

Wednesday 13 June 2018

The Speaker, **Ms Hickey**, took the Chair at 10 a.m. and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS

Child Safety Service

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[10.02 a.m.]

The information provided in these right to information documents you released yesterday is deeply shameful and shocking. They show that on any given day between 1 October last year and 5 April this year, only nine weeks ago, up to 500 Tasmanian children potentially at risk of harm were lost in the child safety system because they had been assigned to officers who had left the system, assigned to team leaders who are not supposed to have responsibility for individual cases, or had not been allocated to an officer at all. This information was released to Labor late yesterday afternoon following your announcement of additional funding to child safety in the morning.

Did you make that announcement only because you knew this astonishing and unacceptable news was coming?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - The answer to the last question was no. Regarding the matters referred to earlier -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. There is very childish behaviour going across the Chamber and I want it to stop. Please let the minister address the question.

Mr JAENSCH - With regard to the broader topic, nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children here in Tasmania. Those opposite and members of the Greens who have been involved in these portfolios before will know that while a case may not be registered on the information system as allocated, or where it is allocated to a team leader, it does not mean that that case or children associated with that case are not receiving oversight or appropriate case management.

Also noting, as the Opposition will, that total numbers fluctuate widely and daily and are not cumulative indicates that there is strong through flow and the numbers go up and down every day. It does not mean that individual cases remain allocated day after day. However, we know and acknowledge that demand on our child safety system is increasing here, as it is across Australia at the moment. That is why our Government is investing \$24 million in tomorrow's budget into

additional child safety workers to share the load and for the further implementation of the redesign of the child safety system started in our first term of government so we can reach out to more kids and more families before child safety becomes an issue.

Child Safety Service

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[10.06 a.m.]

This data, obtained under right to information shows, as recently as April this year, children in danger were allocated to child protection workers who do not exist. Can you guarantee this practice has stopped and that it will never happen again?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As at 7 June, my latest written briefing on this, there are no cases allocated to staff who have left the employment of the Child Safety Service. Following a child safety officer resigning and leaving the Child Safety Service, there is a requirement for their case load to be reallocated to another staff member. This process does not usually take more than a week to occur. While there have been a small number of cases that have taken longer than a week to reallocate, all these cases were overseen by the child safety manager, which included undertaking or delegating court work or case work tasks.

It is important to note when a child safety officer leaves the service, discussion is undertaken with their team leader to ensure urgent matters are appropriately handed over and they work as a team to ensure appropriate transition of matters to other staff where there is immediate capacity to do so.

It is time for Labor to stop playing politics with children's safety.

Short-Stay Accommodation

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.07 a.m.]

Are you aware of the UTAS Institute for Social Changes' recently released research that demonstrates the significant and still growing impact of the short stay accommodation market on rental availability and affordability? The data reveals that between July 2016 and February 2018 an extra 2200 properties were listed on Airbnb and it is clear we have not yet reached peak Airbnb. The report confirms the majority of these listings are whole properties that would otherwise have been available for rental to Tasmanians. Further, the report states that the growth in Airbnb is driving up rents.

Do you agree a pause on new permits is needed? What is your Government's plan to rein in the explosion of Airbnb at the expense of Tasmanians needing a home?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Yes, I am aware of the body of work to which she refers. It is a piece of work that can inform policy decisions and ensure they are based

on evidence, facts and data. It is one of the reasons why, following our housing summit, we have also sought to have short-stay accommodation providers contribute to an audit of properties currently utilised or that may be utilised in that form to truly understand the extent of the issue to which the member refers.

It is one element of our housing market and it is simplistic for anyone to suggest it is in isolation the reason for homelessness or housing stress. It is one element we are addressing as a government and will continue to do so, including as recently as last week, responding to the TPC findings and recommendations to ensure the decisions we make are based on evidence, facts and data, not just on a hunch.

The Leader of the Greens, who asked the question, by her own admission, was reported in the paper the other day as saying, 'It is not going to fix the problem.' It is acknowledged this will not address all issues. It is one element. There is work being done. I understand comments this morning on the radio from peak organisations who are calling for the state, government and community to ensure that our decisions are based on evidence to make sure that we are properly informed.

Dr Woodruff - This is evidence.

Mr HODGMAN - It is one perspective. In our view it is not necessarily conclusive or all the evidence that we should get as a government to make the right decisions. I note the other element of the coalition now chipping in because it is another one of their simplistic responses to a complex policy issue. It is easy in opposition to be all care and no responsibility.

Governments should base their decisions, not on hunches or anecdotal evidence or whatever might have a political ring to it, but what will make a material difference. That is what we are doing.

Ms O'Connor - It is hard data.

Mr HODGMAN - It requires the right data and sensible analysis. There does seem to be a shift in policy position by the Greens who are becoming increasingly more aligned and familiar with their coalition partners, the Labor Party, when you do not know what they stand for or what they believe. Cheap political points is obviously something you believe in and you are keen on. Believing in your policy positions seems to be getting more confusing by the day.

I pointed out the hypocrisy of the Greens yesterday with former Senator Brown happily wanting to fly across wilderness areas that he wants no one else to have access to. I inform the House of what was previously Greens policy position on this very subject. Former Greens leader, Nick McKim, in this place back in 2015, lauded the benefits of the sharing economy. He said it is turning a generation of interconnected people into entrepreneurs. There is more he said that is of some interest. Greens Senator Nick McKim said in his inaugural speech in the federal parliament, and I quote -

The opportunities that come -

from the sharing economy -

will shift people away from welfare and into economic independence. The free-flow of information and data will protect consumers and reduce regulatory burden on governments, freeing up more money for the delivery of essential public services.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to relevance. There are people sleeping on the Domain at the moment and the Premier is citing a speech from three years ago and not going to the issue. Liberal members are laughing during a question about the housing crisis.

Madam SPEAKER - Premier, please confine your debate to the current question.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. With respect, it is. It goes to Greens policy on this issue. Today they are going to argue that we should suddenly freeze any activity in this space. Three years ago, Greens Leader Senator Nick McKim said -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Premier has misrepresented the question. We are talking about whole properties and a pause on whole properties being listed so that people are not shut out of the rental market. Listen to the question.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, on the point of order, it is clearly not a point of order. She is debating the argument, debating the motion. She has made no reference to a standing order. It is not a point of order and I ask you to rule it out of order entirely.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. It is not a point of order. Premier, could you wind up, please.

Mr HODGMAN - I want to conclude the observations of Senator Nick McKim, Greens member, to highlight the division between the Greens Party. He said, and I quote -

The Greens will be right there advocating for more support, less protectionism and the lightest possible regulatory touch.

This shows again that it is political chameleonship at its very best. The Greens say one thing one day, then another the next. They have willing supporters in the Labor Party.

Family Violence Action Plan

Mr BROOKS question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.15 a.m.]

The majority Liberal Government's nation-leading, comprehensive cross-government family violence strategy was launched in 2015 led by you as Premier. The four-year action plan is now nearing its end. Can you update the House on the plans for the second stage of the strategy, future funding for the strategy and your continued commitment to family violence?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and welcome the opportunity to do so. In August 2015 my Government launched a new approach, a new plan to address the issue of family

violence in our community, Tasmania's first Family Violence Action Plan. It included over \$25.5 million of additional funding on top of what previous governments had expended to address this appalling social ill and provide support for its victims. An expert consulting group, community consultation and the best available research and practice helped design the plan. It was described as nation leading and was endorsed by the inspirational, courageous Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty.

It was a plan to bring family violence from behind closed doors and make an unprecedented investment in prevention, early intervention and to holding perpetrators to account. It was openly acknowledged at the time that it would lead to more victims of family violence coming forward seeking assistance and needing support, and that has happened. It has a significant increase in the services and programs to assist victims, more resources and systems to prevent family violence, changes to the law to hold perpetrators to account, as well as, importantly, new programs to change negative cultural attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence, and to build respectful relationships.

As members would be aware our Family Violence Action Plan provided an additional \$26 million investment from 2015 through to 2019. The plan began with 19 actions, but has expanded to contain 23 individual actions, all of which have been delivered on schedule and, more importantly, are delivering positive outcomes.

Since the plan's inception, the establishment of new services and support, our flagship Safe Families Coordination Unit, has mapped over 500 high-risk family violence incidents with over 3000 recommendations made to our agencies to keep families safe and, importantly, help us to identify at-risk children by making over 2600 notifications to schools.

Safe Choices, our program that provides practical support, advice and referrals to support services for those experiencing family violence, has provided over 300 clients with support, counselling and referral for those currently experiencing family violence situations and are seeking information to exit those relationships.

We have provided more than 1900 additional hours of counselling for children and young people affected by family violence, and more than 2200 additional hours of counselling for adults. More than 1000 family violence victims have been provided with access to legal assistance and more than 1900 family violence matters have been submitted for prosecution.

We now have a Respectful Relationships Program being delivered in all of our schools. We have continued to strengthen our legal responses with a number of amendments to strengthen our laws. More reforms are planned, including targeting persistent family violence offenders.

Today I am pleased to inform the House that this year's budget will include an additional \$20.2 million in new funding to address family violence including \$6 million per year across the forward Estimates from 2019 for the second stage of the Family Violence Action Plan; \$1.5 million for additional funding for the service system to immediately address the increased demand; \$200 000 to develop a whole-of-government action plan against sexual violence; and \$450 000 over three years to deliver Project O on the north-west coast delivering generational and attitudinal change by backing young women to become change makers in their own community.

This new investment will ensure we continue to offer the greatest protection possible for Tasmanian families at risk. We are committed, as we said in the recent election campaign, to within

100 days of returning to government commencing a comprehensive cross-agency evaluation of the action plan in order to inform the next stages. There will be an opportunity for public consultation and our new action plan will commence in July 2019.

The precise nature of the programs and the initiatives in the second stage of Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan will be determined by the evaluation underway. This \$18 million commitment of funding in this year's budget provides certainty to partner organisations and agencies, and to the broader community of my Government's unwavering commitment to continuing our efforts to eliminate family violence.

Members - Hear, hear.

Child Safety Service

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[10.20 a.m.]

This RTI reveals that 500 children were lost in the system on any given day. What do you say to those children who have been caught up in your Government's mismanagement of the Child Safety Service? What do you say to Child Safety Service staff who have been pushed to breaking point by your mismanagement and under-resourcing?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As before, we need to preface all of this by acknowledging together that nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children. I reject the assertion that has been made again that up to or excess of 500 children have gone missing in the system. The fact that they are counted in a list of numbers means that they are not missing; they are registered in our system. The Opposition knows they are playing games with children - cases, actually - that are under supervision and management and are in the process of allocation.

We acknowledge that there is increase in demand on our system. That is why we are investing another \$24 million in the capacity of that system, the workers on the ground, the professional services to support them and the additional services to reach out to family and children so that they do not become part of the child safety system. I say to all of those workers who are out there dealing with these cases, thank you for your work. We, and I, will try to at every step keep the politics out of the work you do because it is so important. I say to them we have heard and we listen to you, your management, your department and your secretary and we will be putting in place extra resources to support you in the work that you do.

Child Safety - Total Support Services

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[10.22 a.m.]

On 24 May, it was revealed that three children in the care of Total Support Services, a for-profit provider, had been subject to allegedly heavy-handed discipline and one of those children

had to hospitalised. Last night in a statement to the ABC, the Government confirmed that these children are still in this for-profit provider's care, and you also said that you had not been briefed. Have you been briefed today? Have each of these children been visited by child safety officers and can you guarantee their safety?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children. As I have said in here before, I will not be commenting on the individual circumstances of children, young people or their families. We know that there will sadly always be a need for some children to be brought into out-of-home care and some of those cases are very complex and require specialist care. When we bring children into care we seek the most appropriate placement for that child's individual needs and circumstances. Many of these children have experienced significant trauma in their lives and have a range of complex behavioural, health and disability needs that cannot be met in family-based care arrangements.

For these individuals specialist providers are used to respond to individual therapeutic needs. Total Support Services is one of a number of providers that are used to provide a range of different services for children in need. Due diligence processes are undertaken with all providers of out-of-home care services. Where concerns are raised regarding a child in care, there are well-established processes to assess those claims and prioritise the safety of those children. All and any allegations are always investigated fully.

Under the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act, every adult in Tasmania has a responsibility to take steps to prevent the occurrence or further occurrence of abuse if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is suffering or likely to suffer abuse. I urge again, as I have before -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, going to relevance, standing order 45. I ask that you direct the minister to answer the question as to whether he has been briefed since this matter was raised again yesterday, where he indicated he has not sought more information about the welfare of these children.

Madam SPEAKER - Minister, you have about a minute to go. If you could stick to the point it would be really good, thank you.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Speaker, I urge anyone, including Labor and Greens, if they have any concerns for the safety of a child, to report it through the official channels so it can be investigated. There have been no children removed from Total Support Services due to concerns about care provided. I am advised that there are currently three children placed with Total Support Services on a range of placement arrangements.

Rosny Hill - Proposed Development

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.26 a.m.]

Eastern Shore residents are waiting for a major private development planned for the top of Rosny Hill to be advertised by the Clarence City Council any day now. The secretive Office of the

Coordinator-General's preferred developer, Hunter Hill, with architect Robert Morris-Nunn, are again the proponents. The plans include two restaurants to seat 325 people, a function centre for 250 people, 100 accommodation rooms and a private bar.

Like the corrupted process around the sale of public land in Kangaroo Bay to Shandong Chambroad Petrochemicals for a hotel, this private development has all the sniff of state government secrecy and support. To proceed, it requires transfer of Rosny Hill Nature Recreation Area to the developer, land of acknowledged high-conservation value and a source of beauty, solace and recreation for local residents. This land was transferred to Clarence Council by then premier and minister for parks, Jim Bacon, in 2003, with the explicit direction that uses must be 'consistent with the conservation of the nature recreation area's natural and cultural values'. Will you commit to keeping this land in public ownership rather than granting a century-long lease, which is a sale by any other name?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. No decision to do such a thing has been made by Government and if it is, there will be disclosure. With respect to the process of any proposed development, that is a matter for the Clarence City Council as the planning authority. More broadly, I have just answered the question with respect to any matters that may affect the state. I will disclose any decisions that are made, if and when that occurs. This is a matter that is principally under the responsibility of the Clarence City Council.

Budget 2018-19 - Budget Surplus and Financial Performance

Mr SHELTON question to the TREASUER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.28 a.m.]

Can the Treasurer update the House on the importance of budget surpluses and Tasmania's recent financial performance?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons, Mr Shelton, for his interest in this matter. The importance of strong fiscal management in the achievement of balanced budgets cannot be understated. If a government cannot live within its means then how can businesses have the confidence to invest and to employ people? When we were first elected the results of Labor's financial recklessness was plain for all to see. Business confidence was in tatters as result, unemployment soared, people were leaving the state in droves, and the economy had stalled and gone backwards.

I can hear the shadow economic development minister sighing there. No wonder he is sighing. He was responsible for the recession. He oversaw the recession and nearly 10 000 jobs being lost. No wonder he is sighing.

Mr Ferguson - One hundred and eight police families. Lots of excuses.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is right. He sacked over 100 coppers as well.

Under our financial management we have reversed that situation. After only two years we achieved the first surplus Tasmania had seen in seven years and the best surplus in a decade. The budget is back on track and last year we were able to forecast surpluses in each and every year of the forward Estimates with cumulative surpluses of more than \$200 million. It is no coincidence that our economy is in better shape and in a better place. Confidence is the strongest in the nation. Population growth is the strongest in more than seven years and the recent state final demand figures show that for the most recent quarter Tasmania had the fastest growing economy in the nation.

We have always believed that there is more to be done. The budget I hand down tomorrow will deliver on all of our commitments. It will fund significant investments as we have heard over the last couple of days into Safe Home, Safe Families, into looking after our children, into looking after and assisting those affected by sexual abuse.

The last four years we have built a very strong financial platform. We have laid strong foundations. The budget is in the best shape that it has ever been in. In last year's budget we forecast a surplus for 2017-18; this current financial year, \$54 million. Today I can announce that the estimated outcome for this year will be a significant improvement and the forecast now is that we will deliver a surplus of \$75 million this year. The budget has never been in better shape. It is driving a massive surge in economic growth.

It is no wonder the shadow minister for economic development does not want to hear. Contrast his record with the record of this Government the budget has never been in better shape.

We will deliver a surplus in each and every year of the forward Estimates. We have always said that we will not go into net debt and I reiterate that commitment again today. In addition to that, as we prepared to deliver our ambitious infrastructure program to build the infrastructure Tasmania needs, the net cash and investment position that we finish with this year will also be higher than previously forecast. This has not come about by chance. It is only as a result of the disciplined approach to managing the budget that we now have the capacity to deliver on our plan to make record investments, to appropriately fund essential frontline services and infrastructure.

I have touched on the plan that was rolled out by those on the other side on a number of occasions. I have mentioned it again this morning. Under the stewardship of the former minister for economic development and the former finance minister - failed former finance minister, it rolls off the tongue very easily - the budget was in the red, 10 000 jobs had been lost, we were in recession and, at its peak, unemployment had reached over 8 per cent.

This side of the House has a plan. That side has nothing. Are you getting up to talk about your alternative budget? Maybe we can wait until next week but without an alternative budget they stand for nothing.

Recognition of Visitors

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome the students from Elizabeth College, Legal Studies.

Members - Hear, hear.

Budget 2018-19 - Motor Accidents Insurance Board Dividend

Mr BACON question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.34 a.m.]

In Estimates last year, MAIB Chairman Don Challen stated that there was an agreement with your Government to return MAIB to a sustainable 50 per cent dividend level saying, and I quote:

Yes, it is an agreement between the board of MAIB and the shareholder ministers.

During the election campaign you announced that your election promises would be partially funded by a 90 per cent dividend from MAIB amounting to an additional \$82 million. Have you ignored the MAIB's professional management and board and will you push ahead with a 90 per cent dividend in a desperate attempt to reduce your underlying budget deficit?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will answer that question first up: wait until tomorrow. Across the board our businesses are going very well. Sustainable Timber Tasmania is back on its feet - four years of hard work. Our energy businesses are going beautifully.

Mr O'Byrne - You are raiding.

Mr GUTWEIN - Did you say raiding? If I recall, it was the Labor government that took \$50 million after \$50 million after \$50 million out of Hydro, year after year. They talk about raiding and they talk about MAIB which manages a big pool of money. What about the SPA, the Superannuation Provision Account? You want to talk about raiding, \$1.7 billion -

Ms O'Byrne - Answer the question. If you are not going to answer the question, sit down and stop wasting the House's time.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, our government businesses are going beautifully. In regard to the question, wait until tomorrow.

Budget 2018-19 - Motor Accidents Insurance Board Dividend

Mr BACON question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.36 a.m.]

Did you consult with the MAIB board before deciding to rip an additional \$82 million dividend from the business? If so, when did these consultations occur?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, it is obvious Mr O'Byrne has his foot on the shadow treasurer's throat. We have seen more activity out of the shadow treasurer in the last two days than we have seen for four years.

Mr Bacon - What about when we asked about your list of economic reforms and the cupboard was dry.

Mr GUTWEIN - If I were you, I would not worry. The last time that bloke was anywhere near the finances we lost 10 000 jobs and went into recession. If I were you, Mr Bacon, I would not worry too much. It is obvious he has been lured out of his slumber.

In terms of returns to the budget from our businesses across the board, it will have to wait until tomorrow.

Mr BACON - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to standing order 45, relevance. The question was about consultation with the MAIB and not about the budget.

Madam SPEAKER - This will surprise you but I do not know what is going to come out the minister's mouth.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, in terms of the way we deal with our businesses, in terms of the returns they provide to the budget, that will all be revealed tomorrow. Then, if they have questions about the returns the businesses are providing to state they will have an opportunity through Estimates to ask those questions.

It brings me back to the point of the alternative budget. Will you be providing an alternative budget? That is the question people want answered. Will they be demonstrating what they stand for, what they agree with, what they disagree with? Whingeing is not a policy, complaining is not a platform.

Mr BACON - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to standing order 45, relevance. If the Treasurer could address his mind to the question about consultation with the MAIB board and when it occurred.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, minister.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I have answered that question: wait until tomorrow. The budget will reveal the returns that the businesses are providing. They only have one more sleep to wait. It will be a fantastic budget. This will be a very good budget for Tasmania. I can understand why you are interested and want to know all about it today. Tomorrow the budget will be brought down and the returns from businesses will be included in that.

Mining Exploration and Investment

Mr BROOKS question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[10.39 a.m.]

Can the minister advise the House of the growth in mining exploration and investment in Tasmania? In particular can the minister advise of any threats to this key job creating primary industry in the mining heartland of the far north-west?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his strong support for the mining and mineral processing sector. The mining and mineral processing sector is on the up. Its confidence

is on the up and more than 6000 Tasmanians are working in that sector and their families are benefiting. We now have over 55 per cent of our exports from the mining and mineral processing sector, over \$1.5 billion to the Tasmanian economy.

In the 2016-17 year we saw \$39 million in royalties that flowed straight into the economy helping fund essential services such as health and education, and delivering those budget surpluses the Treasurer has been referring to. That was a 162 per cent increase on the year before. In the heartland of Braddon confidence has returned to the industry and that is very encouraging. Production is up and there are exciting new opportunities.

Exploration and expenditure in that space totalled \$21.2 million just in the 2017 calendar year and that was a 57 per cent increase in exploration spending on the preceding 12 months. You can see that there has been an upswing in greenfield exploration activity and that is responding to the improving markets.

Tomorrow's Budget will include \$2 million to support further exploration, co-sponsored, to get those miners out there finding those mineral deposits and to grow the industry even further with the exploration drilling grant. That is on top of our Geoscience Australia initiative, \$1.4 million, and on top of the \$1 million mining sector innovation initiative where we work with the Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council, working together with the Centre of Excellence in ore deposits at the University of Tasmania, and those projects are underway. You can see that the industry is strong and it is growing. It is supporting families particularly in the north-west. It is driving that economic activity in regional areas, which results in higher inflow to government revenue, including rates, fees, rentals and payroll tax.

Last week, Rogetta Mine was announced by the proponent. That is an iron ore deposit at the back of Burnie. It is a \$100 million investment with up to 100 jobs ongoing during operation.

Mr Brooks - That's good news.

Mr BARNETT - That is very good news, as the member for Braddon says. The Avebury Nickel Mine was sold last year with some positive prospects and we have the CMT at Queenstown. We have invested. We are putting strength back into the mining sector, unlike under the Labor-Greens government, \$9.5 million there. We have the Henty Gold Mine up and running producing gold, which is fantastic.

At the same time we have the Savage River and Grange Resources growing jobs. They have increased their number of jobs by 12 per cent, so 54 extra jobs, to more than 500. They have announced \$28 million for upgrades in the mining sector where they are placed and \$10 million for further exploration and feasibility to look underground in terms of their mine. The Savage River mine sits right in the heart of what the Greens refer to as takayna, or the Tarkine. This has historically been a very productive area and they wish to turn it into a national park or nominate it for World Heritage listing. There is only one way that can occur, and that is with a Labor-Greens alliance. This is 10 per cent of the state - 680 000 hectares. What am I referring to? This impacts on 1000 mineral deposits, eight current mining leases, and you have Tasmania's biggest mine smack-bang in the middle of the so-called Tarkine national park. The impact on the forestry and mining is big. Over the next 20 years it would be a \$160 million detriment to the mining sector, and a \$250 million detriment to the forestry sector.

This is what the Greens are proposing - forever locked up, locked away, never to be seen again. This is seriously a big concern because the Greens have dishonestly been siding with an international clothing company to tell lies about this area. The Patagonia film claims to be a documentary and is actually a work of fiction. I will explain. It claims 90 per cent of the Tarkine is under mining tenure when the actual figure is 17 per cent. The movie claims 159 forestry coupes are targeted for clear felling logging. I am advised the annual review of the Sustainable Timber Tasmania three-year wood production plan lists 10 coupes in the area. The fallacies in the film have been exposed by the federal Liberal candidate for Braddon, Brett Whiteley. He recently exposed these fallacies and falsities. I say congratulations to him.

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Speaker, point of order. I urge your intervention. We are now pushing six minutes on a Dorothy Dixier that is replete with tedious repetition. Question time is not about taxpayer-funded self-promotion.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Minister, I ask you to wind up, please.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, Madam Speaker. They do not like the answer I am providing. The Greens hate it because they know they are involved with deception, misleading conduct and lies. The Greens know full well they got 3.5 per cent of the north-west coast in the Braddon electorate at the last election. That is the support. They know they do not have the support on the north-west coast. That is why they are going international to try to find some gullible or clueless celebrities to support their activities.

In summary, this area has been used for 150 years for mining, forestry, farming, fishing and recreational land use, as the member for Braddon says. It has railways, roads and multiple-use tracks. The Patagonia spokesman has described the film as 'advocacy documentary'. That is code for Bob Brown Foundation propaganda.

Budget 2018-19 - Motor Accidents Insurance Board Dividend

Mr BACON question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.47 a.m.]

Treasurer, did you consult with the MAIB board before deciding to rip an additional \$82 million dividend from the business? If so, when did these consultations occur?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for his second attempt at that. As I have said, the Budget will be brought down tomorrow and the revenues from the businesses will be there for all to see. If he has questions to ask about what we are taking from the MAIB, he can ask them then.

It provides me with another opportunity to talk about the Budget I will bring down tomorrow. It will be a fantastic budget that will deliver on all of our election commitments, in full and on time. It will deliver infrastructure for the twenty-first century and take Tasmania to the next level.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order under standing order 45, going to relevance. The Treasurer was asked a specific question. It is dishonest to say that the budget papers will talk about

negotiations that occurred with MAIB when this decision was made. If the Treasurer cannot answer the question, he should resume his seat.

Madam SPEAKER - Minister, please address the question.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I have. If you refer to *Hansard*, what he said was that we are going to rip money out of MAIB. What I have said is wait until you see the Budget and see what returns we take from our businesses. If he has further questions he can ask them then. I have answered that and I have been very clear about it.

The Budget will be brought down tomorrow. The Budget will make very clear what the returns are from all our government businesses. Any questions they have regarding the level of returns we take from businesses, we will answer them then. Regarding the question: I have answered it.

Mr Bacon - No you haven't.

Mr GUTWEIN - I have answered it. I have been very clear. In terms of election commitments, it provides me with the opportunity to touch on a couple that were made by the other side. You want to ask about the election commitments, I can speak about election commitments. It was in the context of the question. It is no wonder you do not want to talk about your election commitments. You had a health policy that changed on six to seven different occasions, which in your own financial statements spent less each year as it was rolled out. It beggared belief.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to your previous ruling. You asked the Treasurer to answer the question about the consultation that took place with MAIB. That is the question. That is not the answer he is giving to the House. He is wasting the House's time and disrespecting your ruling.

Mr BARNETT - On the point of order, the member for Bass clearly knows the minister cannot be directed as to how to answer the question.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. My problem is that I do not know what the Treasurer is going to say with his next few words. I ask the Treasurer to continue.

Mr GUTWEIN - In terms of the policies brought down on the other side; a health policy that changed seven times and then, extraordinarily, defied health economics and stepped down over the forward Estimates. It was a financial policy that included phantom revenues, which were thrown in to prop up their bottom line. It was farcical.

The context of the question was ripping money out of government businesses. We will bring the Budget down tomorrow. All the revenues will be there for all to see. If there are further questions of the revenue levels we are taking from businesses or dividend policy I would be very happy to answer them then.

Budget 2018-19 - Investment in Education

Mr BROOKS question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

Members interjecting.

Ms ARCHER - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I draw your attention to standing order 146, as members opposite continue to interrupt during members' contributions, particularly when the member is asking a question.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. That is a good point. We would like to hear the questions from all sides. Please proceed, Mr Brooks.

[10.52 a.m.]

Mr BROOKS - Can the minister please update the House on the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's record on investment in education?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and considerable interest in this matter. The Government has a strong track record of delivering for Tasmanians on education and that is exactly what we will continue to do. Each and every year we have been in government we have delivered record investments in education and the Treasurer's annual financial report clearly demonstrates that.

