



# **PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

## **TRANSCRIPT**

### **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

### **ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP

**Monday 23 September 2024**

### **MEMBERS**

Mr Simon Wood MP (Chair)  
Mr Josh Willie MP (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP  
Mrs Rebekah Pentland MP

### **OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

Mr Dean Winter MP  
Ms Anita Dow MP  
Mr David O'Byrne MP  
Mr Mark Shelton MP  
Ms Helen Burnet MP  
Mrs Miriam Beswick MP  
Ms Cesily Rosol MP



## **IN ATTENDANCE**

### **HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF MP**

Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Minister for Trade and Major Investment.

### **Kathrine Morgan-Wicks**

Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

### **Anne Beach**

Chief Executive Officer, Macquarie Point Developemnt Corporation

### **Craig Limkin**

Secretary, Department of State Growth

### **Denise McIntyre**

Deputy Secretary Strategy, Housing, Infrastructure and Planning, Department of State Growth

### **Robyn Hawkins**

Senior Project Manager, Department of State Growth

### **John Perry**

Tasmanian Coordinator General



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**The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.**

**CHAIR** (Mr Wood) - We might make a start. I have a quick thing to read out. I have received the following ruling from the Speaker, which I shall read to the committee:

Members of Committee A,

I have been advised that the Chair of Committees, the honourable Jacqui Petrusma MP, is unwell and unable to attend to her duties as Chair of Estimates Committee A. In accordance with paragraph 6 of the resolution agreed to by the House on 10 September, I hereby nominate member for Bass, Simon Wood MP, as the Chair of the Committee in substitution of the Chair of Committees until such time as the Chair of Committees is able to resume the Chair of Committee.

Welcome, Premier and members of the committee this morning. Premier, would you please introduce the persons at the table for the benefit of Hansard?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, thank you very much. To my right is the Secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), Kathrine Morgan-Wicks and Shane Gregory, the Associate Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. To my left is Ned Whitehouse, my chief of staff.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. The time scheduled for Estimates of the Premier is three and a half hours. We will be taking a short break for five minutes or so at 11.00 a.m. The resolution of the House provides for a minister to provide additional information to a committee either later that day, or in writing as an answer to a question taken on notice. To submit a question on notice, the member must first ask their question to the minister, and the minister must indicate they will take it on notice. The member must then put the question in writing and hand it to the committee secretary, Ben, so that it can be included in correspondence to the minister.

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

Premier, would you like to make an opening statement?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity for the scrutiny members. I have an opening statement, of which there's a number of documents that I would also like to table throughout.

The 2024-25 Budget provides record investment to deliver the government's 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future over the next four years. We are taking action on the issues that matter to Tasmanians, including the cost of living, health, housing, a stronger economy, and supporting our communities.

Across the Budget and forward Estimates we are providing over \$550 million in cost-of-living relief to ease the financial pressures Tasmanians are facing and to make life more affordable, through energy bill relief payments, half-price bus fares and healthy lunches in

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schools, as well as stamping up stamp duty for thousands of Tasmanians buying their first home.

Importantly, the Budget fully responds to the recommendations from the commission of inquiry. We did not shy away from the commission or what the commission found. We will meet our obligation to victim/survivors and others who shared their stories. These wrongs date back decades. It is our responsibility as a government of the day to make the significant change we need, and to drive that change.

Funding of \$423 million over four years is in the Budget to deliver - to implement the 191 recommendations of the commission of inquiry. The Department of Premier and Cabinet is leading this work in close collaboration with other agencies. This funding, together with the funding allocated in 2023-24 and the provision for civil claims, means that more than \$1.1 billion is being provided from Tasmania's public finances to address the shortcomings in our protective systems, to keep children safe, and to appropriately compensate those who suffered harm. Our government is committed to widespread transformational reforms to our systems and culture to keep children safe.

We recognise that our response must focus on transparency and accountability to rebuild trust. My department has been increasing the level of transparency through the publishing of routine disclosures relating to the assessment and actions by heads of agency in relation to matters referred to in the commission of inquiry report, both for alleged perpetrators and alleged non-perpetrators. Assessment and actions by the Commissioner of Police in relation to matters referred to in the commission of inquiry report, Tasmanian Police officers: notifications of State Service employee suspensions from duty as a result of allegations of child sexual abuse, cumulative since October 2020, and a Joint Referral Review Team (JRRT). Matters of interest are identified through the commission of inquiry section 34A notices and other data sources, State Service employees and general public persons of interest. These tables are routinely updated and published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website, with the latest being published last week, with data as of 17 September 2024.

