



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 18 November 2020

REVISED EDITION

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

QUESTIONS

Budget 2020-21 - Jobs and Unemployment Figures

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.02 a.m.]

Your Government does not have a plan for jobs. You only have a plan for unemployment. Yesterday the ABS released another bad set of job numbers for Tasmania. Tasmania's recovery continues to go backwards and we are the only state still shedding jobs. Job losses in Tasmania are now at 50 per cent above the national average; 2300 payroll jobs have been lost in the past month, and 900 of those jobs were in construction which makes a mockery of your pledge to build Tasmania out of recession.

These are the figures that you are refusing to acknowledge, just as you are ignoring your own Budget forecast for job losses and unemployment above 8 per cent. When are you going to admit that your approach to creating jobs is not working?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question and her interest in this matter.

We just delivered a Budget with \$5 billion worth of infrastructure in it. A very sensible multiplier when applied to that \$5 billion worth of infrastructure would indicate that that Budget will support 25 000 jobs. We will be building roads and bridges. We will be building schools. We will be investing in hospitals and, importantly, we will be building houses. If you consider what investment we have across the forward Estimates of nearly \$300 million into housing and construction, compare that to what Labor and the Greens had in their budget back in 2013-14 of around \$50 million, I think it was.

When you were in government -

Ms O'Connor - You have been in government for seven years. We built 2200 new homes.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. The Premier needs to make a point.

Mr GUTWEIN - Let me make this point to the member who interjects: you were in government, you were a minister, and you had around \$50 million in the budget over four years for capital construction.

Mr O'Byrne - Rubbish. That is not true. Not over the forwards. Do not mislead the House.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Ms O'Byrne - The web of untruths.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - The other point I make is that, since the peak of the job losses in May, around two thirds of those jobs have come back. We have seen employment growth of 6900 females back into work and 5500 men. In the state, based on the most recent ABS data, there are currently more than 1000 people employed today than there were last year at the same time. Importantly, job vacancies grew 84 per cent in the August quarter, the second-highest rebound seen of any state. Our budget will deliver jobs, it will deliver confidence, and, importantly, it will support our community.

Right across the board in all regions the Budget will underpin jobs and confidence and it will rebuild our community, as we have outlined. I note the shadow treasurer jumping in there. What an interesting red book of debt he delivered yesterday. Our Budget provides a sensible pathway back to surplus. That side of the House takes us further into deficit, and, at the same time, piles another \$400 million onto the debt they have been whingeing about for six days. It is almost déjà vu-ish, to be honest, Madam Speaker.

When we first came to government we had Treasury provide a report which demonstrated that under their settings we would have been heading to more than \$400 million worth of net debt and, at his first opportunity to provide a set of numbers, he actually takes us back there again. Our Budget underpins jobs, it will grow confidence, and it will support our community.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Open and Transparent Government - Ombudsman's Annual Report

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.07 a.m.]

The Ombudsman has confirmed what many Tasmanians already suspected: your government is the most secretive in Australia. It is a damning reflection of the contempt you hold for people's right to know. Your Government's rate of refusal to release information is 750 per cent higher than the most open states. You claim that RTO officers are simply following the law, but the Ombudsman's annual report tells a different story. Richard Connock says the public interest test is frequently misapplied; 27 per cent of requests failed to meet deadlines; and of the decisions that were appealed, 20 out of 21 were overturned. Why are you so afraid of transparency and what are you trying to hide?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question and for her interest in this matter. The facts are that, since March 2014, the Government has made a committed and concerted effort to improve openness and accountability of government

decision-making. We have updated the Government Information Gateway webpage. We continue to publicly report on gifts, benefits and hospitality received and given by officers across all agencies. We have an updated ministerial code of conduct and supported parliament's adoption of a new member's code of conduct. We continue to publish information released -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. We are five minutes into question time and everyone on this side of the Chamber is being very disorderly. If you find it amusing, giggle internally, but do not express it out loud. The Premier is trying to deliver an important response.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The other Government initiatives to improve government transparency and accountability have been implementing the public submission publication policy requiring agencies to publish all submissions received; delegating ministerial responsibility under the RTI act to departmental officers; and improving the integrity of parliamentary decision-making by expanding disclosure of spouse interests and financial information through amendments to the Parliamentary (Disclosure of Interests) Act. These efforts to expand our transparency will continue as we move forward.

I noted last night when I saw the reporting of Richard Connock's report, and I actually took the time to read the report and have a good look at it, there are a couple of points I will make about the report. In terms of the Right to Information Act, what was interesting last year is that applications received in terms of summaries for state government departments were down 20 per cent.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, two minutes of silence from all of you. This is a really important issue you have asked a question on and I expect you to behave. This reflects on me and my management of this Chamber. I am not going to have it. Warning number one is given now. You may proceed, Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, thank you. There was an increase of almost 100 per cent in requests for reviews relating to local governments, and an increase of around 40 per cent for other statutory authorities or bodies.

However, I consider the report bears further discussion and inspection. This morning I called Richard Connock and asked to meet him, to discuss his perspectives on what could be done to improve transparency, working with the acts and the reviews he conducts. We need to understand, in particular, that 30 per cent figure that has been quoted. A lot of public disclosure occurs; and a percentage of the material that is not disclosed or provided under RTI will be because it already exists in the public domain. We need to ensure we have a good understanding of what is occurring.

Importantly, under my Government we will take whatever steps we need to to ensure we can provide a full, frank, open and transparent account for the Tasmanian people. I look forward to meeting with Richard Connock in the coming days.

Mr O'Byrne - What about Ivan Dean, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne. You are being very close to coffee time.

Open and Transparent Government - Ombudsman's Annual Report

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.12 a.m.]

We have heard you clutching at straws and going to the back of the Ombudsman's report. However, the truth is the Government you have been part of for the past seven years - and led for less than one - has earned a well-deserved reputation for secrecy. The Ombudsman's Annual Report will only reinforce this public perception. You have the dubious honour of being Premier of Australia's most secretive state.

You try to mislead us with fanciful tales of RTI officers just applying the law and everything being done at arms' length, but that is exactly what the Ombudsman's report makes clear is not happening. The Ombudsman is damming. He says, 'Government agencies don't seem to give sufficient weight to the fact that the act creates a legally enforceable right to information'. He states, 'Tasmania's public authorities refused access to any information in 30 per cent of their 2018-19 decisions - nearly twice that of Queensland and 750 per cent that of the ACT and Northern Territory'.

Premier, you cannot deny these numbers. They are evidence of a culture of secrecy that is infecting every level of government, every agency. Apart from organising a last-minute meeting with the Ombudsman to provide political cover, what are you going to do about it?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Ms O'Connor, the Leader of the Greens, for her question.

As I have said, I read the report last night. That was the first time I had seen it. I contacted the Ombudsman this morning and we will discuss his perspective on these matters. As I have said, what is important, and there are two points that I make here -

Ms O'Connor - You need to direct agencies to apply the act.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - We need to interrogate the data and understand exactly what is occurring. As I said a couple of moments ago, my reading of the report indicates that in terms of state Government agencies there has been a 20 per cent reduction in people requesting review. Local government and other public authorities are up almost 100 per cent and we need to understand the reasons why. Other authorities are up around 40 per cent.

I spoke yesterday about the Government's involvement with this act. RTI officers are delegated to be responsible under the act to make those decisions. They make those decisions under the law - not Government ministers.

Ms O'Connor - They know what is expected.

Mr GUTWEIN - You have cast a slight on hardworking public servants. I consider you should be very careful there. I will have a conversation with the Ombudsman, to understand his perspective. We will interrogate the data and understand what is occurring in terms of our relative standing with other states, so we can provide clear and precise information about the matters reported here. Importantly, I will gain an understanding from Richard Connock about how he thinks matters might be improved.

Budget 2020-21 - Recovering from COVID-19

Mr TUCKER question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.16 a.m.]

Can you please outline to the House how the Budget supports jobs and confidence and is helping our community to recover from impacts of the pandemic? Is the Treasurer aware of any other recent endorsements of our Budget?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker for his question and his genuine interest in our plan to rebuild a stronger Tasmania. The Budget is all about jobs, confidence and community. It builds on the steady signs of recovery that we are seeing and outlines our plan to create and support jobs, grow confidence and deliver even more essential services for Tasmanians in our community. The Budget will provide the economic platforms for jobs. It will provide certainty and confidence for our businesses and community. Interestingly, I did not expect to get an endorsement from Labor yesterday, but I did - they endorsed 99.97 per cent of our Budget yesterday. That is a high distinction. It is extraordinary - a 99.97 per cent approval rating from Labor. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. It is by far the best third-party endorsement my seventh budget has received to date.

It is great news that Ms White and Labor, in supporting the Budget, also support the \$270 million northern regional prison. It is great news that they support our south-east traffic solution. It is unfortunate that the relentless negativity continues. I did not spend a great deal of time on it last night, but I did have a look at the red debt book. In his first attempt at providing a set of numbers in the red debt book he takes us deeper into deficit, provides no pathway back to surplus, and adds more than \$400 million to net debt after whingeing about it for five or six days. The hypocrisy is unbelievable.

In reading that red debt book last night, I could not find the 10 000 additional jobs. I know our Budget supports 25 000 jobs, and that is based on a conservative multiplier of around five jobs per \$1 million of infrastructure. As I have said publicly on many occasions, and it is advice provided to Senate committees by federal Treasury, if you are constructing things it is around six jobs, and with a multiplier effect you might be able to add on some second-order jobs to possibly make it nine. If you go through and add up the jobs you get a lot less than 10 000 in the red debt book, but on the basis of a \$470 million worth of additional investment generating 10 000 jobs that is a multiplier of 21 jobs per million. That defies any law of economics and the shadow treasurer should release his modelling.

I have made it perfectly clear how we arrived at 25 000 jobs from our infrastructure, so it is incumbent on the shadow treasurer to release his modelling. If you add up what is in

the red debt book you do not get anywhere near 10 000 jobs, but with \$470 million worth of additional spending for 10 000 jobs that is a multiplier of around 21. It is a new economic theory, to be frank, and is completely unheard of.

On this side of the House our Budget will deliver jobs and confidence, and we will support our community. On that side of the House the red debt book takes us further into deficit, adds more net debt, more than \$400 million, and has a jobs black hole. The shadow treasurer should release his modelling.

Open and Transparent Government - Ombudsman's Annual Report

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.21 a.m.]

I have listened very carefully to the discussion in the Chamber today around transparency. I always try to be consistent on this issue. I heard of lot of complaints but not a lot of propositions about how we go about addressing things, so that is what I want to put to you. It is true that we want a fearless culture of transparency in our Government and State Service and it is what our community wants. We want government for the people, by the people, and open to the people. If the pandemic has taught us anything it has shown us that we can do things in new ways. The transparency with which you ran the daily briefings on government actions to manage the state through the crisis was widely acknowledged as a good thing; it is about communication.

There is \$135.4 million going into transformation and cyber, more than enough from the overhaul of processes to ensure timely disclosures, information integrity and new ways to engage with the public. This is an opportunity to take a new approach, to refresh and reboot how we go about releasing information. The default position should be a culture of disclosure, reversing the current model of disclosure by exception. Will you please agree to consider a new model of continuous disclosure so we can have a post-pandemic open government 2.0?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, thank you once again for the opportunity to discuss this matter and I thank the Independent member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, for that question. The Tasmanian Government is committed and making a concerted effort to improve openness and accountability of government decision-making.

There have been continued and ongoing efforts to improve government transparency and accountability, with numerous extensions to the information released under our routine disclosure of information policy. Since June 2018 the Government has released more than 60 new routine database sets online as it continues to expand public access to information on the activities of government. We are launching a new Government Information Gateway webpage available on DPAC's website to make government information proactively disclosed easier to find, and a range of disclosures that we can continue to provide in regards to gifts, benefits, hospitality received, et cetera, both as ministers, members of parliament and staff in agencies as well.

The point I have made very clearly twice this morning in response to questions is that after reading the report from the Ombudsman last night I believe the data bears further inspection. I am going to meet with the Ombudsman soon to have a discussion to gain his perspective on what he believes could be done to further improve openness and transparency. I will have that conversation with Mr Connock and seek his views. I would like to get the data properly analysed to understand exactly what is going on and to ensure that I have -

Dr Woodruff - Are you disputing the data?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr GUTWEIN - No, I am not disputing the data. I just said I would like to get it analysed. I would like to understand it, because it runs across a range of public authorities including the state Government, local government and government businesses as well. I will work through that process.

Members interjecting.

Ms OGILVIE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I am finding it very hard to hear the answer. It was actually my question and there is a lot of chatter.

Madam SPEAKER - There are some very rude people in this Chamber, I agree with you. I urge everyone to listen.

Mr GUTWEIN - The previous premier made a commitment and a concerted effort to improve openness and accountability of government decision-making and that commitment stands. I will start with a discussion with Richard Connock and we will work through from there.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.26 a.m.]

Your Government's addiction to secrecy has some very real-world consequences. The journalist behind the podcast that has exposed the LGH nurse James Griffin's horrendous crimes has accused you of trying to bury the story by refusing right to information requests. In addition to failing to order an inquiry into James Griffin's heinous offences for more than a year, you have also been accused of attempting to prevent the shocking details of this incident from ever seeing the light of day. The Government no longer holds the trust of staff or the community. I ask you again, will you finally implement a full commission of inquiry to get to the bottom of this deeply disturbing matter?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for a question on this matter. The safety of children in our care is our highest priority as a government. The charges that have been laid and the allegations made against the deceased former nurse are abhorrent. We have publicly acknowledged many times the community's concerns with these very serious matters. We

thank all those who have come forward to share their stories and we continue to encourage anyone who has information to come forward. If you come forward you will be supported.

Ms O'Byrne - You hid it for a year, minister. No wonder they don't trust you.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms O'Byrne - Madam Speaker, they don't trust the process anymore.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms COURTNEY - Throughout this process I have been assured that the THS and the department have taken steps to provide support to staff, including in the wake of a former staff member's death.

As I outlined during the MPI yesterday, this support has included access to a contracted employee assistance program and the engagement of an additional counsellor who attended for one-on-one counselling and support with a specific focus on grief counselling. The counsellor also provided additional sessions for individual employees where required. There are trauma sessions with respect to self-care and responding to trauma and grief, and responding to parents and patients with difficult behaviour; training sessions with Enterprising Aardvark specifically covering topics related to sex offences; in-service sessions with the executive director of medical services and HR; and the secretary of the department has also confirmed that additional support sessions will be arranged for staff through Laurel House.

Ms O'Byrne - And yet they still want this.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms COURTNEY - As I have previously outlined to the House and in the media, the THS took action the very day the former staff member's working with vulnerable people registration was withdrawn. The former staff member was directed to not attend work and access to the hospital and its information systems were blocked. There was a police investigation, which I will not be commenting on, followed by an open disclosure process in which identified victims and their families are being provided with support.

Following this process, I requested that the secretary examine the THS processes and policies relating to these issues as well as respect to this particular case.

The Government communicated with staff to detail the public disclosure email address for the purpose of staff and public inquiries regarding this matter as well as standing up an email for the public, as well as a dedicated phone line to triage complaints or submissions and advise of support services that are available.

The Government is now in the process of delivering this new independent investigation, having announced Ms Maree Norton as the investigator.

I reassure the Tasmanian community that the Government is committed to ensuring this independent investigation is fully empowered to examine any and all matters related to this issue.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am trying to hear you, minister.

Ms COURTNEY - Madam Speaker, the Government has been very clear that we will take whatever action is required and the Department of Health and the Tasmanian Health Service are committed to providing whatever and every bit of information Ms Norton requests and will fully cooperate.

I make it clear that we are not waiting for Ms Norton to finalise her investigation. We are acting where we can. The Department of Health secretary's review is also continuing and will feed into the investigation. The secretary's work includes looking at the complaints related to this matter as well as THS's internal reporting mechanisms, complaint handling systems and whether there is action we need to take to improve aspects of the culture.

We know that this has been a very difficult time for many in our community. These charges and allegations spanned well over a decade and have had an enormous impact on individuals, families, staff and indeed the community.

Ms O'Byrne - Your inquiry does not go far enough.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms COURTNEY - The independent investigation was stood up based on advice from the secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the secretary of Justice and with professional input and legal engagement. We are taking the action that is required and will continue to take whatever action is recommended and make sure that we report publicly on this so that the community understands what we are doing as a government to ensure that this never happens again.

Fish Farming - Reports of Expansion

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT

[10.32 a.m.]

Tasmanians in coastal water areas will be waking up this morning to hear news that their communities are potentially under threat from a massive expansion of fish farming. Last month, you quietly announced you would be supporting the industry to grow to \$2 billion a year, more than doubling its current gargantuan footprint. Instead of growing salmon farming on land or far out to sea, we understand you are doing everything possible to help the industry take the cheapest, dirtiest and most harmful expansion route it can.

Despite a cast iron commitment to the people of the east coast that there will be no more fish farming outside Okehampton Bay, we understand Tassal is jockeying for more sites and has bought lease 164 in a consortium. This is a shellfish lease in the pristine Mercury Passage.

Can you confirm your department has formed a secretive committee or other entity to look at the 'no grow' zone on the east coast? Can you also confirm you will not be reclassifying

any existing leases to become finfish or creating new leases north of Maria Island around Ile du Nord and Lords Bluff near the precious marine protected area? Will you tell Tasmanians how long you have been in conversation with industry about their plans for massive expansions into publicly-owned waterways?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question.

At the outset, can I reject the unfounded allegations that were being made by the member. It comes from a position of attacking and criticising a very important industry to Tasmania, and that is the salmon industry that has the backing of this Government -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr BARNETT - Not only that, we support the many jobs, particularly in those rural and regional areas. Let me make it very clear that I have been aware of unfounded rumours that are circulating regarding existing east coast aquaculture leases and salmon farms being established. Let me make it very clear for the member and members of the public, including those on the east coast that, with the exception of Okehampton Bay, all other leases on the east coast can only be licensed to grow species such as seaweed and shellfish -

Dr Woodruff - At the moment.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, I am -

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, the minister is addressing parliament.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Dr Woodruff - I am making sure he understood me, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not very helpful. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, as I was saying, it is important to be aware that the current Government policy excludes salmon farming in these areas and, additionally, there is no interest expressed to Government to grow salmon on these leases. They are there for seaweed and shellfish growing. Importantly -

Dr Woodruff - No, they would like to trade them for new leases.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, I am trying my best. I have been asked a question.

Madam SPEAKER - I know you are, minister, and I apologise for the rudeness of some. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Importantly -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I understand why you might regard Dr Woodruff's interjections as rudeness but we are actually asking this question for people who live along the length and breadth of the east coast. They deserve an honest answer.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. You do not like it when people interrupt you when you are speaking.

Dr Woodruff - We do not mind. We can deal with it. We are tougher than that. We do not have glass doors.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me. You have been here long enough to know the form of the House. You are not allowed to interrupt.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, I remind you that we are trying to run a dignified parliament here and a safe workplace. We are capable of far better debate than we are managing at the moment. Please proceed, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I was -

Madam SPEAKER - Rudely interrupted.

Mr BARNETT - inappropriately and rudely interrupted, importantly, one of the main leases being pointed to is in the Mercury Passage. The Mercury Passage remains an area where salmon farming is banned. Schedule 6 of the Marine Farming Planning Act 1995 prescribes that the area of Mercury Passage is a no-grow area for finfish.

Mr Jaensch - That is right.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. That is correct. In Okehampton, finfish farming was already established prior to this legislation coming into place and was excluded and is heavily regulated by the EPA, but no further finfish farming expansion is permitted in this area. This ban could only be overturned with the approval of parliament - something we have no intention of looking at.

Madam Speaker, this is on the public record; it is in legislation. The Greens and other people know that. These are unfounded rumours that have been perpetuated -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 45 - relevance. It is about relevance to the question. The minister did not understand it. I entirely understand the situation as it is. The question is, will the minister be reclassifying any leases or opening new leases north of Maria Island, Ile du Nord, Lords Bluff, and other trade-offs that we understand Tassal would like for their best interest.

Madam SPEAKER - As a point of relevance that is not a point of order.

Mr Ferguson - To quote a great leader - you do not own this place.

Madam SPEAKER - I know it is a circus. Would you please stand up -

Dr Woodruff - It is hard when we ask for the truth. Can the minister respond in kind?

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, internalise all that, please.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, I am tired of the mistruths around this industry perpetuated by the Greens. It is a highly-regulated industry, it is a jewel in our crown. It is part of our brand, the Tasmanian Brand. It creates thousands of direct and indirect jobs, and it is an integral part of our regional communities. We need to get behind it, behind the hardworking Tasmanians employed in it, and stop listening to the Greens' mistruths and the social media scuttlebutt.

Greens members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Warning number one for both of you.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, as part of the second review of the plan, as I announced in the Budget last week, the Government is committed and has committed \$250 000 for a marine spatial planning exercise to identify potential sustainable growth areas for new offshore finfish marine farms. Let me explain. The salmon plan - we are progressing this review. The progress report will include a contemporary marine spatial planning exercise and explore ways to identify potential sustainable growth areas for new offshore finfish marine farms. Through the review, the Government does not anticipate there will be major changes to the plan. We believe that by opening new areas for finfish marine farming development, supporting industries that can provide jobs and generate a network of supporting businesses -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Sorry about this.

Madam SPEAKER - I hope it is not an irrelevant one.

Dr WOODRUFF - Standing Order 45, relevance. The minister has not addressed any of the questions I asked, particularly about whether he has formed a secretive community for no-grow zones on the east coast.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I ask you to sit down.

Dr Woodruff - Has Tassal threatened the minister to go to Queensland if he does not do a trade-off on the east coast?

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, you are sailing close to the wind. You know that is not a point of order. You know I am incapable of telling the minister what to say. Minister, please resume.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, on the point of order and your ruling, I draw your attention to the incessant nature of these rude interjections and ask you to consider if it occurs again to send the member out.

Dr Woodruff - Are you directing the Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - No, he is not directing, he is sharing advice. Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I was rudely and inappropriately, and in an unparliamentary manner, interrupted let me make it clear that we believe that by opening those new areas for finfish marine farming developments, supporting industries that can provide jobs and generate networks of supporting businesses that are also providing employment opportunities, particularly in the most impacted areas, we can get Tasmania back on the path to recovery. This review will involve a science-based re-evaluation of the current map of grow and no-grow zones using -

Dr Woodruff - The communities in Lyons are going to hate you for this.

Mr BARNETT - lessons learnt from the pilot marine spatial assessment tool that was developed by the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies in south-east Tasmania. The work will be completed by early 2021 and any proposed changes will be released for public comment. An advisory group will be established to assist in this process. Any consideration to change the existing grow and no-grow zones for finfish in Tasmania will be subject to a comprehensive public consultation process that provides all Tasmanians with a chance to comment on any potential changes.

Dr Woodruff - Like all the others where you have taken no interest in what people say.

Members Suspended
Member for Franklin - Dr Woodruff
Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, you are incapable of keeping self-control today, so I am going to ask you to leave the Chamber. Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, I need some clarification here. Dr Woodruff has had one warning.

Madam SPEAKER - Well, you are not getting any. I have given an order. The member is suspended until the end of question time and you may join her for back-chatting. The two of you will leave the Chamber until the end of question time.

Ms O'Connor - Democracy is in very fine form in Tasmania at the moment, isn't it?

Madam SPEAKER - Would you like to be named? I hope not. Please leave with a dignified exit.

Mr BARNETT - I will conclude. If any changes are proposed, these will be detailed in a draft map that will be released for public comment. It could be that following the review and public consultation that no changes eventuate.

Let me make it very clear that this side of the House supports the salmon industry, we support the jobs in it, and we support the regional communities that are supported by it. We are backing in the industry's plans for sustainable growth to \$2 billion by 2030. We are backing it in and support it subject to strict terms and conditions and strong environmental protections

under the EPA, and under legislation that protects the Mercury Passage, making it very clear what is available and what is not available in that part of the east coast I referred to.

Budget 2020-21 - Supporting the Arts and Creative Cultural Sector

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for the ARTS, Ms ARCHER

[10.43 a.m.]

Can you outline to the House how the 2020-21 State Budget will provide additional support for individual artists and arts organisations in our creative cultural sector to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the question on everyone's lips, is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr Broad - Have you got some more money for the Bob Brown Foundation?

Madam SPEAKER - Dear oh dear, please, Dr Broad, I do not want to have to throw someone else out.

ANSWER

No, Madam Speaker, and it is a clear lack of understanding of the process on their part as usual.

I thank the member for Lyons, Mr Tucker, for his question and his interest in this area as members on this side of the House have a keen and distinct interest in our cultural and creative sector. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our cultural and creative sector was one of the fastest growing employment sectors in Tasmania, but it has been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic with almost all arts organisations and businesses in shutdown or hibernation at some stage this year.

The Tasmanian Government understands and appreciates the importance of the arts sector and recognises that a productive cultural and creative economy provides both economic and social value by enhancing lifestyles and creating opportunities. That is why in our State Budget our Government has included \$4 million in new funding to be provided to our cultural and creative sector over the next two years.

Guided by a recommendation of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee, \$1 million will be provided over two years to support a brand-new focused program of community arts and cultural development. Community arts and cultural development applies arts practice to community-identified need and provides employment opportunities for workers in the arts and cultural sector. There is ample evidence that indicates that participation in community arts gives rise to positive social impacts when the project design clearly takes into consideration larger social policy goals. This is what this program will be geared towards. I am particularly excited about this new program as it will deliver long-term improvements in social health and wellbeing through partnerships that address health, disability, justice and education priorities between the arts and community sectors.

Also the Government will provide an additional \$500 000 over the next two years to the Screen Innovation Fund for Screen Tasmania to continue to invest in the production of

strategically important film and television projects in Tasmania. This is in addition to all of Screen Tasmania's usual funding programs. The funding will supplement Screen Tasmania's existing production investment income and drive increased production in the state. Screen production provides significant economic benefits in terms of expenditure and employment as well as creative outlets for sharing our place, our stories and locations around the world.

In addition, the Government is allocating \$2.5 million over two years for an arts and cultural support fund. This includes \$1 million for performers and artists to bounce back from COVID-19 hibernation and \$1.5 million to Tasmania's arts and cultural sector to produce new work. This is separate and distinct from our already announced events package - on the other side of the House they seem to get confused between arts and events. This fund will provide for artists and arts organisations specifically who have been unable to earn the income they had planned due to cancelled engagements and terminated contracts through the COVID-19 period and to produce new work for new markets, assisting our arts and cultural sector to remain active, vibrant and viable as we emerge and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding is distinct and separate from our events funding, which covers some arts festivals as well. These are new funds, not repurposed funds.

I might also add that because the 2020-21 State Budget has a substantial infrastructure component, in Tasmania eligible capital works trigger commissions under the Tasmanian Government's Art Site Scheme and this will provide significant opportunities for Tasmanian artists to make work for publicly owned and operated spaces.

The additional \$4 million in funding comes on top of our Government's initial Cultural and Creative Industries Stimulus Package announced in late March this year to support the sector through those early uncertain days of the COVID-19 pandemic. As I have said before, this initial support package included new funding worth \$1.5 million to support our artists, screen practitioners and organisations who had projects cancelled, by providing targeted funds. Recognising that it was unreasonable to expect arts organisations that were due to apply for further funding this year to develop business plans amongst such uncertainty, we also put in place a strategy worth \$2 million to extend many existing funding agreements for an additional year.

At the time the stimulus package was independently recognised as the best per capita of any state or territory. Since then our Government has also provided substantial support through the COVID-19 Small Business Sustainability and Recovery Grant Program and it is pleasing to see that nearly \$4.3 million in support was accessed by cultural and creative businesses through the program.

In closing I want to address one further matter that is important to our cultural and creative industries. Last Friday evening I launched the Cultural and Creative Industries Recovery Strategy: 2020 and Beyond. This recovery strategy has been in recovery for some time, with significant consultation for the original strategy initially undertaken throughout 2019 and early 2020 and then necessarily delayed but enhanced due to the impact of COVID-19 and to sufficiently address our recovery.

When COVID-19 hit we realised it was more important than ever that we provide a pathway to support the cultural and creative sectors through a strategy that is fit for our future. There was no point proceeding with a strategy that did not take into account COVID-19 recovery and opportunities. Therefore the intention for this new recovery strategy is to support

the sector by articulating a framework to encourage innovative ways of working and communicating its value as a whole sector.

Creativity is fundamental to our Tasmanian way of life. The cultural and creative industries are integral to the story of Tasmania. This will enable creativity, connect people with opportunities and share the stories of the cultural and creative industries. I am pleased to report it has been very well received by the sector.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.50 a.m.]

It was more than a year from when you were first told about the horrendous crimes of LGH nurse James Griffin to the time you finally took some action. A year had passed since the police investigation ended with his death. In the meantime, a damning, shocking podcast was released exposing the details of this matter. Minister, is it not a fact that you took action only because of the release of this podcast, and had it not been released you had every intention of keeping this awful matter secret?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. I refute any assertion that on a matter like this I would do anything not to ensure it was fully addressed.

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please, let the minister answer.

Ms COURTNEY - I have been advised that appropriate steps were being undertaken when the matters came to light over the past couple of months. I repeat: the allegations that have been raised are abhorrent to me, and I am committed to taking whatever action is necessary to ensure this never happens again.

Ms O'Byrne - What happened between him dying and the podcast?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Ms COURTNEY - I take this opportunity to urge members of the community to come forward to the independent investigation. The qualifications of -

Ms O'Byrne - It is not truly an independent investigation.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, please, would you like to leave the Chamber?

Ms O'Byrne - No, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Well, sit there and be quiet, thank you.

Ms COURTNEY - The qualifications of Ms Norton, the independent investigator, are extensive. I am advised the terms of reference were specifically designed to capture a broad scope of investigation. Now that the independent investigation has commenced I urge members of the community and members of this House who have information to come forward. You will be heard and you will be supported. It is very important that this process is allowed to take its course. I want to make it very clear once again -

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - I know it is tempting, Ms O'Byrne, but I ask you to be quiet.

Ms COURTNEY - This Government is absolutely committed to taking whatever action is required and whatever steps are recommended by Ms Norton to ensure this never happens again.

Budget 2020-21 - Community Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[10.53 a.m.]

Can you outline how the 2020-21 State Budget is supporting jobs and confidence in the Tasmanian community, in particular keeping our community safe and helping Tasmanians prepare for emergencies? Are there any alternatives?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question and his interest in keeping Tasmanians safe. There is no greater support for our police and emergency service workers and volunteers than the Tasmanian Liberal government. We are investing \$8.9 million in the Budget to employ an additional 20 police officers over four years. These additional officers will support the COVID-19 response capacity in areas such as quarantine checking and compliance and assessments, which are critical services in helping to keep our community safe.

Following on from the COVID-19 response responsibilities, the additional officers will transition to become a full-time Special Operations Group (SOG). SOG officers are highly trained and equipped to respond to a wide range of security situations and can be deployed during high-risk policing incidents, whether in response to specific security and safety threats or to support criminal investigations.

These 20 officers are in addition to the 125 police officers being recruited over the term of this Government. This is in stark contrast to the previous Labor government which sacked 108 police officers under the then police minister, now shadow treasurer, Mr O'Byrne.

Ms Butler - How many are retiring?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, order.

Mr SHELTON - This Government knows that recruiting additional police officers is one of the most important ways of not just keeping Tasmanians safe, but also keeping police officers safe from the threat of physical and mental harm.

The Budget also provides \$46 million for the next stage of Project Unify - an initiative designed to deliver an integrated and sophisticated operational information system, to ensure Tasmanian police have the best possible ICT system to better respond to and solve crime. Moving to this new technology will improve how we respond to and solve crime, ultimately resulting in a safer work environment for police and better outcomes for our community. The additional funding will also deliver an online crime reporting function where members of the public can use an online portal to report certain categories of crime. This also represents a significant opportunity for the Tasmanian ICT sector that we know has the skills and expertise to successfully compete for this investment and create jobs.

The Tasmanian Liberals are also committed to keeping Tasmanians safe from the threat of bushfire, which is why we are investing \$17.6 million in a comprehensive package of mitigation initiatives in the 2020-21 Budget. This year the Government has committed \$4 million to the State Fire Commission. This funding offsets the freezing of the fire levy as part of the COVID-19 response and includes \$1.5 million to implement a volunteer remote area team firefighting capability and for the operation of the State Air Desk. An additional \$4 million is provided in the Budget to boost the State Fire Commission's bushfire capability further, including the creation of a new division in the Tasmanian Fire Service to manage, plan and respond to bushfires. In addition to this, \$9.3 million has been provided to bolster the Government's Fuel Reduction Program which will see the appointment of 12 additional crew.

The Government will also build on the success of the Red Hot Tips program through a further \$295 000 investment, recognising that the key part of bushfire management is empowering land owners to actively manage bushfire risk on their property. These initiatives combined will lead to over 31 new positions for the Tasmanian Fire Service, including a new deputy chief officer.

This year's State Budget builds on the important work we have already been doing, with more resources than ever to respond to bushfires that we know will occur.

I have been asked about alternatives. For Tasmania there are no alternatives. The question Tasmanians need to ask themselves is, who do they trust to keep Tasmanians safe? Is it the Labor/Greens who we know are joined at the hip, or is it the Liberal Government that has a track record of clear policies, funding and action?