In 2016-17, over \$1.4 billion went into education in Tasmania, an increase of more than \$170 million than when Labor was in government. We have seen school nurses return to our schools after they were cut by Labor. We have seen 38 schools extended to year 12. Labor still oppose that important reform that is making such a big difference to Tasmanian students across the state. We are seeing improvements as a result of increased investment in education. The retention rate of students to year 12 is now at 74.1 per cent, on track to meet our target of 80 per cent by 2022. More students are staying at school longer and they are achieving more while they are there, with our TCE achievement rate now at an all-time high of 58.1 per cent. Our unprecedented funding into education has employed more teachers. I am pleased to inform the House that since we came to government in 2014 there are 142 more teachers in our schools. This week's budget will further build on this investment through delivering on the first tranche of our commitment to bring another 250 more teachers to our schools over six years.

Tasmanians can rely on the Hodgman Liberal Government and this Budget to deliver for Tasmanians and education because that is what we have consistently done over the course of the last four years. We have a strong plan in education and that plan is working. It is in stark contrast to what I say to those opposite, who appear to have given up on education reform and policy development. They have given up on education. They have no alternative budget, and no wonder. They should be embarrassed by the education policies they took to the last election - their school levy policy, for example. Their school levy policy would have ripped tens of millions of dollars out of schools. Not even the Australian Education Union would support that policy. That is only one example of why they are not delivering an alternative budget.

They have no plan for education and they can clearly see that. They do not even mention education as part of essential services. They have dropped it off the list. Such is the low priority this Opposition has for education. They can clearly see and it has been demonstrated over the last four years, we have put \$170 million more in education into our schools, our classrooms and our education system. We have delivered 142 more teachers in our schools than the previous Labor-Greens government. This Hodgman Liberal Government has a clear plan for education. It is working and our educational outcomes have demonstrated that this plan is working for the benefit of our students.

Rosny Hill - Proposed Development

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr HODGMAN

[10.58 a.m.]

Rosny Hill land is publicly owned and a gift to all Tasmanians now and for future peoples. It was passed to Clarence City Council at their request, as long as they managed it to look after its natural values. Will you commit to withholding permission for use of this land for a major private development that would trash the natural values of Rosny Hill?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. In relation to this matter, which is largely one for the Clarence City Council as the planning authority, I am advised the reserve land is managed under that lease by the Clarence City Council. They are the dedicated managing authority for the area as well. I am advised a development application has been prepared and proposes multiple uses within the area, including some commercial activity and hotel accommodation. It has resulted from an expression of interest process conducted by the council. I can confirm any development on this land must be consistent with its reservation status under the Nature Conservation Act 2002 and be in the accordance with the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 and the relevant planning scheme.

TasWater - Proposed Takeover by Government

Mr O'BYRNE question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.59 a.m.]

Yesterday, pathetically, you could not point to one single economic reform you have achieved whilst in Government. Can you confirm that your water and sewerage MOU capitulation to local government will fail to deliver on any of the key priorities of your TasWater election policy? Can you confirm you will not take control of Tasmania's water and sewerage, you will not lower real water prices, your plan will deliver no money for water infrastructure and you cannot guarantee dividends will continue to flow to councils?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for that question and for his interest in this matter. I am pleased he has an interest in economic reform because his track record is not good in this space.

Mr Bacon - Yours does not exist. Yours if a big fat bagel.

Mr GUTWEIN - I hear by interjection that we should compare records. Under that economic development minister, the state went into recession and 10 000 jobs were lost. The unemployment rate peaked at more than 8 per cent and Tasmanians were leaving the state in droves. That is your record. No matter what he does to try to squirm his way out from underneath it, that is what he delivered. Four years as the economic development minister and that was his record.

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 45, relevance. We asked a question about his attempted reform of TasWater. He has not gone anywhere near the question. He

has been ignoring your rulings all question time, Madam Speaker. I urge you to call him to the question.

Madam SPEAKER - Treasurer, it is a big accusation. I am happy for you to answer the question if you can.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I am very happy to go to that. I was outlining the difference between the reform agenda on this side of the House and what happened on that side of the House. I made the point very clearly yesterday: we reformed the state's finances, we fixed their mess.

With TasWater, we said we would lower prices and that is exactly what our agreement will do. We said we would bring forward infrastructure investment and that is exactly what our reform will do. Importantly, councils will be guaranteed the payments they were expecting to receive as a result.

On the key measures of the policy we took to the election, we will deliver on that. I am very pleased to be getting the feedback that I am from local government about the direction we set. For Tasmanians this will mean lower water and sewerage prices and a quicker fix to the infrastructure which is exactly what our policy outlined.

Budget 2018-19 - Health Investment

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[11.03 a.m.]

Can the minister please update the House on the record investment the Hodgman majority Liberal Government has made in health over the past term and outline the ongoing investments we will see in the state's budget tomorrow?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I have to advise the time is up. Thank you for the question and I am sorry, minister.

Time expired.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL 2018 (No. 12)

First Reading

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

MOTION

Order of Business - Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bills 2018

[11.07 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) (by leave) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That Government business take precedence from such time as the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2018 and the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2018 are introduced, until the House has dealt with all business associated with the Budget.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Estimates Committee - Establishment

[11.08 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business - Motion) (by leave) - Madam Speaker, I move that:

- (1) (a) all stages of the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2018 and the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2018 shall have allotted a maximum total of 97 hours as follows:
 - (i) up to the Second Reading: maximum 16 hours;
 - (ii) in the Estimates Committees: maximum 63 hours; and
 - (iii) in Committee of the Whole House and Third Reading: maximum 18 hours;
- (b) on the Second Reading, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have unlimited speaking time and other members speak for not longer than 30 minutes each;
- (c) when the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2018 have been read the second time in the House of Assembly, the Bills be referred to Estimates Committees A and B of the House of Assembly.

Such Committees may not vote on, but may examine and report upon the proposed expenditures contained in the Bills by no later than 3 July 2018, with such expenditures being considered on an output by output basis, including Grants, Subsidies and Loans and the Capital Investment Program.

The following ministerial portfolio units are allocated to House of Assembly Estimates Committee A -

Date	Minister	Portfolios
Monday 25 June		
0900-1300: Premier (4 hours) 1400-1600: Tourism, Hospitality and Events (2 hours) 1600-1700: Trade (1 hour) 1700-1900: Parks (2 hours) 1900-1930: Heritage (0.5 hour)	Hon. Will Hodgman MP	Premier Tourism, Hospitality and Events Trade Parks Heritage
Tuesday 26 June		
0900-1300: Treasurer (4 hours) 1400-1600: Local Government (2 hours) 1600-1800: State Growth (2 hours)	Hon. Peter Gutwein MP	Treasurer Local Government State Growth
Wednesday 27 June		
0900-1100: Human Services (2 hours) 1100-1300: Housing (2 hours) 1400-1600: Planning (2 hours)	Hon. Roger Jaensch MP	Human Services Housing Planning
Thursday 28 June		
0900-1200: Education and Training (3 hours) 1200-1300: Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries (1 hour) 1400-1800: Infrastructure (4 hours)	Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP	Education and Training Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries Infrastructure

House of Assembly Estimates Committee B:-

Date	Minister	Portfolios
Monday 25 June		
0900-1200: Police, Fire and Emergency Management (3 hours) 1200-1300, 1400-1900: Health (6 hours) 1900-2000: Science and Technology (1 hour)	Hon. Michael Ferguson MP	Police, Fire and Emergency Management Health Science and Technology

<p>Tuesday 26 June</p> <p>0900-1100: Energy (2 hours) 1100-1300, 1400-1500: Resources (3 hours) 1500-1600: Building and Construction (1 hour) 1600-1630: Veterans' Affairs (0.5 hour)</p>	<p>Hon. Guy Barnett MP</p>	<p>Energy Resources</p> <p>Building and Construction Veterans' Affairs</p>
<p>Wednesday 27 June</p> <p>0900-1000: Racing (1 hour) 1000-1300, 1400-1500: Primary Industries and Water (4 hours)</p> <p>1500-1600: Aboriginal Affairs (1 hour) 1600-1630: Women (0.5 hour) 1630-1700: Sport and Recreation (0.5 hour) 1700-1800: Disability Services and Community Development (1 hour)</p>	<p>Hon. Sarah Courtney MP</p> <p>Hon. Jacque Petrusma MP</p>	<p>Primary Industries and Water</p> <p>Aboriginal Affairs Women Sport and Recreation Disability Services and Community Development</p>
<p>Thursday 28 June</p> <p>0900-1200: Attorney-General & Justice (3 hours) 1200-1300, 1400-1500: Corrections (2 hours) 1500-1530: Arts (0.5 hour) 1530-1700: Environment (1.5 hours)</p>	<p>Hon. Elise Archer MP</p>	<p>Attorney-General & Justice Corrections Arts Environment</p>

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES - HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES

- (1) Estimates Committee A consists of the following Members:
The Chair of Committees (Chair);
Mr Hidding (Deputy Chair);
One Member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Ms O'Connor.
- (2) Estimates Committee B consists of the following Members:
Mr Brooks (Chair);
Mr Hidding (Deputy Chair);
One Member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Dr Woodruff.
- (3) The Chair of a Committee has a deliberative and a casting vote.

- (4) During sittings, substitute Members may be allowed at the discretion of the Chair.
- (5) If a vacancy occurs in the membership of a Committee, the Speaker may nominate a Member in substitution, but in so doing has regard to the composition of the Committee as appointed by the House.
- (6) A Committee may proceed with business despite a vacancy in its membership.
- (7) The quorum of a Committee is a majority of the Committee.
- (8) If at any time a quorum is not present, the Chair will suspend proceedings of the Committee until a quorum is present or adjourn the Committee.
- (9) Any time lost for lack of a quorum shall be added to the time allocated to that session.
- (10) Members of the House who are not Members of the Committee may participate in proceedings by asking questions, but may not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purposes of a quorum.

SITTING TIMES

- (1) Each Estimates Committee meets only in accordance with the abovementioned timetable adopted by the House or as varied by the Chair.
- (2) Estimates Committees may sit only when the House is not sitting.

OPEN HEARINGS

All hearings of the Estimates Committees are open to the public.

PROCEEDINGS OF AN ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

- (1) Consideration of proposed expenditures in an Estimates Committee follows as far as possible the procedure observed in a Committee of the whole House.
- (2) A Committee will consider expenditures on an output by output basis, including Grants, Subsidies and Loans and the Capital Investment Program.
- (3) A Committee may ask for explanations from a Minister relating to the outputs.
- (4) The Minister who is asked for explanations may be assisted where necessary by officers in the provision of factual information.
- (5) Officers may answer questions at the request of the Minister but shall not be required to comment on policy matters.
- (6) Time limits of one minute for a question and three minutes for an answer shall apply in Estimates Committees.

- (7) Questions may be asked on a ratio of three Opposition, one Government and one other Member or in such form as the Committee determines.
- (8) A Minister may advise an Estimates Committee that an answer to a question, or part of a question, asked of the Minister will be given later to the Committee, where possible that Committee sitting day.
- (9) A Minister may provide additional information to a Committee about an answer given by or for the Minister.
- (10) Additional information -
 - (a) is to be written;
 - (b) is to be given by a time decided by the Committee; and
 - (c) may be included in a volume of additional information laid on the Table of the House by the Committee.
- (11) If any Member persistently disrupts the business of an Estimates Committee, the Chair-
 - (a) names the Member;
 - (b) if the Member named is a Member of the Estimates Committee, suspends the sitting of the Estimates Committee until the Chair has reported the offence to the Speaker; and
 - (c) if the Member named is not a Member of the Estimates Committee, orders that Member's withdrawal from the sitting of the Committee until the Chair has reported the offence to the Speaker;

as soon as practicable, the Chair advises the Speaker who then gives notice that the Member of the Estimates Committee be replaced.
- (12) If any objection is taken to a ruling or decision of the Chair -
 - (a) the objection must be taken at once and stated in writing;
 - (b) the Chair, as soon as practicable, advises the Speaker who makes a ruling on the matter; and
 - (c) the Estimates Committee may continue to meet but may not further examine the output then under consideration.
- (13) Television coverage will be allowed, subject to the same conditions that apply to televising of the House of Assembly.

HANSARD REPORT

An unedited transcript of Estimates Committee proceedings is to be circulated, in a manner similar to that used for the House Hansard, as soon as practicable after the Committee's proceedings.

REPORTS OF ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

- (1) A report of an Estimates Committee is presented by the Chair or Deputy Chair of that Committee to a Committee of the Whole House, such reports containing any resolution or expression of opinion of that Committee.
- (2) When the reports of the Estimates Committees are presented they may be taken into consideration at once or at a future time.
- (3) The following time limit applies to consideration of reports of Estimates Committees on each portfolio unit on the question 'That the proposed expenditures be agreed to and that the resolutions or expressions of opinion agreed to by the Committees in relation to those expenditures be noted.'

One Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or Member deputised by the Leader - 20 minutes, any other Member - 10 minutes. A maximum period for consideration of 2 hours for each Minister.

- (4) When the consideration of reports of Estimates Committees A and B has been completed, the question is proposed and put forthwith without debate 'That the remainder of the Bills be agreed to.'
- (5) When the Bills have been agreed to by the House, the Third reading of each Bill may be taken into consideration at once or made an order of the day for the next sitting day.

Madam Speaker, this is a regular motion considered by our House each year prior to the handing down of the budget. The House of Assembly Estimates Committees have been established each year since 1994 to provide extended and structured scrutiny of the appropriation bills in addition to that normally afforded to bills before the House.

It is proposed that all stages of the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and 2) have a maximum time of 97 hours. This is made up of the following stages:

First and second readings - a maximum of 16 hours.

Estimates committees - a maximum of 63 hours.

Committee of the Whole House and third reading - a maximum of 18 hours.

Special provision is also made for speaking times, membership, proceedings and timetables for committees and reports from each committee. As always this is on advice of the Clerk in relation to the conventions of this system. These are outlined in the draft motion that was also distributed to my colleagues from the other parties prior to today.

I also draw members' attention to the fact, given that the other place also concurrently hold Estimates committees, that the timetable is quite a complex jigsaw to put together. I thank my parliamentary adviser on this piece of work and the Clerk of the other place. The timetable has necessarily been prepared to complement those committees and provide for those departments that will be called in to support ministers and the committees, bearing in mind that nobody here is able to be in two places at once.

I note that the Opposition has flagged a concern relating to the membership of the committees. In previous years there have been six members of each committee. This year it is proposed that the membership reflects the changed composition of the membership of the House and the availability of members to staff those committees.

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Hearing the jibes that are already starting, this is not a reason for the Opposition to claim that scrutiny is in any way limited by the changed number of members. That is a complete fabrication.

If the Leader of the Opposition had thought to read the proposed motion before shooting off at the hip on this matter, the motion makes specific provision for any member of this House to participate in committee proceedings and ask questions against any of the outputs, regardless of whether they are a member of the committee. The member should understand that it is not just in the motion, it is also part of the convention. Quite simply, the committee membership relates to the management of the committee proceedings during the day but does not limit the ability of any member to participate. Any claims to the contrary are frankly baseless, unhelpful and, where they have been said, they are not true. Any change to the membership is not required.

I will say something good about the Opposition and the Greens members. I would like to thank them for their feedback. Frankly, much of the work of bringing this motion to our House is as a result of professional collaboration between myself, the Leader of Opposition Business and the Leader of the Greens, and we extend the goodwill necessary to achieve what is ultimately the best opportunity for the opposition parties to be able to scrutinise the Government's Budget.

We do not walk away from that. I place on the record that I have asked the Opposition to work with the Greens in constructing what periods of time they would like to scrutinise each portfolio. I believe I have been able to honour those requests to the best of our ability and we now have the picture for those 63 hours.

The Government has been consistent in establishing these Estimates committees each year. We willingly take into account the requested changes. There have been a number and I appreciate the feedback from members opposite.

[11.13 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, as foreshadowed by the Leader of Government Business, we have an amendment to move. At the outset, I thank the Leader of Government Business for his openness and willingness to accommodate the times in terms of the scheduling of the ministers and our ability to ask questions, as well as to ensure that the Estimates are conducted in an appropriate fashion. That has enabled us to ensure we will have the right people at the right time talking to the relevant ministers and being able to ask questions. I place on record my thanks for your acknowledgement of the variations in hours; that has been very helpful.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing in this motion, in how both committee A and committee B are being dealt with, is a fundamental matter of principle that goes to the transparency and accountability and the strength of the Estimates committee system. Ever since the Estimates system has been established as a result of a parliamentary inquiry in 1997, there has always been two opposition members at the table on each committee. This has been consistent during the entire 16-year period of Labor government, including the period between 2010 and 2014.

We are not seeking to have the majority on the committee. We are seeking to have two committee members at the table to ask questions. This is entirely consistent. When we were in government we allowed the opposition -

Mr Ferguson - I understand the point.

Mr O'BYRNE - I am not talking to you; I am talking to the Chair.

Mr Ferguson - Fair enough.

Mr O'BYRNE - Madam Speaker, during the period of the Estimates the Labor government of the day had two opposition members at the committee.

In his contribution Mr Ferguson has referred to paragraph 10, which allows, in his view, any member of the House to attend the table, but we know the provisions of paragraph 10 are open to interpretation and they have never been used in such a manner until this date. To infer on the record that paragraph 10 can be used to allow flexibility with the membership of the committee is not true and we refute that. When you look at paragraph 4 of the motion it says:

During sittings, substitute members may be allowed at the discretion of the Chair.

Therefore that is open to interpretation by the government of the day. If we move from having six members, and at times there have been five - no less than two opposition members - if we go down to four that is a precedent that will be established and it will be extraordinarily difficult to bring back scrutiny to those Estimates committees.

There has been much debate in the last few years about the role of the Estimates and accountability in government and having the opposition able, on the public record, to ask questions of ministers and bureaucracy to ensure that the community at large, the people of Tasmania who will see the benefits or the brunt of decisions made by a budget, will have the opportunity for transparency and questions to be answered.

This is a knife to the heart of the Estimates committee process. I do not say that in a dramatic fashion. The role of Estimates is already under question and to reduce the numbers of opposition members at the table to ask those questions further undermines a process that is currently being questioned. What does the Government have to hide? We are not seeking a majority. If the permanent committee membership is reduced to four we are creating a precedent that will undermine the Estimates committee forever.

It is also open to abuse by the government of the day, which may wish to avoid and reduce scrutiny. Again, what does the Government have to hide? What are they afraid of? What questions have not already been asked in years and years of Estimates? I have been on the other side of the table as a minister and we allowed, in minority, two members of the opposition asking question

after question and we had nothing to hide. We defended our budget and the decisions we made and we were open to scrutiny

There is very clearly a simple fix to this, and that is to increase the committee membership to six, including three government members, two opposition members and one from the crossbench. I move -

That paragraph (1) be removed and replaced with the following:

(1) Estimates Committee A consists of the following Members:

the Chair of Committees (Chair)
Mr Hidding (Deputy Chair)
One Member nominated by the Leader of Government Business;
Two Members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Ms O'Connor

and that paragraph (2) be removed and replaced with the following:

(2) Estimates Committee B consists of the following Members:

Mr Brooks (Chair)
Mr Hidding (Deputy Chair)
One Member nominated by the Leader of Government Business;
Two Members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Dr Woodruff.

In support of the amendment, this fundamentally goes to the heart of transparency and openness and the ability of opposition parties and the community of Tasmania to have serious questions answered by the government of the day and the decisions they are making. We can read no other thing into this apart from a government that seeks to avoid scrutiny, to avoid answering clear questions and to inhibit the capacity of the opposition to ask questions to get facts for the community of Tasmania.

[11.20 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I also acknowledge it has been a collaborative process, to the point that we had the amended motion presented this morning. I acknowledge a number of significant changes have been made to the schedule that we felt were important, and we have negotiated them with Mr Ferguson and Mr O'Byrne. They were an increase in the amount of time scrutiny could be placed on the Minister for Parks, so that some of the questions being asked by people who really value our wilderness world heritage areas and national parks could be fleshed out at the Estimates table. We also wanted to be sure there was an extra hour for Planning, which is one of the most significant issues facing our community today. We are very pleased to see there are two hours allocated for Planning. Dr Woodruff will appreciate that opportunity, given the huge amount of work she has done on this issue. Also, changes such as making sure we did not have to endure two hours of Mr Barnett pumping up Building and Construction is a positive change. That has been pegged back to an hour. We also have an extra half-hour for the Environment portfolio; that is important, although one-and-a-half hours to discuss matters pertinent to Tasmania's environment and its future is still not enough. There is also not any particular point at which we could ask questions related to the Government's response to climate change other than in the Environment section. As we know, we do not have a minister for climate change under the Liberals in Tasmania.

Ms Haddad - Shame.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, Ms Haddad, shame. That said, on the amendment moved by Mr O'Byrne, if we were to look at this out of pure self-interest - and that is not the way we operate - we would not support your motion. However, we recognise this is an important matter of parliamentary principle.

I recall the period between 2010 and 2014, when the numbers were the same as they are now. There was no move to shrink the number of members on the committee. For any observer of the way Estimates is conducted, if you looked the four years between 2010 and 2014, when ministers gladly sat at the table, did not need backbenchers running cover for them, answered any question that came forward and minimised the number of Dorothy Dixers asked by either Greens or Labor members on the committee. The only Labor member I recall being on the committee was Brenton Best and he certainly did not ask Dorothy Dixers.

There was no attempt to shrink the size of the Estimates committee in order to accommodate the fact that we were in a minority government, as the Liberals clearly are right now. I was thinking when I was looking at Mr Hidding, who will be the Deputy Chair of both Committee A and Committee B, we probably should buy him a segway so he can move between the committees in a timely manner, otherwise he is going to be thoroughly fried by the end of the day. It will be a highly unusual Estimates committee and on the basis of the Greens' longstanding belief in and adherence to principles of parliamentary scrutiny, we will support the motion put forward by Mr O'Byrne. It is not in the Greens interest to have to jostle away with another Labor member at the table but that is not the point.

The point is one of parliamentary principle, one of making sure scrutiny is effective. We are not dealing with Estimates committees that are shrunk because the government of the day does not have the numbers to staff the committee. That is what we are dealing with. It is a simple question of arithmetic and human resourcing. There is no other backbencher apart from Mr Hidding, which is why he will need to put his skates on in order to have any sort of influence over the conduct of the committees. On the basis of our belief in scrutiny and parliamentary practice, we will support Labor's motion and we are prepared to support the rest of the motion as it stands.

[11.25 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am acutely aware of the concerns raised by the Opposition. I stand by what I have said. It is a misplaced concern. I genuinely believe members opposite are making a case that somehow the reduction from six to four of the numbers of the formal committee curtails in some way the Opposition's ability to ask questions of ministers at Estimates committees. That is simply not the case. I have the permission of the Clerk to advise the House that his advice is that is simply not the case.

Mr Bacon - Can you get kicked out by the Chair if you are not a member of the committee? Yes, you can.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am simply doing my best to assure the House that the Opposition's concern is misplaced. I have the Clerk's permission to indicate to this House he has advised me it is not the case. It is a misplaced concern. I listened carefully to the Leader of the Greens in making

the case and I believe the Leader of the Greens has been the most honest on the point. The Government numbers of this House, together with the reality that this Government's nine ministers are members of this House, reduces the ability to have members of the committee who are not ministers. I am hearing from the Opposition, which surprises me, that they would like to see ministers serving on the Estimates committees. That surprises me. It is the only conclusion one can draw. I am not sure, Ms O'Connor, if you were aware of the reality. I am not sure if you truly believe that would be a good thing. I would be surprised.

I again have to draw attention to the Leader of the Opposition, who was out yesterday trying to play politics on this -

Ms White - It is not politics. It is the principle.

Mr FERGUSON - It is the principle. Thank you for drawing that point.

I will repeat: I have the permission of the Clerk to advise the House that he has advised me that the concern raised by the Opposition is not founded. It is not correct. I should not have to draw the Clerk in but I have his permission to say that is his advice to me. Paragraph 10 is an explicit guarantee to members opposite that they can attend even if they are not a member of the committee. Dr Broad, the only reason a member could be ejected from the committee is if they are misbehaving. I would be shocked if anybody could make the case that ministers should be members of Estimates committees, which are principally formed to scrutinise ministers. It is a surprise that members opposite would make that case.

Something I omitted to mention earlier, which nobody has mentioned, is that the motion I have presented today increases the number of questions Opposition members can ask. Last year it was a rotation of 2-1-1. This year it is 3-1-1, an extra question guaranteed to the Opposition.

It is disappointing this matter has been brought to the House. Mr O'Byrne is trying to play the political game and make an argument. The Government has been acting responsibly. I have virtually given over the Estimates timetable to members of the Opposition to allow them to decide how much time they want to scrutinise ministers. That is the responsible thing to do.

I seek the support of Greens members and the Opposition for my position and in so doing offer a concession I believe achieves what members opposite are looking for. If the member will withdraw or not proceed with his amendment, I propose paragraph 4 be withdrawn from the original motion. The Clerk advises me it is a redundant provision. It is not intended to make it the case that members are reduced in their ability to attend. I am acting in accordance with that advice. My advice from the Clerk is that we are safe to remove the words 'at the discretion of the Chair', so paragraph 4 would only say, 'during sittings, substitute members may be allowed'. Read into that paragraph 10:

Members of the House who are not members of the committee may participate in proceedings by asking questions but may not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purposes of the quorum'.

I ask members of this House to see the sense in this. I am frankly surprised members would prefer to see ministers making decisions at Estimates committee meetings. I would be very surprised if anybody would make the case that that is a responsible outcome. That is my offer. I believe it is sensible approach, consistent with all my actions in trying to arrive at a consensus on this, because the scrutiny should be at Estimates committees and there ought to be agreement in this House about a process that has been in place for 24 years.

I humbly submit that this House should not support that motion and we address this through a much more responsible method on the advice of our respected Clerk.

[11.32 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, even with the concession the Leader of Government Business has proposed, we remain dissatisfied and I will explain why.

Mr Ferguson - I am sure you do.

Ms WHITE - It is for legitimate reasons. The principles of Estimates committee have been undermined by the original motion you moved in the House which grants the opportunity for the Opposition to ask questions of ministers of the day and to have two members who are recognised as members of that committee sitting at the table. Even if you take into consideration paragraph 10, which is the reason given by the minister that it is not necessary to increase the membership of the committee, there are obvious concerns about that because it says that members of the House who are not members of the committee may participate in proceedings by asking questions, but they may not vote, move any motion, or be counted for the purposes of a quorum. That is a problem. It means those members have no right at the table and that is the problem. You are limiting the number of members at the table from the Opposition benches who have rights at the committee table, and that is the problem.

There is no reason the Government cannot move to accept the amendment proposed by the Labor Party to increase the members of the committee to six, which has been the standard practice of the House since the Estimates committees were established. The only time they were five was during the years between 2010 and 2014 where there was a minority government circumstance. Even then, the Liberal Opposition was granted two seats at the table and was recognised in the motion, and those members at the table had rights to vote, move motions, and be counted in a quorum.

There is no reason the majority Hodgman Liberal Government cannot support a motion to return the membership to six, which has been the precedent of the House and is the principle behind having Estimates committees in the first place: it is about allowing opportunities to scrutinise ministers on their agencies, their departments and the allocation of budgets to those agencies and departments.

It is true when the minister says that in order for them to have six members at the committee table, it will require them to nominate another government member to be named as a member of the committee, and it will be a minister, but it should not be the parliament and the procedural matters we are dealing with here that feel the brunt of your inability to manage your members. It is not the parliament's fault you do not have a backbench that can support what has been recognised as precedence in this House for Estimates committees to have six members. It should not be the parliament and it should not be the people of Tasmania who are disadvantaged because they cannot have appropriate scrutiny applied and accountability of the government demonstrated through the Estimates process. Do not hold us and the parliament to ransom.

Mr Ferguson - Don't make false arguments. You are making a false argument. I did not say that.

Ms WHITE - You just said that you did not want to have a minister's office at the table from other ministers. The only times they will be required to be there, as you are well aware, minister, is if there is a vote or a quorum required before any motion is moved.

Mr Ferguson - We have good advice on how your concern can be allayed.

Ms WHITE - But we want our members at the table to have the rights that you are at the moment trying to remove. Even with paragraph 10 you will acknowledge that those members who might be substitute members for a member of the committee do not have rights to vote, move any motion, or be counted for the purposes of the quorum. We will not be supporting your amendment to our amendment that you did not actually move. It was more a concession.

Mr Ferguson - It was actually a foreshadowed amendment.

Ms WHITE - A foreshadowed amendment. We would like to proceed to a vote on the amendment we have moved because we believe it is in the best interests of the parliament for the government to be accountable. The arguments you have made simply are not sufficient to convince us.

