service headcount and this is an increase of 45 claims, with the majority being submitted in the Department of Health.

I'm aware of the stigma that has historically existed around mental illness and our government is committed to fostering workplace environments where employees feel supported to seek help when they need it.

Mental stress claims represent 26 per cent of the total claims lodged in the TSS for the period of 31 March 2025. Compared to the same period last year, mental stress claims represented 24.44 per cent of total claims lodged for the period 31 March 2024. Post-traumatic stress claims have increased marginally over the 12-month period to 31 March 2025, from 46 to 48. Whilst these claims have increased, this remains lower than the previous 12-month period to 31 March 2023 when claims totalled 55. That's a broader outline and breakdown of the questions.

Ms JOHNSTON - That's a broad breakdown of the departments.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have a whole of government, but we can take on notice per department if that's helpful. I did mention, the Department of Health.

Ms JOHNSTON - If you take that on notice, that would be great. Has any modelling or estimates been done to consider the effect of workers compensation and work health and safety issues due to public sector job cuts and extra workloads? Has the department done any modelling on what that might look like and the impact workers health and safety and compensation claims?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the Premier. We haven't done specific modelling, Ms Johnston, but certainly, in terms of the work that's done through the Department of Justice and the WorkCover Board, the information that we also receive in our State Service

PUBLIC

Management Office, we have some, it's approximately 1.3 per cent of the TSS by headcount that have lodged mental stress claims as part of our workers compensation.

Obviously, a much smaller percentage of that is actually PTSD, as a more specific clinical condition. We all know, particularly from results from our employee surveys for example, that for mental stress, workload is a component of that, and that is why we work very carefully and closely with our our leaders and our managers in relation to the management of workload for staff and we review each of the workers compensation claims that are lodged to try to determine whether there are improvements that need to be made.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, I'd like to return to this idea that the closure of the rock lobster fisheries is short term only. Will the government be allowing continued and expanded use of florfenicol over summer if traces of antibiotics are found in rock lobsters in the closed area or in wild fish that are also tested in the vicinity of the diseased pens?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Mr George. The permits are provided by the federal government, the Commonwealth in that sense, so that's out of our jurisdiction.

Mr GEORGE - Well, it's not, is it? It's happening in Tasmanian waters.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The permits are provided by the federal government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But your job is to protect Tasmanians from the potential impact of antibiotic resistance and the export market.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Correct. Yes, we're mindful of the export market, which is why extra precautions have been placed around the waters of the south, around the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, and it is expected to be a short-term measure. That's what I've been advised, and I can only go on the advice of Public Health, Mr George, about fish being safe to eat, safe to fish and safe to swim.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, who made the determination that a briefing wasn't required for the opposition in the election? Was that you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Can I also say that the request for \$100 million came after the \$75 million was put in the budget. That's \$75 million already gone through the process. It was worked through with Treasury and TASCORP, as I understand it. Obviously, we will keep backing TT-Line, as a government-owned business. Just to repeat, we had no knowledge of the Auditor-General's view during the election period. The AG advised TT-Line of his view on 21 July 2025, issued an unqualified audit report on a going concern basis on 19 August, which I think I've already said as well.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, when TT-Line disputed the Auditor-General's determination, did you request the independent advice that they were relying on - that they weren't trading insolvent and breaching the *Corporations Act*?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Shareholder ministers did advise.

Mr WILLIE - You're just relying on letters from the company?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I just say, Mr Willie, that the journey of TT-Line has been rough seas over the course of the last couple of years, which is why we intervened. We have a new board, new chair, new management, we have two new ships, we have the wharf well and truly under construction. This is a positive for Tasmania's future despite the rough seas we've had to endure, of which, as I said, is completely unacceptable, and words to that effect, I made my views very clear on this. So we have intervened, the project is back on track. It's not without its challenges, as big projects have.

Mr WILLIE - The infrastructure stuff-up's well known, but there's an emerging scandal regarding TT-Line's finances. Are you just relying on letters from the company that they're not trading insolvent and breaching the *Corporations Act*?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our shareholder ministers have been briefed.

Mr WILLIE - But you, personally, are just relying on letters?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My shareholder ministers have been briefed. We are working with Treasury and TASCORP, and it is a government business, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, and just relying on the company's advice worked out very well for Michael Ferguson, didn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have a great deal of faith in the new leadership. I'm not sure why you're casting aspersions on others. It is a very competent board with a very competent Chair and a very competent CEO, who will be right in front of Government Business Enterprise scrutiny next week, and then we will consider all the questions you like.

Mr WILLIE - I'm concerned about the impact this is having on Tasmania. It's not only the impact on the economy, because it's years delayed and way over budget, but the impact now on Tasmania's finances, because you're having to inject money into the company from the state budget. Under what circumstances will you provide the additional \$25 million the company's requested?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry?

Mr WILLIE - Under what circumstances will you provide the additional \$25 million the company's requested?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will work with the company, we will work with the Treasury, we will work with TASCORP, through requests that come forward.

Mr WILLIE - Will it be next year's budget, in May?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't have a crystal ball, Mr Willie. We will work with the company to ensure that it's meeting its financial obligations.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, you've referred to TT-Line's extra borrowings as a 'temporary extension' of the loan facility?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's 26 October - is that right, or that increase? 27 October.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - Temporary extension - how will it only be temporary without further injections from the state government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I say, we will work with Treasury, we will work with TASCORP, we will work with the company, to ensure its financial sustainability. That's what we do. We will get around the table and we'll listen, and no doubt when the old ships are sold it brings in a capital injection as well.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, in the past 18 months have you, as an individual, been a subject of, or a party to, any Supreme Court matters?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Dr WOODRUFF - In the last 18 months, have you, as an individual, incurred any legal costs that have been covered by taxpayer dollars?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I see where this is all going, Dr Woodruff. Me, personally - I can't speak for others - but no.

Ms JOHNSTON - Just back into the workers' compensation issue, the Treasurer notes in his budget speech that it's noted that, 'It is noted that other state governments of a different political hue are now legislating to staunch this haemorrhaging of their state budgets', with reference to increasing workers' compensation costs. What did the Treasurer mean by that, and what are you planning on doing? It sounds like an ominous statement in the Budget and very concerning to workers, I am sure, in the public sector. What is meant by that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm sorry, Ms Johnston, I just missed the first quote.

Ms JOHNSTON - The quote is: 'It is noted that other state governments of a different political hue are now legislating to staunch this haemorrhaging of their state budgets', in reference to workers' compensation claims. What did the Treasurer mean by that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My best knowledge would be that the Treasurer was referring to legislation in New South Wales, the New South Wales Labor government, of which has been quite a lengthy and contentious discussion around workers' compensation. I'm not sure that it is state-for-state, in terms of their situation and ours. That is what I believe the Treasurer would have been referring to regarding those particular matters.

Ms JOHNSTON - You would agree that where workers have been injured at work they are due rightful compensation, that they shouldn't have their rights limited due to budget constraints, and that they should be duly and properly compensated if they have been injured at work?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have always had a robust workers' compensation system within Tasmania, which our government has strengthened. The principle, of course, people being injured at work and rightly compensated, remains.

Ms JOHNSTON - Are you ready to rule out, right here and now, limiting workers' compensation rights and the rights of workers to try and save the budget or repair the budget, as a budget repair measure?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is the principle of a good workers' compensation system, around what is fair for workers. I am not going to play any rule-in rule-out. We will judge each issue. There may well be reforms to the workers' compensation system which benefit workers, I'm not going to rule that out in terms of going down that track either.

To your question, the New South Wales Labor government, I believe, has been looking at reforms in this area and may well have just secured some compromise pragmatism through the parliament to see that those are through - but I haven't had that verified yet.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, I met with the Attorney-General last week and received the welcome news that the government plans to introduce reforms to the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* in the next year, which will take into account all the recommendations of the Cox report and the Weiss report. Those changes, of course, will be valueless if the Integrity Commission is not properly resourced, financed, staffed, and has the funding necessary. Are you able to guarantee that in the next budget, mini-budget - which the Treasurer has already warned will probably involve more cuts than it will new spending - guarantee that the Integrity Commission is fully funded, to its requirements, to ensure that it's able to undertake its job and to complete any investigations that it's holding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Mr George. I know of your passionate interest in this matter, and your advocacy no doubt will continue. When it comes to the Integrity Commission, I can point to the record of continued resourcing for the Integrity Commission and the increase in funding that it has received. I believe the figure was \$7 million over a number of years - I will try and remember that figure, but it certainly has increased.

As members would be aware, there is currently a large body of work of reform underway within the Department of Justice to progress legislative changes relating to recommendations and proposed reforms arising from a number of reviews. They include the Cox review, the Commission of Inquiry matters, the Weiss review, as well as additional concerns and issues raised by the Integrity Commission. Your interest is important because we are going to work closely with the parliament to progress these reforms. I understand a number of members have been briefed this week on the first tranche of these reforms brought to parliament last week, with the bill on mandatory notifications progressing high-priority integrity reforms arising from the Cox review and commission of inquiry.

We're also working to release a comprehensive bill for public consultation this year incorporating legislative changes to adopt the reforms recommended by the Cox review, the Weiss review and other matters raised by the Integrity Commission. The consultation on this bill will provide the opportunity for all stakeholders - members of parliament, including yourself, and the public - to be involved in the progress.

I will come to funding now, Mr George, because I know it's a key concern of yours. The government increased funding for the Integrity Commission in the 2024-25 financial year. In 2025-26 the interim Budget again sees total revenue from appropriation increase in this financial year. In fact, the government has consistently increased its funding for the Integrity Commission since the 2016-17 financial year.

The reforms the government has committed to, including the mandatory notifications bill and the largest second tranche which will be released for public consultation this year, has yet to pass the parliament. Funding associated for these reforms will be considered as part of the

PUBLIC

upcoming budget process, between now and May, so we will be diligently working through that to see what resources are required for those reforms to ensure that the funding is there so the work can happen given the importance of the Weiss recommendations and the commission of inquiry and others.

Mr GEORGE - Can we take that as an undertaking that the government will fund sufficient to the requirements of the Integrity Commission?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We want the Integrity Commission to be sufficiently funded, of course we do.

CHAIR - Mr George, you weren't in when we spoke earlier, but if you want to put a question on notice you need to write it down and hand it to the secretary, who is Fiona, at the minute.

Mr GEORGE - My apologies for being late.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, you promised you'd develop a wellbeing framework for Tasmania. Where has that got to? When will it be released and what are its objectives?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much for that, Mr Vermev. Developing a wellbeing framework was always about finding a shared vision for our state. The process began by asking Tasmanians what they want our state to look like today and into the future, what they need for a good life in their own state and what they expect from the government. This consultation has been about finding out what matters most to Tasmanians and then putting that into a framework to guide current and future government priorities, direction and decision-making.

I'm pleased to say that extensive consultation has concluded and today I'm tabling the Wellbeing Framework for Tasmania. It is a vision for Tasmanians by Tasmanians. Over 1600 Tasmanians shared their views in public consultations led by the University of Tasmania, coupled with the existing consultation data and literature reviews. Online workshops were also held and all that consultation has been distilled into the wellbeing domains and population outcomes under the final framework, which focuses on community, governance, health, learning, place and prosperity.

To give an example, in relation to prosperity, that's about being able to find work, breaking down barriers to participate in the workforce, having opportunities for a career and a career progression, and being able to access education and training needed to engage in work. It's also about having a strong economy and providing jobs and opportunities for Tasmanians right across the state. I expect all our government agencies will use the framework to guide priority setting and inform decision-making based on what Tasmanians have told us .

The framework is also a helpful tool for others such as local government and organisations and businesses to consider how their own operations align with the views of Tasmanians, so it is a shared vision. The outcome for the wellbeing of Tasmanians should be a shared and collective responsibility, right across the community. If we all work on delivering what matters to most Tasmanians that will only improve outcomes for the people of Tasmania and indeed, the state as a whole. I will officially table the wellbeing framework. Thank you very much.

PUBLIC

Mr VERMEY - There's no doubt that climate change is increasing, with severe weather events including fire, flood, droughts and storms. What is the government doing, not only to support Tasmanians in recovery but trying to mitigate the risks from these events? What practice have we got there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, and I acknowledge the matters around climate change as well. Resilience and Recovery Tasmania in our department is developing the next Tasmanian disaster resilience strategy. It builds on the lessons we've learned from the pandemic and also natural disasters, as we had floods in 2011, 2016 and 2022, we had weather events in 2023, we had some fires in 2019 and on the west coast this year as well, and of course, Dunalley as well in 2013. It builds on those lessons and we have worked with leading experts from the University of Tasmania again and the Australian National University on developing the strategy.

During the year there has been a network of futures analysis practitioners across the State Service established to provide input and uplift those strategic policy skills across government. Regional consultation workshops on the strategy have also been held, with over 120 people taking part. The new strategy will begin in January next year. We're also delivering the regional drought resilience planning project, working with communities across Tasmania to develop plans and bringing together data, and this will also include small grants to help transform the plans into action.