I want to provide as much information about these matters to victim/survivors and the community as is lawfully possible. I table a copy of the latest routine disclosure report. As part of a continuous improvement focus, the secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet has progressed a DPAC government review to improve the delivery of services to the Tasmanian community for the realignment of similar functions and providing a simple, clearer structure to aid engagement for the community and our stakeholders.

Following a consultation and engagement period, the government's review has delivered a contemporary departmental structure to deliver on key priorities for the Tasmanian government and our community. To inform the committee, I table a copy of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's new structure.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet continues to deliver outcomes for the Tasmanian community and I would like to highlight a few of these.

Service Tasmania marked 25 years of service serving our communities. Launching in 1998, the organisation was the first of its kind in Australia and continues to provide an essential and valued service all these years later. This last year, Service Tasmania handled over 950,000 customer inquiries, with a customer satisfaction rating of 85 per cent. More than

20,000 Tasmanians signed up for the new myServiceTas portal in the first eight weeks of its launch. I would like to share with the committee the Service Tasmania highlights for 2023-24 and I table the full update.

My department also provided critical network and internet communication services to support government business in more than 960 locations in 128 towns across Tasmania, including schools, Service Tasmania shops, hospitals and fire stations; worked with the Australian Government on the development of the National Cybersecurity Strategy and the National Cyber Security Incident Management arrangements; and launched a new Keeping Children Safe website and reporting dashboard to provide up-to-date information; conducted 1400 detailed assessments by Aboriginal heritage specialists and provided advice on proposed activities that may impact on Aboriginal heritage; launched the Disability Employment Portal to support people with disability seeking employment within the Tasmanian State Service; and secured more than \$14 million from the Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund to build disaster resilience, and engaged almost 500 stakeholders and stakeholder groups to develop regional drought resilience plans.

In closing, I'm pleased to inform the committee that in 2025 I'll be the chair of the Council of Australian Federation. This forum provides for state and territory leaders to discuss and resolve important issues independently of the Commonwealth. I'm excited to be leading this forum, given the significant intergovernmental issues addressing the nation, including domestic violence, disability reform, health funding reform and education funding reform.

I thank you for the opportunity to say a relatively short opening statement and I look forward to questions. I table the three documents I referred to in terms of the routine disclosure relating to commission of inquiry matters, the new departmental structure, and Department of Premier and Cabinet and Service Tasmania highlights.

**Mr WINTER** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, you opened by saying that the Budget provides for record funding, but when comparing the preliminary outcome from last financial year to this year's Budget, we can see cuts in funding for employee expenses right across your government of around \$100 million this financial year, which is the equivalent of around 1000 jobs. How are agency saving strategies being managed to make such significant cuts to spending and the reduction of employee expenses?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. There is record funding. In fact, I recall our first Estimates, Health was in the order of \$5.8 billion or \$5.9 billion in 2014-15. It is now \$12.9 billion. But you would expect any government to be mindful of ensuring that the taxpayer contributions are spent very wisely and that budgets are sustainable, recognising, of course, the investments we've been putting in the last few years about commissions of inquiry - very worthy - and, moving forward, the pandemic, which were significant investments, and all Tasmanians would expect an efficient public service and one that works very solidly when it comes to delivering and, most importantly, targeting the needs that Tasmanians quite rightly deserve.

Now, when you talk about efficiencies, that does not mean impacts to frontline services. What it does mean, in terms of our investments, is more nurses, more doctors, more paramedics of course, health professionals more broadly will be in our health system over the course of the next 12 months, and I can look at the matters pertaining to police and emergency services, the housing, schools - all significant investments and record investments.

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Our heads of agency will be working very solidly over the course of the next 12 months to deliver efficiencies. and doing so with no reductions to nurses, doctors, paramedics, police officers, teachers, child safety officers or any other frontline working positions.