Budget 2020-21 - Employment for Older Tasmanians

Ms WHITE question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.59 a.m.]

Working for Tasmania, Labor's fully costed jobs plan, includes \$15 million to help 500 Tasmanians over 35 obtain an apprenticeship. Tasmania has a rapidly ageing population and older people have been among the hardest hit by the pandemic. Both the federal budget and

your Budget abandoned older Tasmanians, with no specific initiatives to help them get into work. At the TasCOSS briefing on Budget Day, Mr Jaensch said older people who are out of work could go fruit picking. What are you going to do to help older Tasmanians obtain a secure job?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Where I should start is to again point out that the red debt book released yesterday is not a jobs plan. It is a debt and deficit plan with a jobs black hole in it.

Mr O'Byrne - This is just remarkable. You got up here and said, 'We need to use the balance sheet, IMF told us so', and now you don't want to do it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Whilst it is pleasing that the shadow treasurer has had a first attempt at this, unfortunately he has failed miserably. As I have said, I thank Labor for their endorsement of 99.97 per cent of the Budget.

As to the question that was asked, it is a fair point to make that across the board the age group that has been most impacted by this pandemic has been those in the 20- to 39-year-old age group. That is where the most significant number of jobs have been lost. However, the policies we have introduced are not age- or gender-specific. The payroll tax grants will support businesses that employ people of any age. The small business grants we are providing to businesses to put on an apprentice or a trainee are available to people who are older or younger, male or female.

I come back to the document that the Leader of the Opposition pointed to, the red debt book. You have a serious problem with that. You need to explain your 10 000 jobs because when you work through that document you cannot add up 10 000 jobs. Whilst I only had a cursory glance at it last night it is quite clear that \$470 million-worth of investment would need a multiplier of around 21 jobs per million, which is simply unheard of.

The policies we have released will support people young or old, male or female. The Budget we have brought down will support jobs, support confidence and, importantly, support our community to rebuild, unlike the red debt book which clearly is just Labor returning to the Labor of old - more debt, more deficits, no pathway back and a rubbery set of numbers.

Apprenticeship Quotas on Public Works

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.03 a.m.]

Working for Tasmania, Labor's fully-costed jobs plan, would ensure that the apprenticeship quota on public works would be extended to the civil construction industry and the GBEs. You have claimed that you are currently meeting this target but your policy only applies to building works. Extending the requirement to civil construction and GBEs is simply

common sense and would dramatically boost apprenticeship numbers in the state. Will you adopt Labor's policy in order to help more Tasmanians get a foot in the door to a secure job?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for that question and having the gall to get up and ask a question about the red debt book.

The Government's policies and plans have been well articulated. We have a jobs plan built into our Budget supporting 25 000 jobs and \$5 billion-worth of construction across the board. I will come back to the point I was making earlier: the shadow treasurer needs to release his modelling as to how he has arrived at 10 000 jobs. The only thing on this document you can believe is the date, November 2020 - they got that right. The shadow treasurer should release his modelling that underpins his 10 000 jobs because what it appears to be is a jobs black hole.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 45, relevance. This was a very serious question asked of the Government about whether they would extend the apprenticeship target to GBEs and other government building contracts. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention to the question.

Madam SPEAKER - It is not a point of order, but as you asked so nicely I will draw the Premier's attention to it.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The point I was making was that in terms of the red debt book there is nothing in it you can believe. The shadow treasurer needs to stand up his modelling because this red debt book takes the budget further into deficit, provides no pathway out, winds in more \$400 million-worth of net debt - something he has been complaining about for five or six days - and, at the end of the day, it is a jobs black hole.

Budget 2020-21 - Housing and Homelessness Support

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH

[11.06 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget continues the Government's delivery of new housing and homelessness support for Tasmania, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Madam SPEAKER - I urge the Opposition to be good. I will be watching.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker, the member for Lyons, for his question and his interest in this important matter. I thank and congratulate our Premier and Treasurer for his extraordinary leadership of our state and delivery of this Budget under these highly unusual circumstances.

I am pleased to confirm that the 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget locks in record state investment into Housing with over \$300 million being invested into new housing and homelessness services right across the state. This delivers for Tasmanians in need right across Tasmania and right across the spectrum of need. For those Tasmanians who have nowhere to stay tonight or are sleeping rough, this Budget includes an investment of \$16.8 million to continue the Safe Space Program as a 24/7 wraparound service in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart. This investment will allow the program to run through to June 2022 with over \$6 million of the funding to deliver general health and mental health supports to people experiencing homelessness.

Additionally, we continue to offer emergency brokered accommodation to Tasmanians in need wherever they are around the state whenever they need it. We are continuing to deliver on the delivery and expansion of Tasmania's shelter accommodation. This Budget delivers more than \$25 million for new youth foyers in Hobart and Burnie and expansion of Thyne House in Launceston. The Budget also delivers almost \$5 million for a new Launceston Youth at Risk Centre and a further \$4.6 million to expand the Magnolia House Women's Shelter.

The Budget will also continue to deliver on the program of works funded by savings under our agreement with the Commonwealth to waive the state's Housing-related debt. This program will assist a further 400 households into suitable accommodation by June 2023, including the delivery of 300 new social housing dwellings, cofunding Hobart City Mission's purchase of the Balmoral Motor Inn for long-term supported accommodation, remodelling of the Oakley Court unit complex and other initiatives.

This Budget also locks in the \$100 million investment announced as part of our construction blitz which will build up to 1000 new homes over three years, twice as many as Labor's policy for the same money -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr JAENSCH - We are currently undertaking an EOI process, inviting bids from qualified parties to deliver these new social houses with the responses due by the end of next week.

Running concurrently to this process, we are working closely with our four established community housing providers to extend their management agreements, and transfer a further 2000 properties to be managed by them. The decision to transfer 2000 more homes to be managed by CHPs means they can access an extra \$6 million of revenue through Commonwealth rent assistance each year for maintenance and stock replacement.

We continue to progress the refurbishment of the Waratah Hotel into a 24-unit supported accommodation facility which is on track to be delivered by Christmas, along with a range of other projects and new social housing being delivered under our Affordable Housing Strategy.

The Budget also contains a further \$15 million for public housing heating and energy efficiency initiatives which will ease the cost of living pressures for public housing tenants taking our heat pump rollout to 100 per cent of public housing.

All said, the Budget continues our strong track record of investment and delivery to address housing stress and homelessness in Tasmania. This is in addition to the hundreds of applicants who are supported with their housing needs each month, and the more than 12 500 households currently in social housing around the state.

In terms of alternatives, Tasmanians will feel deeply disappointed and cheated by what Labor released yesterday. After criticising the Government for even contemplating a deficit, Labor's reply sends the Budget into deficit for four years and increases net debt by \$400 million. Their only new housing policy is actually their old housing policy which delivers half the number of new homes as our plan for the same money and then only for 10 years, and was not supported by their own six-month long housing inquiry.

As the Premier has pointed out, Labor's red debt book also confirms that Labor would redirect only \$27.7 million from our \$7.5 billion Budget and so they support 99.97 per cent of our Budget measures, including all of our housing commitments. I welcome their support, and I will hold them to that support as we get on with delivering more housing for Tasmania.

Budget 2020-21 - Economic Forecasts of Forward Estimates

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.13 a.m.]

This year's Budget Papers do not contain economic forecasts for the complete forward Estimates. You claimed this was not possible because of future uncertainty. However, other jurisdictions have managed to produce these forecasts. If Treasury has not done any economic modelling at all, how have they provided revenue projections? If they do not know how many people will be unemployed, how have they predicted payroll tax?

Why are you hiding critical information that underpins your claim that you can deliver a wafer-thin net operating surplus in two years? How can your claims be believed when you are hiding key data?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for that question. I make the point that if he had bothered to read budget papers in the past, he would realise that Treasury only ever provides a forecast for the Budget year and then they use long-term projections for the final three years. That is what they have provided every year -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - long-term projections which were the same process that they adopted under the previous Labor and Labor-Greens governments and the same process they have provided for me. What needs to be understood, and the point is obviously missed on the shadow treasurer, is that the world has changed and long-term projections -

Mr O'Byrne - Why are other states doing it then?

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Long-term projections no longer stack-up, which is why Treasury did not do that this year. They provided a forecast -

Ms O'Byrne - They must have done it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - for the Budget year and then a forecast for the second year of the forward Estimates.

Mr O'Byrne - This is outrageous. The federal budget does it, other states are doing it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - They have actually forecast an additional year this year but sensibly have not provided projections based on long-term averages because of the singular shift that we have seen occur in economies around the world as a result of COVID-19.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is the explanation. To me, it makes sense.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Listen.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I come back to the fact that the shadow treasurer, once again, asked me a question in this place the day after he has delivered the red debt book and he has adopted nearly 100 per cent of the state Government's Budget. I say thank you for that. Nearly 100 per cent of the state Government's Budget. You hardly broke into a sweat, did you, putting that red debt book together? It is quite extraordinary.

On one hand I am relatively pleased that nearly 100 per cent of the Government's Budget has been adopted by Labor. On the other, all it does is confirm in my mind that we have a lazy shadow treasurer not prepared to do the hard work and once again reverts back to Labor type and delivers debt and deficit and a job's black hole.

Time expired.

**MINES WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (SUPPLEMENTARY
REQUIREMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 48)
PROPERTY AGENTS AND LAND TRANSACTIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2019
(No. 53)**

Bills agreed to by the Legislative Council without amendment.

SITTING TIMES

[11.21.a.m.]

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

That for this day's sitting the House not stand adjourned at 6 o'clock but continues to sit past 6 o'clock.

For the benefit of members, I would be looking at a mirror image of how we managed the House yesterday in terms of times.

Motion agreed to.

POINT OF ORDER

Behaviour in the Chamber

[11.21 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I am not sure formal business is the appropriate place to do this and whilst one never wants to be a tattle-tale, I draw to your attention that when you rise to your feet, no-one is supposed to be walking around the Chamber. It has happened quite a lot in recent weeks. It happened a lot while you were doing that last presentation -

Ms O'Connor - You are an epic dobber! I can see you in school - Madam Perfect.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am not mentioning names, but it goes, Madam Speaker, to the respect for the Chair and I thought I would raise it. It is something members may not be aware of.

Ms O'Connor - It's like when you got up and tried to egg her on to name me.

Mr Ferguson - There were lots of incursions today, Madam Speaker, and -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Okay, enough, please. Back to order.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Right to Information

[11.22 a.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House takes note of the following matter: right to information

We are living in the most secretive state in Australia. That is not high praise; it is something that worries everyone. It worries me and it worries the Labor Party that we are

living in a state under the administration of a government, the hallmark of which is to hide information, to refuse to release government information and to keep the public in the dark about the operations of the workings of this Government. They have been in power since 2014. Since that time we have seen a steady decline in the attitude of government, executive government and the agencies they preside over to releasing information under right to information laws or better still, publicly releasing information before it gets to the point of members of the public needing to apply for it under RTI laws.

I would like to remind the Chamber of the spirit of the RTI act. It is not intended just to provide the mechanisms for people to be able to apply for public information. The spirit of the act is that we should be living under a regime that progresses open government. We should be expecting to see from our ministerial colleagues that they openly release public information so that the public has access to that information before RTI laws need to be brought in to gain that information, but when they do they should be having the attitude when they receive an RTI request in their departments of releasing as much information as possible.

The spirit of the act is that as much information as possible should be released, but that is not what we see. There is a culture of secrecy in this Government, a culture to release as little as possible. When an RTI request arrives, these ministers have created an expectation in the public sector that as little information as possible should be released. That is the opposite of the spirit of the act. As the RTI review that is tabled in parliament each year tells us, the spirit of the act is integral to our democratic systems of government. Everything that happens under the RTI Act should be approached in the spirit of that government. It is intended to improve the operation of democracy in the state by increasing the accountability of government to the people and by increasing the ability of people to participate in government decision-making.

What we see under this Government is the opposite. That has been backed up by the recently released Ombudsman's annual report, in the RTI chapter, where we see that this state has the poorest record of releasing information. In 30 per cent of RTI applications received by public bodies in this state there was a decision to refuse to release any information at all. That is a staggering 750 per cent higher than other Australian jurisdictions. When I saw that figure I wondered if it was a typo, because it is unfathomable that we could be 750 per cent worse than other states and territories. It is not good enough and Labor will continue to advocate for the spirit of the RTI act because our democracy relies upon it.

We also saw in the Ombudsman's annual report released yesterday that when decisions are made to refuse to release information, the public interest test is consistently misapplied. Public authorities refuse to release information sought which vastly exceeds other mainland jurisdictions. As a result of that the workload on his office increases because, while the Premier said in answers to questions in question time today that the number of requests to agencies had decreased in this annual report, what has increased is applications for external review made to the Ombudsman's office.

We have heard from the minister several times that she increased the capacity in the Ombudsman's office in their RTI jurisdiction by tripling the workforce, adding two extra FTE staff, which is great. We supported that. What we have seen since then is that instead of the backlog in that office decreasing - which even the Ombudsman himself expected and said to the Public Accounts Committee would be the case and that they would be attacking the backlog which had got out of hand - despite the increase in FTE staff, the backlog has gone up.

It is not fair to characterise that as a failure of that office because their workload has increased. The reason for that is because of the refusal of public agencies and public bodies to release information. We have seen it time and time again. We do not need to wait to see those words of the Ombudsman in his annual report because it is known by any member of the public who tries to access information from this Government using our RTI laws.

One example of that is a lawyer representing countless clients who have actions against different authorities for historic child sex abuse, Angela Sdrinis. She is a Melbourne-based lawyer who has a large workload in Tasmania and she is leading a class action. She said she has had to apply for a court order to access records related to the class action after a right to information request was rejected. She said, 'I wouldn't call it an extreme step but it is certainly an unusual step and we feel we've got no other choice'. [TBC] It took five months for the RTI application to be rejected. That is how slow it is to get a refusal from the department. You then have to wait for the internal review which takes months longer.

It is not good enough and it needs to be addressed immediately.

Time expired.

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to pick up on some of the comments that were made. I raised this, this morning, in question time as well in relation to the digitisation of how we communicate and information integrity systems. I was very pleased to see quite a lot of new funding going to government coffers to sort out what we call a transformation project. I hope that touches all the different departments in government. I know we have great people right through the State Service, capable of stepping up and doing more - in fact, wanting to step up and do more - to make sure we have a default position of openness and transparency.

Queensland has adopted a very proactive and forward-looking methodology on how to interface with the public, as have other governments around the country.

I know from personal experience that even a simple thing like setting up an email for overseas travellers was a great thing, providing a single point of contact for our consumers. I wonder if we can adopt more of a perspective of treating constituents and our public more as customers of the state. Perhaps we could adopt a new model of how we go about making sure we are providing the most effective and efficient way of engaging with our government at every level.

I have limited sympathy for the story about the class action lawyer. I consider class actions are a little out of control in Australia, and I am not entirely sure that it gives each of those individual clients and litigants the best ultimate outcome. One of the things that they may be struggling with is that in a standard trial where you are representing an individual client, particularly in a very difficult situation, you generally have the other side providing evidence and you would establish agreed facts as part of the process. We need to be careful that the scenario that was raised today is specific to those class action processes, and may well be something that needs to be dealt with around class actions per se. Having said that, of course everybody needs to be sure that justice is done and also seen to be done.

It is in the interests of all of us to be cognisant of the need to be as transparent as possible. If you think about Rousseau's theory of the social contract, the government derives its powers from the people, it comes bottom up, and we are only here to exercise the united power they grant us. How are they to know we are doing so in the right way unless we are as transparent as we can be?

From my perspective, the issue is how we manage information and data and the flow of information across government. Once we do that and we tap into the stores of intellectual property and capacity that we have in government, we can work with the private sector to enliven that and commercialise it. Clearly it would be subject to privacy issues, but there are new ways and means of doing things.

I am pleased to add those few comments.

Dr Woodruff - You are not speaking?

Ms Archer - Of course I will but it is not my MPI.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - If there are no more speakers, the question is that the matter be noted.

Dr Woodruff - I thought the minister was going to speak to the RTI.

Ms Archer - I will, but it is customary to allow me to hear the contributions.

Ms Butler - I was just being courteous to the minister.

Ms Archer - I have every right to wait to hear.

[11.33 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand why the Government would want to muster as much time as possible.

Ms Archer - Don't make something up. Ready to go, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - It is the form of the House in matters of public importance that the Government typically speaks second on matters -

Ms Archer - No, we don't.

Dr WOODRUFF - but the Government is very reluctant to stand in front of cameras and be heard to speak on this issue. It is really all about secrecy.

Ms ARCHER - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I highlight to Dr Woodruff that there is no standing order compelling the minister to speak second only on MPIs.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Thank you, Dr Woodruff, you may resume.

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Deputy Speaker, the community has been talking since the Liberal Government came in nearly seven years ago now. It started as a slow murmur, and is now a tsunami of shouting from the community about the incredible secrecy around getting

information about standard government processes. The types of right to information requests that were quickly and simply dispatched under the Labor-Greens Government started to slow from 2014, and have now come to a grinding halt.

The Ombudsman's report this year makes it very apparent, and the graphics are quite astounding. If anyone who is watching the webcast managed to see the ABC's report last night, the figures could not be starker: Tasmania is 750 per cent worse in releasing RTIs than the worst other state in Australia. We are the worst performer when it comes to transparency. We are the worst performer when it comes to openness about our processes in government.

The Liberals have a pattern of deliberate refusal and of obfuscation, and it has been fostered systematically. Its systematic refusals or denials and repeated attempts to fiddle with the process and to hold up the time line mean that applicants are left hanging, not only for months but for years under this Government. I was reminded of now Senator McKim who, when he was member for Franklin, put a request in for an external review from the Ombudsman in late 2014. That request was finally answered by the Ombudsman five years later. It came back last year.

We have had many examples in the Greens. Two RTIs were submitted with Communities Tasmania. They were submitted on 7 September, the fee waiver was accepted on 23 September; then it took 13 working days to check if Ms O'Connor, Leader of the Greens, was a member of parliament. This is now becoming a standard tactic used by RTI officers, who are under the pump to do everything they can to slow down uncomfortable right to information requests.

On 7 October, a clarification was requested for one of the RTIs, a month after it had been received. On 9 October, clarification was submitted, but there was never any acknowledgment from the RTI officer that the clarification was received. The disclosure deadline was 21 October and on 26 October we sent an email to find out what was happening with the RTI. Our read receipt shows that the message was read but there was never a reply.

On 2 November, Ms O'Connor emailed with another follow up request about the status of the RTI. That message was never replied to. By 18 November, 40 working days had elapsed since the fee waiver was accepted. That is twice the statutory time frame. To be clear, the RTI officer has not replied to any correspondence from the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens since 7 October. There have been no requests for extension from them and no explanation. That example was in Communities Tasmania but the same thing happens in our GBEs.

Hydro has used a legal firm to delay and obfuscate important right to information requests we had about human rights issues occurring in Uganda. The Ombudsman contacted Hydro about our RTI request and was told they understand the first two decisions were invalid by Hydro due to jurisdictional errors that have still not been rectified. The applicant requested that information 18 months ago and our office has been chasing it for nine months. For nine months, Hydro refused to provide information to the Ombudsman's office about our right to information request.

In May this year, after two basic and systemic failures from Hydro, the Ombudsman asked for the matter to be actioned with some urgency. We are still to hear anything from you.

Finally, on 25 May, the Ombudsman office said to Hydro -

We appreciate you only just getting this matter before you now but the applicant has waited an undue amount of time so far on very simple and avoidable mistakes.

The Premier said this morning he would be speaking to the Ombudsman and seeking to do data analysis to understand what the problem is. It is pretty clear the problem has nothing to do with the data. It has everything to do with ministerial influence and a culture within the Government and ministerial offices of doing everything possible to resist providing information to the public that they ought to have access to on uncomfortable realities.

Time expired.

[11.40 a.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I am glad to provide a contribution on this because many members in this House do not appreciate the amount we have achieved as a government since we came to government in 2014.

Much has been said about the processes about what has been mentioned in the Ombudsman's annual report. I do not wish to be repetitive but the Premier has clearly outlined from now our course of action in relation to that annual report. That is what annual reports are for. That is what independent statutory officers are there for: to provide this sort of information as to how something may be working, how something may not be working. It is up to a government to then look at it. I welcome the comments from the Premier and totally support his position on this for us to gain a better understanding of the matters that have been raised by the Ombudsman.

It is important to note that RTI requests and the processing of these requests are dealt with by departments at arms' length from ministerial officers. I urge members in this place to be careful of the language they use when they are criticising. I know that they direct criticism at the Government, and we take full responsibility for our portfolios and our departments, but I often worry about the language that is being used in this space because I know how hard these RTI officers work because of the number -

Greens members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I ask that the Attorney-General be allowed to respond, please.

Ms ARCHER - of RTI applications that they receive. Some of them are voluminous too, I note. I get to see them after they have been provided to applicants. Some of the nature of the applications that I receive in my Corrections space, for example, can often be the same types of questions, or asking for such a broad range of information that it can be sometimes characterised as a fishing expedition. There are a number of reasons, which I will get to, as to the basis for refusal.

We have made numerous extensions to the information released under our Routine Disclosure Policy. Since June 2018, the Government has released more than 60 new routine data sets online as it continues to expand public access to information on the activities of government. We have also launched a new Government Information Gateway page that is

available on DPAC's website to make government information proactively disclosed, easier to find; continue to publicly report on gifts with benefits and hospitality received, and given by officers across all agencies, at least quarterly on agency websites. We have also implemented the update on the ministerial code of conduct and supported parliament's adoption of a new members' code of conduct.

Moving to the reasons for refusal and exemptions, the RTI annual report highlights the reasons for refusal. In the main, reasons for these refusals is that information is already publicly available. That is why I have just explained the process of increasing our routine datasets online. I urge members of the public to check that first before making those applications as well.

The act has a number of provisions that exempt certain types of information from release under the act. However, the application of exemptions may not necessarily result in non-disclosure of all information sought by an application. In some cases, an RTI decision-maker's determination may exclude from release parts of documents that are not relevant to or necessarily part of the request. When information is redacted from released material, the exemption is reported in a written decision to the applicant.

The way in which the data for the report is collected does not explain the reasons for particular exemptions being applied to the redacted document. For example, a document may be exempt under section 35, internal deliberative information, but this report will not explain how or why that document was considered to be exempt. Details about why information is exempt are explained in written decisions provided to the applicant. The RTI annual report also highlights that the exemptions in the main are due in relation to section 36, which is personal information of a person, and section 30, information relating to enforcement of the law.

Part of the Ombudsman's role is an avenue for the external review of decisions made by public authorities not to release the information sought in the applications for assessed disclosure Right to Information Act 2009. If at the conclusion of a review the Ombudsman is of the view that the authority's decision was incorrect, the Ombudsman can make a fresh determination. This is an important part of our legislation. It is important to understand that external review applications are often complex and voluminous and it can take some time to appropriately consider all the information. The number of external review applications made in any year is also difficult to forecast, which makes it difficult to accurately predict resourcing requirements. Last year we provided to the Office of the Ombudsman additional funding of \$245 000 per year to address matters raised by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has welcomed this additional funding and stated that this level of resourcing would enable the office to clear the backlog of cases it currently struggles to deal with and to establish practices and procedures for the more efficient handling of applications for external review in the future.

In the 2019-20 annual report, the Ombudsman reiterated his statements by saying that in the 2019-20 budget the Tasmanian Government allocated an additional \$245 000 in recurrent funding for the office to manage its Right to Information jurisdiction. This allowed recruitment during the reporting year of a principal officer RTI, a 0.8 full-time equivalent, and then an investigation review.

Time expired.

[11.47 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, just to clarify the average review times for the financial year; this is contradictory to what the minister - it is not contradictory - it is just giving you a little bit more real information - the average time is now 1045 days.

Ms Archer - Which report are you quoting from because I may have been going off the RTI and you may have been going off -

Ms BUTLER - This is the most recent information. In 2017-18 the average time to complete an external review rose to 318 days. In 2018-19 it reached approximately 881 days. The source of information is from the Ombudsman's submission. Just to clarify that minister: we do not want to let the truth get in the way of a good story; it would be a bit of an issue would it not?

Under the Liberals, Tasmania's RTIs are a whopping 750 per cent more likely to be refused than Australia's two most open jurisdictions, and twice as likely to refuse to release information as Queensland, the second worst performer.

When the Tasmanian Freedom of Information Act was replaced with the Right to Information Act in 2009, a new section, section 12 was added with the intention of increasing the amount of information being released. We know that under that section 12, that included categories of information to be released as required disclosure, of routine disclosure and active disclosure, or an assessed disclosure. Not enough information was being released as a routine or active disclosure. That quote came from a Dr Snell. He said the whole purpose of section 12 was intended to be a device to progressively increase the amount of high-quality information that was in the public domain. He said the Ombudsman's office needed to do more to ensure departments and other agencies did not get away with providing inadequate reason statements for refusal.

That was in 2009 and nothing has really changed since then. We have known for some time that section 12 was put in place to assist in providing greater transparency. Australian Lawyers Alliance spokesperson, Greg Barns, recently said that the RTI system perpetuates secrecy in government.

In August 2020 Ombudsman Richard Connock said his office had been severely under-resourced in the past and, in November 2020, the Ombudsman's annual report has shown a systematic refusal of requests and the Tasmanian public authorities refused access to 30 per cent of cases.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, the member is speaking.

This ridiculous state of affairs has meant that information which the public should have the right to access is continuously withheld. This is a quote from Richard Connock -

The average age of RTI Ombudsman reviews that were finally closed last financial year was 1035 days, up from 881.

- which is more information than we previously stated.

In 2019 the Australian Information and Privacy Commissioner, Angeline Falk, [OK] delivered the following address to the Right to Know Day in 2019. She stated that under the FOI act 'every person has a right to access a document of an agency or an official document of a minister and to receive it unless that document is exempt'. Importance of transparency and accountability is key and our press are also an important aspect of truth-telling. Often with this Trump-style government which we often see coming through - worse and worse actually as time goes on - even our press do not get the ability to have access to information, so it is not just us that you are withholding information from, it is also the press.

The only two things I think this Government is concerned about is maintaining power and negative public relations. Their secretive withholding of information enables the government machine to control the content of news and information, and journalists are active users of FOI mechanisms.

Commissioner Falk also relates to this in her address where she says that one of the issues raised by journalists is the length of time it can take to process a request and the impact that time may have on the relevance of information obtained. I am pretty sure that that would be a normal government strategy. I do not think that is a conspiracy, just by the continuous slogans and Trump-style politics coming out of this Government, and it is only getting worse. Time frames are often breached and often documents are provided fully redacted. It is embarrassing and appalling democracy. Very little information is provided.

I am going to read into the *Hansard* some of Jenna Cairney's comments from the *Mercury* editorial this morning because it is very telling. She writes -

... documents arrive, usually they're partly redacted which means some of the information is blacked out with the government arguing privacy or commercial in confidence. And the government can use reasons like this to simply release no information at all.

Not good enough.

Once a decision to withhold some, or all, of the information is made that call can be appealed to Ombudsman Tasmania. And it is in these cases where just one of 21 decisions to withhold information was upheld in 2019-20.

Now here's the worst part. When confronted with these facts yesterday, Premier Peter Gutwein said words to the effect that his departments were just following the law.

Clearly they are not.

Imagine if a magistrate or a judge had 20 out of 21 decisions they made on a particular issue overturned in just one year.

Would you say they were just following the law?

No doubt they're not breaking the law but they're clearly either not very good at understanding it - or they're wilfully obstructing it.

The reality is these figures are an embarrassment.

Ms Archer - There's that language.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, that is the editor of the *Mercury's* language. Did you not read Jenna Cairney's editorial? They are her words. Quote for the *Hansard*, minister - you have just belittled the editor of the *Mercury*.

Ms Archer - No, I haven't. I am talking about the language about RTI officers. Don't mislead the House.

Ms BUTLER - Yes, you have. We will check the *Hansard*. That is crazy. The editor of the *Mercury* is pulling you up and saying it is getting embarrassing. The lack of transparency and secrecy is disgusting, minister.

Time expired.

[11.54 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish I had Ms Butler's confidence but she is very pleased with some of the appalling contributions she makes in this place.

Contrary to popular belief, the Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to improving the openness and transparency of government. We have implemented a number of measures. I was not in this place in 2019 but my understanding is that we passed laws through this place in that time to amend the Right to Information Act, to expand the number and type of reviews that could go to the Ombudsman. For Ms Haddad to stand up and express surprise that there has been an increase in the number of reviews requested by the Ombudsman, what did you think would happen when we changed the law to allow a broader range of reviews to happen, Ms Haddad?

Ms Haddad - That's not the reason.

Mr STREET - Of course that is why.

Ms Haddad - They have been going up and up, year on year on year. You know that.

Mr STREET - Ms Haddad, we will not cop you coming into this place as a member of the Labor Party and lecturing us on transparency because -

Ms Haddad - Your Government hides reports.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Haddad. You have already made your contribution.

Mr STREET - Your Leader made a big song and dance after the last election about an election review that was conducted. Has that ever been released? No.

Ms Haddad - It is an internal document. What about public information that your Government will not release?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Haddad.

Mr STREET - Maybe the reason for it not being released is that the report makes -

Ms Haddad - It is an internal document.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms Haddad, I do not think you want to leave in your own MPI. The member was silent during your contribution.

Mr STREET - Perhaps the report makes comment about the fact that one of your sitting members was treated so appallingly during that election process that you have gone from 10 members to nine members in the last 18 months.

The other thing we will not cop is Ms Butler coming in here and lecturing us about transparency. I was sitting in this place on the adjournment a few weeks back when Dr Broad came in here and advocated that the Minister for the Arts interfere in an independent funding process at Screen Tasmania. You cheered him on, Ms Butler, because that is what you do. It was seven minutes of him going on with absolute drivel and you were sitting in the back row there cheering him on, and you want to talk about transparency when you were asking the minister to interfere in an independent process. We do not fund everything that we like, Ms Butler, and we do not like everything that we fund, but there is an independent process -

Ms Butler - What issue are you talking about?

Mr STREET - You know what I am talking about at Screen Tasmania. It is the same thing you talked about yesterday. I am pointing out the hypocrisy of Labor to come in here and talk about transparency and processes while advocating that ministers actively interfere in the same processes. Just because you do not like what Screen Tasmania funded does not mean that the minister gets to interfere in independent processes.

The Premier made clear in question time today that he is going to be in contact with the Ombudsman in relation to this report. I welcome that he is going to meet with the Ombudsman and go into a review of the RTI process.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2020 (No. 46)

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 November (page 110)

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise with great pride to deliver the Tasmanian Greens' fully costed, triple-bottom-line, alternative budget. I seek the leave of the House to table our alternative budget and I believe that has been secured.

Leave granted.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. The year 2020 began with a firestorm that devastated communities, forests and wildlife from the south coast of Victoria to the south east of Queensland. Australians barely had a moment to absorb the terrifying magnitude of the climate-induced catastrophe before the global pandemic struck. COVID-19 laid bare already existing tears in our social and economic fabric. It showed us just how unfair the system is on everyday people. It showed us that poverty and inequality are rife in Australia and here where we live in Tasmania.

It also exposed the truth that these came down to the choices governments have made and made it clear governments are capable of making better choices in a crisis. They are capable of making much better choices, and the Greens' alternative budget presents some of those better choices.

The global community is facing twin crises and while we have been buffered from the worst of it, lutruwita/Tasmania is feeling the impacts on both fronts. As an island community with unique advantages we need to tackle both challenges at once. We can re-set to a sustained social and economic recovery from COVID-19 by investing in people to ensure no-one is left behind, and by ramping-up climate positive action. In a climate crisis, action equals hope, and right now humanity and the planet need both hope and action. The science is grim but despair is no response to it; action is.

The Greens recognise that out of crisis comes opportunity, new ways of thinking, innovation and resilience. It is essential that Tasmania's First Peoples are front and centre of creating this new paradigm of respect, fairness and a closer connection to nature. Every single day we are in this place we are meeting on Aboriginal land. Our alternative budget funds progress towards treaty, dedicated Aboriginal seats in parliament, the return of lands, the establishment of reconciliation day, like the ACT, and resources into Aboriginal school history projects. It powers-up the state's capacity to harness Aboriginal cool burning practices to better manage fire risk and adapt to a heating climate.

The Greens have the respect to defund the plan to open up tracks through the Tarkine, the site of some of the world's most priceless and significant archaeological heritage. We also recognise the central role of government in making the big shifts that are required, socially, environmentally and economically; changes like greening and making our cities and towns more people friendly and climate resilient.

This State Budget is arguably the most socially, environmentally and economically important since World War II. Regrettably, the Government has delivered a narrow-cast roads and bridges 'business as usual' budget. One thing is certain: we cannot go back to business as usual. That is what delivered raging social and economic inequality, habitat loss, an extinction crisis and global warming. In Tasmania, it has delivered decades of underinvestment in people and overinvestment in the big end of town and the rent seekers. COVID-19 has amplified the critical need for government to put people first every time, not just in a crisis.