We've partnered with the Australian Government to deliver funding of up to \$52 million to protect Tasmania's wilderness and Aboriginal heritage values on the west coast and south-west during the bushfires earlier this year. This funding will help fund the complex area of specialist firefighting efforts to operate in some of the most remote and challenging parts of Tasmania.

You also asked about recovery. The Disaster Ready Fund is our partnership with the Australian Government and we've secured \$7.6 million in new funding in round 2 to support the delivery of new projects worth over \$15 million, as well as delivered grants to 34 local government projects as part of the evacuation resources project, with the physical assets needed for evacuation and recovery centres during storms and widespread power outages. We also provided funding to support communities, including over 750 emergency assistance grants to households, over 13,700 emergency food grants, over 2300 temporary living support payments and about 50 grants to support households replace or repair household items, so there has been significant work there.

I want to commend the team across government, DPAC, particularly during the 24 power outages and other matters. They established the hotline very quickly, made payments into bank accounts very quickly as well and it was really a stellar effort. There is much more that Resilience and Recovery is doing, and I table the highlights for the financial year 2024-25 for members.

Mr WILLIE - In your previous answer, Premier, you said that selling the old ships would help remedy TT-Line's finances. Is that enough?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's going to be of assistance, yes.

Mr WILLIE - But it's not enough on its own? There will be further equity injections required from the government?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Again, we will work with TT-Line and you will have the opportunity next week with the CEO of TT-Line, Chris Carbone, and Ken Kanofski, the Chair of TT-Line, and the minister, Mr Vincent, to scrutinise all these matters in great detail.

Mr WILLIE - I will take that opportunity, but you're the head of the government and I'm taking the opportunity to scrutinise you now. Are the equity injections from the state government unlimited?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will support TT-Line as they need support.

Mr WILLIE - That's an unlimited amount?

Mr ROCKLIFF - What do you want us to do? Just roll over, flog off the ships, and she's all over red rover. I'm not going to let that happen. We will work with TASCORP, Treasury, and TT-Line to ensure the future viability of the ships. We will provide what we need to provide to support TT-Line.

Mr WILLIE - The Auditor-General's saying that the company can't meet its long-term debt repayments. Do you have an understanding of what's required to do that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The board, Treasury, TASCORP, the government, our ministers will work through these matters, and these are questions for the TT-Line board.

Mr WILLIE - I am asking you as the head of the government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much.

Mr WILLIE - You don't get the benefit of the doubt on this issue anymore, Premier. As the head of the government, do you have an understanding of what's required to meet the long-term debt repayments of the company?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will meet the long-term requirements of the company.

Mr WILLIE - What's the figure?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will meet the long-term requirements of the company.

Mr WILLIE - I'm asking for the figure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can scrutinise all these matters in great detail with TT-Line next week. That is the appropriate forum to do so. You can ask me when it comes to intervention, which we did, about the new management, new board, new chair, getting cracking on the wharf infrastructure and other matters.

Mr WILLIE - What's the debt guarantee from the government? What's the figure?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will support TT-Line as they need support.

Mr WILLIE - Do you have an understanding of the figure to meet the long-term debt repayments.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - What I understand is the importance of looking after TT-Line and ensuring its viability.

Mr WILLIE - You are not answering the question. Do you have a figure, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am confident that TT-Line, TASCORP and Treasury will work through these matters. The Treasurer guaranteed to TASCORP that the maximum amount guaranteed by the state to TT-Line is increased to \$1.45 billion, and that's where it stands.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, you just talked about some of the government's climate actions to respond to floods, fires and storms. Do you support the target of net zero?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you serious?

Dr WOODRUFF - Just for the record because your federal colleagues don't.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Oh well, surprise, surprise. Yes, I do.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. That's good, especially as you said last week in parliament, that's right. Will you condemn your federal colleagues for their position that they're taking?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Dr Woodruff, I'm going to leave the show that is playing out amongst the Coalition to the Coalition, federally. Can I say, they need to look to Tasmania as a great example of what we've been able to achieve over many generations, over successive governments of all colours, and, most importantly, the hard work, ingenuity, innovation, grit and determination of those who built our hydro-industrialisation schemes and, indeed, windfarms - commencing in the early 2000s probably, with Woolnorth - and other renewable energy opportunities as well, including Marinus.

Dr WOODRUFF - You can say that, but you are also denying the reality at times when it suits you and playing that to that radical right of the Liberal Party because you mocked me in Question Time last week.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When have I ever done that?

Dr WOODRUFF - When I asked you a question about the National Climate Risk Assessment's analysis for Tasmania, which is that we face a severe disastrous threat, you called that Armageddon, but you've just talked about fires.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I didn't. I would never -

Dr WOODRUFF - You are mocking people who are talking about the reality of climate change. Will you condemn your federal colleagues and actually come on board and stop mocking serious conversations about the risk that we face as a state.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Dr Woodruff, I would never mock you.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, you just did last week. I mean, I don't care. I don't take it personally.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - You seem to be caring.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I'm representing people who are worried about their future.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, okay. I was really just saying that we need to have just a very sensible conversation. You know some of the language sometimes you use is sort of Armageddonish and -

Dr WOODRUFF - I only talked about the national and state climate risk assessments, that's not going too far. People go a lot further. We're just trying to get the reality into the actions, the fact that you don't have targets for industries and you don't have an adaptation strategy for people in Tasmania. What you presented is good, but there's no support for local councils who are left on their own to manage climate-change adaptation risks.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, well if you have some ideas - I'm open to ideas about supporting local government. I believe there has been some work there, but I stand to be corrected.

There is strong, multi-partisan support for net zero in Tasmania and we will probably go further in terms of our support for windfarm developments and Marinus and the like. I have to say that in 2017 when the federal Coalition government, with the Tasmanian government, started the whole Marinus conversation - I'm very pleased with that starting. I'm also very pleased with the work we've been able to achieve with the federal Labor government, with Chris Bowen and Anthony Albanese, the PM, and the like. We're all united on all this.

What's playing out federally, there needs to be really bold thinking when it comes to net zero across Australia, I get that some rural communities are -

Dr WOODRUFF - Have you had any conversation with your federal colleagues about the position that they've taken?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, we will move on to Ms Johnston.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, thank you for tabling the wellbeing framework, I know that the community sector in particular has been long waiting for this. Having a quick look through it, though, it seems that, whilst there are fantastic population outcomes in the document, a lot of it will fall to the community sector to deliver some of these population outcomes and your Treasurer just wrote to them, effectively asking them how they can take a razor to their budgets and their programs. I'm particularly concerned, for instance, in learning population outcomes in the wellbeing framework, it says, 'Tasmanians have the knowledge, skills and resources to participate,' and it says, 'Tasmanians can read, write and use numbers confidently in everyday situations appropriate to their age.' Yet, the 26Ten adult literacy funding program is ending this financial year. We have the highest rate of illiteracy in this country, will 26Ten be able to continue beyond this financial year to provide a really critical program to the community to lift our literacy rates amongst our adults and start to actually achieve some of the things that you've put in this wellbeing framework?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yeah, thank you. I've been very pleased and proud with the work that - of literacy in recent times, around that. In my view, we're leading the way in making a transformational change in how we teach literacy in our schools. We've committed to a future where every Tasmanian is able to read and write, and we know that literacy provides

PUBLIC

a foundation for children to succeed at school, and in their future life endeavours. To achieve this vision, in 2024 work began on the Lifting Literacy reforms, including evidence-based literacy instruction, which gives young people the best chance of learning to read. More than one year on, we're well and truly on track with that, which is really good. In December last year we saw the results of the year one phonics check which showed a five per cent increase in government school students who are meeting or exceeding the expected benchmarks on their reading journey.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, I'm speaking specifically about adult literacy at 26Ten.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But you and I both agree that early intervention is so important.

Ms JOHNSTON - Absolutely, but we have a lot of adult Tasmanians who are illiterate, so can you please relate to the question?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to work through that with you. On the 26Ten funding, is that exactly what you're asking?

Ms JOHNSTON - That's right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've been a big supporter of 26Ten. I remember going to the launch of it and Mr McKim, I think, was Education minister. It was in around 2012 in the Devonport Library, if my memory serves me correctly -

Ms JOHNSTON - That's a great trip down memory lane, but can we - will they have funding for next financial year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's a great program. Then, as Education minister, we boosted it greatly in and around 2015 and re-energised it with more funding. I'm a believer in it. I will take on - I want to see it continue - is your question -

Ms JOHNSTON - Will you take it on notice then to seek advice whether the funding for 26Ten adult literacy program will continue beyond the end of this financial year because it's not on the forward Estimates. It's a critical program to deliver that component of your wellbeing framework and it can't be done without them being funded.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will see where it's all at if you like, thank you.

Ms JOHNSTON - You will take it on notice?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but can I get the exact words?

Ms JOHNSTON - Yes, I will write it down. Will the 26Ten adult literacy program funding continue beyond the end of this financial year?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm advised that, given my support of the program and the investment that's been made, there has been really good community engagement. I've also visited work sites which have ensured standard operating procedures are there, particularly for people in the workforce who have English as a second language, which is very important. We have funding for the next 12 months.

PUBLIC

Ms JOHNSTON - For the end of the financial year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and I believe work will be done within that time to look at what is required moving forward.

Ms JOHNSTON - So you are saying they have certainty of funding for the 2026-27 financial year? Because if not, they will need to start laying off staff before the end of this financial year and wind down their programs, and we don't want to see that happen. We want to see a continuous rollout of their programs, not a winding-down in anticipation that they might not get funded.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have great interest in this matter. I've told you my history when it comes to 26Ten. I value the program and I want to see it continue. I'll just have to look at the funding arrangements, so please put your question on notice and we'll be more than happy to answer it, as will Minister Palmer, no doubt, when you ask her similar questions.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, I wrote to you last month and acknowledge that you have replied about disability access in Parliament House. I acknowledge the fact that Parliament House is old and therefore it's not an easy resolution, however, I have a member of staff who is from time to time confined to a wheelchair and is unable to open the doors on their own to disability access toilets and unable to open all the doors on their own that are button operated electronic doors to the the rest of Parliament House. Can I seek from you an undertaking that you will deal with this matter urgently because there are a number of safety issues?

Firstly, it is about general access and inclusivity. Secondly, it's also a real issue because in the event of an evacuation of Parliament House or a fire in Parliament House, this person in a wheelchair is unable to save themselves without parliamentary staff being immediately available to them if they're on their own.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you and I agree with everything you've said in your question. We often talk about inclusivity in the Chamber and the importance of accessible infrastructure for all Tasmanians. I have had a conversation with the Minister for Disability Services about these matters, particularly pertaining to hardworking staff on her team as well, and I've had a conversation with the previous Speaker, Ms O'Byrne, at great length around these needs for improvements, as well as the current Speaker.

I want to ensure that this is a modern workplace, as difficult as it is in terms of the infrastructure and doorways and stairs and all those sorts of things, and I would like to be able to work with you on the significant improvements that are needed in terms of accessibility for staff and people with disability who visit and look at democracy in action and indeed members of parliament who will or may require extra support as well. I know it's on the agenda for me to again speak with the current Speaker about this.

Mr GEORGE - Do you have any preparations under way? I understand that there is some sort of finance available for automatically opening doors and this is something that could be addressed over the Christmas break.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is my understanding and I understand that the Clerks and Treasury are working on this now. There will be need for greater investment, I don't doubt, but

PUBLIC

we need to have a proper plan for how all this works in the areas of priority such as accessibility to amenities, bathrooms and a range of areas that are not up to scratch, as you well know.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, there's a lot of media attraction on major events like Dark Mofo, but what is the government doing to support smaller local festivals, especially those multicultural festivals that are so well attended and important to our cultural awareness and inclusivity?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I appreciate what you're saying about smaller events and we're providing for smaller events support. The last one I opened was the scallop festival in late July, early August. There are some permit matters there which could streamline approvals as well, rather than every stallholder have one permit. If that's what is called a licence then the whole collective can have one, streamlining the processes, et cetera, a bit like we've done with the beekeepers.

To your question around inclusivity, since 2015 we've provided annual funding for the Community Participation and Appeals Fund that's aimed at building social cohesion and encouraging community participation as well as supporting various charitable appeals. In this Budget we're providing funding to a range of small multicultural festivals and other small events, as well as donating to key fundraising appeals, including \$60,000 for the Salvation Army's Red Shield appeal - double the previous funding - the Heart Foundation, Red Cross, as well as local appeals such as Launceston City Mission's winter appeal, Hobart City Mission's Christmas appeal, Vinnies Christmas appeal and the Maddie Riewoldt Foundation.

We're also providing funding support for events such as the Cancer Council's Daffodil Day; the Tasmanian Children's Christmas Event; Reclink's Community Cup and the Christmas Lunch, which was previously run by Colony 47; Awards Australia; the Tasmanian Young Achievers Award; the Rotary Club of Deloraine's Craft Fair, which has recently been held; the Royal Hobart Regatta; a Day in the Park; and again, Maddie Riewoldt's Vision.