**Mr WINTER** - How can you say that there will be no reduction in those services when, for example, your Budget this year reduces the total employee expenditure in the Department of Health by \$132.5 million? So, how can you on the one hand cut \$132.5 million from the health budget and at the same time say you will employ more people? How those two things possible?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Because it is about ensuring that we get the balance right and I am interested to work through your \$150 million worth of savings as well, of which you outlined online with your first iteration of your budget reply and, so, you might well have some insights into the challenges that we have and you can detail the \$150 million of your savings as well, but we will be working very solidly across government to ensure that.

**Mr WINTER** - You are not answering the question, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I absolutely am, Mr Winter.

**Mr WINTER** - You cannot have more staff and spend \$132.5 million less.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is about ensuring that the investment in and across government and the whole of government sense focuses on people on the frontline and the services and find savings elsewhere so we can ensure that we do have that balance right in terms of frontline service growth, but also backline efficiencies, and that could well come from further investment when it comes to the HRIS, in terms of the IT investment we are making-

**Mr WINTER** - Are you suggesting you can save \$132.5 million by implementing HRIS?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, it is just an example of efficiencies that can be created throughout the system. I am not saying \$132 million, as you call it. in isolation with that, but it is also ensuring we take meaningful action to ensure the State Service can provide the central public services, job creating infrastructure on a sustainable basis now and into the future.

Now, as part of our strategy to achieve this, we have got modest efficiencies beginning in 2024-25 representing a \$300 million reduction in expenditure over the forward Estimates. So, in 2024-25, the Budget includes an additional \$150 million budget efficiency dividend to maintain the budget repair effort in the new forward estimate year and to ensure the government is best placed to meet its 10-year fiscal objectives.

And, so, we are not about slashing and burning the public service. We are about ensuring we have a very measured and purposeful approach to a sustainable pathway to surplus, which focuses on ensuring we continue to invest in the frontline but find efficiencies elsewhere across the public service.

**Mr WINTER** - Is there a central process or a budget committee to manage to sign off on these strategies?



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**CHAIR** - I have given the call to Dr Woodruff.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, in your Budget speech you talked about governments having to make tough decisions. I want to know: was it a tough decision to blow your budget on a stadium that you will end up gifting to the AFL instead of delivering critical social and economic infrastructure like a Basslink digital interconnector or a fully funded emergency department upgrade for the Royal Hobart Hospital?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Right, I am not 100 per cent convinced of the way you framed the question. We are investing \$375 million into the stadium, not a cent more. We are ensuring that we invest in not only services, but enabling infrastructure when you talk of choices in terms of investments. As I said in 2022, 2023 and now in 2024, I have been scrutinised on this project for over two years, Public Accounts committees, I cannot think of a project that has been so heavily scrutinised. Now, we have the project of state significant submission, a 4000-page document and so this is the most transparent process in terms of an enabling infrastructure that I can ever recall. It is about -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Do you agree a decision was made to not spend public money on the proper upgrade for the Royal Hobart Hospital and a Basslink digital interconnector? Do you agree that a decision is made not to prioritise funding into those two objectives?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, we are prioritising essential services and enabling infrastructure and the \$375million, Dr Woodruff, as I have said on numerous occasions, we are investing once, just once.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Could have been once for a Royal Hobart Hospital upgrade and once for a digital interconnector as well but you chose not to do those things.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am choosing on upgrading health infrastructure. In fact, all our four major public hospitals are being invested in and improved and there is evidence of that. Every 42 days we invest \$375 million into our health system and we are investing once into the stadium infrastructure, alongside the Commonwealth investment as well, to create that enabling infrastructure and an economy around that enabling infrastructure, as well as all the other benefits associated with the stadium. Now, I accept -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You chose an AFL folly over a data interconnector and a Royal Hobart Hospital upgrade. That is the tough decision that you made, you landed on the side of a vanity project like that, instead of infrastructure for generations for Tasmanians.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am talking about intergenerational infrastructure when it comes to health and schools as the Brighton High School, just the other day completed, term one will have the first students arriving at the school, and that school will be there for decades and decades after I am long gone. Also, intergenerational infrastructure of a Macquarie Point precinct as part of an urban renewal project that will also be there for decades and decades and decades, but also supporting not me, but the thousands of people that will be employed on the project, employed when the project is completed and employed supporting young Tasmanians, not only on the footy field and I speak of AFL and AFLW, but also the other entertainment and opportunities that will come Tasmania's way as a result of that.