The House divided -

AYES 11

Mr Bacon
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Haddad (Teller)
Ms Houston
Ms O'Byrne
Mr D O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

NOES 11

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Brooks
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)

PAIR

Dr Broad

Mr Hidding

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. I therefore have to use a casting vote. In accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, thank you to the Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor, for the courtesy. I feel it is helpful for me to jump in here and move an amendment by the Government. I move -

That in the part headed, Membership of Committees, in paragraph 4, by leaving out: 'at the discretion of the Chair.'

I reiterate that on the advice, which was that it is considered a somewhat redundant provision in any event, removing it removes any doubt. We are happy to remove it. I want to refute the silly comment that was made by the Leader of the Opposition that we are a government that does not want to see this process respected. We are, to the extent that on behalf of the Government I have accepted all of the time requests made by the Opposition. I have invited, and I continue to invite, respectful, constructive negotiations to achieve and arrive at these motions being moved through this House. The behaviour is opportunistic.

Mr Bacon - Opportunistic, Rebecca.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, opportunistic, but helps no one.

Ms White - You are setting a brand new precedent. That is nothing to be proud of.

Mr FERGUSON - I will tell you what else I am proud of; I am proud that the Government is supporting the right of the Opposition to ask all the questions they want to ask, at the lengths of time they want to ask, with whatever member who wishes to arrive at the committee, to ask their questions. I also stand by the behaviour of the Government that has even increased the number of questions in the ratio that Ms White's party can ask.

Tasmanians will be disappointed to know that the Labor Party is trying to up-end what is supposed to be a process that does not divide us along this House. We are supposed to, and our predecessors have attempted to, make this process not political. It is not meant to be political. We are not supposed to be scoring points across the Chamber when we are setting up something that is a 24-year-old tradition.

Dr Broad - You just changed it.

Mr FERGUSON - We have changed it in the favour of the Opposition, Dr Broad, yes. We are making it more supportive of your right to turn up and ask questions. I stand by it. Now that the Labor Party's amendment has been lost, I also stand by the commitment that I made earlier in the debate to clean up this paragraph 4, which I am advised has been hanging around for much longer than it has ever been utilised, but for the avoidance of doubt and the assurance that the Greens and the Labor members can come up and ask questions. I move that motion and commend it to the House.

[11.47 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, in response I indicate we will accept the amendment put forward by the Leader of Government Business. Let us be clear, for some people respect is a relative term. For the Leader of Government Business to stand up there, given his performance in Estimates in the last four years, given his approach and particularly the patronising approach to the Leader of the Opposition, patronisingly dismissing her contribution as something that is petty. It was a contribution of substance around the principles of Estimates, around the principles of accountability, about the role of opposition keeping government to account and providing information for the people of Tasmania, which clearly you seek to avoid. You have avoided it in the last four years and now you have sought to nobble the committees. If you genuinely

respect, and if you follow through in actions in your rhetoric, Leader of Government Business, you would not have sought to nobble accountability through the Estimates process.

We accept we will be keeping a razor sharp eye on the conduct of your Chairs and how they perform under these new arrangements. The arrangements had been in place for over 20 years, allowing the opposition members to have their say, ask their questions, to work through the budget line-by-line so that the Tasmanian people have confidence in what is happening with their taxpayers' money: their taxpayers' money, not yours.

We are very disappointed in the patronising approach that you have just taken in terms of the Leader's contribution -

Mr Ferguson - You are playing politics.

Mr O'BYRNE - We are not playing politics. Scrutiny is not playing politics and having formal members at the table being able to conduct themselves in the business of the Estimates is very important work. Whilst we accept the amendment as put forward by the Leader of Government Business, we are very concerned about the impact on Estimates, the impact on scrutiny, and the impact on the Tasmanian people.

[11.49 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, there has not been a more salient example of why the numbers in the House need to be restored than the debate that we are having right now. We would not be in a situation where the government does not have enough backbenchers to staff formally, properly constituted Estimates committees. There would be a healthy number of members of the backbench in order to apply a measure of scrutiny to their own ministers. We really do need to have the debate in this place, and to remove the politics from the debate about restoring the numbers because obviously it is in the interests of the parliament, it is in the interest of transparency and accountability to have the numbers in the House restored.

I acknowledge that it was going to be pretty much physically impossible for the Government to staff the committees or to populate the committees in the way that they have been in the past. I remember that between 2010 and 2014, even though I was the minister for human services and other portfolios, I had the shadow animal welfare spokesperson's role and asked questions on animal welfare at the time. It caused the Clerk of the day, Mr Alcock, some concern because it is not the convention that ministers asked other ministers questions.

That said, we are quite prepared to accept the amendment put forward by Mr Ferguson, and also to acknowledge that these have been the most collaborative and respectful negotiations on Estimates, certainly since the last term of government. The last term of government was very difficult, not for the Government, obviously. This has been a much more collaborative and realistic approach to negotiating the Estimates schedule and the only lingering concern that we have, first of all, is for Mr Hidding's physical health, but also for the fact that -

Mr Brooks - You are concerned about that?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I have a lot of time for Mr Hidding. I understand that Mr Hidding is not here today because he is representing the minister for tourism and trade at the ministerial council meeting in Adelaide. Again, if we had a properly restored House -

Mr Bacon - I believe Adelaide has direct flights to Taiwan.

Ms O'CONNOR - Taiwan? We have not sent a trade delegation to Taiwan for many years because we are too busy pandering to the Chinese communist government. We are concerned, but we are prepared to accept that given the qualifier that the Opposition would have three questions and then the Greens one and the Government one, but it does say here, 'or in such form as the committee determines'. Let us face it, any question that comes from either the Chair, or Mr Hidding, will not be about scrutiny. We have all sat through these before. I hope that the committee, in the spirit that Mr Ferguson is talking about - and that is the spirit of effective scrutiny, and openness and transparency - that the Greens are given a fair crack at the table because there are questions, and all members know this, that only we will ask. These are questions that significant constituencies want answers to.

I encourage the Leader of Government Business and Mr Brooks and Mr Shelton, who will be in the chair, to acknowledge that if they want to be seen to be accountable and transparent, providing equal time to Dorothy Dixers and Greens members is not in the spirit of transparency and accountability. We will accept the amendment, and in parting, when we have the debate about restoring the numbers I ask members to reflect on the events of the past hour-and-a-half in this place.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Budget Speech - Attendance of Members of the Legislative Council

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I thank the House for its support for that amendment.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House of Assembly requests all members of the Legislative Council to attend in the House of Assembly Chamber following the first reading of the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2018 for the purpose of listening to the speech by the Treasurer in relation to the Tasmanian Budget 2018-19.

Motion agreed to.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Economic Reform

[11.55 a.m.]

Mr BACON (Denison) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: economic reform.

It could easily be titled 'lack of economic reform' over the past four years. We have seen a total failure in economic reform from this Government. There was only one thing you could point toward and it was not a major reform. The Treasurer went in full of bluff and bluster. He is the tough guy of Tasmanian politics, as we all know, but he was forced into a humiliating back down. As we heard in question time today, his failed takeover of TasWater, the MOU he signed, will not deliver the election promises he took to the election. It is one of the great backflips in Tasmanian political history and it does show that the Treasurer has failed in his only attempt at economic reform.

When asked exactly what economic reforms he could point to over the last four years, he had nothing he could point to. It looks as though the next four years are going to be a repeat of the last four. We have a total lack of ambition in this Treasurer and this Government when it comes to economic reform. He points to budget, which is simply budget management. I argue he has failed at that as well. He is good at the spin but in the substance of the budget, it is not there with this Treasurer.

In answer to a Dorothy Dixier today, the Treasurer updated the House on the 2017-18 operating balance outcome. After \$100 million in additional federal payments, he only managed to increase his fake surplus by around \$25 million. There was an underlying budget deficit of \$136 million in the revised Estimates Report. He was asked to update that figure in question time yesterday. He told us we have to wait until Thursday. He can cherrypick figures he wants to update. The one thing he does not want to talk about is that he promised to give an underlying budget deficit larger than we would have. He is probably right on that fact. The only thing he can point to is budget management, which is not economic reform. He has failed at budget management and he has done that by ripping dividends out of GBEs time and again.

He ripped \$75 million from the Hydro and \$100 million from the MAIB. We heard comments from Mr Challen at MAIB Estimates last year, talking about the 50 per cent dividend strategy that was ratcheted up by this Treasurer as 60 per cent to squeeze out every dollar he could. Mr Challen talked about the risks to sustainability of the MAIB at 60 per cent. What did the Treasurer do during the election campaign? He ratcheted the MAIB dividend up to 90 per cent to fund all the pork-barrelling the Liberal Party did through the election campaign. At 60 per cent, it was not sustainable for the MAIB. There was an agreement between the MAIB and the shareholder ministers, including the Treasurer, that they would revert that to a 50 per cent dividend ratio. The Treasurer has broken that agreement. He did not consult with the MAIB on breaking that agreement. He did not consult because he refused, when given two opportunities, to say he had consulted and to outline when that occurred. The Treasurer was given two opportunities to do so. He waffled on for over 10 minutes, if you combine those two answers, and did not address the issue of consultation around the 90 per cent dividend payout from the MAIB.

He would not say whether any consultation had occurred and he would not say when. It appears that no consultation occurred. The Treasurer will, in a moment, have seven minutes to outline exactly what consultation occurred and when. We urge him to take that opportunity and tell us exactly what that consultation involved. We know he has been a total failure when it comes to economic performance. You only have to look at the MOU with TasWater. It confirms that the four promises made by the Liberal Party concerning TasWater at the recent election will not be met. They will not take control of Tasmania's water and sewerage. They will not lower real water prices. The plant will not deliver money to improve infrastructure and they cannot guarantee dividends will flow to councils.

This Treasurer has been a complete failure in economic reform. You only have to ask him to point to the economic reform he has delivered in the last four years. We know he cannot do that because he did not do it yesterday. Let us give him a pass on that. Let us write the last four years off and say that the next four years will be your opportunity. Now you have a chance, let us hear a bit of ambition from the Treasurer, a bit of vision for the future for the Tasmanian economy and let us hear it in the next seven minutes.

We have increasingly seen, in the business community and other interest groups throughout the state, a real focus on the failings of this Government in economic reform. We have seen the TCCI, together with TasCOSS and others, put out the Tasmanian Report, commissioned and delivered by the highly respected economist, Saul Eslake. We know this report has set out a range of problems in Tasmania. We have employment growth below the national average. We have the highest unemployment rate, the highest long-term unemployment rate, the oldest and the fastest ageing population, the lowest median household incomes, the lowest average weekly wages, and what we have in this Government is -

Time expired.

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on this MPI today. I made the point yesterday that the single most important economic reform we have to live with has been to fix the state's finances and to take them out of the red and into the black. The contrast could not be starker. Four years ago I was standing in this place and talking about the report from Treasury. In that, over the forward Estimates, cumulative deficits were over \$1.1 billion and net debt was forecast to rise to \$400 million.

During the last term we know, as it is a fact, that over 10 000 jobs were lost at the peak of the recession. The unemployment rate peaked at over 8 per cent and Tasmanians were leaving the state in droves. We turned all that around and that is a significant reform in itself. We reformed tax and provided changes to the payroll tax framework to encourage more young people into work and into traineeships and apprenticeships.

We have outlined a range of significant election commitments to further reform of the tax system. We will be continuing our focus on engaging with and encouraging young people into traineeships and apprenticeships. We will be using the tax system to boost housing supply. Look at the last term. Now I have a little more time to speak about these matters, we brought forward the single largest reform to superannuation in this state. We created the business with the largest balance sheet capacity in this state.

The other side were going to run the risk of losing that opportunity for Tasmania. We made a decision that we would reform superannuation, work with Tasplan to build their balance sheet to protect jobs and provide an opportunity. It is a reform of Government. We underpin jobs and we created a business with the largest balance sheet. Tasplan is now setting an extraordinarily high standard and winning award after award and we should be very proud of that.

We have reformed the Building Act. We have made it easier for people to build in Tasmania. The reforms that have been introduced are nation-leading. The opportunity that has flowed into our broader economy means we are bringing forward more renovation work and more dwellings are being built as a result. We legislated for and landed a statewide planning scheme, and I understand nearly 20 local government areas in the LPS have brought forward their local planning scheme

amendments by the end of the year - 17 to 20, I believe. That will ensure we have consistent planning rules across the state.

A reform which has been long objected to by the Opposition and opposed has been the reform of education. The single most important economic reform is what you can do with education to give kids a better start. In rolling out years 11 and 12 to high schools across the state we have provided more young Tasmanians with the opportunity to stay engaged longer in education and have the opportunity of a better life, something that has been opposed every step of the way by those on the other side.

Ms O'Connor - The previous government signed up to Gonski, remember?

Mr GUTWEIN - You did not support rolling out, as we have done, years 11 and 12 to every high school.

You only have to look down the road. Our work with TasWater four years ago got Mac 1 out of the ground with respective headworks. I remember being there with Michael Vos on the day and he said that the final decision was made in terms of the headworks charges. That was what tipped the balance to bring that development out of the ground.

Ms O'Connor - Paid for by taxpayers.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor, I warn you for constantly interjecting.

Mr GUTWEIN - Last year we reached in and took decisive action to ensure Tasmanians were not faced with the double-digit price rises that were occurring across the country in energy prices. We determined we would set the wholesale energy price at a level that meant Tasmanians, over the last 12 months, would not have been subject to a 20 per cent increase, as occurred in other parts of the country. We have done all that whilst being opposed every single step of the way.

Time expired.

[12.09 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Treasurer is normally a very confident speaker on his feet but it has been interesting watching him spend seven minutes trying to demonstrate evidence of economic reform in Tasmania, pointing to administrative changes, tweaking the tax system, delivering a statewide planning scheme which was started by the previous Labor planning minister, which has transpired to be a complete disaster for local communities, shuts Tasmanians out and is leading to ad hoc developments.

I really had a heart full of hope when I saw the MPI this morning was about economic reform. There has not yet been a contribution from either Labor or the Liberals that goes to the heart of the issue in Tasmania, which is that there is no vision for this state. We do not have a plan for Tasmania. It is all ad hoc. There is no overarching vision for delivering economic prosperity, social wellbeing and environmental good health. A vision for Tasmania, genuine economic reform, must be integrated with a response to climate change - adaptation, mitigation, making sure there is resilience within our landscapes and within our community, making sure we have a planning system that works for this place and for people.

We need, as Tasmanians, to have a shared vision for this island. At the moment we are wading through in the dark and are easy pickings for developers who come in here, see that we have a government that is prepared to roll over to developers, who think that 'open for business' is a policy and can get the red carpet treatment through the Office of the Coordinator-General, and have within the space of four years since the Liberals took office fundamentally changed the fabric of this island.

We have a planning system now so corrupted by developers' interests that we are put in situation where a massive development is proposed for a place like Dolphin Sands on the east coast - a 3200 hectare development with something more than 500 units of accommodation - sails into Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, where the councillors have had literally four days to look at a large body of documentation, none of which is detailed on what the actual development would be. That is not a vision for Tasmania. That is rolling over and letting anyone with big money move in and profit from what makes this place so special and so unique in the world.

We have not heard a word either from the Planning minister, the Treasurer or the Premier, about a vision for this state that extends beyond the making of money for the few. We have not heard a thing from either of those ministers about a corrupted planning process which is seeing a completely inappropriate development, which has the backing of the Chinese communist government, on our beautiful east coast. Not one word, and it is a significant issue. It is a huge issue for the people who live in and around Dolphin Sands on the east coast. We had a council, who because the planning laws are so poor, sent this through - this special area plan rezoning from agricultural land - without asking the basic questions. Where is the money coming from? What is this company? Where would the water come from? Where on earth on our parched east coast would there be enough water to provide for that massive development, which has the backing of the Chinese communist government?

As to the sale and the giveaway of public assets under this Government, they would call that an economic reform - opening up the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and other protected areas to private developments, degrading wilderness values. That is an economically retrograde step. It is also an environmentally retrograde step because once you compromise wilderness values, you compromise the brand and how people view us in the world. You have a government that under the guise of being open for business is prepared to give away public reserve land at Rosny Hill, prepared to give away effectively crown land at Kangaroo Bay and is prepared to sign over use of crown land at Dover for a divisive woodchip export port.

Where is the conversation in this place about infrastructure for the future that is resilient and will hold us in good stead in this century of rapidly accelerating climate change? Where is the conversation about climate-resilient infrastructure?

Dr Woodruff - Stuck on the Southern Outlet - that's all they ever talk about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right - more roads, more cars, more gouging of GBEs, more giving away of public assets: that is not economic reform. If the Treasurer goes out into the community and listens to key stakeholders who are concerned about this island's future, he will hear a recurring theme. That theme is: we need a vision, a plan for Tasmania's future. The last thing we had that came even close to it was the Climate Smart strategy that was delivered in the Labor-Greens government that brought together the triple-bottom line, major industrials, scientists, environmentalists and community activists for a shared economic, social and environmental vision

for Tasmania. Before that we had Tasmania Together, which was an outstanding initiative where Tasmanians were asked: What is your vision for the future? What is your sense of place? What do you want to see protected? What do you want to see developed? How do you view the future of our cities? Tasmania Together gave people a voice and now they are being denied a voice.

Time expired.

[12.16 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Tasmanian economy is an export-orientated one. It is an economy that relies heavily on the global and national conditions within which it operates. When you look at the global circumstances at the moment, our terms of trade, the level of the Australian dollar, the national GDP and where Tasmania is uniquely placed in a whole range of our key industries, this should be the time the Government is doing the hard work to ensure that we build the Tasmanian economy and create a more resilient economy that will not only take advantage of the global and national economic circumstances but build resilience within Tasmania so when those national and international circumstances invariably change, we are better prepared as an economy to withstand that storm.

In question time the Treasurer is very quick to get up and have a crack at our time in government, but if we had the global and national economic conditions he is now benefiting from we would be doing far better. We would not be sitting back and tinkering on the edges like this Treasurer is doing. I recall that in my first few days as economic development minister the Australian dollar peaked at \$1.10. At that point the four major industrials came to us and various industries that relied very heavily on the export market and said, 'This is the most difficult of times'. We worked extraordinarily hard with those industries and companies to keep the doors open, to keep Tasmanian jobs in the toughest of global circumstances.

There has been an appreciation in terms of the terms of trade by 30 per cent to 40 per cent, so they are better circumstances you find yourself in and to come up with a very short shopping list of tinkering around the edges, claiming the credit for other people's work, is not reform. It is not a vision, it is not an agenda and does nothing to build resilience within the Tasmanian economy.

Labor in government's record of reform is significant. There was removal of petrol rostering, seven-day trading, tax reform by removing significant state taxes, water and sewerage reform - it is Labor's reform, which allowed the \$1.6 billion TasWater capital program to commence. We built the irrigation schemes. It was Labor's idea to start that and build the irrigation schemes across Tasmania. We bought the two TT-Line vessels. We brought back the rail when the private operator walked away from its obligations to Tasmania to ensure that we had intermodal options for Tasmanian freight, particularly on time-sensitive freight. It was Labor that did the hard work to build the Tasmanian economy as we see it now.

In government in the toughest of circumstances we built a vision around a diversified economy, supporting our food and agricultural industries, supporting our tourism industry, supporting our wine industry and advanced manufacturing industries in the toughest of circumstances. That is where the work was done.

What do we see when the GDP, the GST, is in the favour and you have the wind at your sails? What have you done? A big doughnut, nothing. Water and sewerage reform - that was your big agenda. I know when I was contemplating about running again, talking and seeking hearings from a number of business people, the consistent theme about this Government is, 'They're managing

okay in good circumstances, but I wish we would see something from them, a vision, a bit of strategy, a little bit of ticker on some of the big issues'. What have we seen? Absolutely nothing.

Then you had a retreat down at Port Arthur or wherever it was, where your focus groups were telling you that you did not stand for anything, you had no agenda, no vision. The Treasurer said, 'I've got one, how about we attack TasWater?' For the next 18 months you went after Miles, and it was appalling. Then there was the massive capitulation on the opening day of parliament. You said, 'I am going to take control of Tasmania's water and sewerage.' You have not. 'I am going to lower real water prices'. You have not. You said your plan will deliver extra money for infrastructure. It has not. You cannot even guarantee the dividends to the councils. Your one big reform, your one big plan, you had handed back to you in a sling, didn't you? You went after Miles Hampton personally, which was shameful low ebb in terms of public conduct and how you treat Tasmanian businesspeople. You may disagree with what they say, you may disagree with the decisions they have taken in the role they are playing, but you do not denigrate the person. You do not play the person as opposed to the ball. That was a low ebb for Tasmanian politics.

Then the Treasurer was bragging about his local government reform. How much have you wasted on conversations with local government about voluntary amalgamations or working across councils in terms of shared user services? How much have you wasted in terms of that, with no major reform in local government?

You talk about the statewide planning scheme, which essentially is a single document which pulls together the lowest common denominators across all the regional planning schemes, which was essentially launched by Labor in government, but not one local government area has their strategy up. Not one local government area is providing certainty for business. If anything, the feedback from local government and business is that it is more complicated, more costly, and risks now are being transferred to the property developer or the property owner. That is a further dead hand on development in Tasmania. Not one significant reform. All you have done is welcomed the rivers of gold, the GST uplifts.

You have taken advantage of the foundational work of previous Labor governments in terms of the tourism industry, irrigation and freight. The Brighton Hub was a significant investment in ensuring freight from the first to the last mile. The port reforms, the money and the development in the Burnie port and the focus on that, the two TT-Line vessels - these are Labor initiatives to modernise the Tasmanian economy. We sat down with the fruit and vegetable industry and other agricultural industries in terms of their export orientation. You have done nothing.

Time expired.

[12.23 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this matter of public importance. Seriously, I have heard some funny things said in this Chamber, but the last contribution, if you could call it that, the so-called contribution from the wannabe leader on that side, takes the cake. Seriously? You trotted out such a ridiculous argument that did not stack up whatsoever. In spite of every economic indicator proving our reforms in government have delivered high business confidence, high retail -

Mr O'Byrne - What reforms?

Mr BROOKS - I will get to that in a minute, given you would not know.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BROOKS - The numbers show what we have done as a stark contrast to what you did. You can try to rewrite history as much as you want, which is a typical Napoleon attribute, but what we see here is the result of hard work by a majority Hodgman Liberal Government that focused on changing the future of Tasmanians. We heard some of the ridiculous arguments from so-called contribution of the Greens that said we had not done any reform and we did not have a plan. We did have a plan. We have had a plan for Tasmania and for Tasmanians over a long period of time and that is still being delivered now.

It is astounding that they have talked about what reform has been done. Reform is making changes in something in order to improve it and I believe we have improved the economy. The honourable David O'Byrne was too arrogant when he was the minister to talk to small business owners, when in government, and his policies worked against business. Businesses said your policies worked against you. The only response you would have was that we do not know what we are talking about. I say to captain negativity, sitting over there, the feedback from business now is certainly different from that given to Mr O'Byrne on that side.

We all know they do not have a specific example. Local benefits test, reform, reforming in the way Government tendering does. This is something you refused to do when you were the minister. No wonder business confidence collapsed under you in government policy; you refused to do it. We implemented it, we set out a proactive approach to encouraging business to participate in government tendering and to win government tenders, and the results reflect that work. They reflect the reform we brought in, which has allowed more small and medium-sized businesses in Tasmania to participate in tendering and win more government contracts.

The biggest spender on goods and services in the state is the Tasmanian Government and you, as the minister, refused to listen and refused to do anything. You would not reform it, you argued against it, you did nothing and then it took us in government to fix it. You can hide under the desk as much as you want. We all know you failed and that is why you were thrown out. You talk about reform - you destroyed the small business community and small business sector and the census business results indicate that.

If you want to look at why the economy is so much stronger now, why it is going so much better, it is because business is confident. They know there is a government that listens to them, unlike you, and I have given you a specific example of where you failed and you would not do anything. We have reformed it and it is now delivering a better result, a better outcome and a better prospect of jobs. That is also the case if you look at the job numbers. There are more jobs for Tasmanians than there were previously under you.

The biggest reform: we do not spend more than we have coming in. That is a really good reform. It is not that hard but it is impossible for you on that side to understand it. You cannot keep spending money you do not have; it is not Monopoly money. You cannot make it up. We know you want to try to pretend you can ignore it. You spent the super fund. You stole the Tasmanian workers' super fund for your own personal benefit. You spent \$1.7 billion of the people's money to keep yourself on this side of the government benches, then you come in and lecture us. You still could not even manage a surplus with a \$1.7 billion theft of the superannuation fund. Do not tell us you know what you are doing when the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The results show themselves.

Now you are complaining and whingeing because you are captain negative and we all know it. We all know you are working on the O'Byrne ultimatum. You try to lecture us on this. Seriously? Out of all the things you could choose, I would have thought you would not lead with your chin as much as you do. You have learnt nothing because that is all you are doing. You have no credibility. You have no record worth mentioning, other than, 'to learn from what not to do'. That is the only record we should reflect on from you, Mr O'Byrne.

When you were the minister in charge of economic development, nothing happened. Even our upgrading of the *Spirits* to improve the opportunity for tourists to come here, you opposed. The Labor-Greens opposition whinged about that and now it has worked you are telling us we have not done anything and to name one thing we have done. I have given you half-a-dozen things and that was without even trying very hard.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (No. 7)

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 June 2018 (page 86)

[12.31 a.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this important legislation and I congratulate Ms Courtney, the Minister for Primary Industries and Water. This is an important bill and it proves the Government does the job. It is welcoming to see those opposite, the Labor Party, cannot find much to whinge about in this. Congratulations to them and well done for supporting a Government initiative brought on by my good friend and colleague, Ms Courtney, the minister. I congratulate her on her elevation to Cabinet. She is contributing an immense amount of experience and expertise across her portfolios.

It is exciting to make a contribution on this bill. I note it takes action in response to recommendations made as a result of the 2015 Natural Resource Management Review undertaken by DPIPWE while ensuring the management of their important natural resources is not compromised. It is important to have a government and a minister that listens, takes on board advice and recommendations and acts on them. It is in stark contrast to what we previously saw. We do listen and take concerns and recommendations into consideration.

The final report of the review noted that stakeholders valued the role of the Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Council in establishing Tasmania's NRM arrangements but question the ongoing usefulness of the council in its current role. That is no criticism of anyone other than to ask where we are heading as a state. We have heard previously the carping and the whingeing, especially from captain negative, about where we are heading as a state.

This Government takes seriously the opportunities we want to put in place for Tasmanian business growth and Tasmanian kids coming through the education system, through our reform, even of the high schools. We are trying to keep our kids in school for longer, again opposed by those opposite and which is not surprising. This is a relatively minor step in the grand scheme of

any reform we are doing but it is an important example of this Government looking to the future but listening to the advice that it receives. The ability of the minister of the day to form a special advisory committee to advise on specific NRM issues, as required, means that the minister can receive meaningful advice in a timely manner and respond to current issues accordingly.

It is an important aspect of the challenging role that the minister has in her portfolios that she cannot only focus on what is needed but to respond to issues that arise. In that portfolio there are things that come up that do become urgent without any notice. It is important that we look at what we are going to do to manage that. The review also noted that the NRM bodies have again demonstrated that they are performing their roles and functions as outlined in the act. It makes sense that in line with the Government's policy to reduce administrative costs and streamline processes that the statutory time line for reviewing the act be extended.

We have heard the conspiracy theorists previously in other debates say that this could be some sort of secret agenda to hide things, to delay a review or to provide the opportunity to scrutinise it, but it is welcome to see those opposite supporting this legislation. Similarly, removing the outdated requirements for accreditation criteria for regional NRM strategies that refers to a national ministerial council that no longer exists cuts red tape. It is this Government's agenda to reduce the legislative and regulatory burden wherever possible. This is in spite of the criticism and the failure of those opposite to understand a simple concept that we want to make it easier for people to do things. We remain committed to that agenda. We remain committed to looking at any aspect possible to make life easier for the business community and people who want to do things.

No-one is arguing that there should not be any regulation or statutory checks and balances but, an example could be our building reform where now it does not cost more to get the approval than what the actual shed or carport cost to build. I remember that debate on the previous bill and some of the criticisms from those opposite which were about their continued fear for any changes in what they thought was not red tape but was a conspiracy theory about avoiding scrutiny.