To answer your question on multicultural events, we are also supporting and providing four-year funding certainty to Festa Italia, Chinese New Year celebrations, Estia Greek festival, Nepalese cultural events, the Glenorchy City Council's multicultural festival and the Diwali event in Parliament House just last week, which was uplifting.

I agree that these events bring Tasmanians together and help promote cultural awareness, understanding and inclusion. Those small grants, if you like, go a long way to supporting people in multicultural communities.

Mr VERMEY - In Tasmania we have a unique network of Service Tasmania shopfronts, around about 30, as well as digital infrastructure. What is the government doing to make the most of this platform and the benefits it has for Tasmanians?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. We paid tribute to the former premier Tony Rundle earlier this year for starting Service Tasmania, a very proud part of his legacy. I commend all the people who work at Service Tasmania, in all the 27 centres. We have face-to-face services at 27 centres, we have phone services and we have services available online and now through the digital portal and app. Today customers can access over 500 services over the counter, over the phone or online. To give you a picture, in the year to June 2025, there were over 1 million customer inquiries in person or by phone; over 132,000 unique myServiceTas accounts created;

PUBLIC

over 122,000 transactions completed and much more. As well as paying your bills, new services continue to be added to the range of digital options since we have established the new portal. We have already added fire permits and in 2024-25 Service Tasmania formed a Community Grants and Programs unit, so they now manage Seniors and Companion Cards, the Veterans Well-being Voucher program, the Tasmanian Concessions and Discounts Guide, and Community Grants.

They also swiftly deliver Emergency Assistance Grants in times of disaster and recovery, and we have spoken about that. They can process the National Police Record check. They have the ability to restore expired Tasmanian Motorbike Licences and coming soon, they will be able to handle the Temporary Upgrade Permit for short-term Heavy Vehicle Registration. They will be able to connect through to the Marine Safety Master Portal for Boat Licencing, Registration and Moorings. They will process digital renewals for Registration to Work with Vulnerable People, and Face ID will be introduced to the My Service Tasmania App.

For the benefits of members I table the Service Tasmania key highlights documents so they can take a read and see how Service Tasmania is constantly evolving for the benefits of Tasmanians right across the state and again, can I commend all the people at the frontline within Service Tasmania for the great work that they do in supporting Tasmanians with a range of services.

CHAIR - I think it's timely to take a short break, so we will have a 10-minute break and be back at 10.06 a.m..

The committee suspended from 9.56 a.m. to 10.06 a.m.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, you've admitted there's no business case, no financial modelling and no Treasury advice for your flagship policy, TasInsure. What did you base your \$250 saving on premiums off?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've been through that a number of times, including the campaign around some work that we have done, because it was a policy. Elections are about ideas, and I've been working around the communities around Tasmania, everyone stops me and says insurance is out of control. So, that's why we had the policy of TasInsure, and it's resonated because people are hurting when it comes to their insurance premiums either underinsuring, not insuring, unable to get insurance. And so, we need a fairer system and that's why TasInsure is a good policy. We have a discussion paper out there now and people can feedback into that until 9 January. I welcome people's input, that covers a range of areas in terms of where the discussion could go, which is great. And so, I look forward to the bipartisanship once again when it comes to addressing these particular matters because you'd appreciate that it's a problem - insurance.

Mr WILLIE - Public knowledge that it's a problem for Tasmania. This is about the right policy response and I'm interested in your figures. You told Tasmanians that they'd save \$250 on their insurance premiums, and I'm interested in what you were basing that off.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have been through this before a number of times with you and throughout the campaign, in terms of looking at the increase in premiums, the profits of insurance companies, product offerings and we believe that is fair and reasonable objective.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - You had no financial modelling, no business case, you were basing it off profits in the industry?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Profit margins of western insurance companies of what would be a sustainable margin as well. Of course, the \$6 billion of profits the insurance industry made last year. So, there is plenty of scope, in my view, for a competitor in the marketplace, the right market. We're not doing automobile insurance in Tasmania, but when I look at small business, in particular, Mr Willie, community events, I don't expect that TasInsure will cover 100 per cent of the market. But it's important that we do intervene, if you like, on what is a broken market. I don't doubt there's interest from policymakers across the country because everyone's feeling the effects of it. I've raised this a couple of times at a national forum and the Tourism minister's forum. It was agreed that we will look at this nationally and the absence of that happening, we've decided to insert ourselves with our own policy commitment, and we want to hear from Tasmanians on that basis as well.

Mr WILLIE - Will you table your analysis that shows that Tasmanians will save \$250 on their premiums?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've read the analysis into the parliament. I spoke about it during the campaign.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Will you table it, is the question?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr WILLIE - Why not?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Because I've explained where we got the figures from and I look forward to Treasury advice, business case to be developed following the consultation period of 9 January.

Mr WILLIE - Who did the analysis, one of your spin doctors or an expert?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We consulted a range of stakeholders when it comes to those matters, but we have really intelligent people around me that work these things through and come up with a very good policy which was embraced by Tasmanians.

Mr WILLIE - It's about accountability - you've made big claims in your election campaign -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yep, and it will be delivered.

Mr WILLIE - and you won't table the advice? You don't have a business case. You don't have any financial modelling. You don't have Treasury advice.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Why would we? It's a campaign. It's in the election campaign. It's a policy of ideas.

Mr WILLIE - When are you actually going to deliver it?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - We will move on to the next question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be delivered, Mr Willie

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Premier, on the weekend I went to the Huon Show and talked to a range of Huon Valley Council staff about the things they're working on - sea incursions, roads going under because of sea level rise, bushfire threats. Last week, in parliament, my question about the national climate risk assessment, you said: 'Every question you ask is Armageddon in nature, and that we're about to confront the worst thing in the whole history of the world.' Premier, do you acknowledge that climate change is the worst threat we face in the history of humanity?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I read the other day that we're going to have another Ice Age in 10 to 11,000 years. I can't verify the source on that just now, but it was reasonably credible and sparked my interest. So, I'm a believer in climate change. I hope you're not getting into the old 'climate change denier' scenario stuff, but I've actually said this many times, Dr Woodruff, particularly in relation to sustaining our emergency services and other important resources of government as well. I reeled off the floods off the tongue because I was part of those affected communities in 2011, 2022, 2016. The devastation of the Dunalley bushfires in 2013, and 2019, with all the dry lightning strikes, the west coast last year as well. The bushfires and floods will become more frequent. They will.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, and that this is currently the worst thing that we face as a state in our future.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have a lot of challenges. This is one of those challenges. We're seeing a lot of investment in viticulture where people are, if you like, migrating to Tasmania to set up a new viticulture industry because of greater uncertainty on the mainland, for example. We have climate change refugees, I think you call them, coming to Tasmania, so we're very lucky to be in the place we are in the world, but there are a lot of challenges that we have.

Dr WOODRUFF - Do you acknowledge that the reason - we talked about net zero before - the reason we have net zero in Tasmania is because of the Tasmanian forestry agreement and hundreds of thousands of hectares of native forests were protected? Given that industry emissions in some industries in Tasmania are rising, do you agree that we need to end native forest logging to protect more of our native forests?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe we have the balance well and truly right. A lot of reasons are factoring into net zero, including our renewable energy capacity, which we intend to double to 2040 as well. So, you know, our native forestry sector is an important part of the solution to ameliorate and decrease the effect of climate change -

Dr WOODRUFF - How?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our current approach to forest management is supported by the viewpoints of world-leading experts. These include the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change -

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - That is absolute rubbish. I can't believe you're reading that spin.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the International -

Dr WOODRUFF - Native forest logging and burning is the largest source of emissions in Tasmania. Full stop, end of story. It's larger than the transport sector. The burning and logging of native forests is causing our emissions to rise at the same time as our industry emissions, in some areas, are also rising. If you're serious about net zero, do you recognise we have to stop the logging and burning and releasing of carbon from native forests? We're not controlling, under you, our other industries.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe what the experts have said is that the mixed strategy of conservation and production can lower greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to climate change mitigation. These are reputable, world-class research agencies that all support a policy of combining conservation with active forest management as being the best approach to reducing fire risk and increasing carbon storage. In other words, a balance when it comes to managing our forests, when it comes to renewable energy capacity. It is all part of the mix.

Dr WOODRUFF - During the 2020 bushfires in -

CHAIR - Sorry, Dr Woodruff, but we will move on.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you, Chair. Premier, the wellbeing framework, as I said earlier, relies heavily on community organisations to partner with government to deliver some of these outcomes. In fact, many of these outcomes. In particular, it refers here to 'Tasmanians have access to help and support from others, when they need it'. One of the targets is that 'government services and community organisations provide timely and effective support'. How are community organisations expected to do that when they've received letters from your Treasurer asking them to essentially take, as I say, a razor to their programs and to try and cut programs that they feel might not be necessary? Do you acknowledge the distress this is causing community organisations, when they're trying to deliver extra work, extra support to a community who has a lot of need, at the same time as being asked to cut?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, can I thank the community organisations that play a very valuable role in supporting Tasmanians - Tasmanians disadvantaged, vulnerable Tasmanians - in a range of settings. I agree with you on the need. I don't believe 'razor' was characterised within the Treasurer's letter. We all need to ensure that we're delivering the services as efficiently as possible, without losing sight of the services themselves.

I'm proud of the commitments that we made in the 2024 election to community organisations, through the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS), where we committed to a growth funding for community organisations. This was because I understood that the fixed funding model was impacting on workforce, availability of continuous workforce and those matters. This budget demonstrates, very clearly, that we will always support a well-resourced, sustainable community sector. That's been very clear. We have hardship grants available, concessions to support vulnerable Tasmanians as well.

Ms JOHNSTON - The community sector have been asked what programs they can defer, or not do, as part of your budget repair measures. They've been asked to identify those and notify the Treasurer. How can they possibly deliver the outcomes in your wellbeing

PUBLIC

framework if what they're already doing - which is not enough to support our community and this is recognised in our community - is already being peeled back?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We all need to look at where we can provide the most efficient service delivery as possible with the least impact on the delivery of those services.

Ms JOHNSTON - Are you suggesting that community service organisations aren't efficient in what they're doing with their money? Their very limited amount of money they get - they're not using that efficiently?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not suggesting anything, except to say we all need to look at how we can deliver services as efficiently as possible.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, during debate and also in the Budget speech, the Treasurer said that there were two choices regarding the Mac Point development area. The first was a stadium, and the second was to leave it as an industrial wasteland.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Correct.

Mr GEORGE - Can we make it clear that the government's determination is that if the stadium doesn't go ahead, they will deliberately leave it as an industrial wasteland? Secondly, can we be clear that the Commonwealth Government's \$240 million contribution is not towards the stadium, but is towards development of Macquarie Point, stadium or no stadium?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It will be to the stadia. Look, in the absence of anything else credible - you know, in 2012 there was a \$50 million injection into looking at Macquarie Point and matters pertaining to titles and planning and all those sorts of things, which have taken some time. There have been some ideas put forward, but the most credible is the stadia infrastructure, which is the enabling infrastructure to support further private investment around it. As I said in parliament the other day, if the stadium doesn't go ahead, I can pretty much guarantee that by 2035 it will still be a wasteland.

Mr GEORGE - So that's the government's determination and threat, is it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it's not a threat.

Mr GEORGE - That you will ensure it remains an industrial wasteland if you don't get your way and if the Legislative Council refuses the Project of State Significance (POSS)?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm just making the point, Mr George -

Mr GEORGE - No, you're making a threat.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I'm not making a threat at all. I'm saying that whatever you put there, people will complain.

Mr GEORGE - You will waste the \$240 million of Commonwealth funding if you don't get your stadium?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - There will be opposition to whatever's put there. We have decided to make the best opportunity of turning that industrial wasteland into something iconic and special that will generate activity and enjoyment for thousands and thousands of Tasmanians and boost our visitor economy.

Mr GEORGE - Or it will remain a wasteland.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I cannot believe the opposition to it, frankly.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, during the election you made out that there was a business case for TasInsure and you didn't want to reveal it because you didn't want it to get into the hands of competitors. Why did you do that during the election campaign when there wasn't one?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've answered all these questions. I'm worried that you want to stop TasInsure. I'm not sure why you want to stop it. By all means -

Mr WILLIE - Because it's financially risky. That's what experts are saying, not just me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will get the analysis from Treasury.

Mr WILLIE - You won't provide the analysis that you based the policy on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will get the analysis. It's a policy that is a good idea. It struck a chord because Tasmanians are hurting in a whole range of areas around cost of living, but particularly insurance. By all means come up with some ideas and put a submission in. I would encourage the Labor Party to put a submission in by 9 January with a discussion paper to support your thinking around that. If you've got ideas to improve it and make it better, Mr Willie, I would really welcome that opportunity, but we are trying to ensure that Tasmanians are treated fairly when it comes to a range of insurance offerings, including being able to insure in the first place and not be subject to mainland prices.