There is much to do and there is no time to waste. The Greens recognise that reducing emissions, restoring natural systems and adapting to the changing climate must be a priority of any responsible government. The Greens' flagship climate legislation, the Safe Climate Bill 2020, provides an attainable jobs-rich transition pathway for lutruwita/Tasmania, and it is a

pathway to recovery from COVID-19. Our alternative budget funds measures set out in the Safe Climate Bill to meet binding 1 per cent annual reduction targets in every sector and to deliver adaptation plans and carbon storage plans. This is the bold action needed to deliver a safe climate and sustained sustainable jobs.

We will also fund the transition to a renewable powered vehicle fleet, low emissions farming and a sustainable waste management system that will power Tasmania's transition to the circular economy. As an island, we do have to become more self-sufficient, less reliant on imported liquid fuels and better able to reuse and recycle.

We will protect lutruwita/Tasmania's carbon stores by ending native forest logging, providing for re-skilled workers to undertake landscape restoration and rewilding, to protect the carbon that is already in the landscape and draw down more CO₂ from the atmosphere. This is some of the most important work that will be undertaken this century. This island's forests are part of a shared island heritage and a carbon bank for the world. They must be protected in a time of climate crisis.

We will make sure Tasmania is part of the global solution to the decline of biodiversity and threat to natural systems by ramping-up funding for the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Garden's native seed bank and for our own global southern hemisphere seed bank. We can help to store and protect nature's DNA here in temperate stable Tasmania and we will be ready for global rewilding efforts in the decades and centuries ahead. This can be another gift from Tasmania to the world.

In the climate portfolio we will fund a chief scientist, a safe climate commission, a climate change joint standing committee of the Tasmanian parliament. We will fund the state's emissions abatement obligations and climate adaptation planning and the development of carbon storages.

The Greens recognise that responding to the threat of the warming climate requires a broad, bold approach. We cannot adequately tackle the climate emergency without rebuilding the structures that led us down this path in the first place. It is well past time parliament reformed lutruwita/Tasmania's political system to limit the influence of those who benefit from emitting greenhouse gases and degrading nature at public expense. This means substantial electoral law reform banning corporate, developer and foreign donations and restoring the House of Assembly to 35 seats.

The Greens budget funds these important reforms to strengthen democracy. Every dollar spent on this line item is an investment in a healthier democracy. Young Tasmanians studying or just entering the workforce were dealt a body blow by the pandemic fallout. They were already stressed about poverty, being able to afford study, finding a home or a meaningful job as well as a deepening sense of climate anxiety. The Greens subscribe to the view that action equals hope and that young Tasmanians need a substantially better deal. They not only need it; they more than deserve it. Collectively, we need to commit to delivering a better deal to young Tasmanians and the Greens would argue that should be a Green new deal.

Our alternative budget funds a job guarantee for young Tasmanians. Our plan ensures any young person can get a minimum wage job with full benefits, workplace protections for 16 hours a week if they want one. They can go to work, helping people, greening up our cities

and towns, becoming carbon farmers and landscape repair specialists. We can help young Tasmanians develop the skills and knowledge this island needs and they will need in the future.

Our alternative budget funds a youth jobs guarantee. It establishes a minister for employment and the Tasmanian employment office; it delivers free TasTAFE; it delivers primary carers; leave retraining for displaced workers; it establishes an inquiry into wage theft, which we know is rampant. It funds the Multicultural Council of Tasmania multicultural employment project and allows for a portable long service leave scheme. We want to protect older workers rights and provide funding for that and establish a national centre of excellence in aged and disability care.

We also invest in transitioning regions into new economic paradigms that are reliant on sustainable growth, high employment, climate responsible green industries - like agriculture and renewables - and provide training to harness the skills of displaced workers. Our allocation to strong, regional and rural communities funds a regional rollout of NBN, a farm ownership incubation program, a regional reinvestment program so that regions themselves can determine their own investment needs.

It funds local area strategic development around infrastructure and local economic area development groups. It funds carbon farming startup grants, assists farmers to establish fencing and provides for on-farm renewables transmission discounts.

COVID-19 has taught everyone the importance of digital connectivity and the benefits of flexible working arrangements and that is why we fund \$50 million a year to bring fixed line NBN connections into regional communities and a program to identify roles where working from home arrangements could be an option. That would be a truly transformative investment in our social infrastructure. Housing is critical social infrastructure and is the bedrock for a good life. All Tasmanians should have a safe, affordable home. Tasmania's housing crisis has become entrenched through a rapidly changing population, prolonged underinvestment by Government, the unchecked growth of short stay accommodation and by poor planning. The Greens invest in every stage of housing, with \$600 million into affordable rent-to-buy properties, funding for crisis and youth accommodation and investment in urban renewal. In addition, a Greens government would regulate short stay accommodation to ensure there are more homes for Tasmanians who need them.

All young people and children in lutruwita/Tasmania should be safe, and their emotional and material needs should be met. Child safety services is bursting at the seams, and is unable to care for at-risk children and young people in a way that gives them a better chance for a good life. The Greens will invest in 50 new child safety officers and initiate reforms to improve early intervention and family reunification outcomes. We would also raise the age of criminal responsibility and establish a commission of inquiry into allegations surrounding the Launceston General Hospital. We would fund an at-home, Tasmanian bush therapy program so the State of Tasmania, when it is the parent, is not in a position where it feels it has to banish some of our most vulnerable and at-risk children to the Northern Territory.

We would provide support for foster carers and invest in recruitment of more foster carers, and establish a child safety joint standing community of the Tasmanian parliament. We would support parent advocacy services. Critically, a Greens government would close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre which is without doubt a failed model that is letting down those young people. We know that evidence from around the world shows you can invest in a much

more effective therapeutic approach at what we would argue, ultimately, is a fraction of the cost. It would certainly break the cycle where young people who go into Ashley are too often on a one-way ticket to Risdon Prison.

The state's hospitals are struggling to cope with demand. A funding focus has to be preventing people from needing to go to hospital in the first place. The Greens will invest in preventative health, community health services and rehabilitation programs to create healthier and happier communities. We would fund a preventative health reform white paper, increase funding to population health, increase funding to community health centres and into community preventative health.

We recognise food security is an issue in Tasmania and too many parts of Tasmania are food deserts. We will invest in improving food security.

If there is one thing that is certain, the war on drugs is a complete failure. It is a long-standing Greens policy position that personal drug use should be decriminalised and we fund that. We know that pill testing saves lives. It recognises that young people will take risks and that adults - including in parliaments - need to have in place every measure possible to keep young people safe at festivals. We will fund and establish a pill testing regime for Tasmania. We also recognise that the state's medicinal cannabis controlled access scheme has been deliberately established to shut people out, and that too few people who need this medicine and know it will improve their lives or the lives of their children are able to access that scheme. Our alternative budget would correct that. We also invest critical funds into drug rehabilitation and staffing.

Tasmania needs a human rights act. Australia is the only developed democracy in the western world that does not have a charter of human rights. Just because it is an issue that is being argued at the national level does not mean Tasmania should not move down this path - for example, Victoria has done so. We will enact a human rights act for Tasmania. We will fund a human rights commission and a human rights unit, so that the fundamental human rights of every Tasmanian no matter where they come from, no matter their age, gender, race or religion, must be protected. Right now under Tasmanian law, they are inadequately protected. We know this state will have a human rights act one day. We are pretty sure it will not happen under a conservative government, but it is long overdue legislative reform that ensures the rights of everyday Tasmanians are enshrined in law.

The implosion in the corrections system is a by-product of a totally ineffectual tough-on-crime policy. It is a negative feedback loop of hopelessness and crime and it is certainly not making communities any safer. The Greens know it will take serious policy reform to turn the corner. We will invest in an ambitious program of restorative justice and diversion programs to improve recidivism rates, bring down the prison population and improve community safety. We will fund a restorative justice policy and programs unit. Funding is provided for the bail hostel, the alcohol and drug court, the drug diversion program extension, and education programs in prison. This funding ensures we are giving inmates every possible chance so that when they get out of prison they are able to undertake education and training, secure meaningful employment and walk away from a life of crime.

We will increase funding to the wonderful people at Legal Aid Tasmania. We will allocate funding towards the Northern Remand Centre and a Greens government would not build a prison in the north. All evolved jurisdictions are putting in place policies that reduce

their prison populations, not increase them, so constructing new prisons is no longer necessary. A different approach to crime and justice is needed in Tasmania, not a northern prison - and particularly not a northern prison on a nature reserve which is home to a myriad of Tasmanian species.

We recognise the vast majority of Tasmanians care very much about the wellbeing of animals, and we know community attitudes have shifted towards traditional industries such as the greyhound and horse racing industries. We know successive governments have been resistant to strengthening the Animal Welfare Act to ensure it works for animals and not industry. We believe there needs to be a whole new paradigm shift in a way this state treats its animals, and we should add to our brand that we are cruelty free Tasmania. We would establish an animal welfare commission; regulate dog breeding to put an end to the cruelty of puppy farms; increase funding to the Tasmania Police animal welfare inspectorate; invest in wildlife veterinary treatment; and ensure the long overdue reforms to the Animal Welfare Act actually come into place.

We would continue the Labor-Greens government program of buying back battery hen cages and transitioning the industry here to cruelty free and free range. It is easy to dismiss battery hen farming as a niche issue of concern. It happens out of sight and out of mind, but we need to remind ourselves of the misery of the life of a chicken in a battery farm that spends every day of their short and miserable lives in cages about the size of an A4 sheet of paper. The Labor-Greens government made significant progress in transitioning the industry to cruelty-free and free-range. The Greens in government made sure that a Treasurer's Instruction was issued to government agencies so that they procured cruelty-free and free-range eggs. All of that was undone in 2014 very soon after the Liberals came to government and that was a choice the new Government made about being prepared to tolerate and in fact endorse cruelty.

As a state we need to do better. Animals have rights. They have an intrinsic right to exist, to life, and we need to change attitudes of governments and industry that treats animals as disposable. We have to do better.

We would increase funding to wildlife carers and to efforts to rehome animals, as well as to support the outstanding work of the RSPCA. We would defund Tasracing because the Greens do not believe that the Government should be in the business of subsidising and supporting cruelty. In fact it is Tasmanian workers and taxpayers who subsidise Tasracing and the cruelty it supports.

I have spent plenty of time talking to racehorse owners and trainers and a bit of time talking to greyhound owners and trainers. I know there are plenty of people who work in those industries who have a very strong commitment to animal welfare. It is the structural issues with the industry. It is the fact that the greyhound and horseracing industries are built on a foundation of animals being bred for profit and when they no longer turn a profit or are too expensive to feed, or are not fast enough, the evidence tells us, and it is unarguable, that those animals are quickly dispatched, and if they are lucky it is a bullet in the head. If they are unlucky they are put onto the *Spirit of Tasmania* and sent to an abattoir interstate. That is the cruelty that is being supported by Tasracing and through it, Tasmanian taxpayers. I do not think most Tasmanians want to see their taxes going into supporting cruelty.

I am absolutely certain that the days of these industries are numbered. We have seen numbers go down at the Melbourne Cup, takings go down and viewership go down, because

increasingly Australians understand that for all the glamour and gloss of the horseracing industry or the Melbourne Cup, there is the most terrible cruelty at its heart where a beautiful animal is treated as a profit-making machine or then disposed of.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you do not believe me, watch Caro Meldrum Hanna's piece on the *7.30 Report* which went to air last November, which makes it very clear that even some of the most famous and outstanding horses that have raced in this country were sent to an abattoir in Caboolture where they died the most terrible deaths. We can do better than that and Tasmania can be a cruelty-free state.

Responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis requires a significant recalibration of social and environmental policy as well as economic restructuring to insure the economy works for people and the planet, not the other way round as it is now. In many ways lutruwita/Tasmania has a head start on the world with 52 per cent of this island's land mass protected and its carbon stores safe. Meanwhile, changes in the forestry industry achieved largely through the tireless work of the conservation movement have led to Tasmania being a net carbon sequestering state.

The island's community punches above its weight in volunteering and donations to charities and non-government organisations. We are genuinely, in action and word, the kindest state in the country, something of which we should be incredibly proud.

The state's economy has produced a clean, green brand that is the envy of the world. lutruwita/Tasmania's Hare-Clark electoral system is widely regarded as the most representative and democratic system in the world.

Tasmania is transitioning from an extractive economy to one that relies on the island's brand and high-value niche products, and we understand there always needs to be room for both but you cannot have an economy that is wholly dependent on resource extraction as Tasmania's was for such a long time.

As an island we have much to be proud of and many advantages to leverage. The Greens' budget builds on our advantages. Our budget capitalises on what Tasmanians are proud of and introduces reforms and a pathway to transition the state's economy into a prosperous, safe climate future. This Greens' alternative budget is the foundation for a green new deal which we will deliver after extensive community engagement next year.

Tasmania's future post-COVID-19 can be sparkly bright. It can harness the full capacity and skills of our people. It can look after those now being left behind. It can restore the damage that has been done to nature and strengthen Tasmania's role as a carbon bank for the world.

This future is about the choices we make now and it is time to get on with making better choices for the people we are elected to represent, for young Tasmanians and for those not yet born who will be living with the legacy of the choices we make here today. I commend our alternative budget to the House.

[12.27 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure and honour to speak today in response to the Tasmanian Liberal Government's seventh Budget. First, I take this opportunity to recognise, acknowledge and applaud our Premier and Treasurer, Peter Gutwein,

and all the Cabinet for having delivered yet another budget that will rebuild a stronger Tasmania.

This Budget is especially crucial during this unprecedented time of this pandemic as it will rebuild our economy, create jobs and continue to invest in essential services and protect our way of life, which is why our 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget is all about jobs, confidence and community, rebuilding a stronger Tasmania.

This COVID-19 pandemic has been the largest shock in generations to our way of life, our society, our economy and our budget, which is why this Government moved swiftly to put in place measures at our borders and in the community to save lives and leverage our strong balance sheet to save livelihoods. These immediate steps, difficult as they were, enabled us to control the spread of this insidious disease and in recent months they have allowed us to return in a staged and careful way to a more normal, albeit a COVID-19 normal, way of life.

Throughout this year Tasmanians have shown and demonstrated great compassion, courage and resilience and I want to commend Tasmanians for what they have done throughout these many months and put on the record today that I sincerely thank them all, because going forward the challenge we face will require all Tasmanians to work together as we face what I see are the two main elements. What we are going through at the moment is both a health crisis and an economic crisis and we must deal with both and the road ahead will not be easy.

There are things we cannot control, as the Premier has outlined, such as volatility in international markets or how soon a vaccine may become available. However, what we can control is how we respond to this situation - our health response and our economic response.

I applaud the Premier because he has made it very clear that we can never tax our way to prosperity, nor can we cut our way to recovery. The only way we can rebuild a stronger and more resilient Tasmania is to invest heavily to support jobs, to regain confidence and to rebuild our economy and our community.

That is why, in addition to COVID-19 support measures, the 2020-21 Budget will provide the economic platform needed to rebuild Tasmania, including allocating \$5 billion towards building the infrastructure our state needs. It will support around 25 000 jobs. It will build the intergenerational infrastructure our state needs to thrive, and it will provide the economic stimulus to return our budget to surplus in two years. This will increase confidence, grow our economy, attract investment, support jobs and rebuild a stronger Tasmania.

As Saul Eslake, well known economist, stated in regard to the Budget -

It has been presented in the circumstances which are radically different from those which have confronted any Tasmanian government in living memory. The overall conclusion is that this Budget is an appropriate response to the circumstances which the Government is confronting.

As the *Mercury* editorial stated -

With interest rates at an all time low it is the right time to spend and as we have said before Mr Gutwein has carte blanche to fork out the cash. With a

planned \$5 billion infrastructure spend Mr Gutwein says he is throwing the kitchen sink at our recovery and that is what is needed.

Matthew Pollock, Executive Director, Master Builders Tasmania, said -

Premier Peter Gutwein is committed to building our way out of this economic crisis and today's State Budget makes good on that pledge with construction put at the centre of our recovery strategy. Construction will be our economic accelerator and a jobs generator.

Stuart Collins, Executive Director, Housing Industry Association, commented -

The Government has handed down a Budget designed to increase confidence, grow our economy, attract investments, support jobs and rebuild a stronger Tasmania.

Rachael Mattheson, the CEO of the Civil Contractors Federation, said -

The uncertainty around COVID has dramatically impacted on market confidence in Tasmania. By announcing a record investment in infrastructure the Government has laid the foundation for our economy's recovery. Our members are looking forward to building infrastructure that will serve the community for generations to come as a result of today's Budget.

This Government is backing Tasmanian businesses, supporting their recovery and growth and making it easier for them to employ. Rob Mallett, the Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Small Business Council, stated -

Today's Tasmanian budget, whilst forged in the fires of the world's worst crisis in a hundred years, provides unprecedented opportunity for the Tasmanian small business sector.

I note funding of \$145 million in 2020-21 has been allocated to a central COVID-19 provision to support the response measures of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC), by supporting businesses, stimulating economic activity through improving the environment, creating regional jobs and supporting young people into training and apprenticeships. Of the \$145 million, \$50 million has been allocated to initiatives to support businesses, jobs and our economy, support the cultural and performing arts sector, improve our environment and invest in public housing infrastructure upgrades.

This Government will also transition the Government fleet to electric vehicles by 2030 and Michael Bushby, President of Roads Australia, stated -

RA also applauds the Budget's announcement of a target for electric vehicles ... by committing to transition its own fleet by 2030 and in investing in charging network infrastructure, the Tasmanian Government is helping to provide the community with greater confidence about EV technology that will be central to increased uptake.

I also note that \$30 million will be invested into circular economy initiatives including a container deposit scheme, waste action plan and waste recycling and re-use facilities. As Mayor Christina Holmdahl, the President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania, stated -

The commitment of \$4 million to implement the Waste Action Plan, \$10 million to co-invest with the waste management sector in recycling infrastructure and \$5.5 million to match the Commonwealth Government's Recycling Modernisation Fund are most welcomed by the Local Government sector. The targeted investment in the collection and sorting of recycling, combined with funding to support improved resource processing, will serve Tasmania very well from a jobs and resource recovery perspective.

As importantly our investments in Tasmania's renewable energy future will not only have the potential to create thousands of jobs and to help our economy, but confirms our commitment to transform Tasmania from not only being Australia's renewable energy powerhouse, but to also being the world leader of clean, reliable and affordable energy with a 200 per cent target by 2040. We will also invest \$168.7 million dollars for Tasmanian Irrigation to build the next tranche of our Pipeline to Prosperity Irrigation Project state-wide which will greatly assist agriculture in Tasmania. I note that Peter Skillern, CEO of TFGA, stated -

The State budget has once again shown the government's support for agriculture in the state. In conjunction with recent announcements the total package for agriculture is to warmly welcomed.

The Government recognises the valuable investment businesses make in training the next generation of Tasmanian workers. To assist this valuable investment of Tassie businesses we are investing more than \$43 million to boost jobs for apprentices and trainees in Tasmania, to give businesses the confidence to employ more Tasmanians. This includes \$10.5 million towards the Australian government's \$21 million dollar job trainer fund, delivering up to 7000 additional free training places specifically for youth and the unemployed.

Angela Bennett, CEO of Master Plumbers Tasmania, has welcomed the government's job training fund initiative. It means that up 7000 Tasmanians have a chance to kick start their career. Peter Cornish, CEO of Fruit Growers Tasmania, said the budget job training initiative which would target school leavers young people and job seekers build on the recent joint efforts between the fruit industry and the Tasmanian government to promote the job opportunities available to locals in the fruit industry. I note that YNOT also welcomes the Tasmanian government's investment in job creation for apprentices, trainees, and youth employees.

To ensure our businesses are incentivised to hire apprentices and trainees, we will extend our successful payroll tax rebate scheme and small business apprentice and trainee grant scheme for a further 12 months until June 30 2022 and we will broaden these schemes to all industries. This will be an investment of more than \$22 million to significantly boost jobs for apprentices, trainees and youth employees. We will also extend the payroll tax rebate for all youth employees for a further 18 months from the end of the year until 30 June 2022. These schemes are already supporting nearly 4000 apprentices, trainees and young people and we expect that these initiatives will support an additional 4000 new full time jobs for apprentice, trainees and youth employees.

We also recognise that we need to do more, particularly to attract and support more women into non-traditional roles, with these sectors set to play a vital part of supporting our recovery. That is why the 2020-2021 budget includes \$2.5 million over two years to develop a statewide program to enable and empower more women to participate more broadly across our economy. To achieve this our Government will work with peak industry bodies and skills and training providers to support women to train and to enter roles in industry. We will also support employers to help them develop the skills that they need to succeed to shift community and employee perceptions of traditionally male dominated industries.

There are specific initiatives in Southern Tasmania which greatly assist my electorate in Franklin. I note our Government has committed \$85 million for the construction of the new southern remand centre on the Risdon site, including an additional \$15 million in this budget. Also, the State Budget has \$19.7 million over four years to meet the additional operational costs associated with the remand centre. The construction of the centre is well under way and is expected to be completed at the end of 2021. This additional funding is being provided to ensure that the centre will be ready to open after construction has been completed. Funding of \$9.3 million is provided to upgrade shared facilities at the Risdon Prison.

I commend Dogs' Homes of Tasmania at Risdon Vale, and thank them for their great work in caring for and re-homing dogs. I was delighted the minister locked in \$200 000 to assist them with critical upgrades over the 2020-21 period. This vital infrastructure improvement will help Dogs' Homes Tasmania to meet projected demand into the future, and as importantly, ensuring that dogs have a safe refuge to be cared for and to be re-homed.

Tasmanians love their pets and we have one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the country. Dogs are a very important part of many Tasmanians' lives. I am the owner of two dogs. I know Michael Sertori, CEO of Dogs Homes Tasmania, was delighted with this funding, and as he said -

In challenging times it is extremely difficult to fund organisations such as ours yet in this budget the Gutwein Government has had the courage to not only fund high level economic activity but to also small project activity within the animal welfare sector.

In regard to high level economic activity, both the east and western shores of Franklin will also benefit from our massive \$2.4 billion state roads and bridges program which will support jobs, give the construction and engineering sector the confidence it needs to keep employing Tasmanians and will continue to improve safety and travel times on our roads.

Michael Bushby, the president of Roads Australia, stated -

Tasmania's road network will be safer and more sustainable as a result of the record level of infrastructure investment in today's Tasmanian State Budget.

Stacey Pennicott, Chief Member Experience Officer RACT said -

This budget delivers on the Government's key commitments around road funding.

Some of the many projects include: \$65 million to match funding from the federal budget with a \$130 million Tasman Bridge project, which will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and provide future traffic growth through the installation of new smart transport management systems. This includes road travel information, variable message boards and automated and dynamic tidal flow for the Tasman Bridge.

There is also \$20 million as the first investment into the \$37 million duplication of the Midway Point and Sorell causeways to complement the \$150 million in funding from the federal budget. We are also investing \$46.5 million together with the Australia Government for the Hobart Airport interchange which is part of the now \$350 million South East Traffic Solution, which will deliver a continuous four-lane highway from Hobart through to Sorell.

There is also \$175.5 million over four years with the Australian Government for the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution, including funding to address congestion in Kingborough; a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet, the Derwent River ferry service trial; Kingborough park and ride facilities; bus improvements and prioritisation measures; active transport upgrades and improvements to Macquarie and Davey streets and \$23 million for Intelligent Traffic Systems around the Greater Hobart area, enabling the road network to be more resilient and to accommodate traffic changes arising from unplanned events.

Other road, bridge and infrastructure projects to be funded in Franklin include \$23.2 million for the duplication of the East Derwent Highway at Geilston Bay, including COVID-19 stimulus funding for improved local road connections; \$6.5 million for the final stages of the Richmond Road upgrades; \$7.5 million dollar for the Channel Highway diversion at Huonville; \$7 million for the Sandfly intersection upgrade on the Huon Highway and \$7.5 million for the Bruny Island landside infrastructure.

Through the 2020-21 State Budget focusing on the infrastructure and services that Tasmanians need now and into the future, we will create and support the jobs and confidence needed to recover and rebuild, including in our tourism industry where I note that the Tasmanian Liberal Government is committing almost \$10 million towards upgrading the Hobart International Airport, which is part of a \$17.5 million plan in partnership with the airport's owners to upgrade the infrastructure and to facilitate its international border arrangements. It is fantastic that in the future, Tasmania will be welcoming international flights from New Zealand for the first time in more than two decades.

This will provide a boost for local jobs across tourism as well as more jobs at the airport. As the upgrades take place, this will set Hobart Airport up for a big positive future for locals and visitors alike while also stimulating our economy and creating jobs. As, Matt Cocker, the acting CEO of the Hobart Airport stated:

Welcoming direct international flights will be a massive shot in the arm for the tourism sector and the economy more broadly. In addition to that, the upgrades themselves will be a great stimulus for the local economy.

I also note that the 2020-21 State Budget also includes a record \$9.8 billion in health spending over the next four years and I commend the minister who is here today, Ms Courtney, because this is a record investment by any Tasmanian Government. It is unprecedented

resourcing for our health system that is recruiting our record staffing, opening beds and investing in the facilities our patients and staff deserve.

This is \$1.7 billion more than in last year's budget, a 21 per cent increase and is operational expenditure on top of the \$391.2 million capital program being delivered across Tasmania, which includes \$89.8 million to continue stage 2 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, including an expanded ED and ICU. This is the biggest-ever uplift in health spending and it also includes \$600 million of additional funding to the Tasmanian Health Service over the next four years and a boost to our funding base that will help meet the demand in our hospitals and will underpin improved health outcomes.

In addition to this, we are providing a \$45 million injection into elective surgery, taking our additional investment to \$60 million. I thank the Commonwealth Government for the \$15 million that they have also provided towards this fund. This funding will provide an estimated 8500 additional surgeries over the next 18 months, above and beyond what was already due to be delivered.

The Government and the THS are also committed to meeting demand in our hospitals with \$50.2 million over the next two years to support staff and beds in our major hospitals. This is in addition to \$299 million over four years to continue the rollout of the 250 new beds at the Royal Hobart Hospital. I note there is \$11.9 million for extra graduate nurses. As a registered nurse, This is fantastic. It will allow for about 60 additional extra graduate nurses for the south, and \$11.4 million is also in the Budget for the Community Rapid Response Service, including the southern pilot.

It is crucial that we support care for patients and their families when they need it most, and I am also delighted to see that we are delivering further funding of \$1 million over two years for Palliative Care Tasmania. Also, to further support the delivery of cancer related services and programs during the COVID-19 response and recovery period, there will be \$500 000 for the Cancer Council of Tasmania in 2021, as well as \$2.9 million over two years to support our other very hardworking community healthcare providers.

I also note that the minister has also been firmly committed to ensuring our regional communities have modern health facilities for staff and patients, which is why the Budget will deliver \$24.4 million over the next two years to upgrade and renovate regional health and ambulance facilities, including in my electorate of Franklin. The upgrade of the Cygnet Community Health Centre and the Huonville Community Health Centre will enable the delivery of better care for our patients and modern infrastructure for our staff.

There is also \$4.1 million for mental health integration and reform; \$4 million for reforming Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; \$4.9 million to implement alcohol and drug sector reform; \$19.8 million to build 27 new mental health beds in southern Tasmania and \$21.6 million for a new human resources information system.

As Dr Helen McArdle, the president of the AMA Tasmania said -

AMA Tasmania has valued the approach taken by the Government in guiding our State and the health system through COVID-19. It has been critical for our clinicians to know that access to funds was not going to be an issue when dealing with this insidious virus.

We support the government's commitment to funding investment into the State health sector. We could not as a State or as a health system have coped with cuts to state government expenditure at a time when the economy is fragile, and demand for health services is increasing.

Paul Lupo, the CEO of St Luke's Health, stated -

The funding boost for elective surgery and mental health support would go a long way to tackling some of the challenges the Tasmanian community faces.

Dr Scott Fletcher, the vice president of the AMA, said -

Any increase in funding for elective surgery is welcomed as this will help us to manage waiting lists.

Connie Digolis, the CEO of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, also welcomed the Tasmanian Government's ongoing commitment to reforming the state's mental health system, as demonstrated through the funding announced in the 2020-21 State Budget -

This Budget is a clear acknowledgement by the Tasmanian Government of the need to create an integrated system that supports the mental health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians.

I note that the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) also welcomes the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) reform, supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students impacted by trauma and a new youth at risk centre in Launceston.

Adrienne Picone, the Chief Executive Officer of TasCOSS said -

The Government's welcome shift towards prioritising investment in people's health and wellbeing throughout the COVID-19 recovery is evident in this Budget.

I note too that there is also \$350 000 in this Budget for TasCOSS to assist the community sector to adapt and respond to COVID-19.

I also note that the Tasmanian Government is also investing a record \$7.5 billion over the forward Estimates into education and training as part of our plan to rebuild a stronger Tasmania. We know that education is a major contributor to improving social and economic outcomes in our state, including health, happiness, life-expectancy and productivity. That is why this Budget will be continuing to employ additional staff in Government schools, in line with our commitment of 358 more staff, including 250 additional teachers by the end of 2024.

This Budget includes \$38.9 million to employ 87.25 teacher FTEs which will have the benefit of reducing the instructional load for primary school teachers by about one hour per week and will also enable teachers to have more time to spend on lesson planning. A further \$12.8 million will also be invested in an additional 35 quality teaching coaches, including six new lead numeracy coaches for 2021 and a further 29 coaches for 2022.

Investment in this Budget will also continue to support Learners to Succeed, with \$36 million to continue our commitment of expanding all government schools to year 12. I note that a total of 47 schools have already been extended to year 12 with a further nine to commence in 2021, leaving just one to be extended in 2022.

Other significant educational investments in the 2020-21 Budget include \$6.6 million to engage and empower our learners in senior secondary education through providing flexible learning pathways to and from years 9 to 12 with a focus on school-based apprenticeships. There is \$1.2 million to engage parents as partners in student learning by providing families with greater access to information on their child's progress and achievements. There is also \$3.2 million for the student system renewal, including a case management platform to deliver a cross-agency view of learners facing vulnerability.

There is \$53 million across the forward Estimates for the educational adjustments model for students with disability to continue building participation engagement for students with disability. There is also \$4.4 million for the Adult Learning Strategy and \$14 million to expand the Student Assistance Scheme which waives the cost of government school levies for eligible students, and \$14 million for supporting mental health and wellbeing in our schools including students impacted by trauma.

On top of all of this, there is \$222 million for new and upgraded schools, training centres and IT infrastructure, including \$3.6 million for the redevelopment of the Southern Support School in Howrah and \$28 million for six new Child and Family Learning Centres statewide including in Kingborough.

The importance of education and supporting our learners has been further highlighted following the challenges of COVID-19. A commitment to improving education and supporting our economic recovery is evident in this Budget and again I commend the minister and the Premier on these initiatives. These initiatives also support PESRAC's recommendations of accelerating existing strategies to deliver improved educational opportunities that meet individual student needs and also provide clear pathways to jobs as well as supporting our most vulnerable students across all sectors.

As the Australian Education Union (Tasmania) said:

Having recognised the increasing number of students with trauma in our schools last year, it is most welcome to see an increase in funding in this budget to begin addressing the complex needs of students affected.

The Tasmanian Government deserves to be commended for committing to needs-based funding in our schools - it's a common sense, fair funding approach.

On top of all of this, the 2020-21 State Budget also includes a range of targeted investments totalling more than \$13 million into our public training provider, including \$2 million to employ more teachers in areas of high demand. An extra 10 teachers will be employed across a range of courses including aged care, electrotechnology, plumbing, allied trades and nursing.

We are also continuing our strong investment in TasTAFE infrastructure, with \$4 million in this Budget for upgrades to IT infrastructure to futureproof our training provider. The funding will support switch and server upgrades, a new wi-fi network statewide and support the implementation of critical systems including teacher competency records and work placement management. These upgrades are vital to support digital innovation at TasTAFE and to support TasTAFE's move to become a more agile training provider which delivers flexible training for students.

I note that an additional \$7 million has been allocated in the Budget towards TasTAFE's Energy Trades and Water Centre of Excellence in my electorate of Franklin at Warrane, which will increase our student enrolment capacity and deliver the skills needed to rebuild Tasmania. This brings the total investment for this facility now to \$21 million.

With regard to housing, the Tasmanian Liberal Government has continued to rebuild a stronger Tasmania with our record investment in new social and affordable housing to continue in the 2020 State Budget. Overall, the Budget includes more than \$300 million to deliver new housing and homelessness initiatives which will help some of our most vulnerable while creating jobs, growing our economy and strengthening our communities in every region. This includes locking in the \$100 million investment announced as part of our construction blitz which will build up to 1000 new homes over three years with an EOI currently under way. The new homes will be delivered where Tasmanians need them most whilst supporting local economies in their recovery from COVID-19. This is a great outcome and forms a crucial part of our record investment into infrastructure across the state that will create jobs and opportunities for Tasmanians.

I note as well that this Budget also includes \$16.8 million to extend the Safe Space program as a 24/7 wraparound service in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart. This will allow the program to run through to June 2022, with over \$6 million of this investment used to continue to deliver general health and mental health support to people experiencing homelessness.

This comprehensive housing package also builds on the exceptional work done to date since we commenced our Affordable Housing Strategy by locking in the operating expenditure for key projects and continuing the rollout of the Government's second Affordable Housing Action Plan and in southern Tasmania includes more than \$10 million for a new Hobart youth foyer including operating costs, more than \$22 million for new supported accommodation facilities around Hobart, and the delivery of the Huntingfield land release project, a subdivision that will provide around 470 residential lots.