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I was at the Bill Sorell lunch last Friday, Chair, 580 people, Mr Winter was there and every time the stadium was mentioned there was a round of applause, including that of Mr Winter. The Greens, I respect, have a different view but I've always -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - And the majority of Tasmanians.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, the difficult decisions are decisions we make in terms of this project, but if I look at other stadia infrastructure across the nation, Adelaide, Optus Oval in Perth and others around -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Chair, I believe that the Premier's probably had time on that answer.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - My question is a whole-of-government shareholder responsibility question around the government business enterprises. You have TT-Line, who has overseen a delay in the delivery of the vessels and there is clearly a crisis of confidence in their leadership, given some of the changes. You have TasPorts with their infrastructure crumbling and their actions are imperilling our Antarctic Gateway. You have TasNetworks staff in intense negotiations and not very conducive to good delivery of service. You have Metro that has cancelled hundreds, if not thousands, of bus services. Has your government lost control of the government business enterprises?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, but as I expressed in parliament the other day, Mr O'Byrne, my expectation is that our government businesses and state-owned companies have a very strong team Tasmania approach. I have been concerned about the siloed approach in many respects where, in my view, a lack of communication across GBEs has resulted in not the best decisions being made. That's why we have started rewriting the charters from government to GBEs, setting very clear expectations.

I acknowledge the need for a shake-up. You've pointed to some challenges and there needs to be a shake-up. The GBEs and state-owned companies are owned by the Tasmanian people first and foremost and they should never forget that. We expect a government policy to be delivered. You name a number of areas. I expect very strong and stronger stakeholder engagement with our GBEs as well and I get feedback that there could be a need for continuous improvement in those areas.

In our first 100 days of government, we committed to rewrite the ministerial charters in a statement of expectations of all government businesses. The ministerial charters and statements of expectations outline those expectations and, as I've referred to, the service delivery requirements, Mr O'Byrne, providing transparency and accountability.

You mentioned one of those projects, Macquarie Point berth 6. I've had very good discussions with federal minister Plibersek, just last week in fact, and my expectation is that within a matter of a few weeks we will have a deal and be able to progress that berth redevelopment. I respect the cooperation between agencies, federal and state. While minister Plibersek and I don't agree on matters salmon, we do agree on matters when it comes to working together to ensure that we get berth 6 up and running and done and secure for the *Nuyina* and securing our gateway to the Antarctic as well.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Premier, in terms of the ministerial charters and the statement, isn't that really window dressing? They're already pretty prescriptive. You talk about team Tasmania but

aren't most of those GBEs kicking the other way from where we need to go? Are we going to use that analogy? Metaphor, sorry.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The charters are very good statements of expectations. When respective ministers meet with their GBEs, then that is a very good reference point. But I do expect our GBEs to play the team Tasmania game, if I can put it that way, and work together when it's required on certain projects. When it comes to a number of GBEs involved in infrastructure requirements for ports, for example, and other matters to ensure that we are attracting investment. I also expect strong stakeholder engagement as well, and for stakeholders to be listened to in some of their views on these matters, whether it's impacts on upgrades of certain infrastructure, or TasNetworks that are engaged with landholders on a range of matters, for example. That's my clear expectation. That needs to be improved, certainly prior to the election. I believe it will be improved further.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, my question is to do with the weather, would you believe. The last month or six months we have had some very much welcomed rain. But along with that rain came some fairly significant weather events with the wind and so forth. Of course, a lot of the constituents out there had power outages and suffered the bad weather through storms and floods and that sort of thing. You've actually identified some grant programs that are out there. My question is around how many people have access to these grants and how much has been provided to date? In the future, will there be any other grants for businesses, for example, that have suffered through that weather?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, for that question. Can I also thank you and other members of Parliament that communicated with me directly through the power outages and we talked with team Tasmania approach. There was very little politics played throughout that extreme weather circumstance. I had messages from all colours of the political rainbow, if I can put it that way, contacting me, alerting me to the circumstances of individuals at which we were able to act and respond. It was a true Team Tasmania approach.

We were hit by the extreme weather. This led to significant damage from destructive winds and flooding. Thousands of Tasmanians were impacted by these power outages. I'm advised the TasNetworks had more than 20 per cent of its network damaged. The storms also caused flooding in a number of catchments, and major flooding in the Derwent River between Meadowbank and New Norfolk. The Derwent Valley Council opened two evacuation centres in New Norfolk to support impacted residents. The centres were staffed and managed with support from Hobart City Council, thank you, Kingborough Council, thank you, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, thank you.