Mr WILLIE - Why did you make out there was a business case when one didn't exist?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't believe that's right at all. As I travelled around the state, almost everyone I spoke to about insurance cost increases were seeing massive rises in insurance premiums - I've said that many, many times - and with \$6 billion of profit in the industry people can't get insurance. Events can't go ahead. We want to ensure we are setting up Tasmanians with a cheaper and fairer insurance system.

Mr WILLIE - Why did you make out there was a business case when one didn't exist?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sure you have the right context.

Mr WILLIE - Absolutely I do. You said it in a debate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, you have the wrong context. You're misrepresenting me there, unfortunately, but nonetheless there will be a business case, we will get Treasury advice and I look forward to providing and supporting Tasmanians with cheaper and fairer insurance. The discussion paper is quite comprehensive. It covers off on a range of areas and a range of thinking about how this could be delivered in an open and transparent way and I'm excited

PUBLIC

about Tasmania leading the charge once again. I note some interest from elsewhere and I wouldn't be surprised if there's similar policy offerings.

Mr WILLIE - Who? The Premier's just made some claims. I'd like to know who.

Mr ROCKLIFF - People on the mainland are very interested.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, there are more than 155,000 registered firearms and 37,000 firearms licences in Tasmania. Australia's threat level has increased this year and national security agencies have warned of increasing domestic terrorism driven by social and political issues, conspiracy theories, personal grievances, a range of things.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - Do you acknowledge that this is no time to be weakening Tasmania's firearms laws?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're not weakening Tasmania's firearms laws, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - You have supported a motion by Shooters and Fishers Party MP Carlo Di Falco to allow shooting on Sustainable Timbers Tasmania land.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's not weakening firearms laws.

Dr WOODRUFF - It is.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, you're missing the whole context of the very strong decision made by former Prime Minister Howard, former leader of the Nationals Tim Fischer, and former opposition leader Kim Beazley, united along with all colours back at that particular time and for very good reasons, around licensing, access and all those matters, so I don't agree with your characterisation.

Dr WOODRUFF - In the debate in parliament last week the Shooters and Fishers member in his summing up referred to the use of silencers, also known as sound suppressors. We are deeply concerned, as are members of Tasmania Police, about any prospect of silencers being approved for use in Tasmania. I refer to just two weeks ago where a woman was charged with the attempted murder of police officers after she allegedly shot at their car at Collinsvale. Every day Tasmania Police go onto properties to execute warrants and place themselves at risk. Will you rule out sound suppressors being allowed for use in Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - First I will go back to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, who I understand was granted an exemption to use sound suppressors in specific controlled deer-culling operations. These exemptions, granted by the Commissioner of Police under section 155(4) of the *Firearms Act 1996*, allows 11 designated NRE employees to possess and use one of four permitted sound suppressors. The use of sound suppressors in this context is subject to very strict conditions and limits their use in certain key purposes. These conditions include that NRE's shooting activities must be subject to supervision and control through their approved cull plans, reserve closure plans and public safety plans. Safety procedures must be established and maintained when the sound suppressors are in use to prevent injury to any person.

PUBLIC

While sound suppressors may have some benefit to shooters in certain situations, there are reasons why they are currently prohibited. The risks presented by sound suppressors include public safety, misuse by shooters and criminal activity, quite clearly, so this is in the context of not domestic matters but around the culling.

Dr WOODRUFF - So you will not allow any changes or weakening to the firearms laws that would allow the use of sound suppressors, because other than -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Community safety will always be the highest priority, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, thank you. In relation to 3D printing, just to finish this last question on firearms, there were 4500 firearms seized or surrendered by Tasmania Police last year, a 16 per cent increase on the previous year. The police said that was concerning and it was driven by homemade 3D printed weapons. Would you support any changes Tasmania Police recommends in relation to any regulations that need to be strengthened to protect the community from 3D printed weapons? To be clear, I don't know what they would be, but if there were any proposed, would you support that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're asking me would I support any strengthening of regulations when it comes to 3D printed firearms in your house?

Dr WOODRUFF - Just 3D printed firearms in Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Would I support any actions to protect against that?

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, of course I would.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, in answer to my previous question in relation to community sector cuts, you said that the letter the Treasurer sent them reflects the need for them to be more efficient and that we all need to be more efficient when it comes to how we deal with government public money.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Look at efficiencies.

Ms JOHNSTON - Look at efficiencies. Can I ask, then, has the same level of scrutiny and the same request been made to the department administering private sector assistance grants asking them to likewise look at how they can be more efficient with the delivery of private sector assistance grants?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, right across the department.

Ms JOHNSTON - They have received the same request, or demand, that they actually look at how they are delivering?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You may have heard me speaking about these matters and head of the State Service is here.

PUBLIC

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the Premier. All secretaries are aware of the efficiency and productivity needs and measures to be applied in their departments.

Ms JOHNSTON - Will measures be put in place to step up scrutiny of any assistance grants that have been given to private sectors to actually make sure they're achieving and acquitting their grants and achieving the outcomes that they said that they would? Has that been increased, the level of scrutiny?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can take that on notice, but our expectation is to ensure that the grants administered are there for the right purpose and, in some areas, good purpose. I've seen examples where a relatively small amount, compared to the overall investment, has been very worthy, in terms of bridging that gap to allow those opportunities to proceed. That would be my expectation around evaluation, it could always be strengthened.

Ms JOHNSTON - It would be your expectation, then, that if a private sector grant recipient hadn't acquitted a grant, they wouldn't be eligible for further grants?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'd have to look at the certain context and the circumstances and the example.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, TasInsure, I take it that the policy you announced during the election campaign is a promise that you intend to stick to?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr GEORGE - So, is TasInsure -

1. Is it inevitable?
2. Do you expect TasInsure to make a profit, given the rather dubious history of GBEs?
3. Will you press ahead even if Treasury advice and a business case show that TasInsure doesn't add up to a profitable business?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We welcome the advice from a range of areas. At the end of the day we make a policy decision based on that advice, we distil all the advice around us and make that decision accordingly.

To your question, we have a very good GBE in the MAIB, that is performing well. That is had, not the 35 per cent increases in insurance premiums, but 5 per cent. I would expect TasInsure to make a profit, but it might well be a profit that is reinvested into the business to ensure that we can keep that competitive advantage and ensure Tasmanians have access to cheaper and fairer insurance. They have to generate enough income to make a profit to make it all work, but the idea of having a state-owned insurance entity is to ensure that profits can be reinvested back in the company, if you like, to allow for very competitive insurance offerings.

Mr GEORGE - That's a pretty optimistic outlook. Wouldn't it be a lot better to work with the RACT, which is already in business? It's already shown that it is capable of doing so and, if necessary, working with them to offer cheaper or more available insurance to people

PUBLIC

who are unable to afford insurance on their homes and their businesses. Surely, that is far better than setting up an entirely different business with all the investment that that will require and uncertainty?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yeah, look, thank you. I have met with RACT on these matters. They don't currently offer small business insurance, as I understand it. They do offer automobile and household insurance. We're not going to get involved in automobile insurance. I agree that they are a great company with a very strong brand. I think they're the only mutual insurance company left in Australia.

Mr GEORGE - Why not work with them? Why not leave them to do it? They're the experts.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But, why not - we're happy to work with them. TasInsure's not a bad thing. I mean, honestly -

Mr WILLIE - That's not what Saul Eslake says - one of the dumbest policies he can remember.

Mr ROCKLIFF - all you lefties. I'm the so-called 'conservative premier', announcing a government insurance company. All you lefties should be embracing it, loving the opportunity -

Mr GEORGE - Fact check, I'm not a lefty, I'm a progressive.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I mean, you were belting me up six months ago, saying I was going to flog everything off, now, here we are setting up a state-owned insurance company and you're criticising me, honestly. What world are we living in?

Mr GEORGE - No, no, it's a question. It's not a criticism. Don't be so sensitive.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sensitive. I'm just perplexed, to be honest with you.

CHAIR - We will move on to Mr Vermey.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, can I finish the question to the member, because he raises a good question, which is why I've met with the RACT. On page 7 of the draft discussion paper, item 3 'key policy issues and questions for consultation' -

Mr WILLIE - He leaves the door open to it.

Mr ROCKLIFF -

Views in relation to the proposed model, framework or structure of TasInsure, including considerations around scope, mandate and product offering; the design and components of the implementation plan, including phasing in arrangements, prioritisation of product offerings and target customers and groups; potential partnerships or delivery models that may support TasInsure and its objectives, including local councils and community organisations.

We welcome the input from RACT in this process as well.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, attracting and retaining skilled health professionals is a challenge right across the country and the world. Can you tell us what Tasmania is doing differently to attract health talent and what results we're seeing from this innovative approach?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, and I remember as Health minister being briefed on the great work of Brand Tasmania, back at that point in time, particularly in international recruiting, and they have done an outstanding job. It's about wages and conditions, the recruitment and retention of staff are so vitally important, but the location and the places that you can potentially work in are very important as well, which is why Brand Tasmania do such a fantastic job. Particularly, when it comes to joining forces on the innovative Health Talent Attraction project, which is already delivering tangible results for our state. Rather than using the traditional recruitment methods, we're promoting meaningful work in a meaningful place - which Tasmania is - highlighting the lifestyle and the community that make our state unique.

Between February and March this year, the Brand Tasmania team attended six major international job fairs in the UK, Ireland, and Canada; engaging with over 1100 health professionals and adding more than 300 highly interested leads to our international talent register. Impressively, 83 per cent said they are ready to relocate to Tasmania. These international activities were in addition to an active graduate engagement program at mainland and New Zealand universities, to attract graduates in programs not delivered by University of Tasmania. This has been achieved with a modest investment of just under \$300,000, shared between Brand Tasmania and the Department of Health. I must commend Jess and the team at Brand Tas who do a wonderful job, with relatively limited resources, I have to say, in this climate, and deliver fantastic work and a strong return for our state and helping to reduce reliance on costly locum and agency staff.

Following these recruitment events, in May 2025, a bulk recruitment campaign for nursing attracted 449 qualified applicants, with the vast majority from overseas. Notwithstanding the complexities of picking your life up and moving across the globe for a new career, we're already seeing results from this campaign, as I referred to just previously. One new radiation therapist and four mental health nurses are already working in our health service as direct recruits from these events, with more to follow in 2026. More than 1100 new staff members have relocated from interstate and overseas since 24 April, underscoring the benefit of national/international campaigns - it's a lot - national and international, 1100 people relocated.

One area where we've seen immediate success through this approach is in the oral health net recruitment. With eight graduate oral health therapists and three graduate dentists starting with the Tasmanian Health service this year, almost all of whom the team met directly through this program. This project is about more than just filling the jobs, it's about building a skilled, caring and community centred and focused workforce to support Tassie's future. The results show that what is an innovative approach and, more importantly, the whole-of-government focus from Brand Tas, and the willingness of the Department of Health to engage in a joint partnership is really doing marvellously well in recruitment. Thank you.

Mr WILLIE - Thank you. The Premier claimed earlier that he has some interest from mainland parties. I'm just interested in who - in terms of his TasInsure policy.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've had conversations, and those interested from elsewhere. I wouldn't be surprised if a government or an opposition put up their hand to say that they are keen to look at this particular idea.

Mr WILLIE - You're not going to provide the analysis; you're not going to tell us who's interested in it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Everyone's interested in it. The most important people that are interested in it is Tasmanians. I mean, the mainland can do what they like, but this is for Tasmania.

Mr WILLIE - You're still making claims.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well -

Mr WILLIE - You've made claims about \$250 savings. You're saying people on the mainland are interested. You won't tell us who.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They're all interested. I mean, I told you I was at a national tourism forum - I mentioned it twice in two different forums, the need to address this issue, particularly for the hospitality and tourism industry. You know, despite best efforts and all those sorts of things, it hasn't progressed - a national approach. I'd love to see a national approach, but we're taking our own pathway to this. However, this is about Tasmanians.

Mr WILLIE - You also made a claim that it would put downward pressure on grocery prices. Can you explain how that works?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can explain how the economy works, if you like.

Mr WILLIE - You made a claim that a Tasmanian government-owned insurance company would reduce grocery prices.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Okay.

Mr WILLIE - What is the basis for that claim?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's how the economy works, Mr Willie. When you're producing an input - I mean, I know as a farmer, when your fuel prices go up and your fertiliser prices go up, it adds to the need to get, you know, more at the farm gate. Now, farmers in Tasmania don't tend to get more at the farm gate. We're price takers, unfortunately, but just like the MAIB has kept prices low, TasInsure's purpose will do the same for Tasmanians. It will be a Tasmanian solution with Tasmanian prices, because it will be Tasmanian owned. We want TasInsure to bring all goods and services down, because as insurance costs go up, and up, and up - and they've been dramatically going up - the cost of doing business goes up and margins are squeezed.