Overall our Affordable Housing Strategy has seen more than 2400 households supported into housing that suits their needs. I note that the waiver of the Commonwealth housing debt will also assist a further 400 households into suitable accommodation including the construction of 300 new social housing dwellings.

As well, the State Budget allocates \$15 million to public housing heating and energy efficiency initiatives to ease cost-of-living pressures for tenants, reduce emissions and create jobs. This will include completing the Government's program of replacing inefficient direct electric and gas heating in all public housing stock with energy-efficient heat pumps where it is appropriate and viable to do so. We will also begin a program to progressively replace existing standard electric hot water systems with new heat pump hot water cylinders.

Pattie Chugg, the CEO of Shelter Tasmania, has welcomed the State Government's 2020-21 Budget with increased spending for social housing and homelessness services. She says -

A building-led recovery will help increase jobs and create more affordable homes for Tasmanians. Today's announcement that \$300M over four years will be spent on social and affordable housing will provide certainty and a pipeline for new construction. Shelter Tas welcomes this clear commitment to increasing much-needed public and community housing across the state.

With a quiet confidence and cautious optimism Tasmania is returning to a more normal way of life. We will continue to take action with the levers we have to keep us safe and to provide security, certainty and confidence for Tasmanians, our businesses and our community.

Once again, I congratulate the Premier and his Cabinet for delivering a solid and sensible Budget as we recover from the greatest challenge of our generation, the coronavirus pandemic.

[12.58 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my contribution on the Budget for 2020-21. In December last year I first heard about a coronavirus, later called SARS-CoV-2, or COVID-19, that first emerged in China and subsequently across the world, devastating families, communities and economies.

Many years ago I worked for a time in public health and even further back I studied virology and epidemiology. We have all heard about novel viruses that have threatened the world from time to time and the threat of influenza hangs over us all as winter approaches every year. Nothing prepared me or any of us or softened the shock as the pandemic began to disrupt our lives and livelihoods.

COVID-19 is like nothing seen not just in this generation but in 100 years since the Spanish Flu pandemic that swept across the world in 1918. Medical historians conservatively estimate that that influenza killed 50 million people globally, including 675 000 in the United States between 1918 and 1920. Despite 100 years of knowledge, technological and medical improvements and advancements, there have been around 55 million cases of COVID-19 worldwide, with 1.33 million deaths, and the situation in the United States and parts of Europe is truly terrifying, let alone in those countries where public health monitoring and surveillance is not what we have in Australia and other developed countries.

Together with all Tasmanians, I grieve not just for loss of lives and livelihoods, but I have serious concerns now for the unrest that is simmering barely beneath the surface in some countries, threatening peace and a civil society.

Here in Tasmania there have been 230 cases and tragically 13 people have lost their lives. There is no worse price than loss of life and my heart goes out to those who have lost loved ones.

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome to the House His Grace, the Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous; and the Vicar General, Fr Shammi Perera. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2020 (No. 46)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I will resume from where I was up to before the break.

While COVID-19 is a mild illness or even without symptoms for some, I am mindful that some people have experienced serious complications and ongoing illness for months. Others have lost their businesses or livelihoods; and charities have lost their volunteers and fundraising capacity at the very time demand for their services has simply exploded. Thankfully, since September the number of cases across our country has dropped significantly. However, the reported cluster in South Australia is a reminder of the fragility of the situation and the importance of ongoing vigilance around personal hygiene and social distancing and how critical it is to maintain strong border control measures, testing and contact tracing to protect our community.

For some time, this parliament embraced a more cooperative way of working. Our community expected its leaders to come together in the best interests of tackling and overcoming the threat and impact of the pandemic. From the fear and confusion, we saw some of the best of our community and from our political system emerging. Labor stood with a gentle hand at the back of the Government, supporting those critical early decisions to stop the cruise ships, to close the borders, to support businesses to hibernate and to transition to new approaches, look out for those at risk and stay at home to save lives.

The State Budget is a statement of priorities and this State Budget was the most important Tasmanian Budget in a generation. It was an opportunity to create vision and to provide hope and inspiration. It was an opportunity to be bold and to reinvent Tasmania, most of all to address inequality and create jobs. We cannot return to the old normal of insecure work, low wages and a broken TAFE system. As my colleague, David O'Byrne, shadow treasurer, said, 'Behind every unemployment statistic is a real worker with bills to pay and a family to support'.

I am sure all of us in this place are motivated to work hard, to contribute to improving the lives for this generation, and to build a future with hope and opportunity for our children and for future generations, but too many people are missing out and being left behind.

Under this Government, the elective surgery wait list has blown out by 49 per cent; the outpatient waiting list by 64 per cent; the public housing wait list by 55 per cent and the

proportion of school leavers engaged in work training or further study has reduced since 2014 to less than 50 per cent.

Through seven years in government, seven years of budget mismanagement, the good times - the Treasurer's so-called 'golden age' - is being squandered without addressing the deep and ongoing problems in health and housing, in disability, in jobs, skills and training.

I was looking forward to speaking about the new measures this Government has put in place for my electorate of Franklin in my shadow portfolio areas too of housing, environment, parks and heritage, and climate change. I was looking forward to seeing the initiatives that will deliver for the people of Franklin. These are the people who matter most to me - they are the people who put me in this place and in this place I am their voice. It is a privilege to be their voice but sadly, apart from roads and bridges already announced, there is little to celebrate.

Most of all, like all Tasmanians I was hoping that this would be a budget that would rise to the challenges of the times and offer a plan for jobs. Instead it is a budget that tells Tasmanians that unemployment will spike at 8.5 per cent, just like that and without a solution.

With half of the year already in the rear vision mirror the best that can be said about this Budget is that it is a housekeeping budget accounting for a range of measures already announced and some services already delivered in the emergency pandemic response.

This Budget is from a government led by a Premier lacking in vision, leading a Cabinet that has failed to deliver on its promises throughout the seven years and, particularly over the past three years, it has become tired and out of puff. It failed to invest through the good times and it is a plan for unemployment rather than job creation. It fails to adequately support the disadvantaged or vulnerable in our community.

I have worked most of my working life empowering people to make their lives better. It is the reason I joined the Labor Party, to give a voice to the voiceless and a hand up to those needing help, to contribute to a better, fairer state.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our economy and on jobs. At the height of the pandemic 20 000 people lost their jobs. A total of 12 400 people who lost their jobs during the pandemic have not found alternative employment. This Budget locks in two years of recession and accepts unemployment rising to 8.5 per cent where for every job vacancy there are 27 Tasmanians looking for work. At the same time, the participation rate will decline to 59.5 per cent by 2021-22, meaning thousands of people will stop looking for work altogether.

Once again, this tired Liberal Government has ignored major areas of need in favour of a big spending infrastructure budget without a single new project, with a list of projects the Liberals promised years ago and are still yet to deliver. This Government says it will spend nearly \$4 billion on infrastructure in addition to more than \$850 million through Government businesses. Last year they spent just \$521 million, \$200 million less than budgeted so this Budget is a con. They just cannot be trusted.

In contrast, Labor has outlined a fully costed jobs plan that connects education, skills and training, private sector investment, government spending and infrastructure development to achieve a common goal of getting more Tasmanians into work. It is a plan to strengthen the

economy and put the Budget on a pathway back to sustainability: to create 35 000 new jobs through investing nearly \$270 million in all sectors of the economy, drive business investment and rebuild our TAFE and skills base, to build a better and fairer Tasmania.

Every Tasmanian, perhaps most of all young Tasmanians, were hopeful that when the Premier created a climate change ministerial portfolio for the first time and then made it his own that signalled a serious interest and long overdue action on climate change. As if two years delay was not enough, the Liberal Government will now fund another review of the legislation to deliver climate action. The plan to electrify the Government fleet will take far too long and the plan to trial alternative energy buses is simply a lift of Labor's plan five years ago.

Labor's jobs plan will deliver real action through a climate action workforce that supports projects that will protect communities from the effects of the changing climate including flood, erosion and fire mitigation work. The plan will also tackle weed management, including non-declared weeds such as capeweed, update the threatened species management plans and support species protection. This investment will create 200 jobs predominantly in regional areas.

This Liberal Government may have an ambition to support the return of tourism and the visitor economy post-COVID but it has little understanding that it is the public sector workforce, the very important DPIPWE staff in Parks and Wildlife, who are supporting the beating heart of the tourism industry particularly in regional Tasmania, enhancing the visitor experience and contributing to fire prevention and management across our state. I take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank DPIPWE staff for the important work they do.

Heartbreakingly, visitor information centres have been closed and staff relocated, distant from providing the advice that visitors need. A number of DPIPWE staff are on 50-hour contracts. This does not mean 50 hours per week; these contracts only guarantee employment for 50 hours a year, less than one hour a week guaranteed. These are the cave guides, the indigenous rangers, an important backbone of DPIPWE who provide important services to the people of Tasmania and our tourism economy. They are denied income security because so many of them are dependent on contracts and seasonal work. The seasonal workforce is the key to rebuilding the Tasmanian brand and this Budget is a missed opportunity to create surge capacity for fire management, for repairs and maintenance on tracks, and so on, to improve access and importantly, to provide support for regional jobs.

It is possible to protect the environment and provide meaningful regional jobs, very often entry level jobs that require a Certificate I or II level certification; an opportunity that is missing in this Budget. It is the time the Government acknowledged these quiet achievers and invested in their workforce. Labor's plan will identify opportunities to convert long-term contract positions in the public service to permanent jobs, including full time positions where appropriate.

Labor's plan for jobs also proposes a strategic approach to government procurement, helping to build new markets for growth industries, such as recycling. Labor will work with industry to identify where adopting new approaches to Government spending could benefit local industries and incentivise innovation. For example, working with innovative road manufacturers that recycle materials such as tyres, plastic bags, plastic packaging, printer

cartridges and glass in their asphalt mixes. Using procurement policies like these will benefit our environment and help create good, new jobs.

I have said in this place many times that this Liberal Government does not take cultural heritage management in Tasmania seriously. They have ignored concerns from staff at Heritage Tasmania since 2014, and they cannot guarantee owners their place is actually on the Tasmania heritage register. In 2014 when the Liberal Party came to power they took an axe to staffing numbers at Heritage Tasmania and intended to slash the number of places on the register by 30 per cent at the same time as slashing jobs.

This Government expected Heritage Tasmania to undertake this work with deep cuts to their workforce - an impossible ask. A year after the Tasmanian Liberals came to power a senior manager in Heritage Tasmania resigned, citing the damage the Liberal government had done to the organisation. In his resignation letter he conveyed his concerns for the health and wellbeing of staff, the lack of transparency, and the culture of blame shifting by management. In estimates during June 2017 then deputy secretary then Mr Tim Baker when questioned about action taken as a result of Mr Scott's letter said that and I quote - 'I can tell you that the matter was reviewed and dealt with and there have been some structural changes in heritage Tasmania'. A recent RTI contained a critical piece of information about that staff member's resignation that said, and I quote - 'There are no records in relation to an investigation by DIPIWE'.

It appears that nothing was done at the time. This year, a CPSU survey of Heritage Tasmania staff revealed these dedicated and professional workers were stressed and anxious, alleging ongoing harassment, bullying, extensive workloads and a lack of direction from management. RTI documents also revealed this year that DPIPWE's culture change action plan, tailored for Heritage Tasmania to supposedly fix their problems, had been running for more than 12 months at a cost of around \$20 000. There are around 5000 permanently entered places in the Tasmanian heritage register. Every one of these properties has an owner and sometimes tenants. If even half those 5000 entries have a tenant, there are 7500 owner/occupiers affected by the daily operations of Heritage Tasmania. That is a lot of stakeholders who deserve some transparency about the operations of Heritage Tasmania. Staff at Heritage Tasmania know what needs to be done to fix the register. Why can this Government not simply resource the staff properly to undertake this work? The Hobart office of Heritage Tasmania has been relocated and closed to the public, and the Launceston office was threatened with relocation to Mt Pleasant and closure to the public.

After three heritage ministers in six months - premier Hodgman, the then treasurer, Mr Gutwein, and now Attorney-General, Ms Archer - it is abundantly clear that the conga line of ministers has failed the staff at Heritage Tasmania. In a post COVID-19 world, we will need the staff of Heritage Tasmania to engage with the building and construction industry to stimulate the economy. They will play a vital role in guiding and supporting developments big and small across the state. I once again thank the hard working and decent staff who should be able to undertake their work without the ongoing cultural problems hanging over their heads.

In its first term, this Government had built only a pitiful handful of homes - despite promising hundreds. The Minister for Housing, Mr Jaensch, has resorted to changing the goalposts, changing his language, and misleading the parliament in an effort to make up for lost time. His quarterly housing report has been pared back to avoid scrutiny, and his latest trick is to delay release of his overview September quarterly report.

Every day I hear stories from Tasmanians who are living without a roof over their heads. They are living in their cars, they are couch surfing, living in tents, or sleeping in shipping containers. They are homeless.

I recently talked with a woman in her fifties from Huonville. She had been caring for her mum for 10 years before she recently passed away. She was talking with me about her housing options. It turns out there are two options. Her three siblings who are interstate want her to pay market rent for the house she is living in, in Huonville. She knows it is unaffordable on her carer's pension, or JobSeeker which she has now moved on to. Her second option is for the house to be sold and to receive a quarter portion of the proceeds, approximately \$80 000. She would then become ineligible for social housing, and because of her income support payments, she would be ineligible for bank security in order to get into home ownership.

The other story I want to tell is of a woman who lives in Rokeby, also in her early fifties. She suffers from mental illness but has been in a long-term, subsidised private rental property. She has been advised that on 8 December this year she is required to move out. She is being evicted. With the support of her family she has been desperately looking for an affordable private rental property or for support from the social housing system and none is materialising, so her family has paid for her to move in with her mum interstate.

At one time in this state we were concerned about losing our young people, the supposed brain drain of our young people moving interstate. What have we come to in this state, in this day and age, when a woman in her fifties is forced to move interstate simply to find a home? That is unacceptable. It tells you a lot about the state of housing and homelessness services in this state, particularly in the face of increasing housing unaffordability and lack of availability.

The affordable housing strategy, which runs through to 2025, has two key outcomes - first, to decrease the proportion of low-income Tasmanian households experiencing housing stress; and second, to decrease the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness over that 10-year period. On both these key outcomes this Government is failing the people of Tasmania.

In terms of housing stress, we have a situation where 120 000 Tasmanians are living in poverty - one in four Tasmanian households. Around 8000 of those households are in housing stress, and thinking about the number of people that represents, of course it significantly magnifies. Recently the Australia Institute released a report called *The Choices We Make: the Economic Future of Tasmania*. Tellingly, the number one recommendation relates to social housing. It calls on the Tasmanian Government to, and I quote, 'Make a direct substantial and focused investment in public housing'.

There are 40 000 households in private rental and median rental prices in Hobart have increased more than 25 per cent over the past five years. The median rental household is in rental stress because they are paying out at least 30 per cent of their household income in rental payments. They are caught in a pincer movement of increasing rents and low income growth. Private rental affordability, as reported in Anglicare's last two rental affordability snapshots is getting worse with pensioners forced to share their home, or choose between paying their rent, their electricity bill, or putting food on the table.

It is not just pensioners who are struggling. Availability of private rental properties remains less than 2 per cent. That means that people are turning up to housing inspections and

competing with upwards of 50 others for the same property. Once a place known for an affordable cost of living, our Tasmanian way of life is now at risk. Historically, low average wages have been balanced out by lower costs of living, including rent, but this is no longer the case.

The average private rental price in Hobart is now ahead of Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, and on par with Melbourne and Darwin. This year we gained the dubious honour of becoming the least affordable capital city in this country. An estimated 6 per cent of long-term rental properties have been removed from the housing market into short stay accommodation. Lower income workers are being squeezed out of the private rental market and young people are losing hope of ever being able to afford their own homes or even rent.

The private rental protections that were supported by Labor are set to be lifted from 1 December, and I am being contacted by tenants who are asking, 'What is the plan - I simply have no options'. People like those women I mentioned. Older women and younger folk are particularly vulnerable in this market.

Instead of building a guardrail to protect those most vulnerable from falling off a cliff, facing income support reductions, this Government has put a Tontine pillow at the bottom of that cliff and the community sector is bracing. Income supports are dropping down at the very time that rental protections are dropping out.

In relation to Commonwealth income support, the Tasmanian Commissioner for Children and Young people said that because of the temporary increases in income support, roughly 4000 children were lifted out of poverty and now they are at risk of being forced right back into it. Demand for food security has doubled.

The wait list for social housing is roughly 3500, of which one in three are young people, and one in four are people with a disability. This represents an increase of around 55 per cent since the Liberal Government took office. Priority applicants are waiting on average 63.6 weeks to be housed. There is a shortfall of 11 400 social and affordable homes in this state - a figure that dwarfs the Government's promise of 2400 new social housing dwellings in the outdated affordable housing action plans. The affordable housing strategy is manifestly inadequate and it is failing people in this state. That is why Labor initiated the House of Assembly Select Committee on Housing Affordability that produced a comprehensive blueprint with 61 recommendations to address housing affordability and availability, and achieve cross-party support.

It took six months for this lazy Housing minister to even respond to that report; about as long as the inquiry itself, and the response was disappointing to say the least. It was a slap in the face to the many organisations and individuals who made submissions and appeared before that committee, rushing recommendations aside by pretending the Government had all those things in hand.

The latest housing quarterly report, the September report, is now significantly overdue. The Government's report on short-stay accommodation data that so tellingly talks about the impact on the unaffordable private rental market impact is also more than two and half months overdue. What is this Government hiding? Why will they not release those reports? Why will they not demonstrate an ability to reset the Affordable Housing Strategy to support people struggling in housing stress?

A Labor government will adopt all 61 recommendations and act immediately to regulate the short-stay accommodation market for entire dwellings in areas of rental stress. At the same time as addressing rental affordability and availability, there is an opportunity to support licenced operators like B&Bs that have significant site costs. Some are on their knees due to low occupancy resulting from low visitation.

In the area of housing supply this Budget fails to invest one more dollar than had not already been announced. This is a government whose record of announcements is stronger than its track record of delivery. It pales in comparison to Dan Andrews' recent announcement that will deliver 12 000 new homes, increasing supply by 10 per cent in Victoria. The Housing minister's latest quarterly report claimed to deliver 873 homes but this included over 100 that had been refurbished, so they are not new homes and not even the 900 homes promised by the end of AHAP 1 in June 2019, an average of 128 homes per annum, not the 400 this minister has claimed. He knows that upwards of 600 or so are now required to meet the shortfall in demand.

In that same report the minister showed he had completed just five of the 80 new homes promised every year from the Commonwealth housing debt waiver. In this Government's first term they built just 37 new, social housing dwellings, a massive fail that is said to have set back social housing in this state by up to a decade. For years this Government has failed to invest in TasTAFE to create the building and construction workforce to deliver the housing stimulus that is now required.

Madam Speaker, the chickens have come home to roost and you had better believe I will be keeping this Housing minister to account when he says he will build 1000 more homes over and above his targets in the AHAP, because just as surely as the growing housing wait list over the last seven years is a result of the lack of investment, particularly in the first term of this Government, this minister must wake up and realise that hiding behind record spending is not the same as giving people homes. Shelter Tasmania suggested that we need to aim towards 10 per cent of the housing market comprising affordable homes but that figure currently sits around 5.5 per cent, so much more needs to be done.

Tasmania Labor will deliver Housing Works, 490 affordable homes while stimulating job creation in the building and construction sector over and above what is planned by the Government. Creating 550 jobs, including 75 apprenticeships, will support community housing providers to offer these homes at a cheaper rent to provide urgent relief for Tasmania's homelessness crisis. We will put \$17.5 million into maintenance for public and community housing for general housing, heat pumps and energy-efficiency upgrades, creating savings in cost of living for tenants and 150 jobs. I look forward to making further announcements on Labor's plans for housing and homelessness in the lead-up to the next election.

In relation to homelessness, we know that there are outdated Census figures of 1600 Tasmanians living homeless on any given night. By talking with service providers, we know that homelessness has rapidly increased, even as much as doubled since 2016. If we can flatten the curve on a pandemic, why not on homelessness? In relation to emergency brokerage, there has been a missed opportunity to provide shelter to those most in need, to act like the South Australian government and set a target for putting those on the streets into hotel rooms.

Funding in this year's Budget is predominantly for crisis accommodation in years three and four and that leaves us with little plans in the next two years for what is sure to be an

increasing need in the area of crisis accommodation. I have a background in health and community services serving some of the most vulnerable people in our community, but even that has not prepared me for the heartbreaking stories I have heard over the past months and years.

A family moved from interstate with a promise of a new life, dad with a new job. The mother-in-law agreed to house them at first but it was only for a short while. The kids settled into local schools and at first it was tolerable, if not over crowded, but then dad was unexpectedly retrenched and the dream of a new start evaporated. Tempers frayed under financial and emotional stress and soon the mother-in-law felt she had no choice other than to ask the family to leave, but there was nowhere else to go.

Then there is the couple with young children who were in private rental accommodation until recently. Sadly, that relationship broke down. No longer able to afford the rent, they initially resorted to living in the in-laws' shed. Without basic facilities and with the marriage in tatters she sought help and reluctantly found a place with her children in an emergency shelter. She knows it is no place for her kids and worries about the disruption to their schooling and friendships, but soon there is an even bigger worry. The shelter can only offer them a bed for six weeks. Next week that time is up and with nowhere else to go she is worried they will be homeless and lose the kids.

Desperate Tasmanians caught in the housing crisis are being told by the Government that currently public housing tenants will need to die before people on the waiting list are housed. Those facing homelessness are being heartlessly told to call the 1800 number.

At the Hobart Women's Shelter AGM recently, I was interested to see that they had provided over 17 000 bed nights of accommodation in the past year and the number of unassisted requests for accommodation has increased from 2840 last to 3500 this year, up almost 680 or 24 per cent for the year.

For two years running this Government has brought forward funding, only to see underspends of \$23 million in the past and \$16 million the year before. Incredibly, in the period to 2019 there was a net stock decline of nearly 600 homes. There is not one new dollar in the overall funding available to address housing and homelessness and this will do nothing to address the homelessness crisis.

The faces of homelessness are literally changing in Tasmania. People and families of all ages and backgrounds are struggling to find and keep a roof over their heads. Safe and secure housing is fundamental to health and wellbeing, educational attainment and participation in the workforce.

A Rebecca White Labor government will recognise housing as essential infrastructure and a human right. Having shelter is fundamental to building or rebuilding lives, engaging in education and employment. There is an urgent need to reset the Affordable Housing Strategy and take a long-term strategic approach that is linked with income support, jobs and economic recovery. Labor has a vision for Tasmania that will create jobs - good, fair, long-term jobs - and rebuild our economy. We believe in the dignity of work and earning an income for all Tasmanians and we believe that all Tasmanians have the right for a roof over their head. From the ashes of COVID-19 we have the opportunity to build a better, stronger, fairer Tasmania.

This Budget needed to do much more to rebuild Tasmania and it needed to do even more to make us stronger and prepared for an uncertain future. It was an opportunity for vision and hope for this generation and those to come. A future Labor government will realise that vision and deliver that hope and commitment for a brighter future.

[2.58 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise today with my budget reply. I first take the opportunity to place on the record my sincere admiration for the Tasmanian community in this year, 2020. Our community has come together and met the challenges of COVID-19 in a way we could not have imagined, demonstrating exactly what it means to be a Tasmanian. Our community has supported each other in challenging times. We look out for each other and care for each other. It is what makes Tasmania such a special and unique place and goes to the core of this year's Budget.

This Budget is about delivering our plan to rebuild a stronger Tasmania. We know Tasmanians have done it tough this year. This pandemic has been devastating for many. I pause to particularly remember those who have lost their lives this year, but we are committed to supporting our community.

The Government's focus is on the things that are important to Tasmanians - creating jobs, providing confidence, investing in our community and keeping Tasmanians safe. We are focused on delivering the foundation our state needs for a strong recovery. It is often said that Tasmania's best days are ahead of it and this continues to be true. In spite of the challenges that we, along with others in many parts of the world have faced since COVID-19, we will rebuild this state.

As Minister for Small Business, Hospitality and Events, it has been a privilege to have engaged with Tasmanian businesses throughout this year with regional chambers of commerce and peak industry bodies. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our community and all of us in this Chamber recognise that they are the core of many regional communities.

The year started out with great promise. Business confidence was high, and Tasmania was the destination of choice for many. Local Tasmanian businesses were reaping the benefits, doing what they do best: showcasing our products, our services, our talents to visitors and locals and to export markets, demonstrating that we do value here, we do quality and we do niche. It is a statement of fact that small businesses are the engine room of the economy, making up more than 97 per cent of all businesses in Tasmania and often in regional communities.

Things were so positive in the small business space at the start of the year that the Government had been working with industry on a business growth strategy to support achievements of business aspiration. Then COVID-19 hit and the impact for business was swift and it was the largest shock in generations. Very quickly, the normal way of doing things changed. I acknowledge the thousands of businesses that have had to adapt the way they had been doing things, through no fault of their own. I also thank these businesses for the willingness and attitude that they have had this year to ensure they are keeping their staff safe, their patrons safe and their communities safe.

Very quickly their way of doing things changed and I am very grateful for everybody having worked together. It has been inspiring to see the way businesses have tackled the

situation that has been forced upon them. Unfortunately, we know that not every business has been able to make it through these challenging times, which was why we have been getting on with the job of delivering the largest economic and social support package in the country as a proportion of our economy.

Our business stimulus package has helped thousands of businesses since it commenced in March and throughout the Budget we are continuing to deliver support for businesses and communities to ensure that they are focused on their recovery.

The Budget underpins jobs and provides the certainty and confidence the community needs as we rebuild a stronger Tasmania. As the Tasmanian Small Business Council says:

Today's Tasmanian budget, while forged in the fires of the world's worst crisis in a hundred years, provides unprecedented opportunity for the Tasmanian small business sector.

This is why we are implementing our plan to support businesses to recover from the impact of the pandemic and to create jobs for Tasmanians. In late July, we announced the \$20 million Small Business Sustainability and Recovery Assistance Package which we have been progressively rolling out to support businesses over the past three months: \$9.45 million of the \$20 million package has already been distributed in \$5000 small business sustainability and recovery grants on top of the \$60 million in support already provided. There are more initiatives still to come.

Further, the assessment of applications is commencing for the Event Infrastructure and Critical Small Business program which closed on 13 November. The Small Business Advice for Recovery Program is currently open and supporting businesses to access specialist advice.

Under our \$1 million Mental Health Support Package for small businesses, we have funded the Minding your Business mental health training and support program delivered through a Tasmanian Lifeline. This was launched earlier this month and we are also working with industry peak bodies to look at ways we can help them provide a bit more support to their membership.

I thank the peak bodies for the leadership role they have played. They have worked very cohesively with Government. I applaud them for the role they have played in supporting their members.

We are also working with the Department of State Growth on ways to extend the support provided through our Enterprise Centres Tasmania network, with \$500 000 of the \$20 million package allocated for this purpose. Importantly, a new initiative for small business in the Budget includes \$22 million to extend payroll tax rebates for trainees, apprentices and youth employees, including extending the targeted apprentice and trainee grant for small businesses; the \$500 000 peak body support fund, as well as \$10 million in support for hospitality businesses.

Our significant infrastructure program, including the \$10 million Building Projects Support Program provides unprecedented opportunity for the Tasmanian small business sector to tender for work.

Robert Mallett, CEO of the Tasmanian Small Business Council, said of the Budget:

... the number of bite-sized projects in regional Tasmania in this budget will provide ample opportunity for all to participate.

He went on to say -

The decision by the state government to invest in Tasmania's skilled future shows foresight and a commitment for the employers of today ...

And -

In difficult times, a commitment to take on untrained and unproven staff is a bold one.

There was also strong support from other industry sectors. Steve Old from the THA said -

... I don't think we could have asked for much more.

Luke Martin from the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania said -

The Tasmanian Government has walked the talk when it comes to support for our tourism recovery from COVID.

Matt Pollock from Master Builders Tasmania says -

Construction will be our economic accelerator and a jobs generator.

Peter Skillern from the TFGA said -

The State budget has once again showed the government's support for agriculture in the state ...

This Budget is clearly backing small business. We are supporting their recovery and growth and are committed to making it easier for them to employ Tasmanians and in turn support the local communities in which they thrive.

We know that many of the small businesses that we have in Tasmania are hospitality businesses and, like states and territories all across Australia, Tasmania's hospitality sector has felt the full force of gathering restrictions as a result of COVID-19. Overnight, our bustling bars, crowded cafes and renowned restaurants were shut down to protect our community. Prior to this, Tasmania's hospitality industry was thriving, delivering \$744 million to the state's gross state product and as a major employer, investing \$480 million into Tasmania each year through salaries. You simply do not have to go very far to find someone you know who relies on this industry for their income, which is why the Government moved quickly to provide the sector with as much support as it could.

Tasmania's nation-leading tourism and hospitality industries were - and still are - one of our greatest competitive strengths and this Government is its strongest supporter. As the

Minister for Small Business, Hospitality and Events, I am pleased that this year's Budget will deliver even more new initiatives to support this amazing sector. The Budget has \$10 million in additional funding to assist hospitality venues to meet the costs of energy bills for the first quarter of this financial year. Further to this, \$1 million has been allocated for a waiver of the annual liquor licensing fees in 2021. Since being announced, these two initiatives have been warmly welcomed by industry and the hospitality peak industry body.

I quote the THA again -

The budget announcement will come as welcome relief to many in the sector. Energy and utility cost relief was a key issue for the THA in their action plan and we are pleased that the Government has listened to industry concerns in that area.

On the licence fee waivers the THA said -

That covers a lot of venues so we are pleased with that outcome. Operators have been doing it extremely tough so any support is very welcome in a very challenging time. We understand that it is a very tight budget and we appreciate the support. I do not think we could have asked for much more.

As we emerge from this pandemic, it is clear that Tasmania's capacity to cater for increasing visitor numbers and deliver outstanding visitor experiences in both national and international markets will be underpinned by the skills of our workforce and the capability of our industry to ensure we can deliver those experiences.

Tasmania is renowned for our incredible tourism and hospitality staff. Indeed, it is what makes us special and with this Budget we are prioritising their skills development through \$1 million over two years to support the establishment of a new not-for-profit industry training organisation. Led by industry, the training organisation will help to build specific skills that meet the demand of emerging markets and are designed to complement existing private training providers and TasTAFE's Drysdale. It will provide training and experiences differently to reflect post-COVID-19 industry and more pathways for Tasmanians that result in more employment opportunities especially for people living in regional areas.

From apprentices to front of house staff, to chefs and restaurants managers, we want Tasmanians to have a wide range of training choices tied to meaningful and sustainable career pathways.

Hospitality businesses may also benefit from the Tasmanian's Government's commitment to over \$22 million to drive job creation for apprentices, trainees and youth employees, which I mentioned earlier.

Finally, to further support the investment in skills and workforce development, the Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Advisory Committee is currently being established with representation from the THA and TICT. We know from past history that when industry and government work together with a shared vision and a common set of priorities we can achieve great things.

It is important that Government listens to industry as we work to rebuild our economy. They know their sector better than anyone and we know they love what they do. The

Government is committed to working with all these sectors as we work towards recovery, and this is what this Budget aims to do.

With regard to my portfolio of Events, I am proud that our state is recognised nationally and internationally for its homegrown festivals and events. This is a great achievement, predicated on thousands and thousands of hours of hard work by volunteers, because over the past decade the Tasmanian Government has continued to invest in a diverse portfolio of events throughout our regions that are delivering social, cultural and economic benefits to our communities. We have gone from strength to strength, getting better at innovation, strengthening our entrepreneurial skills and celebrating our regional quirks.

The 2020-21 Budget is building on our commitment to deliver world-class sporting events for Tasmanians to enjoy. Funding of \$11.6 million over four years will enable the National Basketball League to return to Tasmania and play 14 home games here in the state, 11 of which will be at the Derwent Entertainment Centre and at least two in the north. Having our very own team, the Tasmanian JackJumpers, is an exciting coup for the state and will shine on national and international stages.

Through the Budget the Government will also invest \$1.5 million over three years to support a partnership agreement with the Collingwood Magpies Super Netball League Club. In this state just last year netball boasted the highest female participation rate with over 7300 registered players, and I am confident this significant investment will not only increase grassroots participation but strengthen the pathways for young Tasmanian netballers to realise their dreams of playing at the highest level.

Tasmania's reputation as a destination for elite sporting events is growing and will not slow down, even in the midst of COVID-19. Our partnership with Cricket Tasmania is testament to this reputation and I am delighted that a further \$1 million over four years in the Budget will support the hosting of the Big Bash League and the Women's Big Bash League. No doubt there are thousands of Tasmanians who are looking forward to the season opener being played in Tasmania for the first time ever between the Hobart Hurricanes and defending champions, the Sydney Sixers. Importantly, this commitment will also see games played at Blundstone Arena and at UTAS Stadium.