Councils and community organisations established locations for communities impacted by power outages to charge their devices and access amenities. Derwent Valley Council held community information sessions in locations across the Upper Derwent Valley. Other recovery was attended including DPAC who assisted the recovery grants, et cetera. I thank the local councils for their responsiveness and support, and our public service staff who assisted with information applications.

We provided grants to Tasmanians impacted. We also provided grants of \$255,000 to Neighbourhood Houses, and \$50,000 each to Foodbank and Loaves & Fishes. DPAC engaged recovery partners to perform outreach visits and calls to communities to deliver psychological first aid, check on wellbeing and connect people with available supporters.

The Tasmanian Emergency Information Service was activated on 1 September. I'm informed that it managed over 30,00 calls to date. As of 20 September, I can advise that 13,567 recovery applications were approved and processed, which equated to \$7.17 million. Our Tasmanian Emergency Information Centre received again over 3,000 calls, in fact 3,400 I am advised. The TasAlert App was installed 50,000 times, and almost 700,000 app notifications were sent. The \$7.17 million included emergency assistance grants. These were for the Derwent Valley and up to \$1000 per a household was made available. There have been 632 applications approved and a total of \$267,000 provided. In relation to the emergency food grant, there is \$350 per household for those without power for 72 hours or more and there have been 11,497 applications approved with \$4.02 million provided. For the temporary living support payment, it is \$2000 per household every seven days with no power, or if a home is uninhabitable due to damage. There have been 1445 applications approved with \$2.89 million provided. Lastly, of the grants to replace or repair household items or homes, there have been three applications approved for \$2799 paid.

In relation to the second part of your question about business support and other grants, the emergency event impact registration process has been set up and already more than 220 businesses have registered. This will help us to tailor specific response activities where needed. To inform the committee and in the interests of time, I table the information on the community recovery response here.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, do you accept that this year's Budget reduces the total employee expenses by around \$100 million across the public service compared with what was spent last year? Is there any kind of central process or budget committee to manage these cuts?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, they are efficiencies, and you would expect a government to be efficient when it comes to applying the resources, which essentially are Tasmanian taxpayer resources. The Budget indicated that the government would seek operating efficiencies while protecting frontline services. These efficiencies are an essential component of ensuring a responsible budget and Tasmanians expect their public service to be efficient and productive.

Government efficiencies are being achieved in part through a combination of operating efficiency measures in agencies and ceasing or scaling back non-priority activities that are either not a strategic priority or have been replaced with election commitments. Efficiency measures must be achievable in both the short and long term. This means that agencies must identify efficiency measures that are structural and achievable on an ongoing basis.

Our government will ensure our resources are prioritised and we will work with agencies to allocate resources to efficiently support government priorities and new services. Where the government can be more efficient in our non-people costs, as already referred to, we will be, but not to the extent that we're not continuing to improve or uplift the service we provide the community through programs like the digital service uplift. It is acknowledged that some efficiency measures will have a lead time, particularly those making structural or service delivery changes and, as such, there is a rising profile in the efficiencies to be achieved.

There are key principles to your question. Efficiency measures must be allocated to activities and costs within the control or influence of the agency. In general terms, this means that efficiency measures should be applied to controlled activities and not applied to administered items or to specific activities funded by specific external parties, such as the

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Australian Government. Efficiency measures must consider operational impacts. This means that the efficiency measures must consider matters including, but not limited to, timing and transitional issues, staffing impact, internal communications and change management requirements.

Efficiency measures must not negatively impact outcomes of frontline services. The following strategies have been identified by the Department of Health, for example, to meet the budget efficiency dividends by combining leadership roles where appropriate; combining service delivery areas to implement leaner operating models; reducing expenditure on consultancies; reducing expenditure on suppliers and consumables through a reduction in items purchased outside of common-use contracts and negotiating more competitive pricing on a non-contracted items; and reducing operating costs through a variety of measures including vacancy control and reducing non-salary expenditures such as travel, transport, advertising, property expenditures and consumables.