Mr WILLIE - The business you were at, when you said it would reduce grocery prices, disagreed with you at the press conference.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Charging more means higher prices that Tasmanians have to pay in terms of recouping some of those margins. It's all about the competitive economy. That's how it works.

Mr WILLIE - Have you asked Treasury for a business case? Has that request been made?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will be doing our due diligence. We will be wanting to see the work that's being done, of course, to 9 January, when people submit their ideas. Listening to Tasmanians.

Mr WILLIE - That request to Treasury has not been made?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not to my knowledge.

Mr WILLIE - Not to your knowledge?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we have to work out the proposal yet, Mr Willie, and work out what we're dealing with in terms of TasInsure.

Mr WILLIE - It hasn't stopped you making claims that you can't back up with evidence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yeah, but when we finalise the consultation - and we're seeking specialist advice around this, and in the process of employing a consultant to do so.

Mr WILLIE - Do you still maintain that it won't cost Tasmanians a thing - basing it off MAIB's balance sheet - and that there's no cost to it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My expectation is that consumers will have another competitor in the marketplace, and again, this is the economy working, more competition and downward pressure on prices.

Mr WILLIE - The question is about what it costs Tasmanian taxpayers.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, just finalising, closing the loop on the questions that I asked before about firearms - just for community reassurance and, in fact, a couple of police officers that I spoke to in the last week. Can you require that any changes to firearms regulations come to Cabinet for approval?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to look at the Cabinet processes. My understanding of parliamentary procedure, though, is that changes to legislation committee can be disallowed in parliament. I stand to be corrected on some of that, but that would be my understanding. Given the nature of the discussion we're now having, it would be important to have a community conversation, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Just earlier, you tabled your government's Wellbeing Framework Strategy. We've also been trying to get a copy of the Tasmania Positive Sustainability Strategy via active disclosure, on the advice of your own office, since late September. On 3 November, we were told by DPAC's RTI officer that DPAC's business unit would be publishing that

PUBLIC

document online and therefore we wouldn't be able to get a copy of it, because it would be released publicly shortly. That was two weeks ago. Can you please table that document today?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well -

Dr WOODRUFF - Consultation occurred two years ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I take advice on that, Dr Woodruff? My understanding is that the background documents have been released through active disclosure today, through RTI.

Dr WOODRUFF - Is that the whole document, the framework? This is the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - The background documents, I understand -

Dr WOODRUFF - That the Tasmania Positive Sustainability Strategy, which was consulted about two years ago, is that being released?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand the background documents have been released today.

Dr WOODRUFF - So, can you table the strategy, then, which we understand is also completed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - When it's ready.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, we understood from the RTI officer that it is ready.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

Dr WOODRUFF - And it will be tabled shortly, at your leisure, but we would like the people of Tasmania to have access to it today, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are you against it?

Dr WOODRUFF - I would like to see it. I think it would be great. Can you please release it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am advised the strategy is in draft, and I need further advice on the strategy.

Dr WOODRUFF - And when will it be finished, please?

Mr ROCKLIFF - As soon as possible.

Dr WOODRUFF - What does that mean? It's already been two years since the consultation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Soon.

Dr WOODRUFF - Before Christmas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will try.

Dr WOODRUFF - Definitely? Maybe? Yes? Is that a yes before Christmas to find out about our strategy for sustainability? Two years overdue.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Given your longstanding interest - yes, so that would be the best endeavours and best intentions, before Christmas, but we need to look at it, see the advice, talk it through.

Ms JOHNSTON - The Premier's version of 'very soon' is probably different to yours and mine, Dr Woodruff.

Premier, back to the wellbeing framework. It says in the wellbeing framework that it draws on international best practice and various other Australian jurisdictions. Many of those jurisdictions are introducing wellbeing budgets, ensuring that spending is directed across silos to achieve the kinds of outcomes that are identified in the framework. Do you envisage Tasmania moving towards a wellbeing budget? How would that be reported against in terms of the outcomes achieved in a wellbeing budget - given we are in a cycle of budget repair and resources are very scarce and tight?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to take that under consideration.

Ms JOHNSTON - That you would be developing a wellbeing budget? How do you intend to deliver the wellbeing framework against next year's budget, the May budget to be delivered, if it's not across the budget and items? How do you intend to do that? I mean, resources are scarce.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand the intent of the question. It's a reasonable idea to explore. On those matters, in terms of delivery, are you able to shed any light in terms of the workings and operational matters?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the Premier, obviously we've just released the wellbeing framework. It lists the domains of wellbeing, and we'd need to have conversations with Treasury, obviously, in relation to the formulation of the budget. Certainly, the intention is in relation to monitoring of those domains and being able to report and have an ongoing conversation with community about how outcomes are being achieved in each of the wellbeing framework domain sectors. So, that's not a commitment to developing a budget in a particular way, but it's certainly the intention with the release of the framework that we are looking at monitoring across each of the domains. As part of that it is the expenditure across all our government services, across the contracts that are let to both not-for-profit and for-profit institutions in those domains, and being able to report back, in terms of that framework. It's been a huge amount of work to create this Wellbeing Framework and we continue to advocate in terms of expenditure to improve the wellbeing of Tasmanians in each of these domains.

Ms JOHNSTON - As a follow-up, you talked about monitoring and reporting back. What's the timeframe for that? Are we expecting quarterly reports or yearly reports in terms of monitoring and reporting back on the achievements within the framework?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - That is something being considered by my team and I'd expect further advice in relation to that. We don't have an agreed timing or set of monitoring, but I'm

happy to request further advice in relation to that, noting that we've just released the Wellbeing Framework.

Ms JOHNSTON - When do you think you might be able to release information about when we expect to get reporting on this framework?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We expect all government agencies to use the framework to guide priority setting and informed decision-making, based on what Tasmanians have told us through the framework, but -

Ms JOHNSTON - You'd appreciate that unless we report back on how we're progressing, it's just a document and we don't know if it's working or not, so we need to have some reporting back regularly and monitoring of it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I agree.

Ms JOHNSTON - When will we be seeing the first report to see whether we're actually making progress agreements on this framework?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will invite Mat Healey, the Deputy Secretary, to talk a bit further about this, Ms Johnston. I remember this being my first question in parliament as Premier, the Wellbeing Framework, in the good old days when we had DDs. It goes back to then, so it's an important part of my objective as well. Mat, take us through it.

Mr HEALEY - Thanks, Premier. The Wellbeing Framework builds on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework that has been out for a number of years now. One of the lessons we had out of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework is that perhaps the biggest benefit of a wellbeing framework is that it creates consistent language across agencies and services. It helps them to collaborate, helps them to identify where they have common objectives and helps to bring the system together. That's the first objective: let's embed this common language into the prioritisation for agencies into the way that we talk about how we're pursuing these outcomes.

In terms of systematically reporting on them, it's quite a lot of work to break down all of the population outcomes and get that into a reporting framework, so that's work that's yet to be done. Right now we're focused on promoting the Wellbeing Framework with local government and the community sector, getting everyone to understand that there is a really useful common language that can help us to collaborate on some of those important objectives.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, you will know that the crossbench felt thoroughly ambushed by the premature announcement of terms of reference to the salmon inquiry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr GEORGE - I acknowledge that the government rapidly changed its position on recommendations. What I'm not clear on, because nothing else was changed, was whether you intend this inquiry to have full public consultation, including the ability of the public to make submissions to it.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks for your engagement in this matter. We want this to be beneficial, from my point of view, to the sustainability of the industry, the social licence, the learnings from it and to build community confidence further in the industry. I thought it was in the terms of reference originally around consultation but it wasn't clear enough. I believe we made that clear when we released a statement around the recommendations and the like. I believe Mr Pearce made that statement. The answer to your question is yes, we will be able to take submissions from the public. If that wasn't clear enough I'm sorry about that, but that's our intention.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, you mentioned Brand Tasmania and the wonderful work it's done to bring health professionals here, but what other areas is it impacting on the state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Brand Tasmania is not a traditional promotional agency. It's really a strategical enabler - and if you've been to any of the presentations of Brand Tasmania, including the presentations around health recruitment, that is very clear, and it helps us tell Tasmania's story in ways that build pride, drive alignment and also influence long-term decision making as well, which is really important. Through a deliberate long-term strategy that engages individuals, institutions and policymakers, Brand Tasmania is building trust, coherence and value for Tasmania and for Tasmanians.

As it moves to its next five year strategic plan, Brand Tasmania has matured into an organisation that delivers measurable impact across a wide range of sectors and communities. It engages directly with Tasmanians through their experiences, their lived experiences, through stories, and services that build that identity and, I think most importantly, builds confidence as well. It works with partners across schools, councils, institutions to embed the Tasmanian brand into how services are delivered. Increasingly, it is also influencing how we design policy, allocate resources and plan for the future of our state now.

Other places use branding simply to promote, but we use place branding to actually transform as well. That's why Tasmania is being recognised globally, including by the OECD, for leadership in place-based innovation. Brand Tasmania is helping Tasmania and Tasmanians grow with purpose. It's not about selling an image, it's about using the stories and lived experiences around our shared identity as a lever for social, economic and cultural change, and the approach is generating lasting public value, aligning people, organisations and policy around a shared story and also build legitimacy, reach and sustainability into government and community programs. In short, Brand Tasmania, I again thank Jess for the work and her team. It is far more than a brand, it's building trust, confidence, strategic investment and alignment across the state as well. Great to see Brand Tasmania evolve. I want to commend Todd Babiak as well, the inaugural CEO for his outstanding contribution over the first five years and it's going to leave a lasting legacy for all Tasmanians and it has, as I understand it, very, very strong multi-partisan support as well.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, you were unable to say before whether the implementation of TasInsure would not cost the Tasmanian taxpayer, as per your policy. Do you agree with experts that a government owned insurance company will expose the state to unacceptable financial liabilities in the event of a bushfire or an extreme weather event? If you disagree with them, how will the policy mitigate against that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, this is about ensuring that what you're saying is not the case.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - It's not me, it's experts. It's the insurance council. It's Saul Eslake, who said it's the dumbest policy idea out of a major party in his living memory.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wouldn't expect the insurance council to welcome a policy that may well intervene on their market. Would you? I mean, here's an insurance industry that's made \$6 billion worth of profit over the course of the last little while and insurance premiums continue to go up. I don't expect them to be singing from the rafters.

Mr WILLIE - Just dismissing Saul Eslake's commentary around this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it all depends on the model. I welcome Mr Eslake's input at any time, but we won't expect, you know, 100 per cent market share in 100 per cent of areas all around Tasmania for various reasons, but we will ensure that what you are saying is not the case.

Mr WILLIE - How? You've announced this policy, some people are calling it reckless because of the financial risk -

Mr ROCKLIFF - You call it reckless.

Mr WILLIE - Yeah, well, because of the financial risks that it could expose Tasmanian taxpayers to in an extreme weather event or a bushfire. You haven't been able to say how you could prevent that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we will design a model that supports the introduction of TasInsure, another competitor into the marketplace, with cheaper and fairer insurance, particularly when it comes to being able to insure for local events, small businesses - happy to engage with other providers as well. I've mentioned the RACT here through Mr George's question. We needn't be negative about it. By all means, ask the questions and that sort of ensures that the degree of accountability and ensure that we've thought of everything as we implement this policy.

Mr WILLIE - You said that you will use MAIB's balance sheet to implement the policy. Has MAIB agreed to that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, of course, it's a key stakeholder in this policy.

Mr WILLIE - Have they agreed to that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're working with them as we design the model.

Mr WILLIE - Have they provided advice to you about the policy?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Mr WILLIE - The Auditor-General said that the MAIB's financial position is deteriorating, and won't your government owned insurance company - with no modelling or Treasury advice - jeopardise a real, strong public insurer?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that gives you a further - by that question, you've really lampooned your own policy by ripping out \$100 million worth of dividends out of the MAIB.

Mr WILLIE - That was prior to the Auditor-General's warnings, which we listened to experts. You clearly don't.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We take advice for a range of people. I've answered that question in Question Time the other day.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, you read out some of the things that the government has been doing in response to the commission of inquiry's recommendations, and they're noted - as you promised you would do in the timelines. But there's 27 very important recommendations that your government had committed to delivering in the timeframe recommended by the commission of inquiry that you are no longer going to do. I draw your attention to the quarterly report of Keeping Children Safe. Most concerning is 9.16: the commission of inquiry's recommendation to make sure that all children in care have a case manager, set a maximum caseload for child safety officers, and regularly publish relevant data. That was meant to have been delivered by July next year. You have pushed that off until 2027, without a date. There's no date in 2027. It's an open amount of time. It's a key recommendation that the government I know has been working on for two years and it is a funding related issue that is being pushed back. How can you justify the priorities that your government is making about not putting money into that critical area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we are investing in the critical area, Dr Woodruff, and you know that. It is a key area of priority. I want to commend our teams across government for the implementation of 57 of the 191 recommendations. They're working very closely with Robert Benjamin, who's keeping us accountable, of course, to monitoring our implementation progress.