Like the hospitality sector, the events industry was also deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I have met with business owners who have been very impacted and have heard first-hand the struggles that are confronting them. The Government has provided a lifeline to many of these businesses with the \$2.5 million Event Infrastructure and Critical Support Small Business Grant Program which I mentioned earlier. In addition to this funding, we have also delivered support to event organisers through the Event Ready Grant Program, with grants of up to \$5000 for events scheduled to occur between 23 October and the end of this year.

The commencement of larger scale events on 1 December as part of Tasmania's Safe Activities and Events Framework will be a significant milestone for the industry. This has been an extensive body of work and will map a way forward for our sport, arts and events industries and manage the risk of COVID-19 to keep Tasmanians safe.

I am very proud to be Tasmania's Minister for Women. As I embark on the Budget contribution I pay tribute to the Honourable Jacquie Petrusma. It is a portfolio she achieved an

awful lot in in her time as minister and I know she continues to work very hard in her community to ensure the interests of women and girls continue to be advocated for. On behalf of the House we all thank Jacquie for her contribution to this important portfolio.

As the Minister for Women I want to ensure that Tasmanian women are empowered to access the opportunities they need to succeed. We have seen through the pandemic, in stark contrast to national figures, that jobs for women have had the greatest recovery here in Tasmania, but we acknowledge that there is more to do. This year's Budget invests \$2.5 million over two years to support an industry-led approach to enable and empower more women to participate more broadly across our economy. This exciting new program will support more women into non-traditional roles in industry with these sectors set to play a vital part in supporting our recovery. We have progressed this approach through a number of different avenues. Government will work with peak industry bodies and skills and training providers to develop a statewide program to support women to train and enter roles in industry. We will also ensure we are supporting employers to help young workers develop the skills they need and to shift community and employer perceptions of traditionally male-dominated industries.

We will look at how we can partner industry and training providers with Government to play an important role in helping to match career pathways with local industry needs and support up-and-coming students through training and building industry networks. These initiatives have been designed to build the strong relations that have been forged with these peak bodies. Our partnerships have already helped to deliver leadership scholarships to women in the industries of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, building and construction and mining, just by way of example. These areas will be complemented by the priorities of the Tasmanian Women's Council who play a key role advising the government on strategies, action plans and leadership and workforce participation pathways, especially in areas where women are under-represented.

Matthew Pollock, executive director of Masters Builders, has strongly endorsed this approach, stating it shows a commitment by Government to make sure that this construction-led recovery provides jobs for Tasmanians across the spectrum. Over the past four years the construction industry has made positive inroads to attract women into the workforce.

The Budget also invests a further \$400 000 over two years for measures to enhance industry liaison and develop leadership pipelines for women in these fields. We are delighted we are going to be delivering funding support for the Tasmanian Women's Strategy and the highly successful scholarship for women's leadership development.

It is clear that the Tasmanian Government's policies have been working since 2014. In what has been such a challenging year for the Tasmanian community, it is more important than ever that opportunities for women and girls are at the front and centre of our plan as we rebuild a stronger Tasmania. We want to keep building on this success and have delivered the investments that are needed in this Budget.

I now turn to Health. First, I sincerely thank the contribution of our staff this year. It has been truly remarkable. The other reflection I have of this year is the way that our Health workforce, both those employed by the state Government and those within the private sector, have worked together for a singular outcome of a safer Tasmania. It has been quite inspiring

to see what can be achieved when we all work together with a single vision. It makes me excited for the future of what we can achieve in Tasmania with regard to health.

This Budget includes a record \$9.8 billion over the next four years. This is unprecedented and is around more beds, more staff and investing in our facilities to ensure we can deliver the patient outcomes we want to. We are sometimes mocked for saying that we are delivering record funding but I would like to put this into context. At \$1.7 billion more than last year's budget, a 21 per cent increase, there can be no argument as to this Government's commitment to doing all we can to supporting our health system. This remarkable figure includes \$600 million of additional funding for the Tasmanian Health Service over the next four years, which was announced earlier in the year, in a boost to our funding base that will help meet demand in our hospitals and underpin improved health outcomes.

I have been proud to announce a number of initiatives over the past fortnight that will help even more Tasmanians: \$45 million of new funding for elective surgeries with an estimate that will now be able to deliver some 8500 additional surgeries, ensuring that those who have been on the waiting list for too long receive their surgeries sooner. I will say this once more: this funding provides more surgeries for Tasmanians in all three regions and we will be able to see many more families receive the benefits.

This Budget also includes a \$391.2 million capital program being delivered right across our state which includes \$79.8 million for the major redevelopment and expansion of the Launceston General Hospital, including completion of Ward 4K; \$89.8 million to continue stage 2 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, including an expanded ED and ICU; and \$33 million to continue the Mersey Community Hospital Redevelopment.

We are not just focused on our major hospitals. We are also making sure that a significant investment is also made to our regional and rural communities. I am pleased that this year's Budget delivers an additional \$10 million to continue to upgrade and renovate our regional health and ambulance facilities, bringing our total support to \$24.4 million over the next two years. This important investment into our rural and regional areas is supporting better care for our patients, modern infrastructure for our staff and new spaces for paramedics, with upgrades being planned, under way or completed at more than 40 regional facilities. These are making real differences. I commend the engagement we have had with many local contractors to be able to deliver these improvements.

Our regional health infrastructure is working. Furthermore, I have also announced \$23 million for our Health Technology Package, a new integrated digital resource ICT system and a commitment to deliver a new 10-year Digital Health Transformation Plan. With this new system, the department can better manage its workforce in real time to deliver high-quality health services and plan more accurately for the future while also freeing up our frontline staff to spend less time on paperwork.

We know it is crucial that we provide care and support for patients and their families outside our hospitals and health facilities which is why we are making significant investments into community services and improved access to primary health care.

The Budget includes \$1 million over two years for Palliative Care Tasmania to support the continued work of improving community access to palliative care support as well as end of life care clinician training and development. This is in addition to the continued funding of

statewide clinical nurse educators introduced following the 2018 budget who are doing a fantastic job in enhancing the skills of our clinicians and ensuring Tasmanian palliative care service providers maintain a best-practice approach to end of life care.

There is close to \$4 million for other community organisations including Epilepsy Tasmania, the Stroke Foundation and the Hobart District Nurses. To support the delivery of cancer-related services and programs during the COVID-19 response and recovery period, \$500 000 has also been allocated for Cancer Council Tasmania in this year's Budget and I congratulate the Cancer Council on the work that they have done providing support and care in what has been a really challenging time. These organisations all deliver important health care and support services right across Tasmania.

Again, I take a moment to reflect on our staff. None of what we have achieved this year would have been possible without the engagement, the attitude, the hard work, the dedication of our extraordinary staff across our system and I say thank you on behalf of our parliament and on behalf of the people of Tasmania. You have kept us safe and you have been extraordinarily brave in what has been a year like no other.

In the few minutes I have remaining I will reflect on my electorate of Bass, which I love very much. By doing that, I will start on one of the initiatives that we are funding through the strategic growth portfolio. George Town is an area that I know many members of Bass feel very dedicated towards. The community of George Town has had challenging times with their successes and their community somewhat riding on the success of industries within Bell Bay. It is really nice that we are able to invest further into that community.

The \$1 million in funding will support the innovative and important Launchpad, Renew George Town and the Digital Warriors programs, making a real difference to the lives of those in George Town and supporting better community outcomes. I thank the community organisations and community participants who have made that possible.

Through the Strategic Growth portfolio, we have invested in both the Glenorchy and the Sorell areas to ensure that we are creating opportunities. There is also further funding for Troublesmiths Employment Program as well as Hamlet, providing opportunities for young people.

I am pleased that through this Budget we are going to see delivery of the new Legana Primary School, the Launceston Tamar Valley Traffic Vision, refurbishment of our police station in Launceston and fire service upgrades at Exeter High School. I congratulate the staff and the students at Exeter High School. That high school has just gone from strength to strength in recent years and now is an absolutely shining light of education in our valley.

There is also a mid-week ski patroller on Ben Lomond ski field as well as refurbishments at Flinders Island District School, again another school that is providing amazing support to a regional area.

This year has been like none that we have ever experienced but one of the great learnings that I have had this year is that the Tasmanian spirit cannot be conquered and the way that our community has come together and worked together to support each other has been inspiring.

It gives me supreme confidence for our community going forward that by working together and making sure that we are supporting each other we can achieve great things.

This year's Budget from the state Government seeks to support our community. It seeks to support jobs and it seeks to support the Tasmanian way of life. I am confident that through our businesses, through our community leaders, through our sporting organisations, through our health professionals and through our volunteers, we will make sure that we keep on top of COVID-19 and I am sure that we have a strong future ahead.

[3.28 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - What a year it has been, Mr Deputy Speaker, one that will be judged by history and spoken of by many for generations to come. Many countries around the world are still living with the coronavirus active in their local communities and this virus continues to take lives and decimate economies. Despite Tasmania being in a very good place right with no active outbreaks in our communities these international and any national outbreaks will impact on our local economy through changes in trade, supply chain disruptions and travel and border restrictions.

Our response to this global pandemic, and the health and economic crisis it has created and the steps we take to rebuild our communities and local economies across Tasmania, will also be judged by history. This Budget has been touted as the most important for Tasmania since the post-World War II budget. History will judge this Budget and the Tasmanian Government's approach to rebuilding Tasmania.

A budget response to a once-in-a-lifetime, unprecedented global pandemic and the resultant uncertainty and consequential health and economic crisis should be nothing less than outside the box and take a significantly different approach to budgets of years gone by. This year Tasmanians needed an uplifting budget, a budget that offered hope and opportunity, that would instil confidence in all Tasmanians that a post-pandemic Tasmania would be better and fairer than our pre-pandemic Tasmania. I thank Tasmanians for their vigilance and resilience during what has been an absolutely trying year for everybody.

The Budget handed down last Thursday, despite \$5 billion of infrastructure spend, sets out an unemployment rate that will spike at 8.5 per cent in 2021 and 8.25 per cent in 2021-22, but fails to articulate a clear and diverse plan for jobs. This compares to national unemployment projections of 7.25 per cent in 2021 and 6.5 per cent in 2021-22. This Government has reverted to the same formula to create jobs and it is concerning to note that the majority of the infrastructure projects in the budget were reannouncements of already delayed projects.

This Government has a great difficulty in getting major infrastructure projects out the door. In fact, this has been a hallmark of this Government. This is concerning as this is the one-dimensional approach the Government has taken to stimulate the economy and create jobs. Particularly when you look at job losses across our tourism and hospitality sectors, if there was ever a time for a dedicated focus from government on a diverse range of initiatives to invest in our people, stimulate local economy and create jobs, it is now.

It is one thing to allocate funding, but as this Government has demonstrated time and time again, it is another to actually build the projects to which that the funding is allocated. Some of the important delayed projects which come to mind include the northern suburbs light

rail, the Cradle Mountain experience, the Burnie and Glenorchy ambulance stations, and the new *Spirits*.

The Budget Papers state that full recovery from the pandemic is expected to be gradual and uneven and subject to continuing uncertainty - that is perfectly reasonable - and that physical and economical estimates presented in this document have been prepared in a highly uncertain environment. There are no employment or economic forecasts post 2021-22 but I note that the Government claims and forecasts that it can deliver a surplus again in two years, all this at a time when COVID-19 has demonstrated that we should be investing more in essential services and employment-creation initiatives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our lives. We have lost loved and respected members of our local communities. It has separated many of us from our loved ones for extended periods of time and has called into question many of the things that we have come to take for granted. I extend my thoughts to all those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 across our state during this year, particularly in my own electorate of Braddon. This has been a very difficult time.

The economic consequences of COVID-19 were of a scale not seen since the Great Depression. While the ongoing economic impact is not quite clear yet, our community and businesses continue to operate in COVID-safe environments and the challenges this presents. The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a rare moment in time when political leaders in Tasmania united to support measures to ensure public health and safety and swift measures taken to address the financial distress and economic impact of the Public Health directives that had to be put in place.

We called for swift action and supported the Government's interventions every step of the way. However, we always maintained that we would continue to hold the Government to account if we felt their interventions did not go far enough or we thought there was a better way.

During the height of the pandemic in Tasmania our Labor team worked tirelessly and closely with stakeholders and our local communities to assist individuals and advocate for different industry sectors and their individual needs and I thank very much my electorate office staff for all of their work during this time. It was quite unsettling working from home but their commitment to helping those across our electorate never wavered. I thank them very much for their contribution during what was a very difficult time.

The consultation that was undertaken by our PLP during this time was the foundation for our COVID-19 recovery document and our submission to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC). I take the opportunity today to highlight that a number of our key initiatives were recommended by PESRAC in their interim report. I note the inclusion of the \$145 million in the Budget for the implementation of PESRAC's recommendations. I encourage the Government to get on and fund these recommendations and report back to Tasmanians very transparently about what these moneys have been expended on. I thank those involved in PESRAC for their ongoing work and commitment to the state's recovery.

We only have to look at South Australia right now to see how quickly things can change when there is an outbreak. I extend my thoughts to those in Adelaide and South Australia as I

have experienced first-hand the uncertainty about health and wellbeing and that of my loved ones and devastation of business in my own community when we had our COVID-19 outbreak in Braddon and the extended period of lockdown. It is important that we continue to back one another and observe social distancing to ensure that with the reopening of our borders we continue to keep our community safe.

This principle of vigilance also applies to our defences and screenings at our borders and to our quarantine and self-isolation settings. We must ensure stringent procedures and compliance are in place and that there are adequate resources for all those hardworking government agencies involved in ensuring and monitoring this compliance. There are many businesses within our community that simply would not survive another hard lockdown, and we must always do all that we can to protect our ageing population and those most vulnerable in the Tasmanian community.

Some have described this Budget as a missed opportunity. This is a budget which has been framed by a government devoid of vision and lacking the intestinal fortitude required to drive Tasmania forward and make sure Tasmania and every Tasmanian has greater opportunities post this pandemic. We have been presented at this moment in time with the opportunity to think differently, address the pre-existing structural deficits in our local economies, and make sure we address all of those issues and deficits in our economy and gaps in essential service provision which COVID-19 has shone a very bright light on. There are issues governments have struggled with and systematically failed to address over many years.

Our ageing profile and levels of disadvantage across Tasmania have only been intensified by COVID-19. Tasmanian Labor believes there is a need to focus on the wellbeing of our regional and rural communities and put targeted initiatives in place to truly address the disadvantage many Tasmanians right across Tasmania experience each and every day.

Many of my colleagues have referred to the state of the state prior to COVID-19, and I also want to put some remarks on the record in relation to a number of key indicators. The first is elective surgery waiting lists which total 11 342 Tasmanians, which has increased by 49 per cent since 2014 when this Government came to office. Our public housing waiting list sits at 3373 Tasmanians waiting for a home, up 55 per cent. Our outpatient waiting lists total 42 238 Tasmanians waiting for outpatient services across our communities, up 64 per cent, and 48 per cent of school leavers engaged in work, training or further study, down from 79 per cent in 2014. These were all pre-existing prior to COVID-19 and a number of these things have obviously been impacted significantly by COVID-19.

My electorate, including the west coast, Burnie and Devonport, ranks in the lowest quintile in the 2016 CEDA index of relative socio-economic disadvantage in Australia. I believe this has been the case for far too long. Prior to COVID-19, there were issues like the high casualisation of our workforce, particularly in our aged care, tourism and hospitality industries, underemployment, a reliance on locums and agency nurses and contractual work across our health services, our reliance on backpackers and international workers in our agricultural workforce and also in our hospitality workforce, and reliance on international students in the viability of many of our regional university campuses, and a need for greater investment in and resourcing of regional health services and infrastructure.

One example highlights this very well. It has happened in the north-west over a number of months now following the closure of the Mersey Community Hospital Accident and

Emergency Department outside business hours. This was an incremental change - a change that took place via notification, quite late at night, by means of large electronic signs at either end of the Mersey region of my electorate and through local newspapers and the like. This action, combined with the north-west outbreak, put additional pressure on our local paramedics who have been working extremely hard over the last six months.

Prior to this event they, and hospital staff right across our region as well as those at the Launceston General Hospital, were already working in a heavily compromised health system. Closing the Mersey accident and emergency service outside business hours has created tremendous pressure on an already compromised health system. It has also created uncertainty for our local community, adding additional stress and concern at what was already a difficult time.

I put on the record today my thanks and gratitude to all our hardworking health professionals working right across our state right now and for their efforts during the pandemic and during the closure of the Mersey accident and emergency department outside business hours.

I also extend my sincere thanks to the Mersey Community Hospital staff for all their hard work and the additional load they took on during the quite unprecedented closure of the North West Regional Hospital and the North West Private Hospital during the height of the pandemic across my electorate. They did an outstanding job and demonstrated the integral part they play in our local health system. We could not have managed without them. I extend my sincere thanks to each and every one of them - and to our paramedics, who were providing that interconnecting service across the region. It was a very stressful time for all involved.

I also note and welcome the funding for Palliative Care Tasmania, which is included in this year's Budget, particularly the funding for palliative care education roles. As a previous palliative care educator myself in a previous life, I understand the importance of that role and the value it brings across each of the regions of Tasmania. The role is also important for professional development within the Tasmanian Palliative Care Service and the Tasmanian Health Service and also externally, in engaging with all members of the multi-disciplinary teams who provide quality palliative care across many different settings in our community.

I note that the minister previously spoke about the inclusion of the investment for further developments at the Mersey Community Hospital. Many people in our community are looking forward to the establishment of the dedicated palliative care beds at the Mersey Community Hospital. We have been waiting a significant amount of time for those to be developed and they will be very well received by the community and very well utilised. It is disappointing that the recommendation that was made for those to be made available across both campuses - the North West Regional Hospital including the Mersey, and the campus in Burnie is not going to happen; they will only be provided at the Mersey. Nonetheless they will be an important service and it is important we make that available because up until now there have not been any dedicated palliative care beds on the north west coast. That is inequitable. Despite there being provision of fabulous community-based services there will always be a need for inpatient beds as well. We look forward to those finally being built by the Government and honouring their recent election commitment.

That brings me then to speak more broadly about the beautiful electorate of Braddon. I am sure it comes as no surprise when I say that I love the electorate of Braddon and I enjoy

representing the people of Braddon. I have enjoyed getting out amongst each and every individual community that exists right across the north-west and west coast and King Island.

Our electorate has so many key strengths, and world class industries and fantastic people. I am very proud of it. As I have said, it is a place where many live with significant disadvantage. As a local member I am committed to looking at ways we can increase access to essential services - not just infrastructure - across our beautiful region to address our poorer health and educational outcomes and enable those who have been out of work for a long time to experience employment and the great reward that brings for health, wellbeing and financial security.

I have spoken about the difficulties we experienced in Braddon with the outbreak of COVID-19. There is no doubt that the economic implications of our shutdown were felt the most by our communities and in particular our small businesses. When our region re-opened, Labor called for the Government to fund a targeted recovery package and to bring forward significant infrastructure projects across our region that had been significantly delayed. The Government did not take that action. I note that in this year's Budget many of those projects have been identified and I encourage the Government to get on with those projects because they will provide one part of an important stimulus for our region.

There is, however, still a need for targeted investment right across our region and other regions of Tasmania. There are very few new initiatives in this Budget for regional Tasmanians.

I will now reflect on a number of the Government's commitments across Braddon, in this Budget.

One of the projects we called for to be brought forward was the next iconic walk, so it is pleasing to see that project in the Budget. The west coast road needs upgrading. The road before you get to Tullah is pretty poor and I have had many constituents contact me about it. I ask for that to be addressed as well as the capital works investments, to improve those pieces of road infrastructure overall.

I welcome the funding for the amazing Unconformity Festival on the west coast, and it is great to see investment in the West Coast Wilderness Railway. However, it is disappointing to see that the Don River Railway did not receive any funding as part of this Budget.

Of course, investment in mineral exploration and growing investment in the mining industry on our west coast is very important and I welcome that. I welcome the upgrade of the police housing statewide. Many people have mentioned the state of education housing and health housing across some of our more rural and remote communities to me. I hope to see that also addressed by this Government.

I am pleased to see \$85 000 there for the Mountain Heights School refurbishment. Many of our schools on the west coast are older school facilities and it will be great for those students and teachers who are working in that environment. I was very pleased to see that included.

There are some good initiatives for King Island but sea freight continues to be a frustration for the people of the island. A reliable service is important, as it is their lifeline in

many ways. I hope to see the Government focus their efforts on making sure that there is that reliable sea freight service.

When we come to the wider north-west we have the Burnie port complex. Surprisingly, I do not hear many of my Liberal colleagues in Braddon speaking much about it. That proposal has changed significantly from its original iteration of being a redevelopment on the current site to now being relocated and using the university facilities on Bridport Road which will become available as the new redevelopment on West Park comes to life. This is an issue that has been raised with me a lot across the local community and proper consultation is needed, not just during the planning process. I encourage the Government to get on with that consultation. The Budget notes the intention to undertake that consultation and they should be starting to do that sooner rather than later.

The Burnie Ambulance Station is another project that has been significantly delayed and we do not have a proper update. The Budget Papers now refer to 2022. The intention was to move off-site because the current site is significantly restricted. A more detailed update on this project would be appreciated.

The antenatal clinic is finally getting off the ground at the North West Regional Hospital. This will be a highly valued service.

Obviously the ongoing funding for Cradle Mountain, which as I have said before in this place has been delayed. It is an iconic project for our region and for the state, and will drive significant economic activity and investment for our part of the state. I encourage the Government to get on with that expression of interest process, and get this fantastic project off the ground, to deliver the great benefits that were promised for our region and for the state.

I will also mention the Burnie to Wynyard cycle way. I say to Mr Jaensch, what a great project it is. We need to get it built and get people using it. I hope there are no further delays. I understand the strategic corridors legislation has been through the parliament, so that will now enable the next step in the processes with tendering and so on for local government. I hope we can get that built next year. It will be a fantastic asset, connecting the coastal city of Burnie and township of Wynyard.

Mr Jaensch - Do not forget Somerset.

Ms DOW - Yes, and Somerset in between. The only new funding I can see there is around north-west racing infrastructure and it is related to a social housing and community housing development proposed for the Devonport showground. It is pleasing to see that has been included, and I will be interested to see how the Government progresses that initiative. I am well aware of the benefits that could be brought to fruition through that housing project.

I move now to a couple of my shadow portfolios. I will not go into great detail, as I will save that for Estimates next week. My shadow responsibilities include local government and I realise it has been an incredibly difficult time for the sector. I congratulate local councils on their response to COVID-19 as they assisted their local community members and businesses under financial hardship. They responded as nimbly as they could, offering support not only to their communities but to the many staff who work in local government right across our beautiful state and our communities. It was very inequitable that local government was ineligible for the JobKeeper payment. It put great pressure on the sector. I wrote to federal

government members and to the state Government including the Premier at the height of the pandemic, seeking their advocacy of the importance of JobKeeper being made available to Tasmanian councils. I welcome the inclusion of \$300 000 for the legislative review which is being undertaken at the moment.

I am pleased to see there is some funding in the Budget for Metro planning and regional land use strategies, and I look forward to learning more about that in Estimates next week. I also note it has been a devastating year for small businesses across Tasmania and they have sacrificed a tremendous amount for our health and wellbeing. I sincerely thank all the members of our small business communities for their resilience and for rising to the challenge, and for the sacrifice they have made for the health and wellbeing of their communities. Tasmanian Labor is here to support them in any way we can and we will continue to work collaboratively and constructively with small businesses across Tasmania. I note that the Budget includes \$400 000 for the advanced manufacturing strategy, and that is welcome.

Every so often in this place we hear the catch cry from the other side 'are there any alternatives'. There certainly are alternatives. There is a choice for Tasmanians when it comes to a plan to rebuild Tasmania as a fairer and better place post this pandemic. My colleagues, Ms White and Mr O'Byrne, delivered our Budget reply yesterday, with the cornerstone being Working for Tasmania - Labor's plan for jobs. I say to members opposite - have you read our plan or have you just criticised it. Labor's job plan is fully costed and will create 35 000 new jobs. We will review our estimates and initiatives at the regular formal reporting intervals in the budget cycle. We will progressively release further fully costed initiatives, particularly in health and education, in the lead-up to the next state election.

Only Labor is committed to working with local communities to create training opportunities and to get more people into jobs, no matter where they live. Job creation will require a strong relationship between government, industries and unions and this relationship has also been critical to the success of Labor's eight industry advisory councils. It should not come as a surprise that a Labor government would invest in public vocational education and training, rebuilding TAFE from the ground up, making training free across key skill shortage areas and have a suite of diverse initiatives representing the importance of a diverse economy in Tasmania and a focus on addressing current regional disadvantage.

This is the Labor way and it should come as no surprise that a Labor government would support an apprenticeship guarantee for workers over 35 who can be often disadvantaged by the cost of business to put on a mature-aged apprentice. We understand that our traditional industries have restructured over time and our markets change and those Tasmanians who may be made redundant at a later time in their life should be given every opportunity to get another trade and undertake meaningful work. This is the Labor way and it should come as no surprise that a Labor government will invest in a Tasmanian jobs and innovation fund partnering with industry and local businesses to drive innovation and research and development and create jobs. Industry development is critical to the growth of Tasmania. Funding will be allocated through a competitive grants round and priority will be given to investments that will result in business growth and job creation.

This is the Labor way and it should come as no surprise that a Labor government recognises the importance of face-to-face advice for small business owners and the cost barriers to accessing professional services for some small business owners, particularly across rural and

regional communities. Working with small business and increasing community confidence and vibrancy: That is the Labor way.

These are a few of the many initiatives outlined in Labor's plan for jobs, Working for Tasmania, and I extend my thanks to everyone involved in developing this comprehensive document and commend it to the Tasmanian community.

It is clear that Labor is committed to creating a better and fairer Tasmania post the pandemic. Unlike the Liberals, we have a diverse plan to create jobs and navigate our state's economic recovery. I am proud to be part of a Labor team that is committed to working with Tasmanians to get more people, no matter where they live, into jobs. We know there is a better way to progress Tasmania. That is the Labor way and we are committed to providing a better and fairer Tasmania.

[3.57 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Housing) - Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on the 2020-21 Tasmanian State Budget, a budget that demonstrates how this Government is investing in our community and continuing to take action to improve outcomes for all Tasmanians.

I commend and personally thank, as a Tasmanian, our Premier and Treasurer, Peter Gutwein, for his exceptional leadership in these extraordinary times, including the preparation of this Budget. I extend my thanks to my Cabinet, PLP and parliamentary colleagues for their stewardship of this Government and this state through this last difficult period of our history.

The 2020-21 Budget includes record funding which will ensure we can effectively recover from the setbacks the COVID-19 pandemic has caused and build towards the future. This Budget will allow us to deliver on commitments across all portfolios, growing the economy and creating jobs while supporting our essential services and ensuring no-one is left behind.

I listened to several of the Labor speakers today and yesterday who made comment that the Budget was an opportunity to be more visionary and expansive, full of reforms and expressions of values. This is a Budget that is six months later than it should have been. It is for half a year and a period of recovery in very uncertain times. This Budget needs to be about Tasmania, not about a political party or a brochure or a series of slogans. In these difficult times this is a comprehensive, considered, responsible budget. It contains real deliverable commitments and initiatives which provide the genuine positive outcomes that Tasmanians need right now. If this is a reflection of our values as a party and as a government, so be it. We will stand by it because we are delivering what Tasmania needs right now, not an advertisement for ourselves.

This Government has already invested record amounts to deliver new housing and homelessness services for vulnerable Tasmanians. This Budget continues the trend, committing over \$300 million. This commitment has been broadly endorsed by peak bodies across Tasmania such as Shelter Tas, whose CEO, Pattie Chugg, has said -

Tasmania shows great leadership by including social housing as a key post-COVID economic stimulus.

And -

Today's announcement that \$300M over four years will be spent on social and affordable housing will provide certainty and a pipeline for new construction. Shelter Tas welcomes this clear commitment to increasing much-needed public and community housing across the state.

Master Builders Tasmania executive director, Matthew Pollock, said -

Construction will be our economic accelerator and a jobs generator. \$300 million dollars for social housing will ensure we are building a fairer economy and ensuring Tasmanians have access to adequate shelter.

This Budget includes an investment of \$16.8 million to continue the Safe Space program through to June 2022, providing a 24/7 wraparound service in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart for Tasmanians who may have nowhere else to go or who already sleeping rough. Over \$6 million of this funding will be allocated to deliver general and mental health supports for people experiencing homelessness. I recognise the great work and leadership of Hobart City Mission, Launceston City Mission and the Salvation Army for standing up these services when they are needed, and I look forward to their continuing work to evolve those services to meet the needs of their clients as they go forward.

The Budget delivers more than \$25 million for new youth foyers in Hobart and Burnie and extension and expansion of services at Thyne House in Launceston. It also delivers almost \$5 million for a new Launceston Youth at Risk Centre, and a further \$4.6 million to extend the Magnolia House women's shelter in Launceston. We are also continuing to deliver on the program of works made possible by savings achieved under the waiver of the state's housing-related debt to the Commonwealth which this Government achieved last year. This program will assist a further 400 households transition into suitable accommodation that meets their needs through to June 2023, including the delivery of 300 new social housing dwellings, cofunding for purchase of the Balmoral Motor Inn for long-term supported accommodation, remodelling of the Oakley Court unit complex and other initiatives. The refurbishment of the Waratah Hotel to provide 24 units of supported accommodation is on track to be completed by Christmas, as is a range of other projects and social housing development being delivered under our second Affordable Housing Action Plan.

The Budget also locks in the \$100 million additional investment announced as part of our construction blitz which will build up to 1000 new social housing dwellings over three years. We are currently undertaking an expression of interest process and inviting bids from qualified parties and their partners to deliver these new social houses in cities and towns across the state, and that process closes next week.

Running concurrently to that, we are working closely with the four community housing providers to extend their management agreements and transfer to them the management of a further 200 Director of Housing-owned properties, enabling them to access an additional \$6 million of revenue each year through Commonwealth rent assistance which will support their maintenance and replacement and the delivery of additional new stock.

The Budget also includes a further \$15 million for public housing heating and energy-efficiency initiatives which will ease the cost-of-living pressures for public housing tenants and

complete this Government's program of rollout of heat pumps to all public housing which commenced when we took government at just over 16 per cent of public housing dwellings and is now at around 74 per cent. With this initiative, within around 18 months will be taken to 100 per cent of our public housing dwellings. Benefits for the tenants but also it benefits in cities and towns right across Tasmania for local supply and installation of these new pieces of equipment.

It was interesting to hear Labor in one breath state that we are not doing enough but that then they will match all of our commitments and that they will act where we have failed. It is big, tough talk but why would they adopt all our housing commitments if they thought they were wrong? In housing, why would they criticise our rollout of new social housing and then turn around and propose their own model that delivers half the number of houses for the same price? When they commit to put more money into the deferred maintenance liability for housing in Tasmania maybe they should have owned up to the fact that the deferred maintenance liability is the one that we inherited from the last round of the dysfunctional on again, off again Labor-Greens relationship which was a \$90 million legacy when we took over. We have now been able to reduce that by a third and are continuing to drive it down.

Our housing budget is responsible and considered and continues our record investment and our program of delivery to address housing stress and homelessness in Tasmania and provide greater housing choice and affordability for Tasmanians in need. I take this opportunity to recognise and thank the great Housing Tasmania team and the Housing Connect network right across the state for their efforts to deliver housing and provide services every day for people who need them. It is very much appreciated and it is very important work for Tasmania.

Our investment in supporting and caring for vulnerable Tasmanians goes beyond putting a roof over their head. It is also about providing for people and families when they need it. For example, we will be contributing an extra \$2.1 million over the next two years to build on the child safety initiatives we implemented as part of our COVID-19 response. These initiatives were critical in enhancing the services and systems that supported and safeguarded our vulnerable children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We provided additional funding in key areas to support carers, to increase our child safety after hours capacity and bolstered the capacity of therapeutic residential care.

Also included in this Budget is \$200 000 for the development of an informal kinship carer liaison and support function. We want to provide additional support to those grandparents and other kin carers who have stepped forward to care for children rather than see them enter the child safety system. I thank Kin Raising Kids in particular for their extraordinary advocacy for this group of people in our society who are stepping in to take care of family members and providing a really important buffer for those kids and those families where otherwise there might have been a total breakdown in those families and children entering out of home care.

We are also providing additional critical support for young people under 16 who are at risk of homelessness and have provided \$513 000 to increase the capacity of community service organisations to provide intensive case management, outreach support, mediation and family reunification.

We also continue to invest significantly in out of home care. We want to ensure that all children and young people who need to be in out of home care have access to the individual supports they need to be safe and to thrive. This will include investigating opportunities to establish a therapeutic residential on country program in Tasmania, to which we have been committed for some time. This is partly in response to the Commission for Children and Young People's out of home care monitoring report recommendations, but also most recently in the context of our review of the Many Colours, One Direction program in the Northern Territory for that small number of kids with very complex needs who need a special form of help to manage their behaviours and to assist them to prepare for independent living after they reach the age of 18.

We also continue to progress our significant redevelopment of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and our long-term investment in our Strong Families, Safe Kids reforms in the Child Safety Service system.

Importantly, as announced by my colleague, Mr Rockliff, this Budget also allocates a \$4 million investment to the reform of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Of this, \$1.8 million will be provided to establish and provide dedicated and highly-specialised mental health services for our children in out of home care. The Commissioner for Children and Young People has welcomed these investments saying -

It is pleasing to see that this initial funding will go towards addressing the existing service gaps including the establishment of dedicated specialised services for children in out of home care.