**Mr WINTER** - The question hasn't been answered, which was a pretty simple one. Is there a central process or budget committee to manage and/or sign off on these strategies?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, there is a whole of government approach, we have a Budget committee of Cabinet, which will be having a very close eye on efficiencies. It is also a collective responsibility of Cabinet as you would appreciate, the whole of government responsibility when it comes to these matters, not just the Budget committee of Cabinet but all cabinet ministers have that responsibility.

**Mr WINTER** - Who sits on that committee, Premier? Presumably you and the Treasurer, who else sits on that committee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we have often tended to a process of committee. Sorry?

**Ms DOW** - On it, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, you know who is on it?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, who? You tell us. You are meant to be in charge.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Traditionally, we have not informed people about Cabinet sorts of matters, I think in the interest of transparency, I said that last year, did I not? Open and transparent.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Previous governments have done this.

**Mr WINTER** - You say the words a lot.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am not sure about that. But, of course, Treasurer and I, Mr Abetz, Ms Osgilvie and Mr Street, there you go.

**Mr WINTER** - We are now three months into this financial year, your Budget requires \$100 million to be saved. This is from employee expenses, which is the equivalent of about 1000 jobs. How much work has gone on by this razor gang that you have set up in order to make those savings that are required in the Budget?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, you can term it the razor gang if you like, it is not that -

**Mr WINTER** - That is 1000 jobs that need to go, according to your Budget.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The way we manage internal processes, you would expect us to be very diligent in our approach when it comes to delivering efficiencies in and across government. With the ministerial responsibilities, our heads of agencies are responsible for working through these efficiencies in terms of operational matters.

**Mr WINTER** - Is each agency required to have a savings strategy in order to meet those what you term as efficiencies?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Each agency will need to ensure they do have budget efficiencies. Katherine would like to talk about the approach and talk about the DPAC approach if you like, but other agencies, of course.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, from a DPAC perspective and as a Head of Agency, I am responsible for determining, together with my executive, budget efficiencies that will be applied through the DPAC budget and providing that advice to my ministers, so Premier and other ministers that are responsible for deliverables in DPAC. For example, within DPAC, the budget efficiency dividend to be achieved by DPAC is \$969,000 in 2024-25, \$1.937 million in 2025-26 and increasing to a structural reduction of \$2.905 million in 2026-27. How we will achieve the first years of that is that we are undertaking an establishment management project to improve how salary is budgeted in the department and to optimise how our staffing resources are used to meet the government's priorities of the day, including all new commitments that are funded in the 2024-25 Budget.

Initial work from this establishment management project has identified that budget efficiencies can be achieved through funding staffing establishments based on workload variation, for example, how the staffing establishment is actually being paid. Changing the basis of staffing budgets to this methodology where in the past we have budgeted as to 1.0 FTE for every person and now actually budgeting to what is the workload paid variation throughout the agency and on a long-term basis. Checking, for example, the actual part-time and flexible working arrangements too, for example, 0.8 of an FTE or 0.6 of an FTE, and particularly where that's on a long-term basis, that's how we will budget for 2024-25. Making sure we have the flexibility that if people wish to change their circumstances and move from a 0.6 back up to 1.0, that we have sufficient flexibility in the Budget to reflect that change. We believe that on the basis of this methodology, we will deliver savings in the DPAC budget in excess of the \$969,000 target, and could be up to \$2 million. That's on our initial assessment. This is not a vacancy control process and will not result in any job losses. Nor will the process impact on the delivery of key government priorities. Further work is continuing on how we optimise the way the department manages its resources and our associated budget allocation, and we will achieve our full budget efficiency dividend targets across the forward Estimates.

**Mr WINTER** -Chair, the saving strategy answer was great. Are we able to get the savings strategy tabled for the committee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll take that on notice and we can work back through that.