But if you're saying this is not a priority, I don't agree with you. I reject that. It is a priority for us.

Dr WOODRUFF - It's about children who are in care just having a child safety officer appointed to them, because there is a huge list. There remains a huge list despite the commission of inquiry's findings and you saying that you would respond to them. It should have been done by July next year. That means that your government is allowing children in care to continue, for at least another year - it could be 18 months beyond the timeframe that the commission of inquiry said - without even a commitment to having a single child safety officer appointed to them, let alone setting a maximum for child safety officers - the maximum number of children that they can have on their caseload, which has ballooned and means that children are not getting checked up on. This is a basic recommendation, it requires money, and your government is prioritising cuts and this is one of them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, we're not prioritising cuts. That's not true.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, that's what the Treasurer has said he will do and will do more of next year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's not true, not prioritising cuts. They are prioritising children and that's why we've gone through the commission of inquiry. A total of 57 recommendations have

PUBLIC

been completed and we'll continue to implement all 191 recommendations. Some timelines will probably be shorter and some will be longer, but we want them all to be delivered as soon as possible, I hasten to add. I might just throw to the secretary to comment on that. The question's an important one. Could you give some insight, Kath, across the State Service?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Thank you, Premier. I note that Minister Palmer and the secretary for DECYP would have the detailed information about the recruitment of caseworkers. As head of the State Service I'm obviously aware of the incentive package that was put together by former minister Jaensch in discussion with unions to support the recruitment, particularly in very difficult areas like the north-west, in terms of attracting. We've seen some significant increases in the number of caseworkers that have been recruited by the department and certainly that's the continuing advice of the department through to our industrial committee.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you for that. Maybe you can speak to this, Premier. I don't understand the explanation in your report. Your explanation says:

A long-term phasing approach will not meet the commission of inquiry recommendation deadline and risks undermining the department's ability to deliver timely, effective and consistent support to children, young people and their families.

That is a cut and paste that has accidentally been put in the wrong column, because you've actually pushed out the timeline and made it go longer. That has happened in a couple of places in this report. It has obviously been done in such haste that there have been cuts and that is why this will not be delivered, because it's about assigning more workers, and that is exactly what's happening here. I really want to draw your attention to what's going on in areas that are not your responsibility, but you are responsible for the priorities in the Budget, and the commission of inquiry recommendations are being pushed back on this key area and just throws money away.

CHAIR - Before you answer that, Premier, what is the question as your second question, Dr Woodruff?

Dr WOODRUFF - The question is are you aware of what's going on here that significant commission of inquiry recommendations are being pushed back? Is it a budget-related decision that this has happened?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are no cuts.

Dr WOODRUFF - To where?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This area of responsibility.

Dr WOODRUFF - But there are, because every part of the State Service is having cuts. We've confirmed that in Question Time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is an absolute priority of ours. I believe I went through this the other day in Question Time. There are no cuts to this area. The fact that you're reading that report is a demonstration of the level of accountability that we need to uphold so that you can ask

PUBLIC

questions around these matters and people are being provided regular updates. It keeps everyone accountable right across government. It keeps the opposition parties accountable for asking the questions and providing scrutiny. That's progress in itself.

On the matters you're particularly talking about, I believe Ms Morgan-Wicks was getting to the original intent of your question.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - The department has appointed Peter Whitcomb and Tiffany Black as expert leaders in this area and they are leading the reform. They've worked together with the industrial committee to make sure there is an additional incentive for workers to be recruited and they've been successful in recruiting. The advice to me is that there is no budget efficiency dividend being sought from this area because of the priority as a commission of inquiry recommendation.

In terms of timeline, on the advice of the department the recommendation has been moved from mid 2026 to 2027, but we continue to work closely with them in relation to that timeline and what will be required. If additional funding is required to hire additional caseworkers, that is a matter for the department to put back to the budget committee and to make that request.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, in February this year the then Archbishop Julian Porteous and head of Catholic Education Tasmania Gerard Gaskin told the current school discrimination inquiry that they do not adhere to the state's *Anti-Discrimination Act* because they feel an exemption in federal law gives them an out, even though the relevant law says it does not limit the operation of any state law. What is the state government doing to ensure adherence to our *Anti-Discrimination Act*?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. I'm not intimately aware of the context, but I am aware of the inquiry and those matters and your interest in all of this. We have very strong anti-discrimination laws in Tasmania, I believe the strongest in the country.

Ms JOHNSTON - Apparently so.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We should be proud of that.

Ms JOHNSTON - Very proud.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not exactly across how the federal laws intersect with exemptions, I must admit. I know our Attorney-General -

Ms JOHNSTON - Does it limit the operations of Tasmanian state law?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our Attorney-General would be right across these matters so it's a good question for our Attorney-General. I want every Tasmanian to be included, safe, supported and most certainly not discriminated against.

Ms JOHNSTON - I appreciate you may not be aware of the evidence given by the former archbishop and Dr Gaskin, but will your government take steps to protect Tasmanians where there is clear and admitted evidence that Tasmanians have been discriminated against?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't want any Tasmanian to be discriminated against.

Ms JOHNSTON - Will you take action, though?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'd have to seek advice on what action exactly you'd like me to take and see the complaint. We have an anti-Discrimination Commissioner. It's an interesting question, I just don't have the information at hand to be able to answer it in a fulsome way, but if you ask the Attorney-General this question he may well be able to provide a comprehensive answer on that.

Mr GEORGE - Premier, I've just had an email from the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Council which in part addresses those fishers who may have been impacted by the closure of the fishery in the south of the Channel. It says in part:

If your operations have been impacted by the sudden closures, especially if you had to pull pots and steam elsewhere to fish, please keep good records and get in touch.

Will you make sure that none of these small business operators who fish for crayfish will be financially disadvantaged by the closure of that particular area, and will you consider making it the responsibility of the salmon companies to pay for any of those costs or income that has been lost by the industry?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't think I can make that the case in terms of the last part of your question, but we will always work with the industry that is affected from time to time for whatever the circumstances there may well be. We had the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome which affected our oyster industry around 2015 and we reached out in support of industry then. When the rock lobster industry lost market access to China we ensured that we provided appropriate support there where possible in a range of areas. I can't quite remember the specifics of it now, but in the area of mental health and wellbeing, the Stay Afloat campaign has been managed very well by the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council of Tasmania and is an area that we support as well.

In answer to your question, I'm more than happy, as our minister would be, to engage with the industry to get an understanding of the impact of their circumstances and then engage the Rock Lobster Association and the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council to see what and if any support is needed whatsoever, but certainly engagement will be the first step in all of that. I haven't seen the email but no doubt I've got it as well.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, across many of our school communities there's a growing discussion about how we can better support children to be ready to learn each day. We all know the strong evidence about learning outcomes and adequate nutrition contributing to student engagement and behaviour, and how critical having a full stomach is in allowing students to help get the most out of the school day. Can you outline what the government is doing to support schools in this area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Supporting individual school students, most importantly, and as a collective. There is a significant investment of some \$25.1 million to provide healthy lunches and a free breakfast to students. About \$14.5 million has already been invested in the healthy school lunch program and additional \$4 million is proposed for the 2025-26 budget and

PUBLIC

a further \$6.5 million investment over four years to deliver school breakfasts was proposed in the new 2025-26 Budget. We're going to try to reduce as many barriers as possible when it comes to student learning.

I don't profess to be anywhere near as knowledgeable as the Leader of the Opposition on these matters, given his education background, but making sure our students are comfortable, safe at school, their wellbeing is attended to as best as possible - that is when they're conducive to learning. That includes having, as you say, food in their tummies. That is why the school breakfast programs have always been very popular, and our partnership with Variety Tasmania gives all children in government schools access to a free breakfast. As I say, it's a \$6.5 million commitment to that particular program and we have commenced planning for the rollout from 2026. The Variety model will offer a simple click-and-deliver ecommerce platform that will provide a low administration, high impact for schools and reduce the workload on school staff and volunteers.

Schools already running a breakfast program with the local community can continue with that arrangement or choose to transition to the new Variety breakfast club as I understand it. And you know these are not just about reducing the cost of living for - or pressures on families, of course - but also proven to lead to better attendance and positive educational outcome for learners. I certainly got that feedback from Julie Dunbabin a couple of years ago when it comes to the school lunch program, where it was found that in a number of circumstances some young people were engaging in education for the first time ever, simply because they knew they were going to get a hot lunch at lunchtime. I know that sounds - saddening to hear that, but it highlights the need for this investment. Thank you for your question.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, you've claimed that insurance premiums will be \$250 cheaper, that grocery prices will go down, that TasInsure can be implemented off MAIB's balance sheet at no cost to Tasmanian taxpayers, that it won't run MAIB into the ground, and that there won't be extreme financial risk to the state of Tasmania. Can you provide any advice at all, today, to back up those claims?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I look forward to the outcome of the discussion paper. We want to achieve the objective of affordability - reduce pressure on insurance premiums by supplementing existing insurance options, like local ownership; deliver a Tasmanian-owned entity that reinvests financial returns into the business rather than distributing them to external shareholders; and expand the coverage providing Tasmanian-focused insurance solutions.

Mr WILLIE - My question is about evidence. You don't have any evidence to back up any of these claims. You're just making it up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is a policy, of which - elections are an opportunity to have policies and new ideas -

Mr WILLIE - You made these claims to Tasmanians and you're not able to back them up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will introduce TasInsure and we will have the required information, the business case, to see and model to ensure that we can deliver on our commitment. I prefer you to be in the - I understand why you need to keep us accountable to commitments and -

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - Because you're clearly just making things up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - but we have the policy - now we have the discussion paper. People can submit their ideas and thoughts on the discussion paper and suggestions for delivery and implementation by 9 January and I welcome the opportunity to read your submission. At that point, I'll realise that you do understand that Tasmanians are hurting through insurance costs -

Mr WILLIE - You're taking advantage of that by making things up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - then I will get a very good understanding that you are serious about addressing the issues of cost of living and the accessibility and affordability of insurance premiums, and that will be a good day.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, your Treasurer has been using the phrase 'peak debt,' when do you expect debt to peak?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know he's been using the phrase 'peak debt,' which is the point when annual borrowings stop increasing; that's when we deliver a fiscal surplus that covers our capital expenditure. So, at that point.

Mr WILLIE - Do you agree with him that it will be in the last year of the forward Estimates?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I take good advice from the Treasurer, but a fiscal surplus is what's required, and we need to work hard to ensure that happens.

Mr WILLIE - The cash position drives net debt. There's \$3.6 billion worth of cash deficits over the forward Estimates, and if you look at the last year, it's a \$423.6 million deficit. If you're talking about ending peak debt, that means significant cuts would have to happen because you've ruled out other remedies. Is that when it's going to happen - peak debt - at the end of the forward Estimates?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Treasurer's outlined this. You will be able to scrutinise the Treasurer tomorrow, no doubt. We're working solidly on the Budget, but as the Treasurer has also said, I think again today, we need to manage the finances and, indeed, the savings, well enough ensure that we're also not constricting the economy. Like was done in 2011, when there was savage cuts to services with dire consequences, of which, really it took the health system, for example, more than a decade to recover from.

Mr WILLIE - You have cuts like that projected in your Budget, if they come to fruition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've been very open and honest about our rightsizing of the public service.

Dr WOODRUFF - Premier, I want to go back to the commission of inquiry recommendations. I know this is not your portfolio area, but I also know that there are some incredibly concerning details here that we think you need to be aware of about the delay on some of the actions that were promised to be taken in line with the commission of inquiry's recommendations, that are clearly lacking the energy and the time and the resources needed to get them done.

PUBLIC

One of them, 9.19, is about developing a separate professional conduct policy for staff who have contact with children and young people in child safety services' out-of-home care, setting expected standards of behaviour for volunteers, contractors, carers, et cetera. It beggars belief that this is being pushed back for up to 18 months. It's about developing a policy to set the standards, it's meant to be delivered by the end of July next year. It's been pushed back for up to 18 months - 2027. How can you not be concerned about that? This is about setting standards of care.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, but we need to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that has been done: the 57 recommendations and the enormity of the work and the complexity associated with such a large body of work. I commend all our public service for the work they've done under very arduous and very necessary circumstances.

We've been open and honest about our level of accountability in terms of you asking these questions, because of a document that I released last Friday. So, there's no lack of transparency here. If I could implement all the recommendations tomorrow, Dr Woodruff, I would, but sometimes, for whatever reasons, it's just not humanly possible. There's no funding shortfall, there's no cuts. We need to invest in these areas of priority to ensure that we do implement the recommendations.