We remain committed to that goal of cutting and reducing red and green tape, where appropriate, because it is an important aspect of allowing Tasmanian businesses to get on with doing what they do best. That is creating jobs, employment, investment, enabling our kids to have a job and an income here rather than seeking avenues and adventures elsewhere. This forms part of that and we continue to be committed to looking at opportunities to make it easier, and making it more efficient, and making it as simple as possible.

For many years, the three regional NRM organisations have played a key role in delivering state and national environment and agricultural priorities and their on-ground activities provide value to our community. The Hodgman Liberal Government recognises this valuable role and has committed to increasing funding to the NRMs to \$4.2 million over four years. In the bill these contemporary amendments will further improve and strengthen NRM arrangements in Tasmania. It is exciting that I can stand beside a minister of the calibre of Ms Courtney, bringing legislation such as this into this place. It is a privilege to stand with the Government and to be a part of the Government to continue to deliver for Tasmanians, to continue to deliver to the communities and stand up for what is important. I commend the bill to the House.

[12.40 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I congratulate the minister on delivering the present legislation to the House. Labor will be supporting the amended bill today.

It is pleasing to see that the Government has noted and included most of the recommendations in the 2015 NRM review in this amendment bill. The formation of a special purpose committee on an as needs basis is a good initiative. To bring in particular skills and expertise as they are required by a government is sensible and that is why we support this bill.

In the past, the council fulfilled an important role in the oversight function by identifying priorities and implementing and administering national and state programs. Stakeholders had indicated that they support this change to remove the NRM council and accordingly we support this too. I would not let this opportunity slip to ask a couple of questions of the minister, given the current situation that two of our NRM bodies in the state find themselves in.

Those questions are: how will the Government liaise with the regional NRM bodies around the state, particularly given the uncertain times for those in the north-west and south, with their value for money being questioned by the federal government? Further, is the Tasmanian Government concerned about this?

I want to highlight to the House the importance of NRM, particularly in my local community in north-west Tasmania and King Island. This was encapsulated very well by the editorial in *The Advocate* recently by Luke Sayer, who is now the editor of *The Advocate* newspaper, but also worked for the Cradle Coast Authority for some time.

Luke goes on to say:

News in recent days that the future of funding for the region's natural resource management body is under threat is not to be taken lightly.

The lack of an ongoing program in this space will have wide-reaching consequences across the region, and further afield.

The bid by Cradle Coast NRM for a five-year funding deal from the Federal Government would have come with lot of work from the local team responsible for the many projects and programs which fall under its control.

It is the first time the regional body Cradle Coast Authority has had to bid in a competitive tender process for the funding to continue for this type of work.

Making these types of organisations take a businesslike approach to spending government money is not a bad thing.

But to see it reach a stage where funding for a significant operation goes out the window and will see its work shut down, should be ringing alarm bells.

The Cradle Coast isn't the only region dealing with the withdrawal of funding, with southern Tasmania, and parts of Queensland among those to miss out as well.

The work of the organisation stretches to all corners of the region and touches on so many aspects of our community.

From cleaning up Macquarie Harbour and beaches right around the region, protecting streams and rivers from stock or to dealing with the spread of dreaded weeds such as gorse or rice grass, the NRM body has an important role to play.

But they have also been involved a variety of capacity building projects across the region, helping smaller local operations such as Landcare and Coastcare groups with a myriad of things.

Groups like Cradle Coast NRM can bring together expertise and knowledge and maintain it within the local area. Because they service a large area, such as ours, they can recruit the type of technical specialists which would be beyond the reach of smaller operations.

If funding can't be maintained, then this type of knowledge and expertise will be lost to the region - or it will need to be brought in, often at an inflated cost for one-off projects or programs. In the end that means that taxpayer dollar doesn't go as far.

That was a great example of the good work that the NRM does in our community, and also highlights a number of the issues that the organisation is facing at the current time.

It is always important to look back at your own experiences with organisations in the community and my experience with Cradle Coast NRM goes back to the work of the flood committee that was formed after the flood event in Latrobe and Sheffield and other parts of north-west Tasmania in 2016. I was fortunate enough to be on that committee and involved in the work that was undertaken.

In that capacity, the NRM worked very closely with local government, but also with state government departments as well, as we looked at flood mapping in our region, changes in river systems, changes in the landscape, banks and soil composition, and the number of log jams and collection of debris which were found in many of the river systems. In many instances, this debris that contributed to that flood event is still in those river systems in north-west Tasmania. There was a great opportunity for NRM and DPIPW to work together and utilise the expertise of NRM and the technology they had available to them, to look at the mapping and changes that had occurred in north-west Tasmania as a result of that flood event. One of the recommendations of the North West Regional Flood Recovery Committee was for those two entities to work more closely together, to share more data and information in future.

I reflected this past weekend when I joined with my colleague, the Labor member for Braddon, Dr Shane Broad, and Labor candidate for Braddon, Justine Keay, on the banks of the Mersey River at Latrobe, which was one site of the wrath of the floods of 2016. We talked about the importance of federal and state governments working with local governments in an effort to look at improved mitigation, improved alerts and warning responses during flood events, working together to learn from the lessons of the past and to plan future mitigation strategies. At that time I thought about the work we did as a committee. We talked a lot about the importance of an immediate, short-term and a long-term response to flood events. Now is the time to learn from a lot of that work done in those early days - the mapping, the changes in the water systems and how that might, through the work currently being undertaken by the Latrobe Council, inform mitigation and future planning for their municipality around levies and the rural landscape - and that it is time for us all to work together. Through those lessons we learned that NRM also has an important role to play in future.

It was interesting that the 2015 NRM review talked about the roles and functions of the regional committees and reinforced the importance of those. I read to the House from page 9 of that report -

The regional model of delivery accommodates regional differences. It identifies regional NRM priorities and emerging issues, and facilitates the integration of local level management and planning activities.

Although some cost-savings may be made by combining the three regional committees into a single entity, these benefits are unlikely to result in substantial efficiencies and may be counter-productive in terms of regional delivery and engagement. Centralising NRM may reduce resources within the regions and be detrimental to local partnerships with industry and other important stakeholders. It may also lead to overall reduced resources for the delivery of NRM in Tasmania.

Since they were established, the regional committees have performed an important function, as demonstrated in their reporting requirements. They have evolved since Tasmania's NRM arrangements were created and have responded well to community needs and expectations.

The functions of regional committees are considered appropriate for the purpose of the Act, and no recommendations are made to modify their existing roles and functions.

Further, on page 10 of the report, they looked at the effectiveness of the regional strategy work that had been undertaken -

The regional strategies have fulfilled an important function in guiding the regional delivery of NRM. The regional strategies guide the activities of each regional body and have contributed to building community engagement and encouraging community participation.

The regional strategies have been effective in achieving natural resource management outcomes that are consistent with and promote the State and regional priorities. No recommendations are made to modify the arrangements regarding regional strategies.

Once again, that reaffirms the value of the regional NRM bodies in Tasmania.

The last example of my experience I reflect on today in working with Cradle Coast NRM was my role as a director on the board of the Cradle Coast Authority, representing Local Government when I was the Mayor of Burnie. I found it fascinating to work with the team at NRM and gain a better understanding of the work they do that often flies under the radar in the local community. One of the examples I share with you today is about their Inspiring Our Kids - school education program. It is a fantastic program that is delivered across Braddon and aims to inform and engage with local school communities about their local environment and build an understanding of the link between environment and prosperity in regional Tasmania.

The first line on this information sheet about the program sums it up in saying -

When considering the role of NRM's Community Education programme we realised that we are actually helping develop environmentally responsible leaders of the future.

I will outline some examples of the projects that NRM are responsible for delivering in north-west Tasmania in order of schools terms. In term one the schools work with the community education officers to develop their own individualised program for the year and they participate in the national Schools Clean Up Day in March. In term two there is an information session for teaching staff on Kids Teaching Kids in May, which is a really successful program, World Environment Day and World Oceans Day participation. In term three there is a national school tree planting day in July, National Science Week in August, the fantastic University of Tasmania Science Investigation Awards, which are held each year in north-west Tasmania, the Cradle Coast NRM Kids Teaching Kids program again, biodiversity month in September and National Threatened Species Day, something we have been talking about in the House recently in line with Threatened Species Day held in September.

In term four there is Enviroweek, which is an Aussie Backyard Bird Count, National Recycling Week, Coastcare Week and they have a program they run, Inspiring Our Kids partnership, with programs as well. They work with a number of organisation across the region, including the Parks and Wildlife Service, National Science Week, UTAS Science Investigation Awards, UTAS Children's University, national Kids Teaching Kids and local council initiatives, such as the Burnie Summer Beach Series.

Despite the changes being proposed in this bill being acceptable to Labor, it is incredibly important the Tasmanian Government works with our regional NRM bodies and the federal government into the future to ensure their ongoing funding is secured. It is also important that the great work they do in our local communities can continue into the future and that they can continue to work strategically with the state government and the federal government on projects of environmental significance.

[12.52 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Madam Speaker, as stated previously by my colleagues, Labor will be supporting this bill. Today I would like to pick up and expand on a point made yesterday by my colleague, Dr Broad, of the negative impact of the removal of Aboriginal people on the natural environment. I would like comment on the work NRM does in working with traditional owners to re-establish traditional land management practices. All the work NRM does is important, that is not in question. This is particularly true of the work they do in Aboriginal traditional land management programs. The aim of the program is to build knowledge and capacity within the Aboriginal community to manage natural values on country and enhance awareness of Aboriginal cultural values in natural resource management.

In the big picture, NRM North region encompasses the land of several traditional owner groups. NRM North acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians and their deep spiritual attachment to country and values the knowledge and contribution Aboriginal people make towards natural resource management. NRM North recognises that Aboriginal cultural values and the land management practices are critical to the management of the region's natural resources. The focus of the Aboriginal NRM program is to work in collaboration with the community to facilitate natural resource management on country and improve awareness and consideration of Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural resource management planning, use and development.

There are strategic outcomes aligned with this and from 2015 to 2025 they will include increasing Aboriginal community capacity to implement healthy country plans and provide opportunities for continuation of cultural knowledge and practices: supporting the Aboriginal community to implement priority actions for the management of cultural and natural values and country plans; supporting the Aboriginal community to protect heritage sites and landscapes outside of land management plans; and supporting the Aboriginal community to raise awareness with land managers, planners and recreational users to increase knowledge and recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage values and natural resource management.

NRM North's Aboriginal NRM program is delivered through a range of mechanisms including provision of training and capacity building for Aboriginal people and communities, providing funding and incentives for implementation of the Healthy Country Plan and facilitating the Aboriginal community to engage with land managers, land and recreational users to raise awareness. Key partners in this delivery of NRM programs include the Tasmanian Land Council, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and other Aboriginal corporations.

This is vitally important because cultural practices have fallen into disuse with the removal of Aboriginal people and we have seen the landscape change because of it. Much vegetation that was encountered by first Europeans in Australia was Aboriginal artefacts. Aboriginal people have used fire sticks to change the vegetation of the continent to suit their requirements. Fire had a number of functions in Aboriginal culture. One use was for signalling and the well-known smoke signals that we often see in movies were heavily utilised here.

Another was for clearing tracks through the bush and keeping poisonous snakes away from camps, making it easier to move through the bush. This function of fire was used regularly to keep tracks clear in thick bush in the mountains and the dense tea tree scrub in western Tasmania. It was also used to keep tracks clear in the tall tropical grasslands in northern Australia, so this was not just a Tasmanian practice. All across the continent fire was used to flush out animals from grass to make them easier to hunt. This was also used to encourage the kangaroo and other prey animals to congregate in areas of fresh vegetation on the areas that had been freshly burnt.

Fire encourages the regrowth of eucalypt forest and edible plant foods such as bracken, from which the roots, young leaves and shoots could be eaten. The ash from the burnt area forms fertiliser for regrowth as soon as it rains. Extensive regular burning altered the environment, increasing the area over which one could find food. One of the places where this had an enormous effect was on the west coast of Tasmania, converting the fire-sensitive rainforest of the southern beach that was a relic of Gondwana from mixed eucalypts and rainforest to scrub and eventually to heath and sedge lands. Since the end of the burning in these cleared areas the rainforest is reclaiming that grassland habitat.

In 1827 the explorer, Hellyer, came across grassland among the highlands of northern Tasmania. He called them the Surrey Hills after the countryside of England. The European colonist found that these grasslands were ideal for sheep, but found that once the Aboriginal people had been moved from the area, the regular fires stopped. Sour grass and scrub replaced the open grasslands and sheep farming ended in about 1845. European agricultural experts lasted 18 years. The allegedly inferior Aboriginal people who lacked agricultural knowledge, apparently, lasted many thousands of years on the same land and maintained the grasslands.

The firestick methods of Aboriginal people increased the amount of diversity of food available. The rainforest here was not rich in food plants or animals. The heathland, wet scrub and grasslands

that replaced it provided plenty of animals and food for plants. Two of the staples of temperate Australia were grass trees and bracken. Bracken colonises burnt forests, so rapidly provided food after the burning. The centre of the grass tree was eaten as a common food. One of the reasons firestick farming was so successful over a vast range of environment is that farmers adapted the fire regime to suit individual areas.

For over 60 000 years Australia's indigenous community cared for this country by using land management that worked with the environment. Using traditional burning, fish traps, sowing and storing, we were able to create a system that was sustainable and supplied the food we needed. When Europeans arrived, they brought farming practices suited to an environment very different from Australia that in the long term caused erosion and salinity.

While many historical European accounts of indigenous land management have faded, today there is a shift to recognise traditional owners and their practices and that they had sophisticated, sustainable agricultural systems. There is growing adoption of these practices to repair the damage done by European farming. One of the examples gaining traction is the use of traditional Aboriginal fire management. Indigenous communities used fire across Australia and in some areas this created expansive grassland and good soils, and in turn encouraged kangaroo to come that were later hunted for food.

Historians and researchers believe selecting this area to burn when and how often was part of indigenous knowledge of the land. The result was a mosaic of trees and grasslands that meant highly combustible eucalypt forests were not likely to create intense and destructive bushfires, as they do today. With the arrival of Europeans, much of this practice gave way as fire became feared rather than harnessed as a tool to manage scrub.

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

MOTION

Jobs Growth and Investment

[2.31 p.m.]

Mr BROOKS (Braddon - Motion) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

Members interjecting.

Mr BROOKS - Nowhere to hide for the anti-jobs crusaders opposite.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BROOKS - Coming from Ms O'Connor who gets up everyday and talks down the economy, talks down jobs, talks down the good work the Government is trying to achieve -

Ms O'Connor - How boring.

Mr BROOKS - It is very ironic but as usual Ms O'Connor has indicated her boredom with jobs in the north-west and the economy, so -

Ms O'Conner interjecting.

Mr BROOKS - So that is where we start off.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Acknowledges the strong increase in jobs growth and investment in north-west Tasmania since the election of the majority Hodgman Liberal Government in 2014.
- (2) Supports the very positive changes the policies of the Hodgman Liberal Government has made in the north-west Tasmanian community.
- (3) Recognises the strong support for north-west Tasmania from the federal Liberal Government and how the partnership between state and federal Liberal governments is delivering for Tasmania.
- (4) Notes how the north-west in particular suffered under a Labor-Greens minority government.
- (5) Agrees that Tasmanians reaffirmed their rejection of a job-destroying Labor-Greens minority government at the election of March 2018.
- (6) Further notes that only a majority Hodgman Liberal Government has a strong plan to further strengthen our economy, help more people into work and build on the gains we have made over the last four years to ensure even more Tasmanians can look forward to a better quality of life.

That sums up what we are going to be talking about this afternoon and debating and hopefully those on the opposite side will support this motion because ultimately it is about the future of our kids and the job prospects of those in the north-west.

What we have seen is a stark difference again from when those opposite were in government to where we are today. Even as you walk throughout the communities of the north-west and speaking to real estate agents, for example, there is real confidence. They are starting to see a higher churn rate in real estate property and markets which we know is delivered from consumer confidence and jobs growth.

Ms O'Connor - It is not Tasmanians who are buying those homes you know.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. That is the third time during Mr Brooks' contribution that you have interjected and you know that it is highly disorderly to do that.

Mr BROOKS - What we are seeing is a transition of the economy on the north-west. We know that there was a significant change in Hobart, in particular, probably a bit earlier than we saw in the north and then following in the north-west. There was a bit of lag in the economic growth that we were able to find for the community of the south. It is a really important aspect amongst the north-west that we do find ways to increase the economic activity within that very special region of Tasmania. A vitally important region that includes our core industries of agriculture, mining, forestry - now that we have been able to rebuild it - retail, specialist advanced manufacturing and other traditional core trades and services.

Through our initiatives and our plan for Tasmania and the north-west, we have seen a transition within the economy. Have we ever said, and are we saying, there is no more work to be done? We are not. We have never said that. There is always more to be done. It is effectively the strong position of this Government that we continue to be focused on what else can we do to make Tasmania a better place for everyone and attract investment and deliver the jobs that are much sought after.

Previously we saw a haemorrhaging of jobs in the north-west. I left Tasmania on 4 January 1991 and joined the Royal Australian Navy. That was predominantly due to a lack of jobs in the north-west. There were not many around in the early 1990s under another Labor-Greens disaster. We saw history repeating itself from 2010 to 2014. We saw people leaving in droves, seeing a better future for themselves in a state other than Tasmania and in the north-west.

As a government we focused on what we could do to increase investment and job opportunities for young kids in north-west Tasmania so that our kids and the community's kids, do not seek their only opportunities elsewhere, interstate or overseas. We had a very clear path and plan for the north-west in the lead-up to the 2014 election and in the subsequent 2018 election which continued that plan. It is important that we contrast what it was like back then and what it is now. We saw the region haemorrhaging jobs at around 50 a week. That was the regional jobs market in 2012 where there were 2400 jobs lost in the year to September 2012, which is virtually 50 jobs a week. We had more job seekers circling fewer potential jobs.

Part of the reason for that was the lack of confidence within the business sector, no confidence with consumer spending. There was no investment, or limited investment, certainly no growth. Tasmania was heading towards a recession. The government could not manage the budget and its policies actively worked against business confidence which has a direct implication and impact on jobs and jobs growth.

It is no surprise when you have a confident opposition at that time that put in place policies and frameworks that were about creating jobs and attracting investment. We are unapologetic about striving for more jobs in the north-west.

We put in place policies that were ridiculed, condemned and ignored by the then Labor-Greens disastrous government. These policies included our opposition to the disastrous forestry sell-out deal when Labor had sold its soul -

Ms O'Connor - That industry and the environmentalists supported.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BROOKS - We saw the demise of the mining sector. If you have a look at the indicators and what mining companies were saying at the time, they were better off investing elsewhere because of the instability in particular, under environmental regulatory changes. These were a direct reflection of instability amongst the then Labor-Greens government.

This is not me saying that. This is a fact that was said by mining company executives as to why they did not want to invest in Tasmania.

The member for Braddon, Dr Broad, may scoff at that but as usual, it proves the point that they simply did not get it.

We worked on a framework of policies that reversed that perception within the mining investment community because we have to fight for each investment dollar. Companies make decisions to invest in regions based on their ability to commence the project, the statutory and regulatory requirements of return on investment and application of appropriate regulatory standards to those investments. If you have a government that make it hard to do business they will find somewhere else that they can deliver what they are legally required to do under the Australian legal framework.

For Dr Broad's personal benefit, you can have a look at the Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies and they will tell you what the results of that were. If you had investment in that specific industry, they were not keen to come to Tasmania because of instability created by the government, in particular around environmental requirements. We were amongst the worst in the nation's survey.

We came up with a policy to relocate MRT from Hobart to Burnie. The reason for that policy framework - and I know previously those opposite said, 'What have you done in reform?' We confirmed today, reform is improving something or doing something that will improve the outcome and fix an issue - was that there was a real issue with investment in mining and exploration in Tasmania because of the policies of that Labor-Greens government. Those opposite can say that did not happen but one day they will come to the real world and acknowledge it did.

We saw, in our policy framework and in relocating MRT, an increase in belief from that sector and from the people who make decisions on exploration and on mining projects. They changed their view because they saw there was a government that listened and understood their concerns. That policy was about putting the right government services in the right place. The north-west coast is the heartland of mining. It is an amazing place for mining opportunity and exploration, done in the right way with some of the most stringent environmental requirements on the planet. Our policy agenda at that time was to put the government agency in charge of and managing mining, mining development and exploration out of Hobart into the heartland of mining in Tasmania.

One would think that is not a bad idea. It also helps with regional dispersal of jobs and brings more government employment to Burnie or the north-west. What was the then government's and now opposition's thoughts on that? They had about seven positions, maybe eight; I lost count after five. They could not make up their mind. They were conflicted because they hated the idea we had come up with something that might work and their pathological hatred of anyone successful continued in their role as opposition. They are also a fully-owned subsidiary of the unions and they did not like that.

You had the then leader of the opposition, Mr Bryan Green, arguing against jobs - in his own electorate - being relocated from Hobart to Burnie. He argued against the agency that is in charge of mining development being put in the heartland of mining. That is a classic example of the dysfunction we saw when they were in government, which continued in opposition. I am interested to know, because they were quiet on this during the election campaign, whether their policy is to reverse the relocation of MRT from Burnie back to Hobart.

I am not sure what Ms Dow thinks of that, whether she now supports MRT being in Burnie, and I am not sure what Dr Broad thinks. You would think the Labor members for Braddon would support some government jobs being moved out of Hobart to the north-west coast for the specific purpose of supporting mining investment in Tasmania, to the heartland of mining. They were too scared to come out with a position on it before the election and they were too scared to fight for mining opportunities in Tasmania. Instead, they were completely silent on it. I look forward to hearing Ms Dow's position on MRT being based in Burnie and whether Dr Broad also supports MRT in Braddon. Do you?

Dr Broad - Is this a debate now? I thought it was you having your usual rant.

Mr BROOKS - As I thought, here are the weasel words of the Labor Party. They are happy to interject when it suits them but today, on a question of whether Dr Broad supports jobs at MRT in the north-west, he is unable to maintain a position.

What has happened since that is important. We have seen a recovery in mining investment, exploration, projects and in confidence in what this Government is doing. That is what the policy framework was structured to deliver. It is something those opposite did not understand when they were in government, did not like when they were in opposition and do not comprehend because they still do not have a position. We can take it by the ongoing silence of members opposite they do not support MRT being based in Burnie. Shame on you, Ms Dow. Shame on you, Dr Broad, but what else would you expect?

We look at other industries such as forestry, the one those opposite attempted to shut down in their disgraceful sell-out to the greenies and the anti-everything brigade. What we saw was a government that proudly stood up and said we will back industry. We now see continued growth in jobs in forestry. This is because we set a policy framework in place that supported forest jobs. We see more people working and more confidence in that industry since we came to government because we focused on those jobs, particularly in the north-west. We remember the outrage among the forest industry at the Labor Party's sell-out of that industry to appease their Greens masters in cabinet and in government. It is clearly a sign of what those opposite will do to retain power. They will throw forest industry jobs on the scrap heap simply to keep themselves on the government benches. That is what happened and we have spent the last four years and a couple of extra months rebuilding after the damage done.

It was exciting to see the announcement of the Hermal investment in the north-west, which is going to deliver more jobs in that region. The exciting thing about that is there are as many or more jobs as part of the operating of that facility than the construction. Construction is key in driving growth and economic recovery in the north-west. It is also about the ongoing long-term jobs through the mining sector. I have spoken about Labor's opposition to jobs being in Burnie. They want them back in Hobart because the union told them to say that. The weak leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, Ms White, is too scared to stand up to the unions on this. We remain committed to forestry and mining as the linchpins.

We saw the anti-everything brigade's propaganda machine in action this week with their disgraceful, outrageous attempts to continue to kill off jobs and investment in the north-west and in particular the Arthur-Pieman multi-purpose use area. We saw the lies being peddled by the Greens, which is all they can do, and also the fear that they try to cultivate, not in the north-west because their vote there is only about 4 per cent, so the people who live in that community see through their BS because they know what the Greens are like. What the Greens are good at, though -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. As a matter of parliamentary behaviour I am not sure using the term 'BS' in any way detracts from what those letters actually mean and perhaps the minister - sorry, he is not a minister any more, I keep forgetting - perhaps the member would like to use different language in this parliament.

Mr BROOKS - I thank Ms O'Byrne for her gratuitous advice, who had the community march in the street in the north-west when she was the minister, and we all remember that, where she required police protection.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am not sure if you asked the member to change his language.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order - on another point of order?

Ms O'BYRNE - No, the same point of order. I am not sure, but did you direct the member to change the term 'BS' or not?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - The member changed his address and mentioned the streets.

Ms O'BYRNE - No, he did not, with great respect. I ask that he withdraw it or replace it - to withdraw it now.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - If the member takes personal offence I could ask the member to withdraw it, however, I ask the member to be conscious of the forms of the House and use appropriate language in addressing the House.

Mr BROOKS - Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker. For the advantage of Ms O' Byrne, I am happy to withdraw it -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Can I now seek that it is your ruling that the use of the term 'BS' is now parliamentary in this House? If so, then let the record note that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - I was listening to the member's contribution and I took it as 'beresk', but I have asked the member to be conscious of the language that he uses. If the words used were those that you heard then I am sure the member will take it on board.

Mr BROOKS - If Ms O'Byrne takes offence to that then I will withdraw it. What is interesting -

Ms O'Byrne - No, it is not because I take offence to it. It is because you cannot use the word 'bullshit' in parliament and 'BS' is exactly the same.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Byrne, you are stepping over the mark.

Mr BROOKS - And now we hear Ms O'Byrne swearing. It is terrible and outrageous.

Ms O'Byrne - You just said he could.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Mr Brooks has the call and interjections should cease.

Mr BROOKS - It is amazing that Ms O'Byrne wants to swear in this place.

As usual they are running a protection racket for the Greens because they are in coalition in opposition, as they were in government and hence the reason they were sent packing by the community in 2014, and they were reminded with their third worst ever defeat in history of why the community still does not trust them. They sold out jobs. Now we have the Labor Party running interference on behalf of the Greens because of the Greens propaganda that cannot get any resonance within the north-west community so they need to send it overseas.

We heard the hypocrisy of the Greens when they are able to fly a chopper over the north-west, over the Arthur-Pieman region, but no-one else is allowed in a chopper other than Bob Brown. It goes to prove the hypocrisy of those opposite. They are still a coalition in spite of the promises made by those others.

Quorum formed.

Mr BROOKS - It is interesting that once we start making those opposite accountable, they seek any means possible for protection.

The whole point of this is about those wanting to stay in the north-west, finding a career and having a home and a lifestyle there. In my completely biased opinion, it is the greatest place on the planet. But there is a difference between industries such as forestry and mining and in the confidence of those in the community. During the campaign as I walked around and spoke to those in the community there were comments about why would they want to go back to what it was. They are with us in the belief that there is more work to be done but they also know what those dark days of economic ruin were like under the guidance and leadership of the members opposite.

We set about our agenda in rectifying those issues, investing heavily in the north-west and making sure that the business community understands there is a government that will welcome the jobs they can bring rather than trying to shut them down. That further underpins our ability to invest in core key community service requirements - more doctors, more nurses, more police in the north-west, more investment in health and education, in particular things such as the upgrading of Latrobe High, Parklands High and Smithton High. Those things are important to people who want to look at working and living on the north-west. It is not just about the jobs. It is what sort of facilities and services are being provided in that region that couple that, because every time I spoke to people who were looking at moving interstate, the first questions around the dining table were, 'What is the education standard or system like in that area', particularly in regional and remote communities around the country. 'What sort of infrastructure is available? What sort of level of job security is available?'

The numbers prove that we have been privileged to be able to deliver a better outcome for those communities and those people who are not only looking at coming here but who are already here and want to stay here. We have seen that in spades in the continued growth in numbers. It is not just about retail growth, which is a reflection of consumer confidence, but also about real estate

turnover and availability, growth within housing markets, investment, construction and all those other key economic aspects that continue to be a key requirement of this Government's agenda to make sure this place is a better place than when we came in. Our job is to hand over to the Tasmanian community a better environment, a better economy and a better aspirational opportunity for those people who have trusted us with governance in this great state.