Our Budget includes further investment in the Neighbourhood Houses Program which received an additional funding of \$700 000 during COVID-19 to assist people who were isolated and needed additional support. I thank Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania and the whole Neighbourhood House family - because they are a family, right across the state, including King Island now - for the extraordinary work that they did very, very quickly in COVID-19. They went from organisations which prided themselves on having an open door that their community could come in and be welcomed and receive services to one that had to close their doors physically because of COVID-19 restrictions but turned itself seemingly overnight into an outreach service.

They became an organisation that went out and found and communicated with those networks of people in their neighbourhoods to help them to deal with the uncertainties, the information, the rules and instructions for being safe during the height of the coronavirus. Since then, they have continued to evolve what they do to meet the changing circumstances and to support some of our most vulnerable people in their communities. I really commend our Neighbourhood Houses, every one of them, for the great work that they have done through this difficult time. It has been a difficult time for the houses themselves, we acknowledge that. I thank them for their service to their communities. Nobody else could have done what they did for their communities.

Also, the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) and its irrepressible leader, John Hooper, which received an additional \$1 million over two and a half years, providing more access points as well including Neighbourhood Houses in many cases. They provide another safer form of short-term finance, helping people to meet their day-to-day costs and needs as their lifestyles have changed in response to COVID-19 as well. It has given them an option safer than pay-

day lenders and other traps, particularly for people on low incomes who may be vulnerable. Congratulations to NILS and John for their continuing work to innovate what we do in this micro loans space.

We have also provided funding of \$2.3 million to support a range of new initiatives to prevent family violence as part of the response to COVID-19 and we have allocated \$350 000 over two years to TasCOSS to help ensure that the Tasmanian Community Service sector continues to be prepared to respond and adapt to help its members and their members to respond to Tasmania's post-COVID-19 challenges.

In total, more than \$634 million has been allocated to the Department of Communities Tasmania to continue to fund a wide range of peak bodies, community service organisations and to directly deliver critical support services to Tasmanians. I thank my department, a huge proportion of whom over this last six months or so have been moved from their regular work into special teams, reaching out and working differently with other organisations and members of the communities and other parts of government as part of our response to the coronavirus. Many of them have been working from home as well, so there have been many changes for them and their families. I am sure that their willingness to quickly adapt, innovate the way they work and find new ways of working together in different configurations has saved Tasmanian lives over this period.

We need to thank them for their work but also capture a lot of the innovation they have created in so doing and build that into our business as usual in the future, particularly in the areas of working across what have been traditional silos or boundaries between and within government agencies and services. I look forward to a lot more vigour as we continue those relationships and discussions about service delivery with the experience of having faced COVID-19 together under our belts.

Our Budget is about building a fairer Tasmania too, providing certainty and confidence that our community needs to deliver better and more inclusive outcomes for all Tasmanians. Just last week I was very pleased to be able to announce that this Budget includes funding of \$1.2 million across the forward Estimates as part of our commitment to the Closing the Gap Refresh initiative. This funding is part of Tasmania's contribution to a national pool that will be matched by the Commonwealth and reinvested in Tasmania to build the capacity of our Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver some of the services and supports their members and communities need to achieve better life outcomes for our Aboriginal people.

This follows the historic signing of the new national agreement on Closing the Gap earlier this year by Australian state and territory governments, the Australian Local Government Association and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. We are now working with Aboriginal organisations, government agencies and service providers on an implementation plan that will set and meet Tasmania's targets as part of the national commitment. We will begin with a series of themed Closing the Gap roundtables to be held around the state in coming weeks, and this is in addition to practical measures already underway including locked-in funding to support our Reset agenda, ongoing funding to enable the cultural management group to continue its work with non-government Aboriginal organisations and other stakeholders on the management of cultural values, a program for Aboriginal Tasmanians to access important resources within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and Aboriginal trainee rangers to work in our national parks and reserves.

Other measures taken by the Government to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in Tasmania include projects addressing family violence, early childhood engagement with schools, support for Aboriginal enterprises such as the wukalina Cultural Walk and investment in recruiting more Aboriginal people into the Tasmanian State Service. I take this opportunity to thank those Aboriginal community organisations I have stayed in touch with throughout the coronavirus period who, like the Neighbourhood Houses, know their community, their people and their needs extremely well, intimately, and better than anyone. They have provided an critical last mile for information delivery, first mile for questions and answers in guidance and the sheer day-to-day practicalities of staying safe for vulnerable people, sometimes in remote areas. The work of Aboriginal community organisations across the state cannot be underestimated and I thank them.

It has had its downsides as well because the nature of those communities means there is a range of processes we have been involved with, consultation-type processes on reforms and legislation and other things and policy that we have had to suspend because it has not been safe to have face-to-face meetings with small groups of people in their own places at their request. We are working hard to catch up and make up for lost time but we have respected and taken the advice of those local organisations and their leaders all the way along because they have taken responsibility for keeping their people safe. I commend them for doing that.

This Budget is about our people but it is also about the places we live in, our settlements and our land and our aspirations for the future and what we want our society settlements, infrastructure and landscapes to look like and function.

One of the key allocations in our Budget is the provision of an additional \$500 000 over two years to the Department of Justice's planning policy unit. This is not a huge amount of money but it is very significant because it marks a key moment in the delivery of our ongoing statewide planning reform agenda and a tipping point, a shift in focus from the statutory instruments to the strategic underpinnings of our planning system.

A total of 27 of our 29 councils across the state have now lodged their local provision schedules with the Tasmanian Planning Commission for consideration and approval and the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, Australia's first statewide planning scheme, is already in effect in Burnie and Devonport local government areas on the north-west coast and many others are hot on their heels.

Soon we will have achieved our goal of delivering a single suite of planning rules applied consistently across the state, providing certainty, transparency and efficiency for proponents, planners, councils and the community; everyone who touches the planning system, but we are not letting it stop there. While the councils and the commission work to finalise the local provisions schedules for all 29 council areas, we are funding the Planning Policy Unit to commence working on higher level strategic elements of our planning system.

I will shortly be releasing a scoping paper seeking the views of the Tasmanian community on the issues and themes that should be addressed in Tasmania's first suite of Tasmanian planning policies. At the same time, funding provided to the Planning Policy Unit will enable them to undertake baseline surveys, data analysis and settlement planning to support a comprehensive review of our three regional land use strategies. By undertaking this work

concurrently with the finalisation of the LPSs it is anticipated that up to 12 months will be cut from the time required to review these strategies and deliver the Tasmanian planning policies.

We are delivering genuine reform in the planning area. It is a long journey but we are at an exciting point of time right now and are committed to ensuring that our planning system is not only the most consistent and efficient in the country but continues to be informed by a rigorous and forward-looking strategic framework which articulates medium- and long-term aspirations and land use policies at state and regional level.

It is often said that national parks were America's greatest idea. In Tasmania I reckon they are one of our greatest assets, alongside our people, our water and our climate. Our Government is committed to managing and protecting these assets not only for their intrinsic values but also as a driver of our economy, making Tasmania a must-see nature-based tourist destination on the world stage.

In 2018 we outlined a comprehensive suite of commitments and the largest-ever investment in our national parks and reserves, in excess of \$80 million over four years. Our Budget this year shows our commitment to ensuring that tourism development in our natural areas continues to support our regions, stimulating economic activity, investment and jobs.

In this Budget the Government is building on our previous investment at Cradle Mountain, providing \$68.5 million through the forward Estimates to deliver a new commercial and retail precinct, car parking, shuttle bus transit stations and significantly improved visitor facilities. We will also facilitate the development of a Cradle Mountain cableway to ensure our visitors can have all-year, all-weather access to Dove Lake and a world-class experience in doing so.

Funding of \$8.4 million over two years will mitigate the infrastructure issues identified in the recent Freycinet Peninsula master plan and enable the construction of a new sewage pumping station and rising main to transfer sewage from Wineglass Bay trail head to a new sewage treatment plant. Also for Freycinet there is \$7.2 million through the federal government for development of sustainable visitor infrastructure, including a new visitor gateway transit hub, new lookouts and foreshore walks.

Other infrastructure funding for our parks and reserves include \$7.1 million for the replacement of infrastructure and associated assets within those reserves significantly impacted by the 2018-19 bushfires and \$7.2 million to improve visitor infrastructure across the state. For our recreational fisher people and boaters there is an ongoing commitment of \$1.6 million to improve boat trailer parking facilities on the east coast.

With the assistance of the Australian Government's COVID-19 relief fund, the redevelopment of huts on the Overland Track will be completed and a new camping area and amenities will be developed for the Walls of Jerusalem Recreation Zone all within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

A \$2.1 million allocation will support the continued development and improvement of infrastructure on the Tasman Peninsula including the Three Capes Track, one of the world's great coastal walks, and \$300 000 will go towards additional assessment of cultural values in

the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area to support consideration of the proposal to reopen selected tracks.

The Budget provides \$19.4 million towards the delivery of Tasmania's next iconic multi-day hut-based walk. The Tyndall Range has been selected out of 35 sites as the preferred location and a feasibility study is being conducted to ensure the economic and community benefits for Tasmanians are maximised.

Funding of \$2.1 million will also be provided over four years to the Parks and Wildlife Services to establish winch capable crews to increase our ability to attack bushfires hard and fast particularly in remote areas. To keep our visitors safe, \$120 000 is being committed for over three years to fund a mid-week ski patroller during the ski season at Ben Lomond National Park. We are providing \$2.2 million to Crown Lands to support improved transaction turnaround times, reducing unnecessary red tape, and delivering timely approvals for development applications.

This Budget recognises the value of our environment to all Tasmanians. As custodians of the environment we are providing significant funding towards a number of new initiatives that will promote the circular economy principles and support our waste and resource recovery sector providing a platform to promote further investment and create new jobs. Overall, \$30 million will be invested in waste management recycling and resource recovery over the next four years, including \$4 million to implement key commitments outlined in our draft waste action plan.

We will be implementing a waste levy in 2021 and introducing a container refund scheme in 2022. The container refund scheme will bring Tasmania in line with other jurisdictions, protect our environment and maintain our brand while providing new opportunities for community groups, local businesses and industry. Waste levy funds will be used to fund innovative re-use and recycling projects and support co-investment with recycling businesses to improve our recovery of recyclables.

Time expired.

[4.27 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I rise to make a few comments regarding the overall key issues in this Budget. I congratulate our Leader, Rebecca White, and our shadow treasurer, David O'Byrne, and our incredible team who have worked so hard to develop Labor's fully-costed plan for jobs. It is an outstanding plan which outlines Labor's priorities for Tasmania.

I acknowledge that the bulk of the analysis of this Government's Budget will occur next week and I look forward to having some fruitful Estimates debates.

I acknowledge that these are difficult times and I thank the people of Tasmania for following health advice and for putting the community instead of the individual first and pulling together, which we all did during this difficult time. Also, I acknowledge the incredible job of our frontline health and emergency service workers through these times.

To the people who lost their lives and the families who are unable to mourn them properly, we are very sorry for your loss as well.

The reality is that there is a collective uncertainty at the moment and none of us knows what the future holds. We hope our health services are ready, we hope that we do not have a second wave and we hope that we will all be safe.

COVID-19 did show our weaknesses and we learnt that our health services and waiting lists are some of the worst in the country. Our elective surgery waiting list is now at 11 342, up by 49 per cent since 2014. The Tasmanian outpatient waiting list is 42 238 people, a rise of 64 per cent since 2014.

Our party is also worried about low literacy and educational attainments, as opposed to our mainland counterparts. We understand that they will be even more adversely affected now due to COVID-19. Our kids are also not receiving the same educational skills as other children around Australia. Only 48 per cent of our school leavers are engaged in work training or further study, down from 79 per cent in 2014. This Budget was an opportunity to rebuild our state, to seize the opportunity, to address the things that matter to Tasmanians and to create innovation, to build a community where all Tasmanians have the same access to health, education and meaningful reliable careers.

Instead, the Premier has delivered a budget of unresponsiveness. This Budget will shed thousands of jobs instead of establishing the structures to innovate, grow and create employment opportunities for Tasmanians. This Budget hides forecasts beyond 2022. We are the only jurisdiction in Australia that does not provide economic forecasts for the complete forward Estimates. Therefore, this Trump-style slogan of a forecast surplus is simply nonsense.

Through COVID-19, 20 000 Tasmanians lost their jobs and 12 000 of these people did not find new jobs. The Tasmanian building and construction industry, even though given special exemption status, is one of the worst-affected industries, with another loss in the last month of 900 people's jobs. That is what we need to understand. With the Trump spin - which is all we often hear from the other side of the room - a month before Christmas, that is another 900 families in the last month alone who have lost their jobs.

During COVID-19, the Government did very little to protect Tasmanian building and construction jobs and allowed interstate workers under the guise of 'specialist workers' to enter Tasmania without quarantine and untested, taking the jobs of Tasmanians. Granted, there were cases where a specialist was just that, a specialist, but in many cases not. The Government states that it was at arms-length - they are always at arms-length from anything controversial, I am starting to get the lingo - of restrictions and processes highlighted our lack of skilled workers or the lack of commitment or motivation to action a program to assess our own state's capabilities before flying in interstate workers. Joiners, carpenters electricians; it was a complete disregard for protecting Tasmanian jobs and workers.

The Government did not ensure safeguards were in place to prioritise and protect locals and only after pressure from the CFMEU, the CEPU and Labor even though it was at arms-length, the Government began to pay better attention to allowing interstate workers into Tasmania. They were taking the jobs of Tasmanians. The change from government only came about after negative press and public relations. The change did not come about because it was the right thing to do or because they thought, hang on there is a gap in our COVID-19 response. We should not be letting interstate workers come into Tasmania, taking Tasmanian jobs. The change was made out of public pressure which is always the trigger for the Government.

I lost an awful lot of respect for the Government during that time and we literally had to drag them screaming to start protecting Tasmanian building construction workers. At that time it was very frustrating, it took a lot of work and also I have learnt some of the Government lines as I said before - at arms-length, now that means we are responsible but we do not want the public to know about it.

Indeed, the Premier's leaking moat allowed hundreds of interstate workers into Tasmania untested and unquarantined during COVID-19. There was little acceptance by the Government that Tasmanians needed their jobs to be protected. Only now they are starting to pay attention to that and it is probably a little too late. In fact, the Government allowed a roofer to fly into Tasmania to fix a leak in the Royal Hobart Hospital roof. Apparently at that time we did not have anyone in Tasmania that was capable of fixing a leaky roof. Now, the roofer was also sent straight to our biggest health asset the Royal Hobart Hospital. The Government response was that the roofer was under some kind of warranty arrangement so they had to be flown in from interstate.

I remember thinking that if the Government could not recognise that changing a warranty contract due to a global pandemic and a major health asset potentially being put at risk was a big issue, what were they really paying attention to? This Budget really summarises that again for me. A lack of innovation, no forward thinking, no driving change, just infrastructure spending in the hands of a minister that lost a leadership battle between this Budget and the last, with a terrible reputation as having failure to launch. I did consider that maybe the Premier knows this minister is going to fail. Maybe the failed leadership coup still runs deep. I then reconsidered and realised that this is the Liberal team and it is probably the best they have.

How have we allowed a system where Tasmanian workers are overlooked? The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport said in parliament yesterday, when he was referring to building and construction, that you cannot find a builder at moment. I believe he was actually gloating like he was quite impressed by that. In basic economics we know that supply and demand is a fundamental. If our skills market cannot meet the demand, it is more to do with a skills gap which is the role of a good government to address. We will address this through our fully-costed plan for jobs by training the workforce for the future.

Labor's Tasmania First Buy Local policy would direct Government businesses to truly Tasmanian businesses after an outright failure by the Gutwein Government. The policy is part of Labor's fully-costed jobs plan, Working for Tasmania, designed to stimulate the economy, foster business growth and get Tasmanians into secure jobs. The Liberal Government's Buy Local policy does not make a distinction between a Tasmanian owned and operated business and a huge global corporation that is set up in an office in Hobart.

Every year, tens of millions of dollars go into international and interstate businesses and that is unfair, it is an unacceptable policy and that is why Labor will implement a genuine Tasmania First Buy Local policy and ensure that the money from government contracts stays in Tasmania because we need it.

Labor's fully-costed jobs plan connects education, skills and training, private sector investment, government spending and infrastructure development to achieve a common goal of getting more Tasmanians into work. Over the last four weeks alone, wages paid to Tasmanian workers have declined by 4.2 per cent. The Liberal Budget locks in unemployment

at over 8 per cent for two years, and by their own numbers, indicates that thousands of jobs will continue to be lost. This Budget leaves far too many people behind.

We have some of the highest disadvantage indicators in Tasmania - intergenerational unemployment, youth unemployment, obesity, smoking, people living with disability, literacy levels and life expectancy. Labor's fully-costed jobs plan will give Tasmanian businesses the support they need to recover strongly post-COVID. Labor's jobs plan is the first tranche of a range of announcements we will be making between now and the next state election and I am very excited about some of the things we are working on. We have a fabulous team, we are very dedicated, we all have the same values and are committed to making Tasmania the state it should be. I really think those opposites have lost their way.

I acknowledge the difficult financial situation COVID-19 has forced upon our community, but now is the time for honesty and truth-telling. It certainly is not the time for Liberal trickle-down economic theory. We are not all provided with the same access to opportunities. Anyone who is that naive or arrogant should not be in politics and certainly should not be a policy-maker.

The latest statistics indicate that job losses in Tasmania are now more than 50 per cent higher than the national average of 3 per cent. The biggest monthly falls are found in construction at minus 4.6 per cent, agriculture at minus 2 per cent, manufacturing at minus 1.3 per cent and accommodation and food at minus 0.9 per cent. That is 900 jobs in construction, 350 jobs in agriculture, 240 jobs in manufacturing and 210 jobs in accommodation and food.

I have listened to the bulk of the Liberal members' budget responses and it reminds me almost of an amateur boxing match, with each Liberal member in their shiny boxing outfits and gloves laced getting ready to step into the arena. As they come into the Chamber they have been handed a speech which is often written by a staffer and is often full of meaningless rhetoric. They have taken a few cheap shots and poorly thought-through swings and the rest of the time raising false political attacks until the bell rings.

This Budget was an opportunity for the Government to fight a good fight and to be bold. The punches are not hitting and your footwork is, to be honest, really clumsy. It was an opportunity for vision and for making Tasmania even better than it was pre-pandemic.

Pre-COVID, our economic indicators were already in trouble. Growth rates for exports, business investment and consumption were weak. According to the ABS total Tasmanian employment fell by 3500 over 2018-19. That is the truth, Mr Tucker, and it is not funny, you should not be smiling. Full-time employment was only 155 000, a fall of 13 000 from the state's pre-GFC peak. Mainland Australia saw full-time employment rise by 17 per cent over the same period while Tasmania's fell by 7.7 per cent.

I also remind the House and the *Hansard* for the sole purpose of recalling accurate facts for Tasmanian history, that in 2007 through to 2013 Tasmania suffered as the rest of the world did under the global financial crisis. Whilst countries around the world were obliterated, it was the federal Labor government under Kevin Rudd that saved our economies. Subsequent Tasmanian Labor governments steered Tasmania through that time. Former premier Will Hodgman was lucky to get into government when the Tasmanian economy was on the improve.

That is the truth. Read your history. Do not believe all the rhetoric these guys tell you, Mr Tucker.

The Trump rhetoric spouted by the Liberal slogan team is simply not true. Yes, our disadvantage indicators were higher than they should have been. Yes, literacy and school attainment needed to be improved and yes, we were not perfect, but we were on the right track. Labor handed this Government a good set of books and I am appalled by what the Liberals have done over the last seven years in times of great growth that has not been because of you, it has been because of international factors. Yes, we should never have allowed two Greens to be ministers in our government. It was a mistake we will never make again.

Dr Woodruff - Is that what Labor is doing again in the ACT, making a mistake going into government with the Greens?

Ms BUTLER - I would like to speak about the elephant in the room before we start speaking over the person who is talking, Dr Woodruff, the pending Liberal-Greens minority government. Let us talk about the elephant in the room, shall we? The Liberals have not ruled out governing with the Greens. We have. The reality of the situation of the problem with a Liberal-Greens government, which is where many people in the community are concerned we are heading, has been summarised quite well in an essay I read - shall I stop?

Government members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - I think your commentary has stirred up a bit of activity so I will ask everyone to be quiet and listen to you.

Ms BUTLER - This essay is called 'Where Greens Support Conservatives: Lessons from the Rundle Minority Government in Tasmania 1996-98', by Dr Kate Crowley and Megan Tighe. It says -

Lacklustre Liberal majority government (1992-96) saw the return of three seats to Labor (to 14 seats) in 1996 and the loss of three seats from the Liberals (to 16 seats) and one from the Greens (to four seats) whose support had dropped from its 1989 high of 17.1 per cent to 11.1 per cent in 1996. It was a pragmatic, rather than an ideological decision, for the Greens to pivot their support to a conservative government.

As I always say, the Greens do not care what colour the government is, they just want the power. They do not care if you are blue or red, they just want the power. Going back to the quote -

No party had a majority, although the Liberals had the highest proportion of the vote by a very slim margin. The Liberals were also the incumbent government in caretaker mode. They were expected to take a plan for governing to the Governor and to test it on the Floor of the House. Labor was keeping its distance from the Greens, rebuilding support, having promised 'no deals with the Greens'.

New leaders, Tony Rundle, Liberal and Christine Milne, Green, further facilitated a Liberal-Greens arrangement. We all know how history has a way of repeating itself. We know

history works in cycles. We have pledged, you have not pledged. No-one from the Liberals has said at all that they will not go into government with the Greens.

The Liberal-Greens alliance was blamed and faulted. Poor economic circumstances stalled developments. Sounds interesting, does it not? Contentious reforms, relentless attacks also called the fragile minority government and their attempts to renew the Liberal Green cooperation but only after only two years the spirit of cooperative politics was broken and policy initiatives were either on a hold or aborted.

During the final six months of government, the government's failure to secure direction left its budget in doubt. The premier declared the hung parliament had reached its use-by date and called an early election. This is the path the Liberals and Greens are now taking Tasmania.

The cooperation, the anti-Labor rhetoric and vitriol of the Greens history travels in circles like I just said. History travels in circles and a Greens minority government or a Greens-Liberal minority government is a realistic outcome.

The Liberals will lose seats. The public is rapidly turning away from them and because you are secretive, because you are ruthless, because you are terrible money managers despite what your slogan says, you are terrible money managers and a lot of your ministers are under-performing. You have had some absolute shockers recently. You have to admit you have had some absolute shockers. Your infrastructure plan is already 90 years behind. That is not made up: 90 years behind and you are about to try to invest \$5 billion into something that is already 90 years behind. That is not sensible.

Only Labor will guarantee a majority government and will not do deals with the Greens. Our pledge is real and if I was successfully re-elected I know that if we ever even thought about doing any deals with Greens I would not be allowed to sit at my family's Christmas table, put it that way. It runs deep in real Labor families.

Since the Liberals came to power in 2014, elective surgery waiting lists have blown out by 49 per cent, outpatient waiting lists by 64 per cent, public housing waiting lists by 55 per cent and the number of school leavers engaged in work training and further study has dropped by 31 per cent.

A reliance on building infrastructure which everyone in the industry, including Moody's, knows that you cannot deliver and as my colleague shadow treasurer, David O'Byrne, stated in his Budget response, the Budget predicts that the labour participation rate will fall from 60.5 per cent in the coming year to 59.5 per cent in the following year. Rather than giving hope and confidence to people wanting jobs, the Government is simply accepting that thousands of people will stop looking for work altogether. Tasmania will have two consecutive years of recession with a forecast reduction in economic growth of 1.5 per cent in 2020-21 following last year's contraction of 0.5 per cent. While economic growth of 3.75 per cent is forecast for 2021-22, this growth rate remains well below the national forecast of 4.25 per cent.

I am pleased that the minister has finally released the strategy for Arts. I will quickly touch on that. I am looking forward to Estimates and I have been waiting since the start of 2019 for the Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy (2019 and beyond). It is good that it was

finally released. It was not honest to say that it was because of COVID-19 because it was late before COVID-19 hit. That is a little bit of Trump-est spin, which we are getting used to.

I completely support putting money into Screen Tasmania. It is a terrific way for us to bolster our economy, our industry and our creative sector. We have a problem with Australia's content quotas now because of the pressure that has been put on by some of the major networks and the Morrison Government has stopped content quota requirements at the moment. Our shows like the *The Gloaming*, *Bluey*, and *Dance Academy*, just about every bit of Australian content that you watch on television, or a movie that you watch, is all done under content quotas. They have been around since the 1950s. I have talked quite a few times in the adjournment about this. That protects our industry and Tasmania was the only state government that did not provide a submission into that report. It was appalling that we did not because it is going to be worth a lot of money to our industry not to have content quotas.

We really need to do that otherwise you will have networks spending maybe a few thousand dollars buying content straight from the United States, instead of investing it into Australian film and drama and animation. It is important that we keep that there. I was amazed that we did not even write a submission. It is very important that we make sure that Australian children can dream Australian dreams, not American dreams. It was 12 December when the ACCC's digital platforms inquiry looked into those content quotas. There has been no movement at all to bring them back on line.

I will quickly touch on a few other things in my electorate. I support the building of new housing. I implore the Government to ensure that they have oversight into the quality of those new builds and to ensure that building inspectors who are surveying those new builds are independent - not employed by the building companies themselves - and that quality assurance is put into place to make sure that our stock has longevity. We need that to be there for at least 30 to 50 years. It is important that we get that right and build those houses.

The electorate of Lyons, which I serve, has been promised significant infrastructure, with the majority late, or there has been some funding cut. The school farm redevelopment is now two years behind; I certainly support that though. The new K-12 Sorell school is behind. That scale of the development, I believe, has been minimised to an extent because there were budget constraints. Students from that school report that the school floods regularly. They have this amazing, fabulous school culture but it is a mismatch of school buildings and is not really conducive to best practice for students to learn in. I look forward to that being complete.

Funding for the Longford Police Station has been cut by 16 per cent. Funding for the New Norfolk Police Station has been cut by 8 per cent. I support those stations being built. The community at New Norfolk likes the fact that a new station is being built but they always wanted a permanent police presence in New Norfolk. That is what the community most wanted. The former minister, Rene Hidding, made it an election promise that he would build them a new station and he would also provide a permanent police presence. He baulked - maybe he did not. He is not here to represent himself, but I know Mr Ferguson certainly baulked on that. It is something the community still wants. It was an election pledge of the Government and I certainly think it needs to be looked at.

I am just about running out of time. The building of new police infrastructure is very important. We recently had a look at the Sorell emergency hub. That is going to be a terrific

site. The Sorell Police Station is very old and probably is not serving the right purpose at the moment, so I am sure the new police infrastructure will be fantastic.

The northern prison continues to be a running comedy show with no plan, no idea of what kind of prison it will be. Again, no community consultation on the new site, no costings; already all kinds of issues with governance and new areas of potential development. We have always supported a northern prison. At this stage, we think it appropriate for the minister - and we have always called for it - to disclose what the original expressions of interest were for those sites. We think the minister is out of depth and that she has proved the Government incapable of listening to the community. There was no community consultation with this other side either. The complete hands-off from Liberal Lyons members, coupled with no feasibility study, it really has just been an absolute comedy of errors.

Now, the Government finds itself with no plan, again behind schedule, with no costings, incomplete due diligence and a department that basically had no idea what they were talking about until the day before they decided to release this new concept and new site up in a bush retreat. With no community consultation, no transparency and a construction sector crying out for a project, you people really needed to get this right.

It is difficult to imagine that the figure of \$270 million was also accurate. That was on a flat site next to an industrial site. This is up in the middle of the bush reserve where there is absolutely no infrastructure at all. I really do not think the \$270 million is probably truthful, but then a lot about this has been quite deceitful anyway. It is also in the middle of a bushfire-prone area; not a good place to put people of a vulnerable cohort. We support a northern prison and we support investment in the north of Tasmania.

I will have a quick discussion about the fire component of the Government's Budget but I will not go into too much detail because we will leave that for Estimates. We had a Public Works Committee meeting the other day, of which I am lucky to be a member, and we were able to visit that Sorell hub, as I stated before. I can see there are no forward Estimates for resourcing and equipment for the fire component or the SES component of that Sorell hub. There is a lot of uncertainty about what that site will be.

The minister has not ruled out compulsory closures or amalgamations by stealth of volunteer fire brigades. We know that members of the Midway Point, Orielton and Wattle Hill volunteer brigades were not consulted and the future of their brigades is quite precarious. Once that is built, whether it is a 24-hour site or a day site, it will mean there will be changes to those other volunteer brigades close by. A dialogue with these brigades would have been helpful to try to work through that process. I know Midway Point is a fantastic brigade and I do not think they want to stop working out of where they are, but that is something the Government will have to start doing some proper consultation with them on.

I also extend our thanks to Tasmania Police for their incredible response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have done and are continuing to do an amazing job. Thanks to the SES and Tasmania fire workers, volunteers and couriers for the incredible job that they have done and continue to do. I will never think there is enough government funding in any of these areas in the Budget and I think the Government has failed to address the problem of first responders doing the work of other government agencies. Some action in this area would allow police to focus their attention on crime, traffic, energy and management.

Time expired.

[4.58 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I am very proud to provide some more details on the Greens' alternative budget following on from the presentation earlier by the Greens Leader, Cassy O'Connor.

The global community is facing multiple crises. Right now we are seeing and feeling the impact of job losses and the huge disruptions to our lives from our efforts to curb the highly infectious and deadly COVID-19 pandemic. In Tasmania we have been buffered from the worst of it relative to most other places in the world, but our state is certainly feeling the impacts on many levels and will continue to do so for years to come.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report on global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius has put the world on notice. If we do not make large, unparalleled changes by 2030 we will face extreme problems. Earth's environment and climate has been pushed to breaking point by the current economic paradigm. The extraction and discarding of resource use is not, and never has been, a sustainable way of life. Responding to the culture, to the climate and biodiversity crises requires a significant recalibration of the way that we as a species interact with other fellow species on this planet and how we conceptualise our economy.

As an island community with unique advantages we need to tackle all these challenges at once - the current COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing and evolving climate and biodiversity crises. We have to make sure we keep our eye to the future and the things that we do not experience in a physical, tangible way at the moment but that scientists tell us are something we should never take our focus away from.

The Greens recognise that reducing emissions and adapting to the changing climate must be a priority of any responsible government. In 2010 a Greens climate minister delivered Climate Futures, which was an unprecedented and detailed analysis of Tasmania's climate vulnerability and opportunities then. Today, our Climate Futures 2030 budget is a continuation of that work and sets Tasmania on a new course for 2030 to match the time line for action that has been given to us by the global scientific community. We fund the architecture that we need for our state to undertake the planning and serious action necessary for responding to the climate emergency. We have to be guided by the expert scientists and do everything we can to limit our emissions.

Climate Futures 2030 is underpinned by the Greens' flagship Safe Climate Bill 2020. That bill provides an attainable jobs-rich and carbon-neutral transition pathway for Tasmania. The bill establishes binding 1 per cent annual reduction targets for each sector in our economy. It delivers adaptation and carbon storage plans and has robust analysis, oversight and reporting provisions to make sure these things happen. We will fund a chief scientist to oversee all government policy, ensuring the Government's response to the climate emergency is grounded in the latest evidence.

We would establish the Safe Climate Commission to provide advice to government on policy and to ensure that there is compliance with the Safe Climate Bill 2020. To make sure there is the capacity for parliamentary oversight and leadership on the climate emergency, the Greens would establish a climate change joint standing committee of parliament. We will fund a unit in this budget to develop and monitor the programs and make sure our state meets legislated emissions abatement obligations. We will also fund the work to develop and

maintain Tasmania's state climate adaptation plan to provide councils with advice as they develop their own municipal level climate adaptation plans.

Maintaining and growing our carbon stores is more essential than ever in a climate emergency. We fund a carbon store plan and provision of ongoing advice to landowners and Government about new carbon sequestration opportunities. We will protect lutruwita/Tasmania's carbon stores by ending native forest logging and providing for reskilling workers so that they can undertake landscape restoration and rewild to protect the carbon that is already in the landscape and draw down even more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

This island's forests are part of our shared island heritage and a carbon bank for the world and our children's future. In a time of climate emergency, governments must reduce emissions wherever and however possible through the levers at its disposal. In 2017, cars made up 54 per cent of the carbon emissions from transport in Tasmania and accounted for nearly 10 per cent of our state's total emissions. The Tasmanian Government can play a critical role in making hybrid or electric vehicles accessible and cost-effective for as many Tasmanians as possible. By harnessing our state's renewable energy advantages, we can electrify the vehicle fleet by 2030 and reduce power costs and drive down emissions from transport. The Greens will also fund the transition to low-emissions farming and a sustainable waste management system that will power Tasmania's transition to the circular economy.

The recent Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO State of the Climate 2020 for Australia is grim reading. It says that 2019 was a year of intensifying drought over eastern Australia with high temperature records and we know about the devastating bushfires. In 2019 a record was set for the Australian average annual temperature, but that report tells us that 2019 was the sort of year we might expect in an average year if the world reaches 1.5 degrees Celsius warming.