Now, in terms of any specific recommendations you might have, and I can refer them to the head of the State Service. That's who would have all knowledge of these matters, particularly because it's a whole-of-government focus. Our minister for Children will also be able to address some of these matters. Kath, do you have anything -

Dr WOODRUFF - Before you do that, Premier, if you wouldn't mind, I accept and welcome the work of the staff that are working on it. The question is about the choices that your government is making. I don't want to go into political space on this issue, but there is no doubt, millions of dollars and so many staff have been used to get a stadium together. I cannot accept that if there weren't more resources, time and money put into employing staff to make sure this stuff is delivered on time, that it couldn't also be delivered.

That is really my question, is that what we've got a commitment from Treasurer Abetz to cut more money out of the budget? Will you commit that there is not a single agency area that will be responsible for delivering commission of inquiry recommendations that will have any efficiency cuts?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've made it pretty clear from the beginning that we need to provide the resources to implement the recommendations. That's always been clear. There will always be areas right across government that need attention of government. We have the major concerns with the future of our smelters in Tasmania. That's an area of government that's taking that particular focus as well. There are always areas that will need to be addressed across every agency. I just have to keep going with all the matters that are on our desks that need our attention. This is very, very important. I accept that. We agree on that. I am going to throw to -

Dr WOODRUFF - Just to the question, before you do. Will you commit to not having any of these areas that are looking to managing the commission of inquiry recommendations, have any austerity cuts, efficiency cuts, whatever you want to call it, in forthcoming budget years?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I commit to implementing the recommendations, which will require intensive resources. I'm not wanting to skimp on anything - we just need to implement all the recommendations.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the Premier. In terms of this budget, the investment in commission of inquiry is actually increased, from \$424.5 million over the forwards to over \$600 million.

Regarding it being a priority of government, and our advice to government in relation to this expenditure, we absolutely remain committed to implementing each of the recommendations. I sit down regularly with Robert Benjamin to work through each of the recommendations. I sat down with him and talked to him about the changes in timing for some of the recommendations, as DECYP is embarking on what is an historic reformation of their out-of-home care system.

They've appointed leading experts as staff, and we are very lucky to have them, and no doubt the minister and secretary and those staff can speak to the change. Certainly, in relation to the timing for a professional conduct and care policy, there is one in place already for DECYP. It is provided, is my understanding, in terms of carers that are engaged.

However, this is about the actual model and the change to out-of-home care, and how Stage 2 will include the development of those supplementary standards, and have those volunteers engage professionals and contracted staff actually trained in it. It's not to say that we don't have one - there is actually one that is now in place in DECYP, and certainly a standard to which we expect existing people operating in out-of-home care to adhere to.

Ms JOHNSTON - My question, Premier, is on behalf of confused and deeply concerned people in the trans community and their allies. In a recent newspaper article, State Attorney-General Guy Barnett said, 'The presence of any male prisoner in a women's prison would present unacceptable safety risks to female prisoners.' This led the newspaper to conclude that this means the state government, Tasmania, has banned trans-identifying male prisoners from women's prisons, although it's not actually clear whether this has occurred. It did, however, lead to Women Speak congratulating Attorney-General Guy Barnett on his position. Can you please confirm or recommit to your government's existing policy allowing trans women to be housed in the state's women prison on a case-by-case basis?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. The policy hasn't changed. Of course, our focus is on the safety of all prisoners. Any prisoner, no matter their circumstances, is assessed and placed in accommodation according to the prison authorities. Risk assessment, I believe, has always been the policy, and it remains so.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you.

Mr GEORGE - Thank you. Briefly, Premier, this is following up on native forest logging questions that Dr Woodruff asked. I've spent some time trying to work my way through the details of what financial support the native forest logging industry receives from the government. I'm wondering if you are able to undertake to provide me detailed financial information on all costs incurred to the budget, on an annualised basis, to support native forest logging? This would include the cost of opening and maintaining access roads, subsidies and

PUBLIC

other costs for Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT), and any other government expenditure directed at the forestry industry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Of course, there is an investment required there. You mentioned roads and that sometimes there's some broader community benefits as well, and those types of matters. That needs to be put in certain context. It's a question, really, for the minister. I will alert the minister to your question on *Hansard*, and the minister will be able to start preparing that answer, if that's possible. It's quite complex and intricate in those matters, but I'll alert the minister to that, and by all means, ask him again. I don't have the information with me on hand, but I will ask him.

Mr GEORGE - That's fine, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and of course, Sustainable Timber Tasmania scrutiny next week as well. Thank you.

Mr GEORGE - Thank you. That's why I want to have it now, if possible, in advance.

CHAIR - I note Mr Di Falco has arrived at the table. If the committee is okay, we might go to Mr Di Falco for this question.

Mr Di FALCO - Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I noted a question by the honourable member for Franklin. Can you clarify that hunting on Sustainable Timbers land is currently legal, well-regulated and safe, and the motion of a fortnight ago about wildlife management, and the use of suppressors is legal via a Police Commissioner exemption?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's my understanding, and I believe that I spoke about that in an answer confirming that. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment was granted an exemption to use sound suppressors in specific, controlled deer culling operations. These exemptions, as per your question, granted by the Commissioner of Police under section 155(4) of the *Firearms Act 1996* allows 11 designated NRE employees to possess and use one of four permitted sound suppressors. The use of sound suppressors, I went on to say, Mr Di Falco, was that suppressors, in this context, are subject to very strict conditions and limits their use to certain key purposes. Those conditions include that NRE's shooting activities must be subject to supervision and control per approval. Cull plans, reserve closure plans, public safety plans and safety procedures must be established and maintained when the sound suppressors are in use, to prevent injury to any person. That's the area that I highlight and I acknowledge the motion that was supported in the parliament, too, the other day.

As well of interest in the Tasmanian Liberal Government Economic Statement, 'Getting on with the job for Tasmania'. If I go to page 26, under agriculture, we're continuing to support landowners to take on-ground action to control invasive species including cats, wasps and rabbits, with an action plan to be established within the first 100 days of government. To reduce deer impacts there is \$2.25 million for implementation of the wild fallow deer management plan and strategy, including a continued trial of commercial use of wild fallow deer for human consumption, consulting with stakeholders on the outcome of the trial within 250 days of forming government and providing increased access to public land for recreational hunting and control programs and ongoing management on crown land and periurban areas. This is part of our economic statement.

PUBLIC

Mr VERMEY - Premier, can you provide an update on child and youth wellbeing strategies and funding across the Budget and forward Estimates?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I talked before about every Tasmanian feeling valued, included and encouraged to be the best they can be. This starts with providing Tasmanian children, young people and their families with the services, supports and opportunities that they need for the best start in life. In 2021 we launched Tasmania's first whole-of-government child and youth wellbeing strategy subtitled It Takes a Tasmanian Village. The strategy and its four-year action plan were directly informed by the voices of Tasmania children and young people and their families and responded to the needs and gaps in services and supports that were identified.

In December last year, the third annual report for the strategy was released, which highlights the personal stories and practical impacts and actions it is having on the wellbeing of Tasmanian children, young people and their families, as well as examples of how we are driving long-term policy and system change.

In terms of the next phase of supporting child and youth wellbeing in Tasmania, we are now undertaking a comprehensive review and audit of all programs across government that support our children and young people to inform our next steps. This review will consider whether a new action plan is the best way forward or another approach, noting the substantive work undertaken since 2021 to support child and youth wellbeing in our state.

Just quickly, to your question, recent highlights include the establishment of a family space and commencement of a school-based model of the Child and Family Learning Centre community outreach at Jordan River; delivery of a series of community storytelling and codesign workshops by Burnie Works as part of the first 1000 days; establishment of a vocational fund within the Sure Start program providing support to young people who have been in out-of-home care to access vocational training; delivery of the Circles of Security parenting program to inmates across the Tasmania Prison Service; and for Brand Tasmania, distribution of over 11,000 Little Tasmanian bags to new Tasmanian parents. They're just a few examples pertaining to your question, Mr Vermeey.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, can you please table the DPAC savings strategy, including by output and including the job titles that haven't been approved through vacancy control?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will seek some information in terms of the physical paper to table for your information and in the interests of transparency, but first I will ask Kath Morgan-Wicks, the secretary, to say a few words regarding the savings strategy pertaining to DPAC.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through you, Premier, DPAC in terms of its budget efficiency dividends has moved, and I should probably look up my exact numbers but I think around \$969,000 was first announced as an efficiency dividend for DPAC in the 2024-25 budget and it is now up to \$1.9 million-plus this year, which DPAC has been managing through a complete review of our establishment, but also our corporate costs, including our property services and accommodation. We have a vacancy management committee that looks at every single separation, such as resignations from the agency, and makes determinations in relation to whether or not that job needs to be filled, whether it is essential or whether, for example, as part of our restructuring across DPAC, another staff member can be transferred into that

PUBLIC

position to fill it and not then backfill that other role at DPAC. Through this up to the last November payroll DPAC has reduced by some 45 FTEs and we are continuing to manage that through our structure at DPAC. That's something I know that all secretaries are looking at across their agencies in terms of delivery of the efficiency dividends.

Mr WILLIE - If I could have all of that information by output initiatives and the job titles that have not been approved under vacancy control, that would be appreciated.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Is that possible?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - That's not a document that exists.

Mr WILLIE - They have previously. I've asked for them through the parliament for each agency, and they have been available in the past.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - It would be something we'd be creating.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. Create that information; I'm requesting that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will see what we can do.

Mr WILLIE - Well, you can give it to me in this forum or I will try it through the parliament.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will create it first and then we will give it to you.

Mr WILLIE - How are you defining a frontline worker?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've been through this many times. We want to ensure that services continue to be maintained and delivered to Tasmanians in the most efficient way possible. It's also about being very innovative as well and it's not just about having staff, it's about streamlining as well. For example, work has been done in our health system on the access and flow for our hospital system and the 17,000 hours that we've saved on ramping, for example, where those 17,000 hours -

Mr WILLIE - My question was about how the Premier is defining the term 'frontline worker' and what guidance is being given to agencies to make those decisions around not replacing people.

Mr ROCKLIFF - On 2 March this year, the Treasurer announced a refocus on the State Service, including a recruitment freeze of non-essential positions. We know there has been a significant increase in the number of State Service employees over recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recruitment freeze is about arresting this growth, which is not sustainable. Since the commencement of the recruitment freeze, heads of agencies have been considering the following: allowing natural attrition of non-essential roles; a focus on renewal and reprofiling our workforce through increasing the use of workforce renewal incentive payments; identifying ways to remove non-essential layers of bureaucracy duplication, which is about how you streamline the provision of priority services, including through the use of digital technology; considering economies of scale through the examination -

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - How are you deeming what's non-essential? I don't want you to read off some brief, I want you to answer my question, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is important information.

Mr WILLIE - You're not answering my question. It's a very simple one. How are you defining what's an essential worker and what's not?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We want to maintain and strengthen the services we're providing to Tasmanians and I've just highlighted an example of where we're investing in streamlining our service by the cooperation of people across the public health system, particularly the interface between the paramedics and the emergency departments on reducing ramping in the vicinity of 17,000 hours, despite a 3 per cent increase when it comes to the demand.

Mr WILLIE - The question is around a frontline worker. How are you defining that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We want to ensure that every person within the State Service is working to ensure the betterment of the services for the Tasmanian people.

Mr WILLIE - I'm sure they are - sure they all are, but how are you defining what a frontline worker is and how are agencies making that decision?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's about having the right-size public service. We've been very open and transparent about the 2800 jobs between now and 2032. There's just a fact of life that despite a 5 per cent increase in population, we've had an 18 or 19 per cent increase in the public service numbers, so, we do need to ensure that we do have the right-size public service coming out of the pandemic and others. But, to Dr Woodruff's question previously, child safety and the areas around out-of-home care are a priority for our government and those frontline positions are essential.

Mr WILLIE - But you won't define what a frontline position is.

CHAIR - Yes, I think we will move onto Dr Woodruff

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Premier, on your watch, both the swift parrot and the Maugean skate are on the brink of extinction. Both of those species are at that devastating point because your government has made decisions, and refused to rein in two industries that are either logging or farming them out of existence. Premier, choices are being made. Do you want to be the premier that oversaw the extinction of these species or the one that gives them a lifeline to survive?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There has been a lot of research going into the Maugean skate, for example, and to ensure the support for the skate, as indeed the swift parrot.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through RTI, it's been found that your government has identified swift parrot important breeding areas that are needed to ensure the survival of that species. There is a stark choice: saving Forestry Tasmania's \$22 million a year or protecting habitat for the swift parrot, the fastest parrot on Earth. That is a choice. Will you commit to protecting the swift parrot's important breeding areas so that species doesn't go extinct?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm aware of a recently released study on threats to swift parrot breeding. Is this what you're talking about?

Dr WOODRUFF - I'm talking about the swift parrot breeding areas that the government has identified as critical for the species.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Findings from this paper will be carefully analysed and considered under the process of adaptive management and continuous improvement built into the Tasmanian forestry practices system. It is important to make the point that the forestry industry in Tasmania is not engaged in deforestation, when wood is harvested from public native forest, they are replanted as native forests, maintaining our public estate in perpetuity.