We take that seriously on the north-west and it is a shame that the members opposite, through their opposition to the relocation of MRT, for example, because the union told them to do so and because they are too scared to stand up for their own electorate, that the people of the north-west missed out. We saw them argue for four years against it. They had a policy that they have quietly tried to walk away from now, from what I understand, and it will be interesting to hear what members opposite now think about whether MRT should remain in Burnie. That is one example of one government agency, whose sole purpose is to support the mining sector with exploration, where they did not want those jobs in the north-west. Shame on them.

We are proud of our record of job creation on the north-west. It is due to the policies we put in place, our understanding of what drives those jobs and the needs of the community, which continue to be developed. I am privileged to bring this motion this afternoon and hopefully those opposite will support it. Given their complete disregard for a strong economy and their complete disregard for jobs in the north-west I would be surprised if they do support it. Hopefully they learnt something from the last two elections they have lost, particularly in the north-west. This is where the primary vote is slightly higher than in Bass but it is still woeful and the reason is that you sold peoples' jobs. You sold out the community when you were in government. That is reason you sit on that side and the reason we are privileged to lead the community out of the wilderness and darkness you put them in when you sold their jobs out from under them.

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, Labor and I are firmly focused on creating employment opportunities in north-west Tasmania. We do not support the tone or the intimations presented by Mr Brooks this afternoon so we will not be supporting his motion. It is interesting when we look at the motion presented to the House in that Mr Brooks did not look at each of the key parts of that motion and outline his response or speak about each of those. He diverted quite significantly from topic.

I have tried to address each of those components and look at federal and state relations as part of that. I will be addressing that as part of my response today.

There is greater potential for jobs growth in the north-west through our key industries; education, tourism, advanced manufacturing, forestry, mining, energy, agriculture, health, community services and in our arts and cultural scene. There is greater emphasis in Braddon on the importance of education, skills and training, research and development, and value adding. As a local member I strongly support that. This is being driven by changes in our traditional industries. This change, as I have said before in this House, has been led by industry, community leaders and the University of Tasmania. The redevelopment of the University of Tasmania campus in Burnie, so that it is more closely aligned to the city centre, is an important project and must be continued to be strongly advocated for by local members and by the Tasmanian Government.

The Government has been a strong promoter of the northern component of this project and the funding for the city deal in Launceston. There are delays in both those projects and the timing of when those development applications were to be lodged with the respective city councils. I ask that these projects do not lose momentum, particularly the one in the north-west of the state, and that

there is strong advocacy in this place and our local communities for the importance of those developments going ahead.

I note my colleague, the Liberal member for Braddon, Mr Brooks, spoke in great depth about retail confidence. One of the essences of the importance of this project was about doing that: instilling retail confidence in regional Tasmania. This is particularly so for the city of Burnie and the other population centres surrounding that area because confidence is not as high in the retail sector. You only have to talk to small business owners in the north-west of the state to understand that. There is still more work to be done.

It is also important to highlight that local government has been the lead advocate in many of the economic development projects in the north-west, particularly around infrastructure projects such as the university development and the Living City Project in Devonport, also another great development for that city and its surrounds. The government has funded those projects accordingly. We cannot underestimate the role of the local government leaders in those projects either.

The change I spoke about in Braddon is in response to changes in demand, markets, our global economy, and changes in the Australian dollar. I acknowledge the economy in Braddon has improved but there is much more to do. Examples of economic growth in the forestry sector, as alluded to by the Liberal member for Braddon, has been influenced by changes in markets; FSC certification; research and development and new product development, such as Hermal Group's development proposed for Hampshire; changes in advance manufacturing through significant job losses; looking at new opportunities, led by industry and supported by government, following the closure of key businesses - not new government policy nor reform.

The Liberal member for Braddon denigrates the achievement of Labor over many years and during its time in minority government, time and again. I offer a different perspective when I look at our legacy. Arguably, it has contributed to the improvements in Tasmania's economy including irrigation schemes, the Tasmanian forestry agreement, *Spirit of Tasmania*, water and sewerage reform, Ten Days on the Island, and local government infrastructure investment. I ask, as my colleagues have earlier today in the House, what major reforms has this Government achieved?

Labor has a proud economic record. I share in this House one of Labor's key economic commitments, which was to create eight industry advisory councils to better match the work of industry and the community sector to that of government in Tasmania. We will be undertaking this work and inviting stakeholders from across industries, unions, education, community services and all levels of government to participate in these councils. Last week the PLP joined two Labor members for Braddon - we now have two seats in Braddon, Mr Brooks - to support Labor candidate, Justine Keay, in the electorate, doorknocking, meeting with people, talking about the issues important to them and to take the opportunity to visit local businesses and meet with key stakeholders across Braddon.

Advanced manufacturers we visited showcased their impressive and diverse businesses and spoke about the difficulties in their businesses in accessing a skilled workforce, being globally competitive and a step ahead of the game to position themselves for new work including in the defence industries. This is an important point. Industry has changed and our industries are competing globally. There is a real need to train more people locally in specialist skills. The current federal Budget includes significant cuts to education, skills and training in Tasmania. In contrast, federal Labor's alternative budget centres on investing in skills and training for future workforce requirements. This will make it easier financially for our young people and our older workers

transitioning from traditional industries to undertake apprenticeships in their communities. This is very important, particularly in regional Tasmania.

I will pause to look at jobs growth in Tasmania. Mr Brooks' motion refers to that. It is interesting that recent jobs commentary in our local newspaper *The Advocate* talks about declines in employment across the region. That may be attributable to a slide in the participation rate in Braddon, meaning fewer people aged 15 and over were either working or formally looking for work. That is concerning. It highlights the need for greater investment in work readiness programs and training and skills opportunities for our young people in Braddon.

Labor has an economic plan. It was outlined in our Economic Direction Statement leading up to the previous state election. I will read through the key areas of Labor's Better Plan for Tasmania. One of these key areas is the importance of education and investing in education in this state. It was mentioned in the House earlier that this has fallen off our agenda. I reassure the House that is not the case and that education is critically important to the future of Tasmania. The first point of our Better Plan for Tasmania is Labor will keep Tasmanians healthier for longer, ensuring they are treated faster, and sending them home to their families sooner. Labor will create education pathways to ensure every Tasmanian can secure meaningful, rewarding and secure employment. Labor will build intergenerational infrastructure that supports productivity, job creation and economic growth. Labor will work with business, industries, unions and community groups to identify our competitive strengths, opportunities, weakness and skills gaps.

Labor will support our regions by listening to their needs and driving positive change. Labor will protect the vulnerable by investing in food security, neighbourhood houses and cost of living relief. Labor will protect the vulnerable by investing in food security, neighbourhood houses and cost of living relief. Labor will provide safer communities by supporting the frontline emergency services workers who support us. Labor will invest in renewable energy to provide energy security and tackle climate change. Labor will ensure visitor growth is sustained by futureproofing our icons and supporting festivals and attractions. Labor will create true partnerships with local government to drive better outcomes for Tasmanian communities.

As I travel around Braddon and the state meeting with stakeholders, common themes always emerge. They are in the need for greater investment in health services; access to training and skills; the need for greater investment in tourism product development; and access to a skilled workforce in those industry sectors that are growing. Prosperity and economic growth is not exclusive for the wellbeing of our communities. Our ageing population must be considered and planned for and it presents us with many opportunities for employment in regional Tasmania.

You cannot have a strong economy without a healthy, educated and inspired people. With growth comes a responsibility to plan effectively for change for those members of our community not directly benefiting from this growth and future areas of need. The member for Braddon espouses his Government's economic record and to reiterate his comments, he says you need a strong economy to provide social services and investment in communities. Each time he addresses the House on this matter, he admits that these services provide employment in Tasmania and are important industries that will aid population growth and skills shortage and address the needs of our ageing population. Mr Brooks can dwell on the past all he likes but we are concentrating on looking to the future and working with industry and our communities that advocate for need and look for more opportunity for employment growth in Braddon. We will wait for Thursday to see if the commitments this Government made during the election are upheld and funded. As for the policies,

we will wait to see if there is real impetus for change and reform which will truly improve the quality of life of all Tasmanians and those who live in our communities in Braddon.

[3.12 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I will make a brief contribution so the Greens are on the record and then I will hand over to my colleague, the Labor member for Braddon, Dr Broad. We will not be supporting this motion; it is not a motion that is written to garner the support of the House, unlike the two that we will be debating later today in private members' time.

This is a motion that is all about giving Mr Brooks meaning in his parliamentary life and creating a wedge in this place. It is a puerile and childish-written motion that delivers nothing for the people on the north-west coast, nothing for young people, nothing for displaced workers from the manufacturing and resource extraction sectors. It is lip service which is exactly what the Liberals have given to the north-west coast ever since they have been in government. The disrespect that the Liberals have in government for the brand of the north-west coast and the Tarkine is extremely destructive to the future social and economic wellbeing of the north-west of Tasmania.

Last week I was in Braddon, at Burnie and Wynyard. It is such a beautiful part of the world and the character within that community is great. It is really good to spend time in the north-west of Tasmania: it is very earthing. We were there to launch our fantastic candidate for Braddon, Jarrod Edwards. I found it a very powerful experience to speak to someone who is a takayna man and who has a lived experience of poverty and close connections, not only to country but to his community. The way he articulated his desire to provide hope and opportunities for the people on the north-west coast was really inspiring.

If Mr Brooks and his colleagues want to be taken seriously on a concern for the economic future of Braddon they will bring in better than this puerile pap. It is a waste of parliament's time like the seven minute Dorothy Dixier that we had to endure from Mr Barnett this morning.

[3.15 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Deputy Premier) - Madam Speaker, I understand Dr Broad wants to make a contribution as well. He said I might give him some time and I might.

In the interests of bipartisanship for our love of the north-west coast, I can not agree entirely with everything Ms O'Connor just said except for the fact that the north-west coast is a beautiful place. Those in this place who represent it are very proud of our region. Not only is it a beautiful place, it is also a stronger and more vibrant place than it was a few years ago and there are very good reasons for that.

Significant resources have been placed in those key areas of need, particularly in social services, health, education, child protection, community safety, not only resources on the ground but resources in infrastructure as well. As a result of good budget stewardship and management we are in a position to invest in key and essential services such as health, education and public safety and that investment has created an environment of confidence in the north-west coast. The member for Braddon, Ms Dow did acknowledge the jobs growth within the region and I am pleased the honourable member gave what was largely a very objective contribution. The north-west coast is a different place from the one it once was.

It reminded me that when I first entered the parliament in 2002 there was a buoyant economy. You could not do anything else but acknowledge the positivity at that point in time. We had the introduction of the two new *Spirits*, I and II, which gave the north-west coast a huge boost in confidence. The symbolism of those two ships gave everyone an air of confidence.

There was more economic activity, there was jobs growth. The 1990s, particularly the middle to the end of the 1990s, was a very challenging space for the nation to be in, let alone Tasmania. The important point to make here is that governments do need to demonstrate vision and leadership and we have as a government since coming in, in 2014.

We are mindful of the fact that we do need to balance the budget and the minority government of the Labor and the Greens did diminish confidence within Tasmania, particularly the north-west coast region. Key resource-based industries did feel under threat from the minority government of Labor and the Greens because there was a government that wanted to close down those key resource-based industries.

Ms O'Connor - Really? Wanted to close them down?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You did close them down virtually, particularly forestry. It was very clear.

Ms O'Connor - The industry was on its knees from 2006.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It diminished confidence within the region so it is pleasing that the north-west coast and west coast have seen a strong increase in jobs since the 2014 election and the average number of people employed in the year to April 2018 is approximately 1300 more than the last year of the Labor-Greens government. In total, there are 1500 fewer unemployed on the north-west coast than during the last years of the previous Labor-Greens government and this is good news. It points to confidence and the willingness of the private sector to invest in the region.

In April 2018 the year average unemployment rate was at 6.2 per cent, which contrasts with the average 9 per cent during the last years of Labor and the Greens. That is an improvement of some 2.8 per cent. You cannot deny that. I go to the point that Mr Brooks was making in respect of his first point which acknowledges the strong increase in jobs growth and investment in north-west Tasmania since the election of the Government in 2014. What really supports confidence and investment in regions across Tasmania - and indeed the north-west coast, which is the focus of this motion - is good, strong financial budget management.

I have to commend my colleague, the member for Bass and Treasurer, Peter Gutwein, for his stewardship over the last four years. Inheriting \$1.1 billion of accumulated deficits is a daunting task for any government. The Treasurer will present his fifth budget tomorrow and he should be very proud of the Budget that he will put before the House and the parliament and indeed very proud of his contribution as Treasurer over the last four years.

I am excited about education on the north-west coast, across all areas from kindergarten to year 12. Ms Dow mentioned the University of Tasmania and what a wonderful asset that is for the region. The infrastructure is in Burnie of which the member was previous mayor but it is a wonderful investment by the University of Tasmania. I thank the university for recognising the importance of access to tertiary education, breaking down barriers to university, and the significant investment they have made for our region over the course of the last decade or more, which is tremendous.

I am excited about the vocational education and training space as well. I am very excited about the agricultural Centre of Excellence at the TasTAFE at Freer Farm in Burnie. I remember standing outside the gates of the TasTAFE Freer Farm in around 2008 or 2009 with local Forth farmer Mike Badcock. We were alarmed and arguing against the sale of Freer Farm which was on the then Labor majority government's agenda. Having had the opportunity of touring the site on a few occasions over the course of the last couple of years, I take my hat off to all the staff including Duncan Gee, the farm manager. Clearly investment in Freer Farm and the infrastructure, equipment and training centre is required if we are to build the capability and skills needed in the agricultural sector, which is growing. It is a wonderful example of an industry in terms of agriculture that is not only growing but also diversifying. We see the investment in protected cropping on the north-west coast, which 20 years ago you would not have imagined in the temperate climate of Tasmania, which does not have extremes, apart from the 2016 floods and the drought of 2015, et cetera. We have a very even climate more generally and to see the growth of protected cropping in what is a good environment for agriculture is fantastic. The jobs that generates is tremendous and really highlights the diversity and opportunity we have in agriculture alone on the north-west coast.

Infrastructure investment has been at unprecedented levels under this Government and now we have had the very good fortune and opportunity to be re-elected, Tasmanians can be assured this will continue. In Braddon, we have seen upgrades to the Bass and Murchison highways, safety improvements to the junctions on the Bass Highway at Wynyard, a brand new \$10 million freight ship for King Island, Strahan Wharf remediated, investment in the rail and hard stand at Burnie Port, as well as a new mooring dolphin to allow bigger cruise ships, and strong growth of the West Coast Wilderness Railway, which is very pleasing to see.

Nearly \$120 million has been invested in our freight and rail network, much of it across the north-west coast, including long-awaited upgrades to the important Melba Line to connect our productive mineral regions, an investment previous minority governments would have opposed. I mentioned the *Spirits of Tasmania* in the beginning of my contribution, which are wonderful assets to Tasmania and the region and, if I localise it even more, the Port of Devonport and the city there. A \$31.5 million refurbishment project was delivered by our Government in the previous term, providing work for over 200 Tasmanians and 24 local businesses, I am advised, and that is great as well.

When it comes to the point of the motion, the cooperative relationship between the state and federal government, the Turnbull Coalition Government and the Hodgman Liberal Government, cannot be understated. It is terrific that we have strong plans working together on infrastructure moving forward.

I was at the Latrobe intersection near the cherry shed over the weekend with the federal candidate for Braddon, Mr Brett Whiteley, celebrating a much-needed infrastructure improvement into that intersection which was funded by both state and federal governments. There is also our Bass Highway package of works west of Wynyard, making the junction at Leith safer, improvements to the Tarkine drive experience, better bus services for Strahan, upgrades to the Burnie Port to accommodate Toll's brand new freight ships, tranche 2 of the freight rail network, investment in the two *Spirits of Tasmania*, and improved facilities of the Port of Devonport.

There is much to be proud of with the contribution of this Government to the north-west region. I sense the air of confidence in the region, which I am very proud of. There is more work to do and that is why we are investing in key areas of infrastructure in education and health, which I am excited to see progressing. Latrobe High School is an example of that. Parklands is nearly finished

and we are excited about the new development for Penguin District School. They are key areas of infrastructure in education we are modernising, making conducive to twenty-first century ways of learning.

I am particularly excited about not just the new infrastructure of our schools but the personnel, the teachers and support staff we are placing into the schools to support our educational outcomes. I am excited that we have 142 more teachers in our schools right now than we had four years ago. That is fantastic news. There is workforce development planning going on to employ another 250 teachers over the course of the next years. Having people around the table such as the Australian Education Union, Tasmanian Principals Association, Peter Underwood Centre of Educational Attainment and the University of Tasmania is very exciting, all working together so they can properly plan and ensure we provide our schools with the resources for more teachers to improve our educational outcomes.

[3.30 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a self-congratulatory pat on the back, taking credit for things that have nothing to do with them. A classic example is the Hermal Group. The Hermal Group investment is contingent on a couple of things: the new forests, the new owner, it is talking about FSC certification -

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Access to Reproductive Health Services

[3.30 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Recognises Tasmanian women require full access to reproductive health services.
- (2) Notes that international research has found that jurisdictions where terminations are difficult to access are associated with higher maternal mortality and unsafe abortion rates and barriers to abortion access in Australia particularly affect young women, rural women and women of low socio-economic status.
- (3) Calls upon the Minister for Health, Hon Michael Ferguson MP to act immediately to ensure women are not forced to leave the state to access surgical terminations.
- (4) Calls upon the Minister for Health to provide pregnancy terminations in the public hospital system, under all circumstances in which terminations are

permitted by law, in accordance with Clause 4 and 5 of the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013, by no later than 1 July 2018.

- (5) Directs the Minister for Health to report on the implementation of this service to the House by 3 July 2018.

The matter before us today has commanded much state, national and international attention this year. Much has been said about why the minister has so far failed to act to ensure women can access this legal service in Tasmania. We have debated the same issue here in the last few weeks and many explanations have been floated. The reality is that we can only form our own personal opinions of whether it is influenced by his personal views on terminations, the power of the conservative right led by Senator Abetz in Tasmania, the incidence and behaviour around the infamous trolling incident, which came out of the Premier's office against a former colleague and friend and the dreadful way that Tasmanian woman was treated, including an attempt to undermine her professional position.

I have spoken of those issues here before and I hope we do not need to speak of them again. This House has an opportunity not to score points, not to argue our own deeply held views or prejudices, but to find a resolution and provide that today. In a previous debate on this issue, Mr Ferguson alleged that I disagreed with him because I do not like him. Minister, I assure you and other members of this House that is not my motivation in bringing this matter before us today. I cannot imagine having such a petty motivation on such a serious issue.

I disagree with this minister's action regarding access to reproductive health services in this state. That is my motivation today. That has been my motivation every day I have been told of doctors not knowing what advice to give as there is no clear referral pathway. It is my motivation when I have been faced with a distressing story of the pressure placed on women who feel they have been denied access due to an incapacity to pay or an inability to fly to Melbourne. It is my motivation every day I hear of the harrowing experience of women when they do fly away, far from their support structures.

The office of the UN Human Rights Commissioner clearly stated that women's sexual and reproductive health is related to multiple human rights. The Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have both clearly indicated that women's right to health includes their sexual and reproductive health. This means the states have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil rights related to women's sexual and reproductive health. The Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health maintains that women are entitled to reproductive health care services, goods and facilities that are available in adequate numbers, accessible physically and economically and accessible without discrimination and of good quality.

I am deeply passionate about a woman's right to choose and I am deeply distressed that women are being forced to leave the state to access these services. Under stress, they have to fly away. There is a genuine shock and distress about the fact that Tasmanian women are required to leave the state to access terminations. There is a sense of disbelief that our public health system would so fail them. It is important that service provision governing women's options around reproductive health supports access to positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes for Tasmanian women. As stated in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action -

Good health is essential to leading a productive and fulfilling life, and the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment.

Women's empowerment should not only be for those women that can afford empowerment. Access is merely privilege extended unless access is enjoyed and accessible by all.

How did we find ourselves here? It pays to recall the previous laws criminalising terminations and restricting access to terminations in Tasmania were based on the British laws of the 1800s. It was a law that was repudiated when women of this parliament, across the political divides, joined together. I offer my sincere appreciation to the many women and men who acted and advocated for laws and services that do the same, both today and in decades past. Many of those people are in the gallery today or are watching online. Such efforts recognise that women experience poorer health outcomes without the provision of a full range of safe, legal and accessible reproductive services. History clearly demonstrates this in Australia and overseas.

In these efforts I include the collaboration of the Tasmanian women of the 2001 Parliament, including and led by former members of this House; Judy Jackson, the late Sue Napier and Peg Putt, who came together across political persuasions to amend the criminal code and introduce a legal exception to the crime of terminating a pregnancy when women and doctors meet specific criteria. At the time this was a significant step forward in what were urgent and extenuating circumstances. I commend these exceptional and compassionate women and all of the women of that Parliament for their cooperation and commitment to improving Tasmania's termination laws.

However, despite these efforts the passage of time showed the criminal law continued to be a restrictive and inappropriate vehicle to regulate access to terminations. Doctors in our public hospitals were frightened they would be sued. Such laws acted as a deterrent to the provision of safe and legal services and, in the absence of which, women seeking terminations were forced to continue a pregnancy against their will, travel to other jurisdictions for services or, frighteningly, to seek unsafe and unregulated services. All of those are an increased risk to their health and wellbeing.

That is why at the urging of youth and women's health organisations in particular, who were fundraising to send women to Melbourne, I introduced a private member's bill, not as the minister for health, but as a private member in this House who recognised this was not a legal issue but a health one. The Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Bill was debated in 2013. It acknowledged that access to pregnancy termination services is first and foremost a health matter and not a matter for regulation under criminal law. The bill affirmed women as competent and conscientious decision makers.

I noted at the time that improved services would not happen overnight and there were many conversations to come as we considered the best way forward. We were discussing provision in the public sector or through public funding, to ensure that having dealt with the legal barrier that cost was not a barrier as well. That should have been the end of it. We should have been developing better, more accessible and supportive services, but we find ourselves today with women being forced to travel and services being forced to fundraise to send them there.

What happened since then? The bill also allowed the provision of medical terminations. It allowed a medical termination under nine weeks, which is less invasive and is safe. Medical terminations are used to terminate early pregnancies within the first nine weeks of gestation, after

which most clinics and most health professionals would recommend a surgical abortion. It involves taking two different medications: Mifepristone RU486 and Misoprostol, which are TGA approved and have been since 2012.

The Tabbot Foundation has made medical abortion more accessible for women in Tasmania by providing that service over the phone. The patient can contact an 1800 number, they are sent a request for a blood test and an ultrasound, which they then have. The results are evaluated and, if appropriate, arrange a consultation with a specialist over the phone. Women receive medication via express mail by the proposed date of the termination and on the day they have phone access to a 24-hour specialist and a nurse. Many Tasmanian women have accessed this service successfully and safely, but it does not meet the needs of all women. It did decrease, however, some of the patient demand for surgical terminations.

When the bill to decriminalise terminations was passed by both Houses of the Tasmanian Parliament in 2013 there were three clinics providing affordable access. The reasons for their closure vary, partly due to changes in service demand and partly the increased economic cost of maintaining and reaching standards that were altered nationally.

At each stage there was an opportunity for the Government to put in place measures to ensure that women were still able to access these services. When the first clinic closed at Moonah, it was not that big a concern. We had just decriminalised and there was a view that we would be able to manage this well, and we had still two services, one in the north and one in the south. When the second closed, the Government should have been acting to ensure provision. When the third closed, we should have already had an acceptable model in place. However none of this took place. When we decriminalised terminations we did not intend to reach this outcome. Denying access based on income is not and cannot be part of a broader strategy to improve the sexual and reproductive health of all Tasmanians, especially our vulnerable populations.

Research shows that restrictive laws and restrictive access does not reduce the incidence of terminations, but instead negatively impacts on the health and wellbeing outcomes for women. When faced with an unplanned pregnancy, women make deeply considered decisions based on multiple and contingent factors. Whether the woman ultimately chooses to continue or end a pregnancy, she is considering factors such as her age, her physical and mental health, her cultural background, her personal beliefs and values, the circumstances of conception - which may have been traumatic and have been a result of abuse and assault - the extent to which she is in a supportive relationship, the stability of her living circumstances, whether she has sufficient financial and other resources to feed, clothe, educate and provide shelter for a child, and whether she can continue to meet her existing obligations to herself, her partner, her existing children, her parents and her community.

Women's accounts of this decision-making process reveal the very complex and personal social constructs in which reproductive health events must be understood. However in Tasmania we then ask women to make yet another decision, a decision not required by women in jurisdictions where terminations are legal. The woman must then consider whether she can afford to access the private services or whether she can afford to fly to Melbourne.

I will now read something written by a woman who had to travel. The actual full document is deeply personal and distressing. I cannot read it now. I struggled reading it the first time I saw it, but I can tell you that this woman and her doctor struggled to find a referral pathway. Due to the timing, she was not eligible for a medical termination and due to the delay in accessing an

appropriate referral pathway she could not use the private facility in Tasmania because she was beyond their cut-off limit. She paid over \$3000 to navigate our health system, fly to Melbourne and have the procedure she should have been able to access here. I quote:

I started to type this sitting in a waiting room in Melbourne while waiting for the first part of my second trimester termination to take place.

This is the first time I've thought about who I am, and I've not started with my work CV. I'm a confident, educated and able woman. Yet, I'm sitting here feeling beyond vulnerable, I'm feeling less of a person. I'm feeling invisible. I'm feeling alone. I'm feeling ashamed.

I just turned 39, I have 3 beautiful kids, I've been a mum since I was 21. My kids are 17, 10 and 7. I'm divorced. I'm into the second year of a beautiful relationship with someone I love unconditionally. We have a beautiful life.

My story represents one part of the unspoken face of terminations - I'm the mother in my late 30s that has a family, that works hard in my career, that does not always pay attention to my car ... and my body (I need to see a dentist, I need to get a pap smear, I need to not eat and drink as much over xmas, I need to work out what my regular cycle is ... regular???) that thinks about everyone else, that forgets about what I need.

I'm not reckless, as some often assign to those that end up in this situation.

I'm also the Tasmanian female who had to fly to Melbourne because I couldn't access affordable and available services in Tasmania.

Even though the media releases tell me I'm not disadvantaged because I live in Tasmania, that the services have been restored, that I just have to see my GP, I've flown to Melbourne.

I'm an advocate and I've never been an activist. I'm now both.

I know politics, especially Tasmanian politics. I worked in Premier Hodgman's Office (after working for Labor and Liberal federal ministers, including our now federal Health minister, Greg Hunt) and I've worked in the Australian Government for 13 years.

I don't think of myself as the typical social advocate, but I had the same desire that all advocates share - we want action.

The health portfolio has hardly impacted on my life, I have private health insurance and I'm fortunate to have a healthy family - so this is my first true intersection with a health policy that fails Tasmanians.

That failed me.

She then details the costs. Her first visit to the GP, where the GP had no idea what to do, cost \$82.50, with a \$37 Medicare rebate. Blood tests were bulk-billed. An ultrasound cost \$265, with

\$102.50 returned by Medicare rebate. Her second visit to the GP, when they were still struggling to find out exactly what they should do and who they should talk to, cost \$82.50 with a \$37 Medicare rebate. The specialist consultation with the local provider was \$190, with a Medicare rebate of \$72.75, but it was too late to access that service. Her flights to Melbourne cost \$411.50 and accommodation was \$507.45. For incidentals, such as Uber food, taxis, train, Skybus, she has a million receipts in her bag across two accounts and has not counted them all up. The procedure itself cost \$2750.

There are many of these stories. I have heard a number of comments saying that we should not provide terminations in the public system because that would lead to abortion 'on demand'. Quite frankly, the use of such language as 'on demand' is judgmental, offensive and does not treat terminations as a legal medical procedure but implies it is somehow a lifestyle issue. A woman can no more demand a termination than any man or woman can demand any medical procedure.

The framework is based on consent, which is exactly the same legal framework that regulates all other medical procedures. Consent of the patient is the legal authority for the doctor to act. Consent takes its usual meaning within the medical context, that is, voluntary consent by a patient after receiving proper and adequate information about the proposed treatment, including potential risks and benefits and alternative options. These requirements exist for all medical procedures and are imposed by professional medical standards.

As international evidence has demonstrated, restricted termination practices do not decrease the incidence of terminations. Research conducted by the Guttmacher Institute and WHO demonstrates this. Forcing women to travel to Melbourne will not prevent them from having terminations but it runs the very real risk of preventing them from having safe ones. No woman who has made the decision to either continue or terminate her pregnancy should face that risk, nor should they be subject to criticism, disapproval or attempts to dissuade her, and never should she be limited by capacity to pay.

Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, which commits parties to protect, promote and fulfil the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, includes the right to appropriate health care, including reproductive health services. It does not mean forcing women to travel or preventing them from accessing services due to cost.

This Government says that women can access the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme. That is not an answer, nor is it timely enough, private enough or indeed actually enough to cover the cost. The Government has talked of a private low-cost provider. I am open to any conversation and any proposal that provides access. Federal Labor has a similar plan for a holistic reproductive health service that is designated as a health service that could access the activity-based funding model. But even if that was agreed today, it would not always meet the needs of every woman, particularly rural women, and even if it was announced today, it could not be immediately implemented. We need a solution that helps women today, not in six or 12 months or longer.

That is why federal Labor's plan was multi-layered. It talked about a stand-alone wrap-around reproductive health service, but also recognised that we need the public provision of termination services to meet the needs of women in the short term and the needs of women for whom travelling to Hobart is just as hard as getting to Melbourne.

That is something the minister can immediately do. He can stand in this House today and commit to providing services in public facilities and then he can leave this House as minister and ensure that it is done. We ask in our motion for him to come back to the House and update us on the implementation. We ask this because all year the minister has said that access is provided, that women are not disadvantaged, that they just need to see their GP, and in more recent months that he is working on a solution, and yet women are still forced to fly.

In January, a spokesperson for the Tasmanian Department of Health told BuzzFeed News that the Government was investigating options regarding the provision of surgical terminations. The Health minister, Michael Ferguson, told BuzzFeed later that surgical abortion services had been restored in Tasmania. The situation he said, in a statement, is now exactly the same as it was prior to the recent closure. Federal Health minister, Greg Hunt, said on a Sky News interview that he had spoken to the state minister that day and that services were available. None of this is true. Bits of it are true. It really depends on what you are trying to tell the media and clearly they were not trying to admit what they were doing.

An amount of \$2500 to a private service which operates on a limited basis cannot be equated to a restored service. Since then, the Government continues to say that they are working on a plan time and time again, yet these women continue to leave our state.

Tasmanian women have waited for that plan to be realised. We need a resolution. There has been plenty of time to find that resolution. I look forward to a holistic service but we also need to make sure that women are taken care of now.

We no longer have confidence that the minister and his department have acted immediately to provide this service. We know the Government says services are not provided in every state. Of course they are not. The procedure is not legal in every state and where it is legal they are accessible in the public hospital system.

We know the Government says the system has not changed in terms of public hospital provision. Actually everything else has. The decriminalisation of terminations removes the concern of a medical practitioner so that they can perform them in hospitals. The legal ramifications are removed but we have also had the closure of the affordable private clinics. There is a capacity and a need for the Government to take and we need to know that they are going to fix it. It has been six months already.

This House, this parliament, needs to put a deadline on it because at every opportunity this issue has been fobbed off. We need a deadline so that the safety net of public access is provided, and provided urgently. That is what this motion delivers. Not just more words but a provision of accessible service in Tasmania and a report back to this House. The pre-eminent part of this role in this state reports back to us to ensure that it is done: to provide the legal service that this parliament voted for in 2013, to provide the service that was intended when women from across the parliamentary divide from each political party joined together in that first bill in 2001 to deliver. We need action now and we need to enforce a deadline on its provision. We have to have confidence that this circumstance that impacts so badly on Tasmania women will end.

Whilst it is a slight extension to the terms of the motion I will explain where it fits. I congratulate those men and women in New South Wales last week who joined together to introduce access zones. In 2013, in the same legislation, we introduced the first access zones establishing a 150 metre zones around premises at which terminations are provided. We included the creation of

an offence for a person to engage in prohibited behaviour in an access zone defined in the bill as 'harassing, intimidating or interfering with a person accessing a service', which I am sure no member in this House would support. There is nothing peaceful about shaming complete strangers about private decisions made about their bodies.

I respect each of us are entitled to our views. What I do not respect is the manner in which some people choose to express them. Standing in the street outside a medical facility with the express purpose of dissuading or delaying a woman from accessing a legitimate reproductive health service is quite unacceptable. It is not protesting, it is bullying. I raise it in today's motion because of the fact that people from both sides of the parliament, of both political divides, joined together to vote in that. In New South Wales they joined together. In Victoria they joined together. In the ACT they joined together. It is only here when the issue of access zones is brought before the parliament that any parliament voted against it. It was just the lower House, the Liberal members in this lower House.

In relation to today's motion, you can be a Liberal Party member and support matters that go to delivering and achieving the rights of women and not be acting in any opposition to conservative policies. In the end our decriminalisation bill passed because despite not a single lower House Liberal member voting for it. In the upper House people like the late Vanessa Goodwin did vote for it. In the upper House people like Paul Harriss who came down and sat in this parliament as a Liberal Party member did vote for it. This is not Labor versus Liberal. This is not progressive versus conservative. It is not even me versus Mr Ferguson. This is saying that the procedure is legal and should be accessible. It is saying that we should not provide access only to those who can afford it. It is about saying we will not force Tasmanian women to fly to Melbourne when they should be with their supporters, with their families and their friends accessing the service in the least traumatic way possible.

Today members are asked quite simply to give effect to the decisions that this House made in 2001 and in 2013, to accept that women are competent and conscientious decision-makers and recognise that a woman is in the best position to make decisions affecting her future and health. When this competent agent forms the decision that she will terminate her pregnancy then she will neither be financially penalised or prevented from accessing a termination due to cost or limited access.

Madam Speaker, I seek leave now to move a minor amendment which will ensure that if it is passed that this motion will not just call upon the minister to provide the services but to adequately resource those services. I do have the right to speak to that but I have taken a lot of the time of the House and I want to ensure that other members get the opportunity to speak.

The amendment to motion 32 moved in my name refers to paragraph 4, after the words 'to provide' and before 'pregnancy terminations' insert the words 'and adequately resourced'.

I will not take much more time allocated speaking to the amendment as I genuinely want there to be time for full contributions from other parties in this House or any member who might be using their right for a conscience vote, who might be using their right to join across the parliament to deliver what this House voted for in 2013.

The intent of the amendment is self-evident. It seeks to ensure there is not a failure to deliver the outcomes this House seeks to achieve through a funding shortfall. Being Tasmanian should not be a barrier to accessing legal reproductive health services. Being poor should not be a barrier to

accessing legal reproductive health services. Being a member of this House should mean that when we pass laws to ensure access to terminations are legal, safe and affordable, that it actually happens.

This minister can ensure services are provided and he can do so today. I commend this motion and the amendment to the House. I call on all members to remember this is not about whether terminations should be legal; it is about ensuring Tasmanian women are not disadvantaged and shipped off to other states for services that are legally available in this state. It is about ensuring women can make choices about their own lives and not be forced into financial stress or unsafe practices because we failed them, because our health system has failed them and because our parliament ultimately fails them.

[3.57 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, the Greens will be supporting this notice of motion as we strongly supported the Reproductive Health Access to Terminations Act 2013. We do so because we believe nobody - not the state, not any other person - should have the power to tell a woman what to do with herself in the circumstances where she becomes pregnant.

Earlier today out on the lawns there was a prayer gathering which I happened to walk into. Unfortunately, I had an exchange with a well-known member of the Australian Christian Lobby and it was a frustrating exchange but it is a conversation women have endured for centuries. It went something like this. 'That's a very unfortunate piece of legislation you will be debating today, isn't it, Cassy?' I said, 'It is a notice of motion because the legislation passed in 2013. Access to terminations is legal in Tasmania'. 'That is very sad still, it is not good, all life is sacred.' I said, 'Are you saying that women should be forced to incubate babies in all circumstances?' The answer was, 'Every life is sacred and important.' I said, 'If only the church you purport to represent spoke as strongly for the children after they are born. If only the church advocated for action on climate change, on inequality and all the other challenges children face as they come into this world. If only the churches - and I say that in a broad sense of the word because I have enormous respect for many of the aspects of the church and have numerous friends who are Christians - but if only the churches did not have such a poor record, such an appalling record on the treatment of children, going back centuries.'

I pointed out to this gentleman the church was in no position to tell us anything about how to deal with our bodies in the circumstances where we become pregnant, and the church should keep its nose out of women's business.

I thank Ms O'Byrne for bringing on this notice of motion today. As Ms O'Byrne has said, 'Women must be viewed as competent and conscientious decision-makers.' The notion that people who purport to represent the church and the majority of people who were at that prayer meeting today were males. The notion they should be able to dictate to a woman what she should do in this situation is offensive to human autonomy and to the right of every woman to choose what happens to her body.

I do not know how many members in this place have watched or read *The Handmaid's Tale*. It is that dystopian future that we could dismiss out of hand as something that is fiction or happened in times past, but with women and for feminism and our human rights it often feels like one step forward and two steps back. There is a need for constant vigilance. I believe *The Handmaid's Tale* is particularly relevant to this debate because at the core of this, and at the core of the conversation I had with the gentleman saying the prayers for the fallen women of this parliament and the world

today, is a strong desire and practice to control women's bodies. That has been part of the culture of male-dominated religions, whether they be Christian, Muslim, Hindu or otherwise going back centuries and millennia. It is about control over women's bodies. I will read a review of *The Handmaid's Tale* in the *Sydney Morning Herald* -

In the world of *The Handmaid's Tale*, women's lives are only contingent on their ability to produce babies and a group of rich, religious white men decide the fate of female bodies. The Commander has perfunctory sex with Offred, held down by his wife, Serena Joy, who can't get pregnant, and the women are rounded up to watch a handmaid called Ofwarren, who's bullied for having an abortion, give birth.

Sure, it sounds absurd - until you remember that we live in a culture in which a Texas judge recently referred to pregnant women as "hosts", abortion is still a criminal offence in Queensland and New South Wales, and the Australian Christian Lobby is fighting to reinstate the global gag rule which denies women from Pacific Island nations rights to reproductive health services and abortion access.

The Handmaid's Tale takes the culture's motherhood fetish to its chilling endpoint and reminds us that we need to fight for autonomy over our lives and bodies at every turn.

It is evidenced again today by the protest out the front and a very clear belief, of those who would tell women what to do with their body, in enforced incubation. That is the flipside of not respecting the rights of women to make their own difficult choices. The flipside of that is enforcing incubation on women. That is the story of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the beliefs are hardly that different. I saw on social media there is a revolting reference from a well-known, purportedly Christian leader in the north of the state, at Legana. He makes it clear that even in circumstances of rape, women and girls should not be able to legally access terminations. Again, enforced incubation.

As Ms O'Byrne said, this is not about whether abortion is legal in Tasmania. The services are simply not available to women. The service system has not responded to the fact that women in Tasmania, and young women, have the right to legally access surgical terminations. That is the law out there. It is a law resoundingly passed by this parliament in a very moving and significant debate. I acknowledge the enormous amount of work Ms O'Byrne has put into this issue. I know you put your heart and soul into it and worked with people such as the wonderful recently retired Glynis Flower, and Susan Fey - extraordinary, wonderful, good women who understand that this is an issue of human rights.

We are not here to debate the law. We are here to acknowledge that right now there are women who are making the decision to travel interstate because they do not have other choices here. That is for women who can afford to travel interstate and who can afford to access the procedure. Whichever way it goes they will still be isolated, as we heard from the written testimony of the young woman whose story Ms O'Byrne read out and which I have read out in the previous Matter of Public Importance debate. The isolation of women in that situation when they are sent interstate feels like a systemic punishment to those women.

In Tasmania, where the law protects the right to choose, the system banishes the women to a service interstate. There will be women and girls who, because they do not know what their choices

are, because there is no service response here and there is no access to surgical terminations in the public system, find their choices are limited. It is historically, in those situations, where women have taken matters into their own hands. You have backyard abortion operators and women have died as a result of this.

Here in Tasmania it is putting women and girls, particular women in regional Tasmania, out of urban areas and areas of socio-economic disadvantage as the notice of motion says. They are impossible situations and that is untenable. The parliament has an opportunity today to set this right and make sure we are not abandoning Tasmanian women and girls in this situation. We are not saying to them we have fixed the law now, it is lawful in Tasmania to access a termination but as a parliament we fail to hold the government and minister of the day to account on the accessibility of these services.

In another review on *The Handmaid's Tale*, they specifically mention Tasmania -

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the wives of wealthy and influential men struggle to get pregnant, while their socio-economically less fortunate but reproductively blessed sisters become their property with the sole purpose of conceiving a child for them.

With abortion still illegal in Queensland and New South Wales, severely limited in most other states and Tasmania's only abortion clinic recently shut down, forcing those seeking a termination to travel the mainland, the reproductive rights of Australian women are in short supply.

We may not be incubators like Offred and her fellow Handmaids, but limiting our choices about when to be pregnant doesn't make us much different.

Madam Speaker, I appeal directly to you because I understand yours will be a casting vote in this situation. This is the parliament's opportunity to make sure the changes to the law are reflected in the services provided. This is the parliament's opportunity to help the Health minister establish a good service in the public system. I completely respect there are members of this House who struggle with this question. I accept that but this is not about your belief system. This is about the law. This is about human rights and those of women in Tasmania, our right to bodily economy and that there are so few choices available in Tasmania at the moment that we are making a difficult situation for women in Tasmania much worse. The wording of the motion is not intended to be political. I respect that it has been carefully worded in order to provide an outcome. That outcome is something that in 2018, in 21st century Tasmania, should be unarguable. It should be supported. We strongly support this motion. We strongly support the rights of women and girls in Tasmania and we wholeheartedly support the provision of affordable, accessible, safe, surgical terminations in the public health system in Tasmania.

[4.10 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, I am speaking to the amendment that has been moved by Ms O'Byrne on this motion. During my contribution I will be looking at the clock, aware that there will be a vote on this matter at 5 p.m. I will be looking for some guidance from the Labor Party on the extent to which this particular amendment needs to be debated. The Government wishes to bring forward an amendment to this motion and because of the practices of this House and the way that private members' time works potentially I could see a

circumstance where I am denied the opportunity to move an amendment on behalf of the Government.

Ms O'Connor - Why haven't you flagged it previously?

Mr FERGUSON - I will be looking for some guidance on that point because if it was agreeable to members of this House that we could consider the amendment immediately and allow my broader contribution to be made I would be grateful for that to occur.

Ms O'Connor - Why did you not circulate it? You chastise us when we do not circulate amendments.

Madam SPEAKER - Could I seek clarification? You are asking for this amendment to be moved and you want to put another amendment later.

Mr FERGUSON - I can indicate to this House that at this moment my office is preparing an amendment on behalf of the Government which we would wish to put forward during this debate to be considered.

Ms O'Connor - Why don't you explain it?

Mr FERGUSON - If I may continue. If I am reading the room correctly the amendment is with us and I will very happily circulate it to members as soon as it is available. It would be unfortunate if the Government had a motion to amend the substantive motion that deals with some of the matters that are raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition then I would look to that opportunity. Until the amendment is here - and I respect that members will want to see it - I also will be looking for some guidance from the mover so that I could be satisfied that the opportunity will be presented for that.

Ms O'Connor - You have to explain what is in the amendment so that we have some idea.

Mr FERGUSON - As soon as it is here you will see it.

Ms O'Byrne - In responding to the request from the minister, we have not seen the amendment. The Speaker has given me the call, the minister has asked for some clarification around the process on whether we would be comfortable to vote on the amendment that is before the House and when that amendment is either agreed to or disagreed to then deal with the amendment that he is raising. We have not seen the amendment which does make it a little awkward but I can say it is not my intent to in any way restrict the capacity of members to make a contribution on each side of this House around the substantive motion that is before the House.

Mr FERGUSON - To assist the House I table the foreshadowed amendment and members are now able to read it. I am not speaking to our foreshadowed amendment at this moment. I thank members for the courtesy of allowing me to speak to that point.

In rising to speak to this motion on the basis that I will have another opportunity to speak, I offer to keep this brief because I have much more to say on behalf of the Government given the nature of the amendment that the member for Bass has put forward. We do not agree with the amendment but we are quite happy for the House to consider it forthwith if that is the wish of the House. I am looking for some guidance: otherwise I will continue my contribution.

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, with your indulgence. As long as the minister is happy to give me time to comment on his amendment then I am in no way concerned about putting our amendment at this point as long as the minister who will then have the bulk of the time which allows the time for me to be able to respond to the amendment that he has moved, which substantially changes the intent. While still directing the Minister for Health to report back it removes all responsibility from him as minister and places it with his department to continue consultation around adequate resourcing, which is a substantial change to the intent of the original motion.

Our amendment, which is simply about adding the words 'that the termination in the public system be adequately resourced' to be voted upon. We can then move to the minister's amendment. If he is happy for us to make a contribution on that, we should be able to vote on that amendment and then the amended or unamended motion at that point.

Ms O'Connor - Point of order Madam Speaker. Is this your amendment, Ms O'Byrne?

Madam SPEAKER - Yes. Ms O'Byrne's amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

[4.16 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, I thank members opposite for the courtesy of facilitating that. I extend the same courtesy by not wasting the House's time with a division.

I speak on the now amended motion. I have now shared with members opposite the proposed Government amendment, which I am not moving at the moment.

As I stand here, there are members of the Tasmanian community who have a range of views on the substance of this issue, that is abortion and terminations of pregnancy. I hope we can have a debate which genuinely respects that there is that difference of opinion in the community and indeed in this House. There has been far too much attention drawn in the debate already to biases that people will make.

I make an important point. If we do respect that, we should recognise and the Government recognises, that for those people who describe themselves as 'pro-choice', that is because they have chosen to take a view that it is the woman's body and she and only she and her doctor should decide whether or not pregnancies are continued. If we respect the range of people and their good motivations in this area, we would also respect them for taking a different view, that the pregnancy they are carrying is a pregnancy with the potency for a human life. I respect human life. I respect those two different world views. I do, we all must. I say that as an attempt to bring good faith and goodwill into this debate.

We do, and I do, recognise that this is a deeply personal issue for all Tasmanians and particularly any woman who finds herself in a circumstance of not wanting to be pregnant and wanting to terminate her pregnancy. I have not been in that situation and so I can only dare to imagine how difficult that would be. It is a time of great vulnerability. I have spoken to many people about this from a range of points of view. They share with me their deepest thoughts. I am thankful for the secrecy and the confidence that they show to share their stories.

There is no doubt that there is a time where she requires support, love and assistance from a trusted counsel. I say they are universally sad circumstances when this service is provided in our public hospitals, which is the substance of this motion.

Public hospitals are there to save lives and at times need to take action to save the life of the mother. These difficult circumstances can arise where there is a pregnancy with complications, ectopic pregnancies or other traumatic events. These are some very difficult and sensitive challenges that women and families face at times. I remind this House that there are times where a child is desperately wanted but it is dangerous for the mother. These are very trying, very sensitive and very difficult circumstances. The politicking that we have seen on this has not helped any Tasmanian person.

Our public hospitals are there to support women in these circumstances and are there for life-saving provision of health care. That is what I support. That is what this government supports. That is what is happening in our public hospitals. I have taken advice on this.

Members opposite might be keen to hear from me on this point. I have taken advice on this. This has been consistent policy under successive governments, the Labor government, the Labor-Greens government and the Liberal Government. I have advice that tells me the policy has not changed in at least 10 years.

One thing that has changed is the motion the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has brought to this House. Yesterday on Twitter was the first draft of the Deputy Leader's motion which built on and added to an earlier motion that brought to this House in our previous sittings which called on the Government to do this and that. Going away for a couple of weeks and thinking about it, the member has found a way to strengthen, toughen, be more controlling and has spent the last fortnight thinking of ways of making it directive.

The motion tabled yesterday, which was shared for the Tasmanian community and has been in the news, was ruled out of order and not allowed. You cannot try to bring a motion into the House that directs a minister on policy. It is not allowed and has been ruled out of order. I do not believe the member drew attention to this fact. The motion had to be fixed. The motion, apart from whatever else it wanted to do -

Ms White - What about the actual issue?

Mr FERGUSON - This is the actual issue.

Ms White - No it's not. This is the politics you engage in. It is disgusting.

Mr FERGUSON - The Labor Party is strategising on this and trying to dictate government policy from the opposition benches and trying to dictate to a minister what he or she is obliged to do on behalf of their Cabinet. It is a pathway, hoping to attract the casting vote of the Speaker and a further pathway to Labor strategy around bringing another motion into this House on another day. You even put the date in, but Ms O'Byrne got it wrong. It was not correct, was not allowed and is not compliant. The House does not and cannot have the power to direct a minister to act in a particular way. Importantly, that point was not mentioned in the contributions made. The motion had to be fixed because Ms O'Byrne misled the Tasmanian people in suggesting she was going to bring that motion forward and she did not because she was not allowed to.

The fact is that terminations of pregnancy, whether they are surgical or medical, are regulated through the standalone Reproductive Health Access to Terminations Act 2013. Since that act was proclaimed, terminations can occur without the need for approval from a doctor for pregnancies up to 16 weeks gestation with no requirement for pre- or post-counselling or referral to another doctor before termination. For pregnancies of more than 16 weeks gestation and up to full term, a doctor can provide a termination with the woman's consent if the doctor reasonably believes that continuing the pregnancy would involve greater risk of injury, or injury to the physical or mental health of the woman than if the pregnancy were terminated. Factors to be included in this 16 weeks through to full-term period include, 'the woman's physical, psychological, economic and social circumstances'. It was the case previously that it had only been lawful to terminate a pregnancy when the mother's life was in danger. A second doctor under this act must agree and at least one must specialise in gynaecology or obstetrics.

There has been much discussion about the appropriate place for the provision of this service. I have already made the point, and it is interesting the mover of this motion was my predecessor as Health minister and yet the policy that exists today in relation to provision in our public hospitals is the same as it was under Ms O'Byrne.

Ms O'Byrne - Governments change.

Mr FERGUSON - I hear the interjection. Government does change but it is interesting that with changes of government over successive years the policy has never changed. I am not proposing to give a chapter and verse outline as to why that policy has not changed over the years, but I can say there are real and practical problems for that suggestion. There is a range of practical problems with this, quite apart from the issue of whether that is the role for government in our public hospitals.

I will speak for a moment about what occurs and where the differences occur with private clinics. Separate from the issue of terminations, the private sector remains an important deliverer of health services in our state. In relation to this area, the same is true. Our public hospitals only provide surgical terminations in cases of high need, such as to save the life of the mother or where there is severe foetal illness or damage. These are individual ethical decisions that are taken by families. All other surgical terminations are provided in the private sector and, as I have said, I am advised that there has been no change to that policy in at least 10 years.

There are some facts to confront here and I am happy to do so. We recognise, as obvious as the nose on your face, that the lower cost standalone private provider that was in business here in Hobart in Tasmania closed operations in December last year. I recognise that. I have given many media conferences where I have acknowledged that. I have also acknowledged that there has been a disruption in the provision of those private services. We have recognised that. While the Labor Party has played their politics around what they know to be my private views on abortion, which are on the record and I do not resile or run away from, they are not the determining issue on this matter. I am delivering government policy on behalf of the Government under the law of Tasmania.

Frankly, the rhetoric from members opposite is quite personal. It is quite attacking and it has been consistent. When the Labor Party saw this as an opportunity during the state election campaign, they came up with I think version four of their health policy where they tried to pretend that they were going to fix it. At the time of that closure in December, it was stated that the closure was a business decision due to the low and declining surgical terminations demand in Tasmania. I was advised at the time that one of the main drivers for that change in demand was less demand for surgical abortions, but a shift in demand for medical abortions, for example, through the

abortifacient drug RU486, as one example. Following the closure of that clinic, private abortion services are now only available with established obstetrics-gynaecological practitioners who offer the procedure. As I understand it, at this stage there are two private clinicians who have chosen to be identified as providing surgical terminations.

Much has been said about the Government's decision to expand the Patient Transport Assistance Scheme for women who choose to fly interstate to secure a termination service. I reject the statement made by Ms O'Connor as quite wrong that this was an attempt to punish women. I also reject as wrong the statement that somehow the Government was forcing women to go to Melbourne. That is the rhetoric of politics. It is wrong, it is not true and it can only be understood through the prism of party politics.

Yes, I hear all the murmurings, but I want to say that on 15 January 2018, the Government extended the Patient Transport Assistance Scheme to women who choose to fly interstate to access surgical termination services on the basis that that service was not readily available in Tasmania. There was no value judgment, as has been suggested. There should not be rhetoric that it was an attempt to punish people. You should not say things like that.

Ms O'Connor - That is what it feels like for those women.

Mr FERGUSON - That is not what this was about. It was wrong to assert otherwise and equally to say things such as that the government is forcing anyone to go anywhere. That denies the reality that this is a sensitive subject with individual anguish and difficult decisions people are making.

Dr Woodruff - That is the response of the individual, anguished citizens who have made those comments. That is exactly how they feel. You are not listening, minister.

Mr FERGUSON - I am listening to everybody. I will say that.

It is understood that those women travelling to Victoria attended a private clinic in Melbourne and this clinic has been providing low-cost surgical terminations. This is a highly political motion being moved by Labor. Despite their claims to the contrary this is not a genuine discussion on health services. Labor even had to have their motion fixed before it could be brought forward for debate. After going in with heavy rhetoric on directing this and demanding that, all for the purposes of the newspaper and television news, they faced an embarrassing slap down and they needed to back-pedal from their overreach.

Ms O'Byrne does not have the right, from Opposition, to direct any minister in a Cabinet government. That is not the role of this place, I am advised. By all means, hold the government to account on actions, policies and decisions. It is not the role of members opposite to make certain directions and determinations as if you were the government. That is not how it works and you have been found out. That is not even the policy Labor took to the state election. Labor's policy at the time was not a mandate for all surgical terminations to be provided in public hospitals. It was for a promise on the never-never from Bill Shorten and only if federal Labor were to win the next federal election. Labor and the Greens, when in office, despite anything our audiences today have heard from members opposite, did not bring surgical terminations into public hospitals, even during the debate the Parliament went through in 2013.

Labor knows and I will repeat, because we have said it on many occasions, if anybody really cares about the issue, regardless of your world view or your personal opinion, there is a private provider interstate who is looking to establish a private lower-cost surgical termination service in Tasmania. As the public record shows, it is currently in commercial negotiations around suitable premises. With that being the case, the department, without value judgment, without rushing to conclusions about people and their views, is working with that provider through the licensing and regulatory process. This is not under the Reproductive Health Act but under the Health Establishments Act, a long-standing act that deals with any private service that wishes to establish in our state, whether a private hospital, dentist's rooms or a termination of pregnancy provider.

It is my advice that the confirmation of this service is currently subject to commercial negotiations and these discussions are progressing. The provider is likely to make an announcement on this proposed service in the near future. This is a continuation of the longstanding policy of successive state governments.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the amendment removes all words of paragraphs 4 and 5 and replace them with new paragraphs 4 and 5.

The Government, in moving this, is happy for it to be incorporated in the original motion. It is sensible. It is not the Opposition directing traffic in a government that it was not elected to be -

- (4) Calls on the Government to provide advice from the Department of Health and Human Services following consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Royal Australian College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, general practitioners and other stakeholders on the provision of adequate resourcing to deliver statewide surgical terminations in the public and/or private system by 3 July 2018.
- (5) Directs the Minister for Health to report back on this motion to this House by 3 July 2018.

How good is that? I have even adopted -

Ms O'Byrne - You are now going to speak to this for 20 minutes?

Mr FERGUSON - I have even adopted the dates Ms O'Byrne tried to direct the Government to act within. This is a far more reasonable approach for this House to take. The motion put forward is trying to hardwire a situation forcing all terminations to happen in our public hospital system.

Ms O'Byrne - No, it doesn't.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, it was. I can read. That is exactly what it was, that it be done by no later than 1 July.

Ms White - Why not, minister?

Mr FERGUSON - Seventeen days. It is unreasonable and ridiculous and forgets that even under the previous Labor-Greens government - that was not their policy. It was not even in your alternative health policy as recently as the March election that you lost. Your alternative health

policy had barely anything in it, no definition around what it would do. Only when you saw a political opportunity did you start to pretend that this would be in your health policy and it was funded. It was simply another version of your failed health policy.