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**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, on the Cabinet razor gang committee, why isn't the Health minister there, given that's where the majority of cuts, the hardest cuts, will happen? Why is Ms Ogilvie there?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Because of her ability to contribute. I'm not sure what you're saying in that question.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Doesn't the Health minister have more right at the table?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've said collective responsibility across Cabinet, didn't I?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - But this is the committee where the decisions are being taken about how the cuts will be achieved.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Cabinet makes the decisions, thank you. We have a budget committee when it comes to developing the Budget and not too long after this Budget's passed, we'll be developing other budgets. A lot of work to do.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - On your tough decisions you talked about making, was it a tough decision to spend \$4 million-\$8 million on a chocolate fountain and put no funding towards implementing the recommendations of the Weiss review needed to protect against future child sexual abuse?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's not a chocolate fountain.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It is just a feasibility study at the moment.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Investing in this community infrastructure to support and enabling part of the community, such as tourism industry. I'm not exactly sure what you're saying. That we shouldn't be investing in tourism opportunities?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I'm talking about the tough decision you made not to fund the implementation of the Weiss review and instead to fund a chocolate fountain.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will be implementing the Weiss review and all its recommendations.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - But there's no money towards that.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - What sort of public-private partnership would you like the state to enter into to finance the stadium?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. As we move forward, \$375 million of investment from the state government and we will take advice on how the private sector investment will come forward. We've received representations from several market players which does suggest that there is keen interest from the private sector to bid for the right to deliver the broader Macquarie Point precinct, including the multi-purpose stadium. We'll be developing a plan for that private sector investment opportunity.

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Interestingly, some private sector interest has extended beyond the precinct to include the delivery of the northern access road for example, key transport projects, pedestrian access, affordable housing and port upgrades, which is also worthy of consideration. Commencing a market testing process to identify a private sector partner while continuing with the government-led approach is the way forward. The nature and the scope of this process will be finalised later this year.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Clarification, Chair? I understood the rotation was three questions to the Labor Party, two to the Greens.

**CHAIR** - You're correct, you had two.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - No, I have no problem with that. Two to independents or JLN?

**CHAIR** - Correct.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - That's right.

**CHAIR** - Mrs Pentland's asking.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - What's the incentive for private investors, and how will they make a return?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - A public-private partnership is one form or another in the precinct. It is one option for attracting a private investment, but there are others and we need to work through the options carefully. The Department of State Growth, along with DPAC and Treasury, are working with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation and Stadiums Tasmania to develop the appropriate way forward for the precinct and the broader infrastructural requirements to then test the market and consider the proposals presented.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, there's been a lot of debate over the past week about ways in which government services can be delivered more efficiently. Can you explain what the whole-of-government human resource information system is, how it will be delivered efficiently and deliver efficiencies for the government, and why it was included in the commission of inquiry's recommendations.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question, Mr Shelton. I mentioned in a previous answer today, the human resources information system began its life in the Department of Health, our biggest agency, and will eventually operate across the whole of the Tasmanian State Service. The commission of inquiry recommendation to your question, in relation to the system, called for us to prioritise this work because it enables total visibility of our workforce across all agencies and will deliver a consistent method to manage investigations if needed. Importantly, the human resources information system will help manage information about current or ex-employees who may pose a risk to children and young people.

However, the transformation of government HR systems will also lead to improvements in productivity across all agencies. Indeed, the Tasmanian State Service HR transformation program was a key recommendation of the Watt independent review of the State Service. Our secretary, Ms Morgan-Wicks, knows some background on this given that started in health and can no doubt expand on this response.



I am advised that the Department of Health has been progressing from building and configuring the HRIS system into developing it into a central employee database, a payroll engine, a system that monitors time and attendance, award interpretation for four awards and 22 agreements, as well as recruitment and onboarding. You can see the benefits in relation to delivering efficiencies across agency and across government.

The first of the new system, the HR case management system, is now operational in the Department of Health. It will be rolled out to the Shared Capability and Centralised Investigations Unit in the State Service Management Office in the next few months. The module is expected to be live in all agencies within six months. The benefits of that case management system are profound because it manages reporting, employee conduct and behaviour. Multiple cases or employees are able to be linked for visibility, helping to identify behavioural trends, patterns and contributing factors. A key function of a system, when fully operational, will be to support payroll. This requires extensive and rigorous testing. Thank you for the question.

**Mr WILLIE** - Premier, in your previous answer you've outlined that there is a razor gang to try and meet your budget targets that you've set. The Budget outlines that there are about 1,000 jobs less at the end of this financial year than there were at the end of last financial year. How is that group that you're a part of going to meet its budget allocation of spending \$100 million less this financial year than it did last financial year?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Some of those matters were talked through with the secretary. We'll manage this as we do it very methodically, in a very measured approach, very thoughtful, on how the efficiencies will be implemented, ensuring that there will be no impact on frontline services.