Further, all forest activity in Tasmania on both public and private land is governed by our forest practices system and this is the best practice approach that aims to protect the forest for future generations to enjoy, while satisfying today's demands for forest products and services. No harvesting activity can occur without an approved Forest Practices Plan, I'm advised. Now -

Dr WOODRUFF - None of that, with respect, relates to the swift parrot important breeding area, it's just spin about deforestation. We know that that's swift parrot important breeding area has been identified by the government. We know it's been recognised as critical for the survival of the species. So, this is a decision about choices and it's about money over the survival of a species. It's a pathetically small amount of money to protect a species. So, will you commit?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not quite sure which - where's the money angle coming from?

Dr WOODRUFF - What is the reason not to - not to stop the harvesting of - the logging -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, foregone revenue you were saying?

Dr WOODRUFF - That's right. Yeah.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, I understand where you're coming from now.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yeah, for Forestry Tasmania, that's a government business. Surely, you'd agree, we don't want to be trading in extinction, it's not good for our brand, let alone all the other reasons do that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're not wanting to do that and there's been a lot of work done on the swift parrot and I'm not sure if I have the latest breeding numbers or numbers of swift parrots -

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, we know that -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Certainly, the Maugean skate's been discussed and debated around that circumstance within Macquarie Harbour. That's a challenging one, but there's a lot of investments and researchers going into that.

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - We know from the Tasmanian Electoral Commission's donation disclosure log that the Labor Party has taken \$1650 from Britton Timbers and \$1450 from McKay Investments. How much have the Liberals taken from native forest logging companies in Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That I couldn't tell you.

Dr WOODRUFF - Would you be able to find the information and table it for Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It should be all disclosed. I can't see why it's not.

Dr WOODRUFF - What about salmon companies?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Should be all disclosed.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, I think -

Mr ROCKLIFF - New rules brought in by the Liberal government.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, in the interest of fairness, as important as the question is, I think we need to move on.

Ms JOHNSTON - Premier, in the Treasurer's Budget speech again, he says, 'This is a sensible and calibrated approach,' talking about his budget, 'It is one that reinforces a fundamental principle of responsible government, that public money must be spent wisely and purposefully, and with objectively measurable benefits to the community.' I agree wholeheartedly that that is a wise principle to adhere to when investing public money.

Yet, in the government's response to the TPC report on the stadium, you threw out this investment responsible principle out the window. You said that, despite the measurable benefits from the stadium and a BCR showing less than 0.5, the unquantifiable unmeasurable benefits - also known as the 'vibe' - make this enormous investment of public money, which worsens the state's financial position and burdens Tasmanians with debt for generations to come, is worth it. Why is the stadium a unicorn project that this very sound investment principle - that there should be quantifiable, measurable benefits for public money - is ignored?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The findings from the TPC said that matters of, I believe, noise, traffic management and other areas that people would have concerns about, can be mitigated - if that's the right word - or addressed, so that's pleasing. We just have to fundamentally disagree in respect to the investment that we're making publicly in the stadium infrastructure and all the benefits that will bring.

Ms JOHNSTON - The investment principle the Treasurer outlined in his Budget speech, that public money must be spent wisely, purposefully and with objectively measurable benefits, does not apply to the stadium project.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In my view, this will be the wisest decision any government has taken for decades. I seriously do. For the benefits -

PUBLIC

Ms JOHNSTON - Is this the only project you will be delivering that doesn't have objectively measurable benefits for the community, or can we expect that to occur for a number of others? Are we picking and choosing when we apply this investment principle?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wouldn't say picking and choosing. We will be judging each project on its merits and this is a project that the opportunity costs, as I've expressed of it not going ahead will be immeasurable for Tasmania's reputation as a place to invest. That will have devastating consequences on this community and all the good things that you have spoken about today quite rightly, and services that you want, and all those matters. If we want to have those services, quite rightly for Tasmanians, we cannot stand still and we must forge ahead like every other state is doing, particularly Queensland at the moment. We have to keep growing, we can't stand still on this particular thing.

Ms JOHNSTON - Again, Premier, you've indicated that if we want services to be delivered by government in the future, then we need a stadium to fund those services. Can you then tell us exactly how much money will be generated from the economic activity from the stadium, that will return directly back into state government coffers, into Treasury, to be able to pay for those services? Not money circulating generally in the community, but money that's coming back into the state coffers to pay for those services. That should be a measurable benefit, surely?

Dr WOODRUFF - I can tell you the answer to that: not a cent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's been a number of economic analyses undertaken in relation to the multipurpose stadium. Each assessment will depend on the scope, assumptions and method applied. All that would produce different results relating to the predicted economic impacts and benefits. The most recent -

Ms JOHNSTON - Can you give me at least one figure of how much will come back into state coffers? One of those many -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just the economic activity, people getting jobs -

Ms JOHNSTON - That's the economy generally. How much is coming back to the state government to pay for those services?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Treasurer Abetz mentioned payroll tax the other day in his answer.

Ms JOHNSTON - That's \$2.6 million - a long way off the \$50 million interest bill.

Ms JOHNSTON - Look, Ms Johnston, we have to agree to disagree on all this stuff. I don't understand why people believe every other state of Australia can have all this and we can't. I was getting selfies from the MCG last night at the ACDC concert. It was pouring with rain and people were saying to me, 'This place needs a roof.' Ours will have a roof, which will be very exciting. Coming back on the plane the other day after the Oasis concert, Tasmanians coming back to Tasmania - take the political hat off a bit and just think of the benefits.

Ms JOHNSTON - With my financially responsible hat on, what's the money coming in?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is financially irresponsible to turn away \$240 million of federal investment, \$360 million of investment for the AFL -

Dr WOODRUFF - Spend it on housing.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is irresponsible looking at the short-term political gain and not working through what has been a painful conversation, but the end result will be tremendous.

Ms JOHNSTON - You haven't done the modelling so you've got no idea how much -

CHAIR - Order. In the 12 or so minutes we have left we will continue around the table. Mr George.

Mr GEORGE - Thank you. In one last effort to make sure that Tasmanian water users and fishers have the information necessary to make their own decisions about their health and the risks of antibiotic resistance, I have here an email that's just arrived from an academic that says:

Florfenicol is exclusively used in veterinary medicine in China but now florfenicol resistance is found in clinical patients. The finding indicates that antimicrobial resistance produced in veterinary medicine can be transmitted to humans, which poses a real threat to public health.

Can I ask you once more to ensure that all government websites that relate to health and fishing and anything to do with the water and public areas of access to the waterways have warnings that allow Tasmanians to make up their own minds about what risks they're prepared to take in areas where florfenicol or other antibiotics are being used?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, Mr George. I believe the information is there on those websites.

Mr GEORGE - It's very hard to find.

Dr WOODRUFF - We've agreed to talk about this afterwards when we will point out all the ways that you're wrong.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What do you want to see? A big red button?

Dr WOODRUFF - A fishing app that says don't fish in these areas.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is the health advice, so people can make an informed decision about what they want to do - fish or not fish, swim or not swim. I believe that information is there. It might be hard to navigate and find, so that's an issue we can address.

Mr GEORGE - Great. Thank you.

Mr VERMEY - Premier, bed-block is a huge issue, which I found out firsthand recently. How are we addressing that issue in our hospitals?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that, and it's been some journey when it comes to this. We have too many people, I believe over 90, bed-blocked, so-called, waiting for discharge to an appropriate setting, whether it be to NDIS or aged care. Ms Morgan-Wicks, I remember we had a forum in November 2023 of all aged care providers in Tasmania trying to address this bed-block issue. Aged care and NDIS happen to be a federal responsibility and this is about trying to do what we can to work with aged care providers and other providers to reduce that bed-blocking, as well as streamlining matters within the hospital, but we need to have the places funded by the federal government that Tasmanians can be discharged into. That is very clear.

Newly released Boxwell & Co analysis has revealed the number of aged care beds in Tasmania has decreased by 54 beds in the last financial year and the equivalent of about three full hospital wards of Tasmanians are stranded in hospital because of a Commonwealth failure to provide them with a place to go. It's not about federal versus the state, it's about the people who need to be looked after, supported and cared for in the right setting that is appropriate. That's why we need greater collaboration and investment from the federal government at both ends of the health system.

We accept responsibility for the acute care system, albeit we need to be funded to 45 per cent by 2035, which is the 2023 commitment, but greater investment in primary health care would alleviate pressure on our emergency departments and ensure that people get the right care they need at the right time. We're reaching into that space as well and we've done some good partnerships with the federal government around the single employee model and other areas of responsibility. Urgent care centres are a very good example of that partnership, but on the other end, beyond discharge around the appropriate setting for individuals, we also need the federal government to take responsibility there. We want to be at the table. We want to work with them. I know Ms Morgan-Wicks has been leading discussions nationally - what's your role there?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - The cross-portfolio negotiation group for the next five-year National Health Reform Agreement and also disability.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We need a healthcare agreement that supports Tasmanians, so the \$673 million over the next five years is what we will receive if the federal government adheres to its December 2023 commitment. That's what we ask. We're reaching in more and more at a state level. I was with Dr Michael Lumsden-Steel yesterday, who's a very good advocate on health and the AMA and all those sorts of matters. He has advice for the state government, but in this case he also has very strong advice for the federal government to reach in further and that's the AMA position nationally and every other premier and chief ministers, as I understand it, irrespective of colour, is united on this. We need to have a health agreement that sustains our hospital system but also the investment on both ends for the acute care hospital setting, primary health care, aged care and the NDIS from the federal government to address that investment appropriately as well.

Mr WILLIE - Premier, your Treasurer said that he's going to decrease the State Service by 2800, which is up 300 from the previous figure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right.

Mr WILLIE - How are you going to do that? Are you going to target particular agencies or is it a blanket approach? Is there a particular strategy?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's the figure we've arrived at. You're right, it's 300 more than the 2500, but that is to 2032, so this can be well and strategically managed appropriately. Each head of agency is responsible for that task. Kath, I'm not sure if you want to say anything further about that task across government.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Each head of agency is responsible for delivering their budgets and the efficiency dividends that are in the budgets. The 2800 FTE target is a target within the fiscal strategy. There is no set plan or allocation of the 2800 per agency, noting that it is a long-term fiscal strategy target. However, each head of agency is looking through their own vacancy management committees at attrition as it occurs. I can provide an example of 2024-25 separations across our agencies.

Across our large agencies, we're already running at over 3000 separations for 2024-25. I'm not saying that each of those separations cannot be replaced. Part of those 3000 will include frontline workers who must be replaced to provide the outcomes agreed to by government. But certainly each one of those needs to be closely examined and we need to continue to ask ourselves if we are providing the most efficient and productive priority service for government. We shouldn't shy away from an examination of efficiency or productivity. We shouldn't shy away from the use and examination of technology to assist staff so that we can make sure we are providing the best outcome for the public, who are paying for these services. I absolutely think that's the responsible thing to do as the leader of an organisation, and I know each of our heads of agencies are examining that and putting in their bids and ideas, for example, through to our Efficiency and Productivity Unit, which is based within DPAC.

We are working very closely with Treasury and will work to support each of the heads of agencies as we look at initiatives such as, for example: [HR? 12.07.29] and People Central, which is looking at replacing some 40 legacy systems and technology and the huge amount of manual work that goes into creating payroll, creating rostering and timesheet manual plugging into systems across our service each and every day. That's a piece of technology that we want to see implemented across all of our agencies and which we've got funding in the DPAC budget to deliver.

Mr WILLIE - Will that 2800 number increase again in May given the Treasurer's commitment to trying to balance that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're not expecting it to, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. What transparency is there for Tasmanians around frontline workers and who's being replaced and who's not? You're not able to define that for us today.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Again, that's a matter for the heads of agencies to work through.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - I could add in through you, Premier, that I think our focus also needs to be on frontline services and how they are most efficiently and productively delivered to the public. We are continuing to improve the outcomes we're delivering by looking at the service provision and looking to our interstate colleagues, for example, in terms of better ways of working and the use of technology through the provision of those services. We need to look at the service and if we have the right and optimised level of workforce to deliver them in the right location.

PUBLIC

Mr WILLIE - Is it just the management committees and the vacancy control committees in each agency deciding who's being replaced and who's not?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through our Efficiency and Productivity Unit in DPAC, working together with Treasury to make sure we have the right priority services and programs that are actually being delivered by our staff, we all know that each and every year new services and programs continue to be added and added, but we are not always as good at the evaluation, particularly of older programs and services and whether they're providing the most value through to community. I can reflect from leading health, for example, and speaking to clinicians about improvements in technology, improvements in treatment and care.

CHAIR - The time for scrutiny has expired. The next portfolio to appear before the committee is the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at 1.00 p.m. I thank everybody for their participation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Chair, and everyone for the scrutiny and thanks to our team for the work leading up.

The committee suspended from 12.10 p.m. to 1.00 p.m.