I feel it is responsible for me to offer in moving this amendment that I would be content in responding and reporting back on this motion to this House. That is sensible. That is reasonable and that is also appropriate because of the way that the Labor Party has conducted itself. Members of the public are free to look at the parliament website, the notice paper, the evolution of this motion and how it has graduated through its various stages of trying to direct government policy, which is not the role for the Opposition. You remember, 26 per cent of voters in Bass voted for you. The Government was elected and only the Government can make government policy.

This motion is an appropriate response. I am content to be scrutinised on this as I have since December of last year. I am content to give an account of myself and to undertake to you, Madam Speaker, and to this House. I would in good faith, if the House were to agree with this, report back to this House. What could be more reasonable than that, given the history of the conduct of the Labor Party on this issue throughout this period from December until now - regardless of the fact that we know there is a private provider looking to establish in Tasmania at arm's length from the minister - and who forgot that the Minister for Health has no role in the licensing of private health establishments?

This was something I had to explain to you, Ms White, at Estimates a couple of years ago. It is a licensing decision for the secretary under the law.

Ms O'Byrne - On indulgence, Madam Speaker, the minister may not be aware but he gave a commitment that he would allow us time to respond to the amendment. He has been speaking for some time. It is entirely up to him about how honestly he wants to approach this matter.

Mr FERGUSON - I have given a commitment to allow the member opposite to respond to all of my remarks, including this amendment. That will happen.

I now move to the problem with Labor's approach, even though in government they did not do it, and I know why they did not do it. It is because they had the same advice from the department that I have. Apart from the ethical considerations that have been considered previously by governments and members, there are difficulties in bringing all surgical terminations into public hospitals. I suspect the previous minister knows this because she was probably advised likewise.

It is also important for me to point out that there are competing priorities for theatre time in the public system, including both elective and emergency surgery. Decisions are always made based on clinical need. The delivery of pregnancy terminations in the public system would displace other obstetric and gynaecological procedures from the allocated theatre time, necessitating the prioritisation of cases of high need. We recognise our hospitals are very busy. It is ironic that the member opposite, who has been frightening people around her health crisis, who says the hospitals are at bursting point -

Ms White - So you deny Tasmanian women access, then. Shut them out - 'Too busy for you, you're a woman'. You're revolting.

Mr FERGUSON - What did you say?

Ms White - You heard me.

Mr FERGUSON - I did not, actually. You are not willing to repeat it? How interesting. There is the respect in this debate from the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition who wants to scare Tasmanians with her health crisis now wishes to add this caseload to the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Clearly there are these practical problems and then there are the obvious ones which you have not addressed in your motion, which is important. Clinicians in all of our hospitals have the right, as at law, to not participate in an abortion if it is against their conscience. That is a right Tasmanian clinicians have. Plainly there are pragmatic problems with imposing this caseload on a public hospital and clearly, from a timing point of view, they are going to need to be seen as soon as possible. For any member of this House who might have some experience in how theatre managers allocate their times and select their staff, how would you guarantee that staff's rights were protected? That is not a guarantee you can provide.

I want to make an important observation. It is my view that these are the reasons why the policy has always been this way. You can shake your head and disagree. You were the health minister. I am certain you would have had advice on this. I cannot otherwise find an explanation for why the policy has not changed in at least 10 years and you were health minister in that period.

I reiterate that I respect people opposite and in the community who believe what they do about abortion across the spectrum. I invite members opposite to show the same respect to our community because this is not an easy issue for many Tasmanians. It is not even an issue for many health practitioners. I want to handle this and I hope I can demonstrate that I have handled this respectfully, professionally and operating within the law of the land. If anybody has a claim otherwise they should give evidence, but they will not find any.

The closure of the provider last December was a decision that we recognise has impacts on people. I have made it very clear that the department is handling an inquiry and discussing right now with a potential provider. What is to happen with that if your policy was implemented?

Ms O'Byrne - Nothing. We'd just have multi layers of response as we do with this.

Mr FERGUSON - Of course they would not come. Why would they for such a small case load? Why would they? It would not be possible. It would not be feasible because based on what I know about this process and the interested party; it would be a visiting service. It would not be available at all times because of the awareness of the likely demand.

If the members opposite wish to politick around that that is obviously a matter for them, but the Government recognises and respects the views of everyone in the community on this issue. We humbly and respectfully put forward this amendment as a sensible approach to broker an improvement to the motion itself. That does not mean the Government loves all of your motion at all, but we want to improve it and we think it is a sensible approach.

In so moving, I make a commitment to follow through on providing the advice that the motion calls for. I can see that members opposite do not look very happy with the amendment because they would rather direct the Government. They would rather control the Government that you were not elected by the people to serve.

That is my contribution. I look forward to the responses from members opposite. Madam Speaker, I commend the amendment to you and to the House.

[4.47 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I respectfully say I find the minister's contribution neither humble nor respectful to this House. I find his contribution not respectful because he alleged a number of things and yet failed to even remain in the Chamber for my contribution, which I took particular pains over. It is true I am rather emotively led on this issue sometimes. I took particular pains to ensure that it was a reasoned and practical speech and an opportunity for this House to join together and find a resolution.

The minister's contribution was highly political and judgmental. He said that women are 'choosing' to go to Melbourne. They are choosing to go to Melbourne, Madam Speaker? That is what this minister truly believes. When you have no other choice then it is not a choice. You can either not have a termination or you can go to Melbourne. That is not a choice. For the minister to believe that shows how he fundamentally misunderstands what women go through. They have a significant decision to make about the future of whether or not they will carry a child, and they do that with full capacity to make that decision. It is hard for many women to do that so when they have made that decision they should be able to access what is legally available here.

That is what the parliament of 2001 sought to provide, by making amendments to the Criminal Code that allowed the scope that would allow women to access terminations. That is what the parliament of 2013 had to deal with because doctors were concerned that when they wanted to provide terminations in the public hospital system they would not be able to because they would be subject to legal redress. That is why we had to bring it to this House. Women were being sent away because doctors were frightened - and you know what? It turns out they are still frightened.

In an ABC interview, an article published by Felicity Ogilvie today, it says the ABC encountered a culture of secrecy and fear surrounding the provision of surgical abortions. Some doctors performing publicly funded terminations would not openly complain about the restrictions placed on providing abortions for fear of Health minister Michael Ferguson shutting off funding or ordering services to be stopped. They found a feeling amongst some doctors performing terminations in Tasmania that they have to do so in a secretive manner so Mr Ferguson does not find out. That is what is happening in our hospital system. You ask how our hospital system is going to deal with this tsunami of women wanting to come and have individual freedoms. The reality is, the numbers are not that high. You know they are not that high, you referenced that in your conversations about a private provider. In reality, they will deal with them in the same way they deal with them now and do not tell you about it. They will deal with them in the same way the Royal Women's Hospital deal with it. They will deal with in the same way they do in South Australia. They deal with it because they are health professionals who day-by-day have to make those choices.

How dare you come into this House and say women have no right to access this because there are more important things and how dreadful that staff might have to make a choice. There is no choice there. This is a legal health procedure that a woman and her doctor can consent to occur, should occur. How dare you.

Mr Ferguson - Very respectful.

Ms O'BYRNE - Talking of respect again. The minister interjects with respect. You did not come in here and listen to my contribution, which I made a point of making as non-political and non-offensive so any one of those people sitting on the other side of the House could have the decency to support it in a way their upper House colleagues have done in the past, in the way their colleagues in others states would do. Any one of you could have the decency to do that. That is how it was presented but we get the political diatribe this minister comes in with. I am appalled.

If I can deal with issues of what has changed in the 10 years, and you are right, there was no change done in that time. We only decriminalised abortion as a result of the access block in 2013, just before the election. We commenced conversations at that point about how to provide public services. Do not tell me what the department would have advised because I know what they would have advised. They would have advised there are circumstances where women cannot afford private services and should be supported. There are times when women could not travel to Launceston or to Hobart because they live in the far north-west and should be supported. That is the advice I received and you know it is the advice you received, minister. You choose not to see it.

Mr Ferguson - Rubbish.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is not rubbish, oh my goodness.

Mr Ferguson - You cannot say what I have seen and have not seen, seriously, and you think you are not being political.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'BYRNE - The reason the circumstance has changed is that the law has changed to give doctors the confidence they will not be subject to any criminal action if they perform a termination in the public hospital system. That is the first part of the law that changed.

The second part that was medical terminations has rightly supported women in the early stages of their pregnancy: less than nine weeks gestation they can have a termination. It has changed because the private providers left and the minister has known all those things. He knew when Moonah closed, he knew when Launceston closed and he knew when the one in Hobart closed and he could have acted.

To come in this House with this motion and say, all of a sudden, we are going to have this wonderful consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, who support public access, general practitioners who support public access and a referral pathway and other stakeholders - I wonder who they might be, minister - about resourcing and delivering statewide surgical terminations. What the hell has he been doing since the last service closed? He expects us now to amend this motion in a way that gives it no real power, no real engagement and no real strength.

The minister is right; we have had a couple of motions. We had a motion genuinely calling on him to take some action around access to terminations. Then we looked at everything he had been saying for the last few months when he told the federal health minister services had been restored, when they had not. When he told the media that most states do not provide it, and he knows that is because in other states it is illegal. When he said services were available, the women simply had to go and see their GP. You condescending, awful human being. Go and see your GP. Do you know

what happens then? The GP says, I have no idea because there is no referral pathway. We had one woman whose GP rang the Royal Hobart Hospital and they said to her, 'We don't provide them.' She thought about maybe adopting the baby out. That is the response.

Mr Ferguson - That is the health department advice, to visit your GP if you have concerns.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'BYRNE - This minister knows it. Why on earth he thinks we would not then go, maybe the will of this parliament should be affected, the will of this parliament that voted to decriminalise, the will of this parliament that said women should be able to access services. That is what this bill does.

We put in a new motion that had a timeframe around it and we did have to make one change. We had to move from 'directs' to 'calls'. I cannot remember the phrase you used, but an appalling phrase saying that the whole thing should have been thrown out. It was an absolute waste. Honestly, you do not understand. You do not understand what brings this matter to this House.

I do not support the amendment. The reasons are there because if we stop at paragraph 3 and we ask the minister to immediately ensure women are not forced to leave the state to access surgical terminations, this minister has just said that women are not forced to go. He already disbelieves that reality. He disbelieves that reality so no effect is given to paragraph 3.

If we then move into his paragraph 4 and our paragraph 4 said that we should be able to provide terminations in the public hospital system under all circumstances in which terminations are permitted by law in accordance with sections 4 and 5 of the Reproductive Health Access to Terminations Act. If we do not have that, then we do not have a commitment for those women for whom any standalone facility will not meet the needs and then they still have to go to Melbourne. They still cannot access services. If cost is the prohibitor or if access is the prohibitor, it does not change. It does not change if we do not require that.

The minister says that he is going to consult. Well I do not know what he has been doing. If the department was going to consult, what have they been doing since before the services closed, since they were first warned? They have chosen to do nothing. The fact is he was not in the Chamber for my contributions because he was busily scrabbling, trying to write some kind of amendment that he could get everyone to agree with. We have seen that kind of game played over there before. He was not in here for my contribution. He came in here and he did not even have an amendment to move. The third one, it is not the minister telling us how he has implemented anything, it is the minister's reporting back on the motion: 'Yes, I received the motion and yes, so the department has done some work and no, I am still not going to provide public access.'

The minister made it very clear in his contribution that he does not believe in providing access in public health facilities. I support a standalone facility - someone coming in and providing that service - I have no problem with that. We know there is a need for women for whom access is still difficult: for whom getting to Hobart is as hard as getting to Melbourne; for whom that sort of service is not going to meet their need and for whom a private facility might still be just too expensive. The situation has not changed. The minister says that he does not have to do anything because nothing else is different over the last 10 years.

The three services are closed. There is access to medical terminations now and the minister knows that the private centre has closed and he knows because at each time he would have been advised. At each time he would have been advised that something needed to be put in place to ensure that women were not at risk of not being able to access services. I know that because across the health spectrum in any of the services that are provided in the private health system, if there is a risk of them not being provided, the health department immediately says 'we need to be aware that if they are not provided we are going to have to look at what kind of service support we are going to have to give to ensure that there is not a gap in service delivery'. That is what happens across every aspect of health service.

Of course we are not going to support the amendment, because it takes away anything that delivers an outcome and the outcome is the outcome that this parliament has voted for. It is the outcome that historically people across political divides have voted for, that members of your upper House voted for. Paul Harriss, who sat in here as a Liberal Party member, voted for it. The late Vanessa Goodwin voted for it. It is only the members in this House that did not. One of them stood in here and said 'I really would like to, and I tell you what, if we win government I will put in exactly the same legislation, I just cannot vote for yours'. Can we not put politics aside now? Can we not just say, yes we each have different views, and I do respect that Mr Ferguson is clearly a man of great faith for whom this is a difficult issue, but this parliament made a decision.

It made a decision that said we are not going to judge women, we are not going to penalise women, and we are going to treat this as a health issue. If this minister cannot do that himself, then this minister needs to say, 'I need someone else to do it'. As an absolute minimum, let us put politics aside, let us give effect to the decisions of this parliament and let us for once act for the women of Tasmania who have been fighting since the 1800s, when this law was first put in place. Women have been fighting for personal agency, for the ability to make decisions about themselves and not to have barriers put in place. Barriers about women even legally being able to make decisions about their body, barriers about women being legally allowed to access services here, and now barriers that are being placed because financial access means that they cannot get there. It is not choice if you have to go - if you have no other option.

It is not choice and we need to ensure that when we decriminalised terminations in this state that we did not then somehow agree that we would make it harder and harder for women to access the best reproductive health available. That is what women deserve, that is what agency is and that is what empowerment is. It is an empowerment that is merely a privilege extended to some women who can afford it and we should all be ashamed if that is what we vote for today.

[5.00 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, this has been a compelling, at times extremely frustrating and saddening debate to listen to. We will not be supporting the Minister for Health's proposed amendment to the motion. I listened carefully to his contribution and he made a number of good points. If we accepted the amendment put forward by the minister there would be no meaningful action on this issue until well after July and there is nothing in the amendment that compels the Government or the department to take any action to deliver access to surgical terminations in the public system.

AYES 11

NOES 11

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett

Dr Broad
Ms Butler

Mr Brooks
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)

Ms Dow
Ms Haddad (Teller)
Ms Houston
Ms O'Byrne
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Mr Hidding

Mr Bacon

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. Therefore, I have to use a casting vote. In accordance with Standing Order 167 I cast my vote with the Ayes. With the indulgence of the House on this historic occasion I wish to clarify my reasoning. I will be casting my vote with the Ayes for the reason that this motion allows the delivery, or potential delivery, of statewide surgical terminations in the public and/or private system by 3 July or rather, the investigation of that. The previous motion did not include 'statewide', it only mentioned the public hospital system. This is a broader approach and I hope we can see it implemented.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Short-stay Accommodation and Housing Crisis

[5.07 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I wish to point out that there is a problem with the way the schedule runs. It is always the Greens who lose time because the clock strikes at 5 p.m., there is a vote and it cuts into our time. It is frustrating and I argue that it is unfair.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes recent data released by the University of Tasmania (UTAS) which shows that in Greater Hobart, at least 1993 properties are listed on just one short stay platform, more than double the amount listed in 2016.
- (2) Recognises that of these, over 75% are entire properties, not just rooms in a primary residence.
- (3) Acknowledges that peak usage of short stay platforms is yet to hit.

- (4) Further recognises the significant detrimental impact short stay accommodation is having on the housing market.
- (5) Calls upon the Government to:
 - (a) pause the issuing of new permits for visitor accommodation in existing dwellings in residential zones, with such pause to be reviewed by Parliament each year before expiration;
 - (b) make visitor accommodation in existing dwellings a discretionary use, with impacts on housing availability and affordability in the performance criteria; and
 - (c) commit resources towards enforcing compliance with visitor accommodation rules, including operation without a permit where a permit is required.

We require a vote. This motion is our initial response to what is clearly a growing housing crisis in Tasmania. Hobart is now the nation's least affordable capital city. We now have the lowest vacancy rates in the country. We have people sleeping at the showgrounds, families sleeping at the showgrounds, at the Domain, sleeping rough in our city every night of the week.

We, as a parliament, must take the opportunity to press pause on the listing of new whole homes on the Airbnb and Stayz platforms. There is no question short stay accommodation, whole properties that would otherwise have been rented, is having a profound and measurable impact on the availability of homes in greater Hobart, in other parts of Tasmania and on the affordability of those homes. I have two amendments to move to the motion. I have been in discussion with my colleagues about this. I hope these amendments receive support.

I acknowledge the long-standing work of people in the housing and homelessness and Social Services sector and share, on behalf of the Greens, their deepening concern about the housing situation in Tasmania. There has been an underinvestment in social and affordable housing. There has been a failure of the planning laws to ensure that we can increase the supply of social and affordable housing and provide for social housing in new development areas. We had a housing strategy that was finalised in 2015 before the data went off the charts. The housing strategy delivered by the previous human services minister, Mrs Petrusma, which was good work, is no longer. Not only is it not meeting its targets because there was not enough money put into the strategy in the first place, but it is no longer capable of responding to the situation that an increasing number of Tasmanians are finding themselves in.

We decided today was the day to bring on this debate because parliament has an opportunity to provide an immediate relief and a quick fix while we get the data and the policy response right to place a moratorium on new whole homes going onto Airbnb from that point forward. I note that the TasCOSS, Shelter, the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania have come together in a unique and impressive display of unity to say we need to do something to tackle this problem. There is widespread acknowledgement within the sector and among key stakeholders, and particularly among people who work on the frontline of housing distress and homelessness, that we must deal with the explosion in properties on the short-stay accommodation market.

This is the last private members' time before we come back on 21 August, so from a Greens point of view we could not live with ourselves and not use this time as an opportunity for the parliament to take some control over this situation. The market does not always get it right. Clearly, while Tasmania's population is growing and the economic times are improved, there are people who are victims of a growing population and the boom in visitor numbers. I point members to the research undertaken by the UTAS Institute for the Study of Social Change. This should be a wake-up call for every member in this House who represents their constituents and wants to be sure that housing that is available prioritises Tasmanians.

The overview of the data that has been released by the institute makes it very clear we have a problem on our hands and now we have the capacity to fix it. The key findings are that there have been constraints on the supply of new housing and a decline in housing completions relative to the five-year average since 2016; the population growth in Hobart is accelerating and net migration losses are declining; and there are significant increases in whole-property short-stay accommodation listings in the state, particularly in the Hobart local government area. It states:

Taken together, this data highlights a significant and growing gap in the Greater Hobart housing supply since 2016. Consequences of this - typically borne by the most vulnerable in our city - include low rental vacancy rates, rising rents and declining affordability that translate to increased housing stress and risk for low-income Tasmanians.

All members of the House today would have received correspondence from the Tenants Union of Tasmania. This is an organisation that is on the front line of the housing crisis. I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Tenants Union of Tasmania and I believe Ben Bartl from the Tenants Union is joining us in the Chamber today. The letter from the Tenants Union implores us to take this opportunity for action. It tells the heartbreaking story in the opening chapter of the human cost of not getting on top of the housing supply issue in the past term of government and not properly planning for the growth in visitor numbers. The correspondence to members starts with:

Over the past year the chronic shortage of safe, secure and affordable housing in Tasmania, particularly in Greater Hobart, has reached crisis point. It seems like every day there is a new story in the traditional media or on social media of men, women and children made homeless and having to live in tents, caravans and other less appealing places. As well as the media, our staff have also heard harrowing stories on our telephone advice line and face to face that points to a significant problem, namely the growth in the short-term accommodation industry at the expense of long-term rental accommodation. As a result there has been a number of adverse impacts, including increased rents as supply has reduced, growing unaffordability and increased insecurity.

The letter goes on to cite some of the key points from the UTAS report which finds that we have not reached peak Airbnb in Tasmania and, as we know, the increase in the number of whole properties going on to Airbnb is also driving up rents. The data that is cited from the UTAS report and the letter from the Tenants Union shows that there has been a 184 per cent increase in entire properties being rented out on Airbnb in Tasmania between July 2016 and February 2018; a 244 per cent increase in entire properties being rented out on Airbnb in the local government between July 2016 and February 2018; and a 212 per cent increase in entire properties being rented out on Airbnb in Greater Hobart between July 2016 and February 2018.

The numbers are frightening and they do not detail the human story here. What they tell us is that the market is out of control and that market failure and a failure of government to regulate properly is putting Tasmanians out of homes that they otherwise would have had to rent. When you look at the data in the UTAS report it makes it really clear that we are not talking about families, singles, couples who choose to rent out a part of their home on the short-stay market. We are not talking here about HomeShare.

In rare situations we are talking about Tasmanians who have enough of an income to afford an investment property that they can then put onto the short stay market. There are some obviously who have that, but when you look at the data - and now I speak to you, Mr Jaensch - it is very clear that what is happening here are multi-listings so we are getting corporations basically buying up homes in Tasmania and adding them to an Airbnb portfolio. What we see here in this report is an increasing proportion of multi-listings which may be an indicator of increasing activity by commercial operators and professional managers. Data shows an increase in multi-listings during the period to close to half of all listings. You can see it there; it is very graphically depicted. What we are talking about is interstate and overseas money being invested into the real estate market in Tasmania at a cost to Tasmanians who need a home. It is as straightforward as that.

It comes down to what we value as a community and what we prioritise. Surely we should prioritise providing homes for Tasmanians. This is not a wealthy state. Everyone here knows that. We recognise that the federal Liberal Government made it very difficult for the previous government to invest adequately in increasing the supply of social housing. One of the first acts of budget savagery they did which had a direct impact on the supply of affordable housing was to cut the National Rental Affordability Scheme. That instantly evaporated a pool of money which was available to increase the supply of affordable housing.

There has been no debt relief offered to Tasmania for the crippling albatross of the Commonwealth-state housing debt. When we were in government I went first to speak to then minister, Ms Plibersek, about the Commonwealth-state housing debt and then Ms Giddings, who was the premier and the treasurer, and I spoke to the then federal treasurer, Wayne Swan. Both times we were told effectively that if the Commonwealth forgave our debt then they would have to forgive the debts of other states and territories that have not paid their debts. The issue is that we are a small and economically disadvantaged state and having a Commonwealth-state housing debt which sits at around \$200 million means that at least three-quarters of the money that comes from the Commonwealth for the Commonwealth-state housing agreement gets sent in the post straight back to Canberra as our repayment on the debt. So we had an under-investment from the federal government and then we had it compounded by a substantial under-investment from the previous Liberal government and we were three years into the term before any more substantial money was put into the housing supply basket.

We have Shelter Tasmania making it clear that Hobart is the least affordable capital city in Australia. We have respected researchers from the University of Tasmania making it clear we have a problem on our hands. We know that the first step to the solution is to press pause. What we are talking about here is a moratorium on new permits being issued for whole homes.

I can now indicate to the House the two amendments I seek to move. I understand Labor's Ms Standen has some amendments too and I hope the amendments I am putting forward ease some of her concerns but let us have the discussion.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That paragraph 5(a) be deleted and replaced with the following new paragraph 5(a) -

- (a) pause the issuing of new permits for visitor accommodation in existing dwellings in residential zones until such time as Parliament resolves, by way of motion, that the pause should no longer apply;

That paragraph 5(b) be deleted and replaced with the following new paragraph 5(b) -

- (b) ensure that current exemptions from permit requirements, including principle place of residence exemptions, still apply; and

It was originally our intention to only apply this motion to the listing of whole properties and entire homes in the Greater Hobart area, but since the conversations I have had with people working in the sector, I recognise the growth in Airbnb and the impact on housing availability and affordability is also having an impact on Launceston, and places like St Helens, and other parts of Tasmania.

Madam SPEAKER - If you are about put through an amendment, you have to formally table a copy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I did provide the amendments to the opposition spokespeople. I thought they had been sent through but that is fine, that is my responsibility.

We believe this motion is entirely worthy of the House's support. We believe it would help the Minister for Housing to have a more informed response and the breathing space that is needed in order to ensure we get the policy settings right. I expect to hear from the minister that we do not know about the impact of Airbnb on housing supply and rents and that we should wait until the Legislative Council inquiry is complete.

We know about the impact of short-stay accommodation on the housing rental market and on rents. The data is in. There are obviously data gaps and the UTAS report makes it clear - and this is a problem for government and for people trying to get on top of this issue - that the number of permits granted does not reflect the scale of short-stay accommodation activity in Hobart. We understand that there are investors who list their properties on Airbnb and do not seek permits. Obviously there needs to be compliance, resourcing towards compliance, monitoring and enforcement of the short-stay accommodation market, which is why the notice of motion we have on the table today states in the final paragraph that we must commit resources towards enforcing compliance with visitor accommodation rules, including operation without a permit where a permit is required.

In closing, this is the complete motion that I am asking the House to support today on behalf of the Greens, but more importantly on behalf of Tasmanians looking for a home and needing a home:

- (1) Notes recent released by the University of Tasmania, which shows that in greater Hobart, at least 1993 properties are listed on just one short-stay platform, more than double the amount listed in 2016.

- (2) Recognises that of these, over 75 per cent are entire properties, not just rooms in a primary residence.
- (3) Acknowledges that peak usage of short-stay platforms is yet to hit.
- (4) Further recognises the significant detrimental impact short-stay accommodation is having on the housing market.
- (5) Calls upon the Government to:
 - (a) pause the issuing of new permits for visitor accommodation in existing dwellings in residential zones until such time as Parliament resolves by way of motion that the pause should no longer apply;
 - (b) ensure that current exemptions from permit requirements including principal place of residence exemptions still apply; and
 - (c) commit resources towards enforcing compliance with visitor accommodation rules, including operation without a permit where a permit is required.

This is a sensible step. It places a moratorium on whole homes owned by investors being placed on Airbnb because more money can be made out of Airbnb than can be made out of providing a rental home to a family, a couple or an individual that needs it. This is a tool that parliament can use now to make sure that we get the policy settings right, that we give the Minister for Housing breathing space and the opportunity to be less concerned about property investor's rights and more concerned about a strong response to the growth of Airbnb and whole homes going on the Airbnb market.

We could make a real difference today to the lives of Tasmanians. This is not a panacea but a moratorium on whole homes being listed on Airbnb until we get it right. This does not impact on anyone who has a property on Airbnb or Stayz right now, not one person who is in the Airbnb market now. What we are saying is that if we prioritise as a parliament providing homes for Tasmanians, then we must support this motion and we must support a moratorium on new listings of whole properties - homes that would otherwise be rented out - on the short-stay accommodation platforms.

[5.28 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I will start with amendments to the motion, and forgive my inexperience in procedural matters here. We would be happy with the Greens amendments to 5(a) and the replacement of 5(b), but we would want to go further. Do I outline those now?

Madam SPEAKER - My understanding is we cannot vote on your amendment until we have voted on Ms O'Connor's, but if you wish to articulate them you can foreshadow.

Ms STANDEN - I will outline the full amendments. Our amendments would be to leave out 5(b). We would be happy with the Greens' amendment to replace that with 'ensure that current exemptions from permanent requirements including principal place of residence exemptions still apply;'

Add in 5(c), 'the pause on new approvals to remain in place until the findings of the parliamentary inquiry;'

And 5(d), 'Parliament to use the findings of the parliamentary inquiry to ensure the best policies and regulations are put in place to protect our state and complement the opportunity that short stay accommodation provides;'

Leave out the existing 5(c). The existing 5(c) reads -

commit resources towards enforcing compliance with visitor accommodation rules including operation without a permit where a permit is required.

Instead, insert 5(e) -

Government to outline appropriate funding towards enforcing compliance with visitor accommodation rules, including operation without a permit where a permit is required.

I hope that is clear. Labor congratulates the Leader of the Greens for putting this motion on a pause for short stay accommodation. Labor has been calling for a pause on short stay accommodation for stand-alone investment properties in high stress areas in particular and understands the amendments that the Greens have moved today to incorporate other areas of high stress, including Launceston and other places.

We are keen to support the current Legislative Council inquiry and to see the outcomes and recommendations from that flow through in this place.

Importantly, we see that putting this pause in place will send an important signal to the market. If just one home is released to the private rental market as a result of this motion, that would be good. One in three permits issued is for whole, entire residences being made available in the market. Clearly there are issues with the existing regulatory and compliance regime. It would be good if we see tightening and monitoring in this space.

From the last couple of weeks, the rental affordability index has highlighted the extraordinary situation of Hobart overtaking Sydney as the capital with least rental affordability. This is no longer an issue that only impacts low income people. This is impacting people creeping into the low to middle income brackets, blue collar workers who are simply being squeezed out of the private rental market.