Our scientists tell us that Australia has already warmed on average 1.44 degrees. We have a wafer-thin amount of time before last year becomes an average year. COVID-19 and the pandemic only marginally slowed the current rate of carbon dioxide accumulation across the planet. Emissions declined over the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, but only by a piffling 8 per cent and, even so, emissions overall are still climbing.

Madam Speaker, the science is clear. The world will continue heating for decades to come. We have a grave responsibility to protect lives and to safeguard community assets and our priceless wilderness values from the increasing threat of extreme weather events, especially bushfires in Tasmania, but also extreme winds and floods. That means governments are responsible for planning and resourcing to prepare communities.

The final report of the National Bushfire and Climate Summit 2020 from the 33 ex-chief firefighters and other expert climate leaders, recommended that every state in Australia should set up regional hubs to provide accessible bushfire information and assist communities in disaster response planning. We have committed \$5 million a year to establish community emergency hubs in Tasmania's 10 fire management areas.

The reviews of the recent major bushfires in Tasmania, and the review of the Black Summer fires in eastern Australia, all recommend early response to fire. In Tasmania, fire will mostly be coming from lightning strikes in the future. Fully trained and resourced remote area firefighters are key to successful firefighting efforts in remote areas. We will fund 20 additional

full-time equivalent remote area firefighters. We will also fund the outfitting of aircraft with thermal imaging cameras and night vision fire spotting and flight capabilities.

When disaster strikes it is often volunteers who are on the ground first and who stay last to protect us and keep our roads and towns safe. SES and TFS volunteers are the essential backbone of our emergency response in Tasmania and we are so grateful for everything they do for us. We will provide funding for resources and staff to improve volunteer training and wellbeing for SES and TFS volunteers.

The establishment of volunteer remote area firefighters will build on the manifest skills and the willingness of people in the community to contribute to putting out fires in remote wilderness areas. We have a vast storehouse of very expert wilderness walkers and scientists who are willing and able to do that work. So far, their enthusiasm and expertise has been stymied by a lack of commitment from this government and also by a lack of training opportunities. We commit funds and resources in this budget to that essential volunteer training.

Water security will be a growing issue as the planet continues to heat. We will fund an ongoing program of hydrological modelling, to monitor water use and to maintain environmental flows for inland rivers and streams and the life that they support. As temperatures rise, so does the risk of people dying during heatwaves, especially in our major cities.

Greening cities with vegetation provides evaporative cooling, protects people during heatwaves and creates flood basins to protect against flooding events. It also, importantly, improves mental health and wellbeing. That is why we funded a substantial matched pool for councils to invest in green spaces around Tasmania.

Madam Speaker, lutruwita/Tasmania's iconic wilderness is a relic of the super continent, Gondwana, that was shaped over millions of years. The Tasmanian wilderness world heritage area meets seven of the 10 criteria for listing on the UN world heritage list, and it is the only property on that list with the word, 'wilderness', in its name. It truly is a gem. This island's wilderness and national parks draw visitors to the state from across the globe. They also underpin Tasmania's clean, green and natural brand. They are the natural home for incredible biodiversity.

Globally, one million species are currently facing extinction. Humans have reduced animal populations by 60 per cent since just 1970. We are one of seven nations that are responsible for some 60 per cent of the world's biodiversity losses. In 2017, Australia was the second worst offender behind Indonesia in the amount of biodiversity that we caused to disappear. We humans are directly responsible for what scientists have referred to as the sixth mass extinction that our planet has ever faced. That is a terrible record, but it also means that this is the only mass extinction that provides us with the position and the ability to do something about it and to change our approach.

In a time of climate emergency and biodiversity crises, Tasmania can show the world how to protect and how to restore large areas of natural habitat, both terrestrial and marine. Now more than ever before, our Government has a solemn responsibility to ensure that wild places remain just that, safe from privatisation and exploitation. The Government also has a key role in supporting the restoration of ecosystems across the island. Tasmania trades globally

on its brand - clean, green and natural Tasmania. This is what the world wants and this gives us privileged access to markets. But our island's clean air and water and environmental integrity have to be protected by strong legislation and policy to keep them authentic and enduring.

Preserving waterways, securing sustainable food production and protecting native wildlife and habitats should be at the heart of the Government's plan and it is at the heart of the Greens' alternative budget. We will restructure the utterly conflicted Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment. Instead, we will create the Department of Environment and Parks. Our funding includes the establishment of the coastal adaptation unit for additional water monitoring and for proper staffing of the threatened species unit, which has so much work to do and so few people to do it.

Conservation of our native wildlife, especially protecting rare, threatened and endangered species is critical to maintaining our high functioning ecosystems. Renewable energy is necessary for a rapid transition away from coal, oil and gas but we must plan where our large wind farms and transmission line routes are developed to make sure they do not threaten birds such as eagles or migratory, endangered or rare birds, or forest communities. They also must not damage local communities. Our budget funds are planned for large energy infrastructure and the mapping of suitable zones in consultation with local communities, and with the expertise of environmental specialists.

We know that feral and stray cats kill wildlife in their thousands every year. They also have a serious impact on Tasmania's primary producers and pose a threat to human health. We have provided an additional half a million dollars a year for community education and to support enforcement activities for cat confinement.

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently beholden to ministerial directions and Government policy. This is having a devastating impact on protecting wildlife from developments across the state. We will remove the interference of Government policy, which currently directs the EPA to prioritise industry productivity over the environment. This is the core reason for our decision to fund a truly independent EPA. As well as funding the EPA to become independent under legislation, we also fund it to become a structurally self-contained authority, making sure it is far from ministerial influence and is focused on protecting the environment first.

Marine biodiversity is currently under threat from warming waters, invasive species, over-fishing and over-farming. Our marine environment also needs robust protections. We will fund a marine protection taskforce to develop marine protected areas around our coast and an overdue update of Tasmania's marine environmental laws to make sure they put science, independence and consultation at the centre of decision-making.

The planet's two global seed banks, the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in England and the Global Seed Bank in the Arctic Svalbard Archipelago, are based in the northern hemisphere and face potential threats from climate heating and other factors. We have directed \$60 million in this budget to constructing a state-of-the-art global seed bank for the southern hemisphere in Tasmania to help safeguard the world's plant life biodiversity and our own precious Tasmanian seed heritage.

At the last estimate, roughly 600 000 tonnes of waste go to landfill every year in Tasmania and diverting waste from landfill is the most effective means to address our state's waste emissions. We fund an options paper for transitioning our state away from landfill. We will also establish infrastructure grants over the next two years for the speedier rollout of container deposit machines to reduce litter in our waterways and marine environment.

We would extend the Hobart City Council's ban on single-use takeaway plastics statewide and fund an education campaign to support businesses and the broader community in this transition.

Our state's hospitals are struggling to cope with rising and continuing demand. Our funding focus must be to prevent people from needing to go to hospital in the first place. Individual health and wellness are the heart of a flourishing community. Tackling the rising demand for emergency services begins with properly resourced preventative health services and with more allied health services in communities to help keep people well for longer. We fund an additional 50 allied health professionals in community health centres across Tasmania and a white paper for preventative health reform in Tasmania that will move us towards 5 per cent of the Health budget being spent on preventative health.

Drug education and rehabilitation and investing in the population's health helps ensure that people do not fall through service cracks and can have quality and meaningful healthcare across their lifetime. We know that criminalising personal drug use leads to poor health outcomes for individuals and can lead to an avoidable cycle of crime. We allocate funding to decriminalise personal drug use, provide more drug education programs, drug rehabilitation staffing and also new drug rehabilitation facilities across the state.

Active transport is critical for health, happiness and also for reducing the carbon emissions from driving. We fund \$10 million a year into an ongoing matching pool for councils to invest in active transport options including cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

The Greens believe that young people and children in lutruwita/Tasmania should feel and be safe and we will make sure government services are fully scrutinised so that children and their parents can be confident that they will always be protected from abuse, sexual or any other type. We commit funding in this budget to a commission of inquiry into the allegations of the behaviour of a former LGH employee who may also have worked at other government services.

The implosion in the corrections system is a by-product of the Government's ineffectual tough-on-crime policies. It is a negative feedback loop of hopelessness and crime and is certainly not making communities safer. The Greens know it will take a serious policy reform to turn the corner so we have invested in an ambitious program of restorative justice and diversion programs to improve recidivism rates, bring down the prison population and improve safety. We will fund a restorative justice policy and programs unit because the current correctional facilities are not able to deliver enough rehabilitative programs and that is one of the reasons recidivism rates are increasingly rising and our prisons are bursting at the seams.

We will also fund an alcohol and drug court to help reduce reoffending and to provide many wider social benefits and cost savings to the court and prison system. We will fund an extension to the drug diversion program that exists at the moment so that alcohol-related

offending, which is substantial and has hugely damaging community costs, would be included in that program to address the causes of offending and save public money and reduce crime.

Importantly, the Greens would fund a refurbishment of the northern remand centre which is not fit for purpose and an unjust place for people to be housed. That funding is provided for significant refurbishments of the northern remand centre. As we have been on record saying before, some of the savings we make in this budget will come from not funding the northern prison, so we have secured money from not building a northern prison towards safer and more just rehabilitative processes to reduce crime and to make sure that the lives for people who leave our prison system are not just safer but healthier and have more possibility for engagement with the wider community.

The global transitions that have occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate and biodiversity crises are already acting upon our state and will continue to affect our way of life into the future. We also have a growing population and that will probably increase as a result not just of the climate crisis. The bushfires last year certainly motivated many people to move from the mainland down to Tasmania, but our situation in Tasmania as an island state and how well we have weathered the COVID-19 pandemic so far has also lent people an eye to the great benefits of living in Tasmania.

We understand and accept that settlement and land use patterns will change and that is why we will actively plan and map out a strategy for how we can retain the qualities we all love about Tasmania that make us a beacon of naturalness in the world. Our state's planning decisions must reflect the demands of the climate emergency and this post-COVID migration. Planning has to also prioritise environmental protection, public participation and it has to value shared public places and a sense of character and community for the people who live in different regions.

Robust planning policies protect our island's values and do not exploit them. Maintaining the quality and integrity of our democratic institutions is also an essential part of safeguarding good future decision-making. We would change the name of Department of State Growth to the Department of State Planning and fund the employment of a chief engineer, a state architect and a state demographer as well as a local area strategic development unit.

We would also undertake a process of state policy planning, development of state policies. We would develop six state policies over four years - namely, climate change, settlement, transport and infrastructure, biodiversity management, public consultation, health and wellbeing and cultural preservation.

We make savings in the planning area from other areas, but in particular by defunding the office of the Coordinator General. That office has been a beacon of secrecy and has caused much grief to communities around Tasmania. Arrangements have been negotiated far away from the sunlight of local communities. Those communities have had to experience developments popping up that have been negotiated behind closed doors, such as the potential Cambria Green development on the east coast and the definite Shandon Kangaroo Bay development, as well as many others. This is not the process that Tasmania needs to take us into the future. We need to have a free and independent process that provides true consultation opportunities for communities.

Responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis requires a significant recalibration of social and environmental policies, as well as an economic restructuring, to ensure our economy

works for the people and the planet - not the other way around, as it is at the moment. Tasmania is transitioning from an extractive economy to one that relies on the island's brand and our high value niche products. As an island we have so much to be proud of and so many advantages to leverage. Our Greens' budget builds on our advantages. Our budget capitalises on what Tasmanians are proud of, and introduces reforms and a pathway to transition the state's economy into a prosperous and safe climate future.

[5.27 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this year has been a year like no other. We will remember 2020 for the most serious public health emergency in our lifetime - COVID-19. As the Premier has said, we entered the pandemic from a position of strength with one of the strongest economies in the nation and with no net debt. We used our balance sheet as an economic stabiliser, delivering the largest economic and social support package in the nation as a proportion of our economy, at over \$1 billion. The Budget takes that response even further and will set Tasmania up not just to recover from COVID-19 but to be even better.

As we all know, in March 2020 the Premier declared the first state of emergency in living memory under the Emergency Management Act 2006. This was a legal framework for emergency powers such as border restrictions that helped limit the impact of the virus on our community.

The State Controller, Mr Darren Hine, has had responsibility for coordinating the whole of Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Deputy State Controller, Mr Scott Tilyard, has also undertaken this function. Police officers and State Service employees from across Government have taken up positions to work with the State Controller in the State Control Centre working in policy, legal, planning, public information and recovery areas. I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the State Controller, the Deputy State Controller and the State Control Centre team.

Since March this year, police officers have enforced compliance with the unprecedented restrictions on movement, and have gone about their business professionally and with good judgment. Tasmania Police have maintained a high level of public confidence and trust during this challenging period of enforcing compliance. I congratulate our police officers on the enormous contribution they have made to assisting Tasmania to continue to be a safe place to live and work.

Crime and public order offences declined during the pandemic, with a 2 per cent reduction in recorded crime including assaults, burglaries, stolen motor vehicles and arson-related offences. Now more than ever, we need to continue to invest in our emergency services to keep Tasmanians safe. Whether it is the battle against crime or bushfire, flood or pandemic, our emergency services are there for us and we know we need to keep acting decisively to meet the challenges before us.

We know that policing is becoming increasingly complex and our community more diverse. In addition to traditional demands, policing now faces multi-jurisdictional crime types such as cybercrime, online fraud, organised crime, firearms trafficking, serious drug distribution, online child exploitation and serious financial crime. The budget provides \$46 million for the next stage of Project Unify, to deliver an integrated and sophisticated

operational information system. This will ensure Tasmanian police have the best possible ICT system to better respond to and solve crimes.

There is no doubt that moving to this new technology will improve the way police respond to and solve crimes, ultimately resulting in a safer working environment for police and better outcomes for the community. This additional funding will also deliver an online crime reporting function, where members of the public can use an online portal to report certain categories of crime. Importantly, this also represents a significant opportunity for the Tasmanian ICT sector, and we know they have the skills and expertise to successfully compete for the investment and create jobs.

We are also investing \$8.9 million in the budget to employ an additional 20 police officers over the next four years. These additional officers will support Tasmania's COVID-19 response capacity in areas such as quarantine checking and compliance and assessment which are critical services in helping to keep our community safe. Following their COVID-19 response work, the additional officers will transition to full-time Special Operations Group (SOG) positions. SOG officers are highly trained and equipped to respond to a wide range of security situations, and can be deployed during high risk policing incidents whether in response to specific security and safety threats or to support criminal investigations.

We delivered 113 police officers in our first term of government. We have committed a further 125 police officers over this term of government for deployment to frontline positions in rural and regional Tasmania. Now, we are adding a further 20 police officers to deliver our election commitment to reinstate a full-time SOG capability to protect Tasmanians.

At the completion of this recruitment, Tasmania Police will have 1378 FTEs - the highest number of police in the agency's history. Recruiting is ongoing for the next scheduled course and I encourage anyone who is considering a rewarding career in policing to visit the Tasmania Police website. Our police service does an exceptional job. It is a huge credit to the serving men and women of Tasmania Police that local communities recognise and value their hard work and commitment.

This budget is set to create jobs, bolstering confidence and investment in our communities while continuing to keep Tasmanians safe through major infrastructure upgrades across our emergency services. Funding of \$12 million has been allocated to complete the Large Vessel Replacement Program that is providing enhanced search, rescue and law enforcement capabilities.

An additional \$13.2 million is also included to continue upgrading police houses across Tasmania, ensuring that the homes are modern, functional and fit for purpose to support our police officers and their families living in regional areas.

Our plans to futureproof emergency service infrastructure in the Sorell area are continuing through the \$11.5 million commitment to the emergency services hub. This will deliver a modern infrastructure that services the needs of a growing community for decades to come.

We are investing \$4.2 million to complete the Longford Police Station which is located on a greenfield site at the corner of Cressy Road and Peel Street, and \$4.5 million to rebuild

the New Norfolk Police Station on its existing site, with work expected to be completed prior to the end of 2021.

We have allocated \$7 million to refurbish the Launceston Police Station to undertake work that will significantly improve the working environment for officers and staff. In addition, \$3.5 million has been allocated for a fit-for-purpose state operation centre facility to provide a whole-of-government coordination and management for the preparation, response and recovery phases associated with major statewide emergency events.

Keeping Tasmanians safe is a priority for the Tasmanian Government. That is why we are funding the delivery of the Tasmanian Government Radio Network as part of this year's Budget. This significant technology project will modernise the way our emergency services and government agencies communicate, helping them to keep each other safe.

Telstra is the preferred tenderer to deliver the TasGRN that replaces five existing separate radio networks to create one unified digital and interoperative government radio network. The Budget and forward Estimates confirm the provision of \$120 million over four years for the new network that will initially be used by eight organisations allowing them to better serve the Tasmanian community.

Recent events here in Tasmania and in other Australian jurisdictions have shown us how important it is to have fast and secure communications to respond to bushfires, floods, natural disasters and other emergencies. The TasGRN Project is expected to create up to 50 jobs during the three-year construction phase with an additional position to help run and oversee the network once it is up and running.

The threat of bushfire is always present. It always has been and always will be. Reducing the risk of bushfire is essential to protecting Tasmania's life, property, infrastructure and our unique and beautiful natural assets. The 2019-20 period was a very challenging year for fire services across Australia. Unprecedented bushfire activity since September 2019 affected large areas across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Thankfully, our Tasmanian fire season was not as severe. However, the Tasmanian Fire Service still responded to over 1200 vegetation fires and aircraft were deployed to more than 40 fires, with the longest duration fires being Fingal, Swansea and the south-west complex fires at Strathgordon.

With last year's horrific fire season firmly in our minds, the state Government has provided additional funding to accelerate the TFS and SES programs that improve bushfire protection and mitigation and floods and emergency responses in Tasmania. We are investing \$17.6 million in a comprehensive package of bushfire mitigation and prevention initiatives.

This year, the Government committed \$4 million to the State Fire Commission. This funding offsets the freezing of the fire service levies as part of the COVID-19 response and also included \$1.5 million to implement our volunteer remote area team firefighting capability and for the operation of the statewide air desk. An additional \$4 million is provided in the 2020-21 Budget to the State Fire Commission bushfire capability to boost the state fire commission bushfire capability further, including creation of a new division in Tasmania Fire Service to manage and plan a response to bushfire. In addition, \$9.3 million has been provided

to bolster the Government's fuel reduction program which will see the appointment of 12 additional crew.

The Government will also build on the success of the Red Hot Tips program through a further \$295 000 investment. In recognition of their key part in bushfire management, the program is empowering landowners to actively manage bushfire risk on their own property. These initiatives combined will lead to a total of 31 new positions for the Tasmanian Fire Service, including a new deputy chief officer.

This year's state Budget builds on the important work we have already done with more resources than ever to respond to any bushfire that does occur. The TFS has trained an additional 30 remote area firefighters from our volunteer cohort in addition to the 100 career firefighters already trained to enhance our remote area capability and improve our capacity to deal with fires in remote and difficult terrain.

This year, Tasmania will have access to 11 aircraft that will be prepositioned in strategic locations across the state. This is more firefighting aircraft in Tasmania than ever before to allow us to keep bushfires small until ground crews arrive. Our capability in early detection of fires has also increased through the addition of an aerial intelligence-gathering helicopter to the fleet. This helicopter will gather data to support targeted operations. This increase in aerial assets complements our local arrangements of nearly 25 'call when needed' aircraft across Tasmania.

The TFS also recruited an additional 28 career firefighters over two programs for the 2019-20 season. This is the largest intake of career firefighters in a single year in over 20 years. The TFS has also put aside funding for a further 30 firefighters in 2021.

We have completed 188 fuel reduction burns across nearly 35 000 hectares in strategic locations to protect Tasmania communities this year. The Government's fuel reduction program continues to be nation leading in its 'tenure-blind' strategic risk approach to fuel reduction. At the local scale, many Tasmanian communities have significantly reduced bushfire risk as a result of the program. Relative risk is the lowest it has been in 15 years and on track to meet the fuel reduction program's 2022-23 target.

I thank all our TFS career firefighters who work tirelessly to keep Tasmanians safe all year around. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed some interesting challenges to fire and emergency service organisations around the country. The TFS has prepared a scalable and agile set of arrangements that can be activated in the unlikely event that interstate assistance is required during this bushfire season. These arrangements will incorporate the full suite of measures within the TFS COVID-19 safe response support plan to minimise COVID-19 risk whilst facilitating prompt and effective interstate support should it be required to protect Tasmanians from significant fires.

I know that the SES has also been diligently working through a similar body of work for their preparedness for emergency and flood response. The Budget allocated \$1.7 million to support the State Emergency Service to provide community protection planning for flood and storm hazards. There is nearly \$1.2 million for SES regional emergency management planning and development officers to support municipal authorities with emergency management planning and education support. There is \$2.7 million allocated for the national emergency

alert system and \$5.4 million to address costs associated with the triple-zero emergency service.

The Tasmanian Government's priority is keeping Tasmanians safe but we are also committed to ensuring that the emergency service volunteers who help us do that are supported and cared for. Therefore funding of \$250 000 has been allocated in the Budget to provide additional preventative mental health and wellbeing services for our fire and SES volunteer workforce. Volunteers deliver critical frontline emergency service activities and we recognise that there can be significant trauma attached to undertaking work of this kind. It can be stressful work and we must do everything we can to support their health and wellbeing. The Tasmanian Government takes the mental health and wellbeing of all employees and volunteers extremely seriously and this Budget's commitment complements our \$6 million investment into proactive and preventative health and wellbeing for our emergency responders.

This Budget is about strengthening our communities and our volunteer workforce is a critical part of that. To all our wonderful Tasmania Fire Service and State Emergency Service volunteers who give their time and effort to help their fellow Tasmanians, on behalf of the Government and our community, I say thank you. Your work, dedication and commitment saves lives and helps individuals in their times of need. I want to recognise the significant effort from our volunteers, TFS and SES, who have supported the Tasmanian community during COVID-19.

Our Police, Fire and State Emergency Services have played a key role in the response to COVID-19, and so have our local councils. The Government recognises that local councils play a critical role in the lives of Tasmanians and are the coalface of supporting our recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic at the local and regional level. Local government, like state and federal governments, are in a unique position to use the balance sheets to support the economy and the community through this difficult time. Local governments also have a number of tools to hand that can help with local communities' economic support.

I thank and commend the local government sector for its proactive approach to rolling out its own local stimulus and relief measures to Tasmanian communities. All councils adopted a zero-percentage increase on their general rate for the 2020-21 financial year. Financial hardship policies have been adjusted across municipalities to provide further financial assistance to those ratepayers who are doing it tough and need help the most.

To support economic recovery in their communities, many councils have brought forward capital works projects to support jobs while delivering benefits to the ratepayers. The state Government's \$200 million Local Government Loans Program has assisted enormously with ensuring that councils have access to a line of finance that facilitates this prioritised local investment. The take-up across the state has been fantastic, with \$144.3 million in no-interest borrowings approved to date under the program. The loans are being utilised for upgrades, renovations and maintenance on existing local government infrastructure, as well as other measures councils are taking to respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

These measures are all providing welcome support at the local level across the state, helping our communities to get back on their feet. The state Government is committed to working collaboratively and supportively with the local government sector throughout the

COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. There is also, of course, a schedule of ongoing work that the Government has been undertaking with the sector outside the pandemic.

In April 2020 the Government announced 48 reforms to be incorporated into the Tasmanian local government legislative framework. This announcement followed two years of extensive consultation with the local government sector, stakeholders and the community since the review commenced in 2018. As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic emergency impacted on the time frames for drafting and consulting on new local government legislation, but this has also provided an opportunity to reflect on our experiences through the pandemic and incorporate those lessons into the drafting of the new act. The Government will be releasing an exposure draft of its new local government bill for public consultation in the first half of 2021. Finalising the implementing Tasmania's new local government legislation is necessary to deliver the Government's commitment to create a contemporary framework that supports innovation, flexibility, productivity and accountability in the local government sector. I am pleased that the funding of \$300 000 has been allocated in the 2020-21 financial year to finalise the review.

The 2020-21 Budget also makes provisions for ongoing work of the Local Government Division within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The division contributes to the well-governed, responsive and sustainable local government sector, which acts in the best interests of the Tasmanian ratepayers and residents. The work of the division includes supporting the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Local Government, leading regulatory and policy initiatives that supports a sustainable local government sector and strengthening the collaboration and the collaborative links between councils and the state Government. I acknowledge the significant work and contribution made by the director and Local Government Division during the pandemic so far.

As a member for Lyons I acknowledge other important budgetary initiatives that will support jobs and make the lives of Tasmanians better. Lyons is a big electorate and infrastructure is critical to connecting people and businesses to each other, to their jobs, to their families and friends, and to fun. The Budget funds a \$20.8 million upgrade to the Great Eastern Drive plus \$4.4 million to extend the Great Eastern Drive to Binalong Bay Road, \$79.9 million to upgrade Illawarra Road, \$576 million for the Bridgewater bridge, \$6 million for the Campbell Town pedestrian underpass, and \$247 000 for Esk Main Road.

The Budget will provide \$37 million to duplicate the Midway Point and Sorell causeways as a part of the \$350 million South-East Traffic Solution from Sorell to Cambridge. There is \$61.1 million for upgrades to state roads including Mudwalls Road, Richmond Road and Highland Lakes Road. There is important community infrastructure for Freycinet, with \$8.4 million over two years from 2021 to mitigate the issues identified in the recent Freycinet master plan through enabling the construction of the new sewage pumping station and rising main to transfer sewage from Wineglass Bay trail head sewerage system to the upgraded Three Lagoons sewage treatment plant.

Education infrastructure also gets a tremendous boost in Lyons. The Budget funds the \$1.9 million project to replace the demountable building with permanent contemporary learning and break-out spaces, relocation of the kindergarten playground and upgrades to other infrastructure at the Molesworth Primary School. Funding of \$40 million budgeted for the building of a new years 7 to 12 high school at Brighton. The Budget funds a \$4.3 million

redevelopment of the Jordan River Learning Federation School Farm, and \$3 million for the redevelopment of the Sheffield School Farm.

The first stage of the \$3.8 million project at the Sorell school upgrade is funded. In addition, \$375 000 is allocated in 2021 to commence the \$22 million project for the redevelopment of the Sorell school to consolidate the school and create a state-of-the-art kindergarten to year 12 learning facility, including new science, technology, engineering, and maths facilities. Education infrastructure investments, when combined with the additional 250 teachers and 80 teachers' assistants to be employed over the next six years, demonstrates our commitment to our children's future and, in my case, to my grandchildren's future. As someone who went to school in a small country town, this regional investment is fantastic.

As a former TAFE teacher, I am pleased that the 2020-21 Budget includes an additional \$2 million over two years to extend the skills workforce to meet industry demand initiatives. This funding will provide an increase in specialist teaching staff to address high demand areas including aged care, electrotechnology, plumbing and nursing.

I also have a strong interest in the farming community and I acknowledge what we are doing to support agriculture. It is very pleasing to see that the Budget includes \$15.9 million for the South East Irrigation Scheme and \$5 million for the Weeds Action Fund.

As always, there are many more important items in the Budget to talk about but I have only so much time. I congratulate the Treasurer on his vision for the future while delivering jobs and investment now. I support the Budget.

[5.57 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the Treasurer for delivering the 2020-21 Budget. The endorsements of our Budget are quite revealing. I start with passing some of these quotes on.

Rob Mallett, Executive Officer, Tasmanian Small Business Council, in a media release on 12 November 2020 -

Today's Tasmanian Budget, whilst forged in the fires of the world's worst crisis in a hundred years, provides unprecedented opportunity for the Tasmanian small business sector.

Matthew Pollock, Executive Director, Master Builders Tasmania, 12 November 2020 -

Premier Peter Gutwein is committed to building our way out of this economic crisis, and today's State Budget makes good on that pledge with construction put at the centre of our recovery strategy. Construction will be our economic accelerator and a jobs generator.

Stuart Collins, the Executive Director of the Housing Industry Association -

The Government has handed down a budget designed to increase confidence, grow our economy, attract investment, support jobs and rebuild a stronger Tasmania.

Pattie Chugg, CEO of Shelter Tasmania -

Shelter Tas welcomes the State Government's 2020-21 budget, with increased spending for social housing and homelessness services. A building-led recovery will help increase jobs and create more affordable homes for Tasmanians.

Today's announcement that \$300 million over four years will be spent on social and affordable housing will provide certainty and a pipeline for new construction. Shelter Tas welcomes this clear commitment to increasing much-needed public and community housing across the state.

Luke Martin, the Chief Executive of the Tourism Industry Council -

The Tasmanian Government has walked the talk when it comes to support our tourism recovery from COVID. We welcome the record expenditure for Tourism Tasmania to invest in destination marketing and partnerships with our airlines to restore our visitor demand quickly, and ensure we can compete with other destinations across Australia.

As Premier and Tourism Minister, Peter Gutwein has had to make some very painful decisions over the past few months that have impacted severely on our tourism industry. But today he has delivered for us, and has given us a platform to surge ahead over the next 12 months.

Peter Skillern, the CEO of the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association -

The State budget has once again shown the government's support for agriculture in this state, in conjunction with recent announcements the total package for agriculture is to be warmly welcomed.

I will finish that there but there are numerous similar comments.

The Gutwein Liberal Government has delivered an A+ budget to rebuild this state. We took a state in recession in 2014 and built Tasmania to number one in the country and Tasmanians know that we will do that again and it will not happen by building ships in Finland. We have delivered an A+ budget and Tasmanians are smart people. They know there is only one party that can deliver a fully costed vision to rebuild this economy after COVID-19. We will emerge from COVID-19 as a stronger and prouder state because our vision is based on jobs, confidence and community.

My electorate of Lyons represents many regional communities reliant on agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, tourism and small business. We delivered an extensive package for regional Tasmania. Then Labor, to its shame, totally ignores these communities and treats them like fools and these communities will not forget. Labor abandoned them in 2010 and joined with the Greens to bring this state to its knees for four years - and everybody knows you would do it again in a heartbeat.

In 2020, Australians have been tested like never before - flood, drought, fires and a global pandemic. COVID-19 has resulted in the most severe global economic crisis since the Great

Depression. Tasmania has not been immune. Our economy has been hit, and hit hard. So many Tasmanians through no fault of their own are doing it tough. Lives have been lost, businesses have closed, and jobs have gone. The Great Depression and the two world wars did not bring Australia to its knees and neither will COVID-19. Tasmanians are resilient people and we are a proud nation and we will get through this together. The way to rebuild a stronger and more resilient Tasmania is to invest heavily to support jobs, to regain confidence and to rebuild our economy and our community.

We entered the pandemic from a position of strength. We delivered the largest economic and social support package in the nation at over \$1 billion which has come at a cost. The actions taken are working with two-thirds of the 19 100 Tasmanians who lost their jobs having now returned to work. Tasmania has been ranked as the best-performing economy in the nation - equipment investment up 15.2 per cent on the decade average; retail trade 14.1 per cent higher than 2019; more Tasmanians employed than September 2019. We must continue to build on our businesses. That is why in this Budget, Tasmanians will see many targeted and temporary support measures continue.

Importantly, as our economy returns to growth, there is a pathway back to the black with a return to a modest surplus in 2022-23 with a clear pathway out.

In 2020-21, \$145 million has been allocated to a central COVID-19 provision in Finance-General. The provision initially supports response measures that align with recommendations made by PESRAC, the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council. Of the \$145 million, \$50 million has been allocated towards initiatives to support businesses in our economy, assist women back to work, support the cultural and performing arts sector, improve our environment and invest in public housing and infrastructure upgrades, while \$4.4 million will be invested for an ongoing centralised COVID-19 coordination centre. The remainder of the provision will be held as an emergency for COVID-19-related health, economic and social response measures and to support the ongoing management of our response to the pandemic, as well as supporting the next phase of the PESRAC recommendations.

This Budget aims to create jobs through infrastructure and community investment, providing the certainty and confidence to rebuild. The 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget provides for nearly \$5 billion of infrastructure investment. Infrastructure investment includes around \$4.1 billion in the general government sector and an investment of nearly \$800 million through our government businesses.

Rebuilding our economy includes building more roads, rail and bridges, and this is why this Government will invest \$2.4 billion into better roads and bridges. This includes almost \$1 billion over the next two years for roads and bridges infrastructure. It includes in my electorate of Lyons \$576 million for the new Bridgewater bridge; \$61.1 million for state road upgrades, including Mudwalls Road, Richmond Road and the Highland Lakes Road; \$37 million towards duplication of the Midway Point and Sorell causeways as part of the \$350 million South-East Traffic Solution from Sorell to Cambridge; \$20.8 million in upgrades to the Great Eastern Drive as part of the investment in roads for the Tasmanian visitor economy; \$4.4 million to extend the Great Eastern Drive, the Binalong Bay Road; \$247 000 for the Esk Main Road; \$6 million for the Campbell Town pedestrian underpass; and \$79.9 million in upgrades to the Illawarra Road.

These and many other projects we are funding will set Tasmania up for the future and investing in our local communities will support local jobs. We expect this infrastructure package will support around 6000 jobs annually and a total of around 25 000 jobs over the next four years. We know that building more infrastructure means more jobs now.