We are seeing unprecedented situations with homelessness. Regulation in this space will be a good thing for sending that signal to the market for putting a pause on short stay visitor accommodation. This will be a move in the right direction.

[5.33 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Housing) - Madam Speaker, I also propose an amendment -

Ms O'Connor - Which you have chosen not to share with other members of the House.

Mr JAENSCH - I have it here. What I would like to take your advice on is how the amendments that have already been tabled and foreshadowed can be addressed so we then have an amended motion that I can then speak to and I will put mine so we have a chance to discuss that.

Ms O'Connor - Sure, it would be lovely, and in fact, polite, of you to provide a copy.

Mr JAENSCH - I shall do that as soon as we clear the deck.

Ms O'Connor - This is not going to play out well for you guys if you are going to do this with amendments on the run. It is not going to work for you. It is not in the spirit of goodwill.

Madam SPEAKER - We are going to move Ms O'Connor's motion and the amendments first. The question is that the amendments be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Madam SPEAKER - I am now going to put Ms Standen's amendments.

Ms Standen - Our amendments would include the amendments put by the Greens so we will be replacing 5(a), we will be leaving out 5(b) and inserting instead 5(b), 5(c) and 5(d) and leaving out former 5(c) and replacing it with a new 5(e). I appreciate it is very complicated.

Mr Brooks - I believe Ms O'Connor's amendment has been dealt with and Ms Standen is now moving her amendment that includes aspects of Ms O'Connor's amendment. We do not have a problem if they include the amendment because it is a secondary amendment. For ease and given the time constraints we should deal with Ms Standen's amendment then the Government has an amendment to move as well.

Ms Standen - Our amendments as tabled would not include the last part of the sentence to 5(a) so it would read instead of 'pause the issuing of new permits for visitor accommodation in existing dwellings in residential zones and such pause to be reviewed by parliament each year before expiration', that would be replaced with 'pause the issuing of new permits for visitor accommodation in existing dwellings in residential zones'.

Ms O'Connor - Ms Standen, given the way you have stepped through these amendments we could accept your amendments in their entirety.

We are now voting on all your amendments, as I understand it. We might get some advice from the Clerk but we could do that because it does not diminish the effect of the original motion.

Ms Standen - That is right.

The House divided -

AYES 11

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Haddad

NOES 11

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Brooks
Ms Courtney

Ms Houston
Ms O'Byrne
Mr D O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)

PAIR

Mr Bacon

Mr Hidding

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. I therefore have to use a casting vote. In accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes. With the indulgence of the House I will again explain my decision. Given that I have been furnished with an alternative motion and this is an issue very close to my heart, as all of you would know, and given the fact that there is such poor compliance with permits at the moment, I am not certain how a pause will work in effect. I believe the motion before the House significantly strengthens the rules and I urge the Government to work on it as fast as possible. We will now take the amendment by the Minister for Housing.

Amendments negatived.

[5.45 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Housing) - As the Minister for Housing I appreciate the efforts and the intentions of the many people and groups who are trying hard to help to resolve the current housing shortage in Tasmania and the severe housing stress affecting many Tasmanian households, particularly in the Greater Hobart area.

I will confirm that the Opposition and the Greens have a copy of the proposed amendment.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, we got it five minutes ago.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. We acknowledge that the housing situation that faces us requires a multi-pronged response and appropriate regulation of visitor accommodation is a part of that response. The Government has shown we are ready to listen to and act on evidence and expert advice, as we have done on receipt of recommendations recently from the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission. We are committed to listening to and working with key stakeholders to deliver policy that better meets expectations and that will work.

I believe we have done this. I believe we have also shown that we are prepared to do this well with the Land Supply Bill that was tabled yesterday which has been substantially modified in consultation with industry and community sector representatives. That is another example of our intention to work with people to get these things right. We take the same approach today.

We accept that there is a demand to properly regulate the visitor accommodation sector in Tasmania and to police those regulations and to do both of these things informed by reliable evidence and expert advice. On this basis we note that the original motion, even with the various amendments that have been proposed, contains elements that are going to be very difficult to make work and also, as acknowledged by the mover, are likely to be largely ineffective.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister is misleading. I said nothing of the sort. I said it would not fix the whole problem but it was part of a solution.

Mr JAENSCH - I recognise that the independent expert, the Tasmanian Planning Commission's recommended changes which have been accepted by the Government introduce a range of very new controls which will have a similar effect to the intent of those proposed to date, particularly with strata title properties. That has not been fully appreciated in the discussion so far.

I note the following, which is important. It was identified by the Tourism Industry Council, TasCOSS, Shelter Tasmania and LGAT in their joint statement today, we need good evidence and we need clear communication of regulations if we expect people to comply with them.

Ms O'Connor - The evidence is in. Talk to people on the front line. Go up to the Domain.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, could we please hear the minister.

Mr JAENSCH - There have been shortcomings with the existing reliance on permits that people voluntarily seek and that are policed by local government in that there has not been the uptake we would have expected. There is an acceptance by the peak bodies that good, reliable data that we intend to extract from a new agreement with Airbnb and Stayz can be used in the process of ensuring compliance and can give those new regulations and permit processes the opportunities to work that they may not have had so far.

We have a set of regulations now. Part of the issue that has been identified is that people do not know enough about what they should be doing to comply with them. What is also proposed is another set of regulations that apply in the original motion for a period between now and when either parliament decides or on the other amendment, when the upper House inquiry decides. We would change them again. What we would have is one set of regulations that have been announced and will start in July. Another set that may change -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - If the Greens proposal had come across and we change the categories of properties again, and changed the regulations again when the upper House inquiry comes through, we would have three steps of regulations. We would be asking people to comply with them and there is that whole communication task that comes with it.

The amendment we have accepts the assertion that visitor accommodation is a factor in the management of housing supply in Tasmania. It gives new regulations developed by the TPC, adopted by the Government, based on evidence, consultation and expert advice, a chance to work. It clearly communicates to the industry what the new rules are and provides an evidence base and hard data from the listing companies that we can provide to councils and work with them to ensure compliance in accordance with the rules. Give these things a chance to work properly. It gives people who were involved in the sharing economy a chance to know what the rules are and that they are to be policed. We will continue to monitor the situation using proper evidence and data as TasCOSS, Tourism Industry Council, Shelter Tasmania and Local Government Association of Tasmania have called for.

We are prepared to commit to do these things, to note the calls from TasCOSS, Shelter Tasmania, the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the Tourism Industry Council for reliable data to assist the impact, to secure those data sharing agreements agreed to in the communiqué from the housing summit in March and to bring forward that evidence as soon as possible. It can be used to inform policy and to ensure compliance. We want to work with the local government sector and those peak groups on ways to better inform the community and the participants in the sharing economy. They will understand what is expected of them and they can comply. We want to work with local government to ensure they have the tools and information needed to police that compliance and make sure it happens.

In recognition, this alone is not going to solve it. We have a housing shortage that has many dimensions to it. We need to continue to accelerate the investment in the supply of new homes for people in Tasmania who need them. We also commit this delivery of new homes by the end of June 2019 and commit that over half of that supply will be delivered in the Greater Hobart region, where the pressure is greatest right now. We recognise that and commit to that as an outcome of this process.

That is our proposed amendment. We believe it is consistent with what the tourism industry, accommodation, social services sector and the local government sector, who we would be asking to police any of these regulations, and what they have been calling for and it is consistent with key agreed outcomes of the housing summit.

Madam Speaker, I move -

An amendment to motion 28 -

- (1) Remove the words 'significant detrimental' from clause 4.
- (2) Remove clauses 5(a), (b) and (c) and replace them with the following clauses -
 - (a) note the urgent calls from the Tasmanian Council for Social Services (TasCOSS), Shelter Tasmania, the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) and the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania for reliable data to assess the impact of short stay accommodation in Tasmania;
 - (b) secure the data sharing agreements with Airbnb and Stayz as outlined in the Housing Summit Communiqué, to provide an evidence base to inform policy and improve transparency in the rapidly changing sharing economy;
 - (c) work with the local government sector and peak industry groups on ways to better inform the Tasmanian community to ensure a clear understanding of the regulations in place for short stay accommodation;
 - (d) work with local government to ensure compliance with visitor accommodation rules, including the potential for increased penalties for permit non-compliance; and

- (e) commit to the delivery of 900 new homes by the end of June 2019, with over half of that supply to be delivered in the Greater Hobart region.

[5.57 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, tonight the parliament has let down people who are desperate for a home. It has let down people who are working on the front line of the homelessness crisis we are having in Tasmania. I point out to you, Madam Speaker, that what has been played here is an attempt to make you vote with the Government in order to ensure no action is taken on this issue. We have given parliament an opportunity today to place a moratorium on whole homes going on Airbnb. You know that is a problem. Instead, we have this. The Liberals will, 'note', secure the data sharing agreement. Who cares, honestly, that you will work with local government? Then you will begin your own self-promotion. This is a rubbish amendment. It will do nothing to stop the explosion of Airbnb in Tasmania that is shutting ordinary people out of homes. You have manipulated the processes of this place at the expense of people who know. They know Airbnb is ripping homes out of the rental market. They know it. Speak to people.

The guy who cuts my hair had lived in the one home for 12 years and he is told to leave because it is going to be an Airbnb property. It is happening all over Tasmania. It is happening in places such as St. Helens. What is our priority as a parliament? Our priority as a parliament is to look after people who elected us and to make sure we are not protecting the property classes.

You are speaking for the Tourism Industry Council before you speak for people who represent the housing and homelessness sector in Tasmania. You have bought yourself time with this rubbish amendment to do nothing at all about the explosion in Airbnb. This commits you to nothing, nothing whatsoever. You have utterly let down people who are right now sleeping on the Domain, sleeping at the Showgrounds, sleeping in the rivulet and at the Coleman Pavilion. It is a disgrace. On your head. This parliament had an opportunity to do something about this. On his head.

Madam SPEAKER - This a very critical issue and close to my heart, as you would be aware. I am going to suspend the House for about five minutes while I seek advice.

Sitting suspended from 6.01 p.m. to 6.06 p.m.

The House divided -

AYES 11

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Brooks
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch

NOES 11

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Haddad (Teller)
Ms Houston
Ms O'Byrne
Mr D O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor

Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)

Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Mr Hidding

Mr Bacon

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. I therefore have to use a casting vote in accordance with Standing Order 167. I doubt I will sleep tonight.

Today we have been presented with two motions and I have great sympathy for both. But at the end of the day I have an obligation to vote for what will actually work and I have taken advice from the department on the limited mechanism available to implement a pause. Their advice is there are also very limited options available to implement regulations that could pause any further entire homes being listed on platforms such as Airbnb and Stayz.

The only options that would be available are to legislate for the pause, possibly an amendment bill to LUPA, or to seek another interim planning directive. The issuing of an interim planning directive first requires that the commission make a recommendation to the minister that a draft planning directive should have interim effect. There are no options for the minister to make interim planning directives without the input of the commission. Given the commission has only just recently handed down its recommendations on planning directive number 6 it is hard to see how an interim planning directive that implements a pause on new entire house listings would be agreed to. And it goes on and on with a number of reasons.

In that case and given that the minister has committed to get on with building 900 homes I will be voting with the Ayes.

Amendments agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mary Elaine Binks OAM - Tribute

[6.11 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Madam Speaker, I share the news and pay tribute to a great woman, Mrs Mary Elaine Binks OAM, who was born in New Norfolk, educated at the St Bridget Convent in New Norfolk and St Marys College in Hobart. She married in 1958 and had four children, a son and three daughters. She worked as a librarian at the CSIRO in Hobart for five years before moving to the University of Tasmania library where she worked for three years.

Mary Binks was the inaugural president of the Devonport branch of the National Council of Women in 1983 and has been a member ever since. Mary was elected to Devonport Council in 1989 and served two years as deputy mayor and four years as mayor. She was a member of the Cradle Coast Authority for two years. She was a member and state convenor of the Tasmanian

Women's Consultative Council and was past vice-president of the Tasmanian Local Government Association. She was the president and office bearer of the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Local Government Women's Association as well as a life member. Mary was a member of the Tasmanian Library Advisory Board, the Tasmanian Heritage Council, the Local Government Review Board and the Advisory Board for the North West Rural Palliative Care Project, set up by the North West Tasmania Division of General Practice.

During 1994-95, Mary Binks chaired a committee that produced the Working It Out report, dealing with the issues affecting young homosexual people living in rural areas, particularly the north-west coast. The outcome of that committee's report was sought by many rural communities throughout Australia and have continuing legacy today. It is about that time and on that issue I first met Mary. When I arrived in 2000 and became the inaugural CEO of the Cradle Coast Authority, Mary was one of the mayors who owned the organisation I served. It was shortly after the Working It Out report came out, I read and it was an education for me. It was an insight into the lives and traumatic circumstances of many young LGBTI people, in what was still a very conservative rural community, and their experiences of growing up and coming out in those communities.

It consisted of a series of interviews recorded in detail, the voices of young people who had been through those experiences on the coast and it was harrowing. The remarkable thing was that project and the awareness, the acceptance and the change that followed it was championed by this tiny woman with the older lady's hair set, suits and a string of pearls, always carrying a handbag, and wearing the twin set. The epitome for me of the iron fist in the velvet glove, this diminutive woman who took on issues and championed them with an absolute passion. At that time, she was instrumental in of all places Devonport and the north-west coast, of breaking this through into the council chambers, the public square, the boardrooms and community in general as a discussion about something we needed to fix.

Today I have had assistance from the current CEO of Working It Out and from Rodney Croome who put together some words I would like to put into the record:

Mary Binks was a supporter of the vulnerable members of our community. During the 1990s she saw the deep damage caused by prejudice against LGBTI people on the north-west coast and help set up LGBTI support and education organisation Working It Out.

In 1998 Mary obtained funding for the initial study showing the intense pressure young LGBTI people were under on the north-west coast. When this study led to further funding for a support and education organisation Mary chaired the steering committee of what became Working It Out.

Over the past 30 years, Working It Out has saved the lives of many young LGBTI Tasmanians and kept many families together. It was a tribute to people like Mary Binks that the seat of Braddon returned majority support for marriage equality last year. Tasmania is a more open, inclusive and happy place because of her.

It was a privilege and honour to meet her and for her to be one of the first Tasmanian people who had a profound impact on my understanding of the place and our roles as leaders in it.

St Helens - One Night Stand - Concert

[6.17 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I never thought I would stand in this House and have the words One Night Stand come out of my mouth, but they are. I rise to congratulate my home town St Helens on securing one of the biggest music events in a significant cultural and economic coup for the east coast.

I am thrilled Triple J's One Night Stand concert will be held in St. Helens on 1 September 2018. The event will attract considerable investment into the area. The boost the event gave to Mt. Isa and Geraldton in Western Australia was tremendous on an economic and social level. With the east coast so reliant on tourism and tourist dollars, this is a significant coup for my home town. On the morning after Triple J made the announcement, nearly all accommodation sold out in the area by 11 am. The rush on accommodation in the region for September is also great news for the local industry. We have quite slow winters, even though they are improving with increasing tourists.

You cannot underestimate the value of an event like this for St. Helens, on both a local and national scale, giving a boost to local businesses and providing nationwide exposure for the region. The most recent event in Mt Isa last year was estimated by the local council to have given the town a \$3 million boost in terms of the sheer numbers of people who travelled north to take part.

This year there are acts such as Vance Joy, Peking Duk and The Middle Kids. My teenage son has told me another two acts, but I cannot remember them off the top of my head. The local community is really looking forward to the boom.

I take this opportunity to thank local resident Kristy Chapel for making the official submission to Triple J, to help put St Helens on the national music map. It is also fantastic for the local music scene. It is an alcohol-free and all age event. What we would like to do is try to encourage families to attend the event with their children. My teenage children, nephews and nieces cannot believe the One Night Stand will be in their sleepy summer paradise of St Helens. I know the Opposition, the Labor Party, intend to swing in behind the event organisers and the community to ensure we can make this event a massive boost for the local economy.

The Launceston Players - Tribute

[6.20 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Speaker, I acknowledge and thank the Tasmanian theatre group that has provided entertainment for the northern Tasmanian community for more than 90 years.

The Launceston Players is a northern Tasmanian institution and one of the oldest community theatre groups in Australia. In 1926, the founders of Launceston Players made it their mission to strive for excellence in local theatre. That continues today. The group strives to encourage new talent, whether that be on stage or part of the crew. Throughout the decades, the Players have staged a variety of production styles from theatre restaurants, to music hall style to fully staged musicals and plays. In recent decades the Players have presented a mix of productions from *Annie* to *Godspell*, *My Fair Lady*, *Armadeus* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Notably, in 1986, the

Players held the world's first amateur production of *Evita*, which was a coup for Launceston theatre goers.

As the community gives to the Launceston Players through its support, the Players give back to the community through services such as the theatre wardrobe, which holds a range of classic costumes and is made available to local groups and organisations through an appropriate donation. Community groups such as this cannot exist without the dedication of passionate volunteers. I acknowledge the strong Launceston Players committee of president Grahame Foster, senior vice president Liz Santamaria and vice president Jeff Hockley, secretary Linda Madill OAM, treasurer Vanessa Clifford and committee members Mark Horner, Alan Telford and David Towns.

There have been seven life members awarded in the Players long history: Margaret Dick, Jeff Hockley, Jacqueline Horne, Linda Madill OAM, Gerard Maloney, Ray Sangston and Liz Santamaria.

The organisation recently publicly celebrated the long service of Linda Madill OAM and Liz Santamaria, who have both dedicated more than 30 years to the Players, on stage and off. I am humbled to be associated with some of the members of the organisation and praise their commitment to Launceston.

I am proud to support the way they continually engage with the community. I was delighted to attend the performance of *Stepping Out* two weeks ago. This production, set in North London, follows the lives of members of an amateur tap class, each attending for their own reasons. It was an uplifting tale of determination, friendship, camaraderie and the way people overcome barriers to form meaningful friendships. It had some interesting story lines within it. The production of the tap was unbelievable. It has been a long time since I attended a production such as that where I not only stayed awake for the whole production, but tapped my foot the entire way. It was an absolute treat.

As one social media comment read -

We went to *Stepping Out* at the Earl Arts Centre. Such a fun show. Great characters and the whole place fell out of the theatre tap dancing up the street and feeling great.

I acknowledge the amazing cast. It was a very uplifting performance. I thank all the volunteers. Productions like this do not happen overnight. They have all been working for months to make it the high quality production that it was.

The evening was supported by countless volunteers in every capacity in the theatre. Community groups such as this who have contributed so much to our community over so many decades are a special part of what makes where I live such an amazing community.

Christine Milne AO - Tribute

[6.25 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the awarding of an Order of Australia medal to Christine Milne, former Tasmanian Greens Leader, Australian Greens Leader, Senator for Tasmania.

Almost without reservation I can say Christine Milne is the most formidably intelligent person I have met, let alone woman I have met. She has dedicated her life, as was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours, to the promotion and protection of the natural world. It is a life of activism where her extraordinary intellect, drive and her big heart worked together to deliver some real change for this island and its people and for the country and in fact for the planet.

Christine began her career of activism on the public record, as far as I know, in the campaign to save the Franklin River from damming, was arrested, sent to the Risdon Prison lock up, which is almost compulsory for the CV of those early day greenies - Rosalie has been locked up too. I have not yet; I am still waiting. Risdon lock up for Christine, and then as a teacher from Wesley Vale and the mother of two very young sons at the time, she went on to campaign to save beautiful Wesley Vale from the then North Broken Hill pulp mill and established the CROPS Group - Concerned Residents Opposed to the Pulp Mill. That was a successful campaign to save that beautiful corner of Tasmania, because it would have been a native forest mill, and Bass Strait from a toxic future.

She went on to win a seat of Lyons in 1989 and was in the accord government with then Labor Premier, Michael Field. One of the first moves that government made - and it was part of the accord - was to extend very significantly the boundaries of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. That is part of Christine's legacy as well.

For those of us who are privileged to know Christine she is simply one of the most inspiring people I have ever known. When you work with her she is a little bit more terrifying because Christine has a sense of vision and purpose which is so clear and so true that it leaves the careers of others, including my own, absolutely in the shade.

I thought I would quote a little bit from an article that was in *Tas Weekend Mercury* in November last year and this was after she had resigned from the Senate in 2015. Some of Christine's reflections on being a woman in politics when it was really, really difficult. Women in this place were called Femi-Nazis and all manner of abuse was hurled at them, no matter what their political colour was. She says in this article:

From day one of my political career in 1989, I decided not to talk about the trials of being a young mother in parliament. It had huge personal interest value for the media and would have been an electorally popular thing to do, but I knew enough to be sure that allowing your children to be used to positively reinforce your image is not a good decision.

Besides, in 1989 there were very few women in Tasmanian politics. Women were expected to fit into the system, not the system to adapt to a different way of seeing or being in the world. Many MPs and members of the community thought women should be at home looking after the children and cooking the dinner and not 'abandoning' their families. Any reference to the difficulties of public life would have resulted in being told to 'Go home, then'.

She reflects:

To make way in politics in the 1990s you had to be strong, forthright and able to withstand the barbs. Bullies see vulnerability a mile off, and any discomfort or emotion would have been considered signs of weakness.

She says later in the article:

I made my career about the issues, not about me. I did not want to get on *Dancing with the Stars* or breakfast TV talking about my children or my relationships or my home or my makeup, simply because that is what people now want to know. If I had to have a makeover to be featured in women's magazines, I was better off not being there.

Here she says:

If we as women abandon the substance of what we have to say for the sake of popularity and profile, there will be no drivers for change in parliaments. If we fail to stop the slide into Hollywood, we will see women elected to parliament but we will not see advances on common decency, on addressing women's rights, family violence, global warming, the environment, inequality, pay parity, marginalisation, housing, superannuation gaps, childcare, overseas aid - and the list goes on.

She says at the end:

When asked by women for advice about whether or not they should go into politics I say: regard it as one huge opportunity in a life of activism, but only do it if you have a clear idea of the changes you want to make. What is the point of being there if you are only making up the numbers or for the salary or the perks? Consider the logistics of where you live and where the Parliament is located and make appropriate choices. Don't do it simply as a career choice, because it is not worth the sacrifices if it is only about your own advancement.

A very clear and compelling purpose makes being an MP not only worthwhile but incredibly fulfilling. You will have done what you knew in your heart you ought to do.

Christine wrote a wonderful biography last year, *An Activist's Life*. For anyone who wants to know about the fantastic work that people all over the world are doing to make the planet a better place in Christine's really crisp, clear and evocative writing, you should read *An Activist's Life*.

From the point of view of someone who is a Greens member of parliament I recognise that Dr Woodruff and I are in here, we do stand on the shoulders of giants and Christine Milne, in my mind, is one of the most outstanding Tasmanians ever to have worked in this place. She has improved Tasmania. She has protected forests. She worked in the federal government in Canberra to deliver a price on carbon and it was Christine who had the most influence over the design of the price on carbon. It was because there was a price on carbon that there was \$70 million a year coming into the Hydro in Tasmania and there were substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the work that Christine did.

It gives me great comfort as a human being, as a mother, as someone who loves Tasmania to know that Christine Milne's life of activism is ongoing. She is relentlessly selfless and on behalf of every person who has been part of the conservation movement over decades, every member of the Greens, I want to congratulate Christine for her award. It is so hard earned. They say well deserved,

Christine's was hard earned. For Christine Milne I say, 'Hear, hear. You are a champion of Tasmania.'

Surgery Waiting Lists

[6.32 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, last week I went to visit a lovely gentleman who I have come to know over the last few months by the name of Theo Stolp. Theo lives in Devonport and unfortunately he is waiting for surgery in the public health system to help him have a better quality of life.

I first met Theo on 21 February when I visited him at his house and met him and his wife and their cute little dog, and spoke to him about the length of time that he had been waiting for an appointment. At that stage he was waiting to see a neurologist. As members would be aware there are no neurologists in the north of the state and he was waiting for an appointment in Hobart. He was very frustrated by the fact that he had to travel to Hobart just to see a doctor. At that stage he had been waiting on the outpatient waiting list for 10 months and at the time that we met with him he still had no date for his surgery.

Theo had come to my attention through conversations that I had with Justine Keay, who is the candidate for election in the Braddon by-election who, at that stage, was his local federal member. Theo said about her at that stage that Justine Keay had been wonderful and helped him get an appointment in three weeks. That was three weeks from the date when we saw him on 21 February.

Since the time that Theo has had the appointment with the neurologist in Hobart he has not been given a date for his surgery. I met with Theo again last week and I was very saddened to see the deterioration in his health over the months that he and I had last sat down and spoken together about his need for surgery. Theo is a man who is retired. He has been a painter and decorator for most of his life, and that physical work has had many impacts on his health. He is waiting for surgery to relieve pain he has for bulging discs in his neck and knees and also lower spinal surgery.

As a consequence of being in pain Theo is now taking morphine daily and has lost a lot of weight. He is not walking very far any more, because even though the morphine has helped relieve some of his pain he still has numbness in his leg. He has not been able to walk his dog or cannot drive his car any more and is struggling to look after himself and his wife. The reason he retired was to take care of his wife who was battling with breast cancer, which she beat, but she has other health issues she is coping with. It was really sad to see the deterioration in his health and the impact it is having on him and his wife.

Theo has been waiting for a surgery date for 375 days as at 7 June. As of today, I understand he is still waiting. It is impacting on his physical health and his mental health. What I found most striking about catching up with him again was how tired he was and the emotional toll it is taking on him. Theo shared some stories privately with us but also bravely shared them with the media, who joined him in the lounge room last week. He spoke about what it felt like to be waiting for so long. I do not know if members saw it; it featured in the news media the next day.

What struck me most was the impact it is having on his mental health. Theo shared with us there are days where he does not see the point in getting out of bed. He only gets up to eat and to go back to bed because the morphine, as members might understand if they have had anything to

do with this drug, makes him tired and weary. It does dull the pain but it has dulled his quality of life, too.

I raise it in the House today on behalf of Theo and his wife to ask the minister to please do whatever he can to support Theo access the surgery he needs. He and Gaye are a fantastic team. They have been in constant contact with us and with the candidate for Braddon, Justine Keay, to see how we can support them and Justine has previously written to the minister. I urge the minister to please do what he can do within the restraints I know he is bound by as a minister, to seek to provide support to Theo so he does not deteriorate further.

It was shocking for me to see how much he has deteriorated over the last few months and I raise it in the House today on behalf of Theo and his wife, Gaye, and ask the minister to direct his attention to this as a priority issue.

Devonport Online Access Centre

[6.37 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the Devonport Online Access Centre, which recently celebrated their twentieth birthday with a very enjoyable afternoon tea and a recognition of volunteer ceremony. I had the opportunity to be part of these celebrations and was honoured with the privilege to speak and present volunteers with certificates of achievement for the time they gave and have given so generously to help provide people with access and receive support for their digital needs.

Devonport Online has had a total of 312 volunteers, including Work for the Dole participants, since opening in 1998. Combined, they have donated a huge and very impressive 77 772 hours of volunteer work. The centre has provided the community with support and training since it opened and while the majority of this training is informal and not accredited training, some training has been accredited and is run by partnerships with TAFE and other registered training organisations.

The overall success of Devonport Online is due to its diverse team of volunteers who selflessly volunteer for many different reasons and the centre has run many successful Work for the Dole projects over the years with the participants being integrated into the volunteer team, which is terrific. It is also worth highlighting that Devonport Online offers a wide variety of training sessions during the year and prides itself on being able to adapt quickly to meet the rapidly changing needs of the community to keep up with the new technology. Devonport Online, the Devonport Library, Service Tasmania and the Devonport City Council are currently working together to prepare for their collective move to the new centre in August, with the new centre expected to be open for business in early September.

I make mention of one particular volunteer, Greg Stanford, who has clocked up an amazing 7800 volunteer hours from helping over 14 years. When speaking with Greg, he said he did it because he enjoys computers and helping others to use and access them. I congratulate Greg and all the volunteers. It is pleasing to know so many people in our community give freely of their time to help and pass on their knowledge in a friendly and informal way to others.

Congratulations to all those involved with Devonport Online Access Centre over the last 20 years, a 20-year milestone worthy of celebration, particularly for the work they have done in breaking down digital barriers for many in the community.

The House adjourned at 6.40 p.m.