In this Budget we will invest \$391.2 million across our hospitals and health system. This will include \$89.8 million for the Royal Hobart Hospital stage 2 redevelopment, including an expanded emergency department; \$79.8 million for the continuing redevelopment of the Launceston General Hospital; \$33 million for the continued upgrade of the Mersey Community Hospital; and \$19.8 million for more mental health beds. In addition to \$11.5 million in upgrades, the Budget provides a further \$10 million for regional health and ambulance facilities; \$2.1 million for the Campbell Town ambulance station; \$25.3 million for rural paramedics statewide, including continued funding for Longford, Deloraine, St Helens, Bicheno and Dodges Ferry; \$11.5 million for the completion of the new Sorell Emergency Services hub; and \$24.4 million for rural and regional health facilities statewide, including the Ouse Community Health Centre and Sorell Community Health Centre.

The 2019-20 Budget also invests \$218.1 million in education infrastructure, which I am pleased to say in the Lyons electorate includes \$40 million towards the \$50 million Brighton High School; \$4.2 million for the Brighton Jordan River Learning Federation School Farm development; \$25.3 million for the new K-12 Sorell school; \$28 million for six new child and learning centres statewide including in Sorell; \$2.6 million for the Sheffield School Farm redevelopments; and \$1.7 million for the Molesworth Primary School.

Tasmania is an island, therefore ensuring freight productivity is essential. This is why we are investing \$208.8 million into TasRail to deliver tranches 2 and 3 of the rail revitalisation over four years. This will include \$5 million for TasRail Brighton and Bell Bay to improve the supply chain for the supply chain for the timber industry, including 40 new locally manufactured lock trains being manufactured at Elphinstones at Triabunna; \$160 million dollars for TasWater to continue accelerating this infrastructure pipeline around the state; and support to enable the decommissioning of TasWater's Macquarie Point wastewater treatment plant.

There is \$218.4 million in 2022-23 to replace the TT-Line vessels; \$111.1 million for the new northern regional prison as part of the \$270 million project; \$14.4 million for the Burnie court complex; \$6.3 million for the redevelopment of Ashley Youth Detention Centre as part of a \$7 million project; \$79.9 million for the Southern Remand Centre; and \$9.3 million to support upgrades for the shared facilities at Risdon Prison. There is \$135.4 million in ICT investments to support better government services, including \$57 million for the whole-of-government digital transformation expenditure program; \$46.1 million for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management's Project Unify to upgrade ageing ICT systems that support policing operations; \$21.6 million for the new HR information system in the Department of Health; \$4 million for critical IT network upgrades in TasTAFE; and \$3.2 million over four years for student case management systems in the Department of Education.

As a government we back Tasmanian businesses as our businesses are the engine room of our economy and they will lead our recovery. We recognise the valuable investment businesses make in training the next generation of Tasmanian workers. We want to ensure businesses are confident and prepared to take on more apprentices, trainees and young people.

This Budget will extend the successful payroll tax rebate and small business grants scheme until 30 June 2022, extending these schemes to all industries. This will be an investment of more than \$22 million to significantly boost jobs for apprentices, trainees and youth employees. Combined with the Australian Government support such as boosting apprenticeship wage subsidies, it means there has never been a better time to hire an apprentice or trainee.

This payroll tax rebate will also be extended for all youth employees to 30 June 2022. Let us make it easier for business to do business and continue to remove red tape. We already know that government services interfacing with the development community can be improved. We are investing \$3.4 million over four years to increase Land Titles Office resourcing to enable faster release of titles to market; \$2.4 million over four years to support regulatory approvals and permit processes to assist our peak industry bodies; \$1 million to establish a new not for profit tourism and hospitality RTO; \$1 million to support business access to mental health supports; \$200 000 to support our tourism and hospitality businesses with financial counselling including in the rural areas; and \$10 million for a building project support program.

The global economic environment remains uncertain, with the impact of this crisis to be felt for many years to come. This Budget sets out the path to grow the economy, stabilise debt and then reduce it over time.

Our arts and cultural sectors are an important part of our road to recovery. The Government will invest \$1.5 million for a comprehensive support package to assist artists to develop partnerships across the arts and screen sectors. More than \$2 million has been brought forward to extend the contracts of 19 Tasmanians art organisations. Final payments for funding artists and art organisations have been fast-tracked, to improve immediate cash flow and allow for planning into 2021. \$500 000 is provided over two years, to support screen production investment. \$1 million over two years is available to implement the community arts and cultural development program. A further \$2.5 million has been included, for an arts and cultural support fund, and \$1.5 million in grants to support performers and artists. \$1 million will help to support the production of new work.

Through no fault of their own, hospitality businesses have faced lockdowns and restrictions that have severely impacted their ability to trade. COVID-19 has turned fundamentally sound businesses into loss making businesses. To give the hospitality industry their best chance to succeed, and to keep more people in work, we will provide \$10 million for additional support to ease cost of business pressures, together with reimbursement up to a capped amount against their energy bills for the first quarter of this financial year. Support will be provided to pubs, bars, clubs, cafes and restaurants which have eat-in dining or drinking with turnover above \$50 000. We will also waive the annual liquor licensing fees for 2021, relieving the hospitality industry of around \$1 million in costs.

We will work closely with the sector to design the program to ensure it will be targeted towards those most in need, those who have experienced a significant decline in turnover.

This Budget is investing more into TasTAFE and schools for skills and training, upskilling and reskilling. We want more Tasmanians to participate in and benefit from our economic rebound. This Budget provides an additional \$7 million for the energy trade and water centre of excellence at Clarence bringing the total investment there to \$21 million, jointly funded by the state and Australian Government, to increase the number of low and no-fee key VET courses to develop our future workforce. We are also funding more teachers in TasTAFE.

We will provide \$2 million over two years in high demand areas including aged care, electrotechnology, plumbing and nursing. We will provide \$1.3 million over two years for the Glenorchy jobs hub, and \$950 000 to extend the Sorell employment hub which has been a great initiative and really does work. Approximately \$900 000 will be provided to Hamlet and Troublesmiths over two years, to assist people of all ability to enter the workforce. We will provide \$570 000 over three years to support the achievement of the intended outcomes of the Aboriginal employment strategy and school based traineeship program, and for the delivery of Aboriginal cultural respect training for state senior executive service and senior managers.

Having a job means more than earning an income. It means economic security, independence and it means opportunity. To enable and empower more women to participate more broadly across our economy, we will be providing \$2.5 million over two years to develop a statewide program, and \$400 000 over two years for measures to enhance industry connection and to develop leadership pipelines for women in specific fields. It is now more important than ever that opportunities for women and girls are front and centre in our vision for a stronger, more resilient Tasmania.

Our health system and our incredible staff have gone above and beyond, putting themselves on the front line in the fight against COVID-19. As a Government we say thank you to each and every one of you and we are committed to supporting them to care for our community. That is why we are providing \$9.8 billion in health spending over the next four years, with \$45 million into elective surgery taking our additional investment to \$60 million in elective surgery. We will provide \$50.2 million over the next two years, to support staff and beds in our major hospitals. \$4.9 million will be provided over two years to implement the reform agenda for the alcohol and drugs sector in Tasmania.

Every Tasmanian child deserves the right to a first-class education. In addition to \$204 million for new and refurbished schools, including \$28 million for the six new child and family learning centres, we will inject a further \$14 million over four years to support low-income Tasmanians with school levies and charges. We will provide \$150 000 to deliver the Hobart City Schools Master Plan, and \$1.1 million for state libraries. These initiatives increase our record investment of \$7.5 billion into Tasmanian education over four years.

We are investing record amounts to deliver our new housing and homeless services for Tasmania and Tasmanians in need, including over \$300 million in this Budget. \$100 million is invested and announced as part of our construction blitz. \$16.8 million will continue the safe space program, with over \$6 million of this funding to deliver general health and mental health support to people experiencing homelessness. Over \$10 million is provided for a new Hobart youth foyer including operating costs, and \$22 million for new supported accommodation facilities around Hobart. Almost \$5 million will be available for a new Launceston youth-at-risk centre, including operating costs; \$4 million to expand Magnolia House Women's Shelter; and \$5 million to expand Thyne House and change it into the youth foyer model. There is more than \$10 million for a new Burnie youth foyer, including operating costs, and \$2 million to deliver the north-west men's shelter.

The Treasurer also announced that through the COVID-19 provisions, a further \$15 million will be allocated for public housing heating and energy efficiency initiatives which will ease the cost of living pressures for our public housing tenants.

When it is safe, the 2020-21 Budget positions our state for the return of interstate and international visitors, with \$198.1 million investments over the next four years. This will

include \$68.5 million for the Cradle Mountain cableway and visitor experience as part of the \$86.8 million project; \$19.4 million for Tasmania's next iconic walk in the Tyndall Ranges; \$8.4 million for the Freycinet Peninsula wastewater program; \$3.2 million to boost maintenance in our national parks; \$1.6 million for improved boat and trailer parking for recreational fishers. \$4 million has been provided to the West Coast Wilderness Railway, and \$10 million as part of the \$17.5 million upgrade to meet requirements for an international terminal.

Lyons will also benefit from these initiatives: \$300 000 to support Agfest 2021; \$2.1 million for the Three Capes Track stage 3 as part of the \$7.8 million project; \$300 000 for the wukalina Walking Track; and \$20 million in equity contributions to the Port Arthur Heritage Site Management Authority. The Government has already committed to a \$50 million Tasmanian renewable hydrogen industry development fund program representing grants, concessional loans and support services, and \$16 million has been allocated in this Budget period to ensure that Tasmania is well-placed to take advantage of and become Australia's renewable hydrogen epicentre. Furthermore, the Budget includes \$3.8 million over four years to support the delivery of Project Marinus, Battery of the Nation, renewable hydrogen and the Tasmanian renewable energy action plan.

Protecting our environment in this magnificent state is our responsibility. The Budget includes \$300 000 to review our Climate Change Act and emissions reduction target, with a view to strengthening our legislation and taking a more ambitious approach. A \$10 million no-interest loan scheme will be available for large Tasmanian greenhouse gas emitting businesses and industries to trial existing clean technology or test new, innovative production processes that will lead to reduced emissions.

Over \$30 million will be invested in waste and resource recovery initiatives across Tasmania. Starting in 2020-21, the Government will also progress the introduction of a statewide levy on waste disposed at landfill. The land levy will fund future waste minimisation and reuse and recycling initiatives with the resource recovery sector to increase recycling and generate more jobs for Tasmania.

In this Budget, the Tasmanian Government will provide up to \$5.5 million in grants. That will be matched dollar for dollar by the Australian Government and recycling businesses will invest at least \$16.5 million in new commercial recycling. It is our waste, it is our responsibility.

Our regions have tolerated the most widespread national disasters in decades. Our regions cannot thrive without water. This Government will continue to support our agriculture and aquaculture industry to increase our water source security, build resilience, deliver jobs and grow our agriculture and aquaculture sectors. An amount of \$168.7 million has been included for tranche 2 and 3 irrigation projects, as well as \$3 million over five years towards the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), \$7 million over two years to modernise our crown and TIA research farms and \$10.5 million has been provided over four years for biosecurity and \$4.6 million has been provided for the Weeds Actions Fund.

In addition, \$610 000 has been provided for the Lewisham/Okines Beach erosion mitigation, and \$250 000 has been invested in this Budget to deliver contemporary marine spatial planning to support its continued sustainable growth as well as \$13.8 million for

Tasmanian Irrigation to deliver water infrastructure across the state and \$15.9 million for the South East Irrigation Scheme.

Tasmania is returning to a more normal way of life and the economy is now fighting back. There remains an enormous task ahead but it is how we respond that matters. We are a hardworking, resilient, resourceful and compassionate people. Across this state, people are digging deep, banding together and getting on with it with a plan to rebuild our economy and to create jobs to secure Tasmania's future. Our plan will grow the economy, our plan will create jobs and our plan will continue to guarantee the essential services Tasmanians rely on.

Time expired.

[6.28 p.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, after 20-odd people have spoken on the Budget it is difficult to come up with anything particularly original and I cannot promise that I will do that but I want to put on the record my support for this Budget. It is a well-planned and sensible path forward for Tasmania out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before I start on the Budget, like so many others who have spoken, I acknowledge the circumstances that have led us to be in this place in November discussing the Budget rather than the normal May time that we normally discuss the Budget.

We have lost 13 of our fellow Tasmanians during this pandemic. Each one of those people, as I have said before, had family, friends and an extended community that had to deal with their loss and for that I can only offer my heartfelt sympathies.

In saying that, we also have to acknowledge that Tasmania has been relatively fortunate in how we have come through this pandemic. Bass Strait has proven to be a vital asset at this time. I heard a previous speaker talking about 'leaky borders' and all of the failings of the Gutwein Government over the past seven months. All I can say is, it is remarkable that we have come out of this as well as we have if we have done such a terrible job as a government, which I do not believe we have.

We have managed this pandemic and our response to it appropriately, sensibly, strategically. We have listened to Public Health, as the Premier's been at pains to say, 'We have listened to the experts and now we are coming out the other side of it'.

In terms of the Budget, it is important to note that there was a lot of money spent during the COVID-19 response prior to this Budget as well, as Mr Tucker put on the record. It was the single largest support package of any state or territory per capita in the country: \$15 million for public housing, heating and efficiency initiatives, and \$10 million for building project support programs to bring forward community or commercial shovel-ready projects.

That is \$25 million towards filling a gap in the market or allowing the Government to fill a gap in the market that was there due to the slackening of the economy which was inevitable as we dealt with the pandemic. There was \$2.5 million in that response as well for a statewide program to enable and empower more women to participate in what it described as non-traditional jobs and there was \$4.4 million just for the COVID-19 response unit.

There was also \$2.5 million for an arts and cultural support fund, including grants to support performers and artists to bounce back and to support the arts and cultural sector to produce new work. That particular line item gives me an opportunity to reflect on one part of the contribution of the shadow minister for the arts who came in here and was particularly critical of the job that our Arts minister has done in supporting the arts sector. All I can say to Ms Butler, the shadow minister for the arts, is at some stage tomorrow she might come into this place either during the day or on the adjournment and point to the line item in Labor's plan for jobs that they tabled yesterday that shows one single dollar over and above our budget that Labor is committing to the arts.

There are plenty of nice glossy photos in there and there is a page titled, 'Hospitality, Events and the Arts' but events and the arts are not the same thing. Labor should know that because they have two separate ministers for them. Ms White is the minister for events and Ms Butler is the minister for the arts. As I said, at any stage tomorrow if she could show us what Labor's alternative plan for the arts sector is, we would appreciate it. Excellent timing, Ms Butler.

One of the lines we have heard from Labor over the last couple of days is what does Tasmania get out of this Budget? What we get is \$5 billion worth of investment into intergenerational infrastructure. Yes, it does take us into deficit and it does take us into debt but, as the Premier and Treasurer has pointed out, there is no better time to be borrowing to invest in infrastructure.

We have low interest rates, we have an economy that has felt the worst of the pandemic and needs to be supported by the Government and that is exactly what we are doing with our plan. There is \$100 million for up to 1000 new social housing dwellings, \$65 million to continue delivering our second Affordable Housing Action Plan. There is \$123.8 million for new housing projects, including the debt waiver program, \$20 million for the Tasmanian HomeBuilder Grants and \$19.4 million for the extension of the First Home Owners Grant.

There is \$391.2 million for new and upgraded health, hospital and ambulance facilities, and I will talk about that a little bit later, particularly in relation to my electorate of Franklin. There is \$222 million for new and upgraded schools, training centres and IT infrastructure. When Labor asks the question, what do Tasmanians get out of this budget, they get a lot. They get an investment in Tasmania's future.

Labor has also been at pains to talk about training and skills and the fact that this Government has not invested enough into that particular area. This Budget contains \$22 million in payroll tax rebates for trainees, apprentices and youth employees, including extending the targeted apprentice and trainee grant for small businesses. There is \$10.5 million for no- or low-cost VET courses as part of the \$21 million JobTrainer initiative, and there is \$2 million for more TasTAFE teachers in priority industries.

There is \$6 million for the Rapid Response Skills Initiative, \$7 million in additional funding for the Energy, Trades and Water Centre of Excellence which is in my electorate of Franklin. There is \$2.5 million for a statewide program to enable and empower more women to participate in non-traditional jobs and there is more than \$500 000 for the Tasmanian State Service Youth Employment and Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

There have also been comments about a lack of vision for Tasmania. This Budget includes \$12 million for the Tasmanian renewable hydrogen fund and \$4 million to meet costs

associated with hydrogen. The hydrogen industry could be one of the great game-changers for Tasmania's economy over the next 50 years. People who know this area far better than me have said that electric vehicles might be the now but vehicles run on hydrogen are one of the ways of the future. It is so important that we get into this particular industry. As the Minister for Energy is at pains to express to the House on every occasion, we have what the world wants in terms of hydrogen and that is green hydrogen. To produce hydrogen you need an energy source and water and we have both in spades. Our hydroelectric scheme and our renewable energy sector means that green hydrogen can be produced here and it is an industry that we simply have to be involved in.

Mr Tucker, the speaker before me, talked about \$10 million to co-invest with the waste management sector across the state to build the infrastructure needed to collect and sort recyclable waste. As he put it so perfectly, it is our waste and our responsibility to deal with it.

There is \$2.4 million for international air freight assistance and \$2.7 million for the Tasmanian Trade Strategy. In all the debate around potatoes that was had in this place a couple of weeks ago, the single thing that seemed to be lost on Labor is that we are an export economy. We cannot expect other states, other jurisdictions, to take our goods if we put up a roadblock in terms of people wanting to send product to Tasmania.

Ms Butler - It's also about diseases as well.

Mr STREET - It absolutely is, Ms Butler; by interjection you are right for once. It is the biosecurity system that we have in Tasmania that makes our goods wanted across the globe, and it is the same biosecurity system that protects Tasmanians from incoming goods. You cannot have it both ways. We have a growing population of more than 500 000 and it continues to grow, but the simple fact is that we are always going to produce more than we can consume, which means we need to export goods and services. There is no point putting up roadblocks and then expecting our goods to be taken into jurisdictions with no impediments.

One of the areas I am most passionate about is mental health. I have spoken in this place about it on a number of occasions. That is why it was so gratifying to see \$19.8 million to build 27 new mental health beds in southern Tasmania. We are doing a far better job these days of identifying cases of people who are dealing with mental health issues. We have become much more compassionate towards those people. There is a lot less demonising of those people. Services like Lifeline allow people with mental health issues to get in contact with somebody and talk through their issues, but behind that there has to be services for those people who need them, so the \$19.8 million is money incredibly well spent.

We also know that mental health issues for our youth continue to be an issue. There is \$14 million to support the mental health and wellbeing of students, including students impacted by trauma. We know that so many young people and adolescents have struggled with some of the effects of the lockdowns, et cetera, that we have had to institute during this pandemic so \$14 million towards the mental health and wellbeing of students is incredibly important.

In terms of protecting the Tasmanian way of life, which is a phrase that gets used a lot, we are investing \$7.1 million into national parks to rebuild infrastructure damaged by bushfires, with \$3.15 million to support essential asset repairs and maintenance in national parks. We have \$4 million for the container refund scheme and waste action plan initiatives,

which I have already touched on, and \$5.5 million towards a new \$16.5 million grants program for new commercial recycling opportunities.

There is \$9.6 million in bushfire prevention and fuel reduction initiatives. We talk about natural disasters in this place all the time and Tasmania is as susceptible, if not more so, than most jurisdictions to both floods and fires. It might not be a convenient truth for some members of this place who sit over in that corner, but bushfire prevention and fuel reduction initiatives - not you, Mr O'Byrne, the people who sit to your left.

Mr O'Byrne - Right.

Mr STREET - Fuel reduction initiatives are imperative in protecting communities. We can put more money into remote area and volunteer firefighters but if we do not undertake fuel reduction initiatives and bushfire prevention during the off season then all we are doing is encouraging more volunteers in bushfire season to put themselves in danger for our safety. That is simply not an acceptable ask on those people. They are heroes in our community. We are lucky to have them and the least we can do is make sure that we fund and enact bushfire prevention strategies that make their job easier when times are the worst.

Again, the Greens would have you believe that this Government somehow despises the environment and the planet, but there is \$4.7 million for climate change initiatives including the rollout of electric vehicles across the entire government fleet, and there is \$7.2 million for improved statewide visitor infrastructure as part of a \$16 million project. In terms of community spending there is \$500 000 for real-time fuel monitoring, helping to find cheaper fuel prices. Fuel is one of a household's highest costs, so if we are able to do anything to stimulate competition in the fuel market then it is money well spent.

We have \$351 000 for Volunteering Tasmania to engage volunteers. When I visit these organisations, one of the things that strikes me is the general age of the people in these volunteer organisations and the fact that my generation and the generation after me are letting the team down in terms of the amount of time and effort we put towards these volunteer organisations. We also know that the people in the higher age groups who are more likely to volunteer and have the time to volunteer are also more susceptible to COVID-19 and were asked to isolate themselves.

In terms of re-engaging volunteers, it is important that we get to these communities once the pandemic is over and get them to re-engage with these organisations. There is more than a billion dollars' worth of volunteer work done in Tasmania. The state simply cannot function without its volunteers. We rely more heavily on volunteers than any other jurisdiction in this country.

While I was not in this place I had the pleasure of working in the Sport and Recreation portfolio. One of the programs that provided immense benefits across the state was the Levelling the Playing Field program that the Government instituted after the 2018 election. We have changed the name to Improving the Playing Field and there is another \$10 million to improve girls' and women's sports changing rooms. Anybody who is involved in sport at any level would know that when you go to grassroots facilities and see the amenities that women and girls are asked to use we are a long way behind the eight ball. The first \$10 million was good, the second \$10 million will be additionally good and we are going to have to keep doing it because we are dealing with a legacy issue that has maybe 50 years behind it in terms of

investing in sporting facilities for men but not building these facilities to be acceptable for women and girls as well.

There is \$350 000 for TasCOSS to assist the community sector to adapt and respond to COVID-19 which in conjunction with the money for Volunteering Tasmania is going to be very important. There is \$1.2 million for Closing the Gap. We had a debate in this place about flying the Aboriginal flag over Parliament House. It was terrific to see that it received unanimous support and, as I said on that occasion, it is important that we undertake these symbolic gestures to move the cause of the Indigenous population forward. However, I would argue it is even more important we invest in services and programs to close the gap. Again, not unlike the improving the playing field program, this is a legacy issue we are dealing with and we need to invest money in order to rectify it. The gap between health and education outcomes for Indigenous Australians and the rest of us is something we should be ashamed of and we need to continually work to improve.

There is \$780 000 for the Multicultural Policy and Action Plan 2019-2022. Finally in the community space, \$9.4 million is available to meet the costs associated with the \$200 million local government interest-free loan scheme. I refer to that funding so that I can mention one particular project, and that is the new playground down at Kingston Park in Kingston. I have had some people question the investment in that playground, but what people need to understand is that it is infrastructure that will attract people to the area - not just Kingborough residents, but people from outside the area. I do not have children myself, but I am continually amazed by the stories I hear from parents who travel across the city simply to access facilities like the one being built at Kingston Park. We are really proud of the fact that we have been able to support the Kingborough Council to invest in that particular project at this time. I believe a number of businesses in the Kingborough region will see the benefit of that particular project. Until it is functioning, they might not appreciate how important it has been to attracting people to the area.

Again, talking about intergenerational assets, \$553 million for the first four years of the new \$576 million Bridgewater bridge. It is scoffed at in this place; it got another grin from Mr O'Byrne. We cannot hold Mr O'Byrne responsible, he was not here, but it was a Labor government that spent the money that was given to this state to build that bridge 20 years ago, Mr O'Byrne, and it is probably something you should not forget.

Mr O'Byrne - In terms of the design and outcome, hopefully, it will be a better result now.

Mr STREET - A sum of \$160 million is provided for TasWater to accelerate its infrastructure pipeline to deal with the situation at Mac Point. There is \$13.8 million for Tasmanian Irrigation to deliver water infrastructure across the state. This funding is incredibly important to our agriculture industry and those farmers and extended employees in that industry.

I briefly refer to the \$68.5 million for the Cradle Mountain cableway. This is an important government investment. One of the things I noticed in the Greens' alternate budget is that they are intent on abandoning that particular project. It is a real shame, and it exposes the Greens' hypocrisy on the issue of attracting people to our national parks and our environmental assets. Currently we have cars and buses chugging up the road and parking at the edge of Dove Lake. We want to build a new cableway that will run on renewable energy

and will improve access at Cradle Mountain - and the Greens are opposed to it. They are also opposed to the \$19.4 million we put aside for the next iconic walk - again, that is a real shame, and it exposes the Greens' snobbishness in terms of access to national parks. We have an ageing population. We talk about it all the time in this place. Not everybody can bush-bash to see what they want to see, and appreciate the national parks and assets we have at our disposal. Some people need a better formed track, like the track down at the Three Capes. Say what you will about the Labor Party - and there is plenty I could say - but the Three Capes Track was driven by Paul Lennon in this place and it has been an unqualified success. Why the Greens would be opposed to duplicating that project across the state and attracting people to the west coast, to the north-west, to the north-east, to the east coast - it really does stagger me. As I said, it exposes their snobbishness and their view that the only people who should be able to enjoy our national parks and environment assets are people who can carry their own rucksack in and dine on mung beans and what have you around a camp fire -

Ms Standen - Mung beans is going too far but otherwise I agree.

Mr STREET - I just went a little bit too far and lost the Labor Party there, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Labor Party continually claims this Government has a poor record of infrastructure delivery. The single largest health infrastructure project in the state's history has been delivered on our watch. As the Premier and Treasurer says - 'Not a brick laid down at the Royal Hobart Hospital until we came to government'.

Mr O'Byrne - We got the money, though. What about the Kingston Bypass - are you driving on that?

Mr STREET - It was a lot of money. I am very pleased to see that the next stage of the Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment is funded in this Budget to the tune of \$89.8 million. There is also \$3.7 million for the Pharmacy Redevelopment at the Royal Hobart Hospital. This funding will benefit the people in my electorate of Franklin.

I will also refer to a project on the eastern shore, and that is the \$23.2 million for the duplication of the East Derwent Highway at Geilston Bay. This is a long overdue project, not only in terms of road safety - although as we are in Road Safety Awareness Week that is very important - but also in facilitating increased housing development in that particular area. North of the section that will be duplicated, there is a large expanse of land that is being developed for housing. If you then turn right into Risdon Vale, there is a lot of land ready to be developed as well. These developments will use this duplication to get to and from the city - an extremely important piece of infrastructure.

Mr O'Byrne - And facilitating entry and access to -

Mr STREET - Yes, access to the school and access to the sporting precinct down there as well.

Ms Standen - Retirement village.

Mr STREET - Yes, to the retirement village on the right-hand side, on the top side of Geilston Bay there - all very important.

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Mr STREET - Another one. For the Kingborough area, there is \$7 million for the Sandfly intersection upgrade on the Huon Highway - a really dangerous intersection. I know many people were hoping for more money to be spent there, but for \$7 million we will get an upgrade of that intersection to make it much safer.

There is \$7.5 million for Bruny Island landside infrastructure - another important piece of infrastructure in terms of getting people to and from Bruny Island which, in my humble opinion, is the crown jewel in Tasmania. There is no better place to spend a day than to go down to Bruny Island.

There is \$500 000 for new bus services as part of the Hobart City Deal for Kingborough. I believe the ferry service from Bellerive is a terrific idea. I am yet to be convinced that a ferry service into the Kingborough region is necessarily going to work. I consider there is a lack of parking at both Kingston and Blackmans Bay Beach that is going to be difficult to overcome. I consider the solution to a lot of the traffic problems south of the city in the Kingborough region can be solved by increased use of public transport in terms of buses, which is why I was excited to see this funding for these services. It needs to be complemented by new facilities as well in the Kingborough region, and I look forward to working with the minister into the future on delivering that.

Others here have mentioned the \$28 million for the six new Child and Family Learning Centres and it is terrific to see one of those will be in Kingborough.

Finally, there is \$13.2 million for new and upgraded police housing statewide and includes at Alonnah, Dover, Geeveston and Woodbridge. Trying to get people to live in some of these remote areas is difficult. It is important we invest in housing infrastructure to make it more attractive for them to live and work in these areas.

In the time I have remaining I will quickly touch on Labor's alternate plan. It has been called an alternate budget by Mr Broad. It is not an alternate budget. Everything you need to know about Labor's alternative plan is buried after a lot of glossy photos, I have to say. On page 40, when you go to 'General government', under 'Expenses' there is an asterisk. I thought, 'That is interesting, what is the asterisk?'. You go down to the bottom there -

Unless otherwise indicated, Labor will continue existing government programs.

That means 99.97 per cent of our Budget was accepted by the Labor Party.

Interestingly enough, the one thing Labor is questioning or cutting is consultancies, government advertising and travel. The government advertising line caught my eye because, quite frankly, most of that money is currently being spent on putting COVID information out into the community, and do you know what? The only advertising that Labor is interested in is the brochure that has landed in letterboxes across this state - the ridiculous pamphlet trying to convince people Labor is not going to go into partnership with the Greens.

We all heard Ms Butler's contribution this afternoon. What I would say to her is the one thing you said during that contribution, Ms Butler, was history repeats, and you are absolutely right: past history is the best predictor of future behaviour. You did it when you were -

Ms Butler - Your turn, we learned.

Mr STREET - Oh, it is our turn. There is a real maths problem on that side of the House. At some stage Ms Butler can try to explain to me how a party with 24 per cent of the primary vote is going to form a majority at the next election.

Just to finish, today the Greens delivered their alternative budget and whilst I do not agree with the vast majority of what is in there, that is an alternative budget. They have costed their policies; they have told the Tasmanian people what they stand for and they will be judged on it. I encourage the 525 000 Tasmanians who are interested in the future of this state to look at both documents -

Mr O'Byrne - Did you say 525?

Mr STREET - You are now questioning the population?

Mr O'Byrne - I am sorry. I misheard - I thought you said 525 Tasmanians. I thought, 'Is that a focus group he has or what?'.

Mr STREET - We know how many hours have gone into that particular document of the Greens. We also know how many hours went into this particular document and quite frankly Control C basically from our Budget gets the Greens' alternative budget done.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Time expired.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

[6.58 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Risdon Brook Farm - Walking Track Brain Injury Association of Tasmania

[6.59 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I know it has been a long day but I wanted to rise on the adjournment this evening to make two brief contributions.

The first one is in my electorate of Franklin about the Risdon Brook Park, the dam near Risdon Vale. It has been brought to my attention by a number of people living in Risdon Vale that the walking track in Risdon Brook Park has been closed now for quite a number of months. The latest update posted on the TasWater website is from 2 September, well over two months ago now, highlighting storm damage near and along the walking track.

I am concerned that the local community is being left in the dark on the time line for any necessary repairs to be made. For local families, people living alone, and those with limited mobility, this park and its walking track have been a mainstay in their lives and now they are not able to access it. Getting out for some exercise and fresh air in our local parks is an important part of life, especially in these warmer months when the daylight stretches longer and the warmer weather invites us outdoors. The people of Risdon Vale deserve to know when their park will be opened again and need to be assured that TasWater are doing everything they can to have repairs completed as soon as possible.

I ask that Mr Barnett ensures TasWater post timely updates, not only to their website and Facebook pages but also in local newspapers to keep the community posted and informed on the works in Risdon Brook Park.

I also want to speak briefly about the Brain Injury Association of Tasmania, which does terrific work in this state. I had the privilege of attending their AGM earlier this week. The Brain Injury Association of Tasmania, or BIAT, is the peak body across the state for people living with or affected by a brain injury. It is a non-government, statewide, not-for-profit organisation working for people with an acquired brain injury, their families and other stakeholders. A major role of BIAT is to promote community awareness and understanding of acquired brain injury in terms of both prevention and the impact of ABI on the lives of individuals, families and the broader community.

At the end of June last year cessation of funding and a change to the funding model effectively stripped the capacity of BIAT and 17 other organisations to provide information, advice, referral, community outreach, education, training, systemic advocacy and community awareness services in the community for people with or impacted by brain injury. Those 18 organisations have been providing specialist brain injury support in Tasmania for more than 20 years, providing a wide range of services in the community to thousands of Tasmanians, many of whom are not eligible for the NDIS. The NDIS information linkages capacity-building program that replaced previous funding arrangements fundamentally changed the funding from core operational funding to that of national competitive grant rounds that were project based without providing funding support for infrastructure or core needs, stripping out the capacity of small organisations like BIAT to provide that service.

It was terrific to hear that nonetheless, they are doing the best they can with the change to the model of funding. They are really energetic, wonderful people at BIAT and at the AGM we heard a presentation about an exciting project partnering with disability employment services providers to overcome barriers to employment for people with brain injury. It was a strange-sounding project, that of disclosure videos, which might evoke some strange thoughts, but the project involves jobseekers making these videos in which they explain to prospective employers what sort of work they are interested in, their strengths and limitations, and how their injury affects them and what adjustments need to be made in the workplace to accommodate those needs.

Both employers and jobseekers have spoken very highly of the project, which has also helped to boost the self-confidence of jobseekers. We saw a couple of these videos and it was very impressive work. I have to say that I think there is tremendous potential to use that type of approach in recruitment more broadly. My warmest congratulations to president, Dario Tomat, executive officer Deborah Byrne, and the team for the wonderful work they do for Tasmanians with acquired brain injury.

The House adjourned at 7.03 p.m.