Health often comes up in these matters. Frontline services will be supported with more frontline staff, including paramedics, nurses, doctors and other very important frontline people across government now.

The budget efficiency dividend, I spoke about a measured approach, and this is important because it is a far more moderate approach than the Labor-Greens budget in 2011-12. In the first year, I am advised, it equated to \$3.73 out of every \$100, and grew to \$4.95 out of every \$100 in the final year. The cuts then equated to \$877 million. It is more modest, of course, than the \$2 billion of cuts you announced at the election. I am interested to see where the \$150 million of yours is coming from as well, I hasten to add.

We are going to take a very measured approach to this. There was big backline impact when it comes to your Labor-Greens budget in 2011-12 and -

**Mr WINTER** - Have you got the time machine out again, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You do not need a time machine to remember because people do remember. It might seem -

**Mr WINTER** - We should ask the next question. We are not in Estimates 2012, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I was.

**Mr WINTER** - We are not at the moment, Premier. You've outlined in the Budget a reduction in total employee expenses of around \$100 million for this financial year. We are already three months into the financial year. How many positions have been made redundant so far this financial year as part of your so-called efficiencies strategy?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Since 1 July?

**Mr WINTER** - Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We can present last year's numbers, of course, to be helpful. Targeted negotiated voluntary redundancies and workforce renewal incentive program payments are available to the heads of agencies as tools to assist in managing their workforce establishment and profile as part of the managing positions in the State Service, which was issued in 2016 and still remains in place today. A total of 21 targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancies were paid for the financial year ending 30 June 2024 with a combined cost of \$1.61 million.

**Mr WINTER** - Sorry, is that just in DPAC or across the public sector?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Whole of government. A total of nine workforce renewal incentive program payments (WRIPs) were paid for the financial year ending 30 June 2024 with a combined cost of \$239,200, which is less than some of the figures I've been presented with as a result of the Labor-Greens administration, where we had a total of 554 targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancies and 1013 workforce renewal incentive programs between 2010 and 2014. The total negotiated voluntary redundancies and the WRIPs are entered into voluntarily and by negotiation between the employee and the employer.

**Mr WINTER** - Is there a target number for this financial year as to how many staff will need to leave the government?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, there's not.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, is the unbudgeted funding for the Weiss review a separate line item or are you including it in commission of inquiry funding? They are very specific recommendations, they are different and additional to the 191 commission of inquiry recommendations. Is it a separate line item?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much for the question and I thank Ms Weiss for her diligence in providing the report and the recommendations. We've publicly committed to implementing all five recommendations of the Weiss independent review. Work to implement the recommendations is underway and being led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in close consultation with the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Department of Justice and other relevant agencies and officers as required. This work will be subject to the same governance and oversight arrangements, including independent oversight of the Child Safety and Reform Implementation Monitor, once appointed.

The initial phase of work to respond to the Weiss review involves policy and legislative development and scoping activities, which are being undertaken from within existing agency resources and in alignment with related recommendations of the commission of inquiry.

## PUBLIC

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, can I draw you to the question, please? Is it funded through a separate line item or is it funded as part of the commission of inquiry bucket of money?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The work undertaken by the Department of Police and Emergency Services is within their budget and the commission of inquiry investments as well.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - So it's a part of the commission of inquiry funding?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of what I've just said, in terms of the work we are starting to undertake for the implementation of the recommendations following the review. Kathrine, do you want to add anything further to this?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - The commission of inquiry reform unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet has taken responsibility for the coordination of the recommendations of the Weiss review into Paul Reynolds. For example, one of the recommendations which relates to redress requires a significant amount of work to look at what a redress scheme would look like. Certainly, the Weiss review made a start in terms of the recommendations for that scheme, but it was not fulsome in terms of its parameters. If I may reflect as a previous secretary of Justice that looked at the redress scheme for the royal commission into child sexual abuse within government institutions, it's actually quite a piece of work to prepare and advise on options for the parameters of a redress scheme, but that work has commenced and will inform the 2025-26 budget. Funding to do that work is within the commission of inquiry funding which is within DPAC's budget.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, on 29 April last year you committed to managing the Macquarie Point project to make sure it didn't cost more than \$715 million. Your recent summary report to the Planning Commission shows that costs have already escalated to \$775 million. Will you be Premier enough to apologise for breaking that promise, or was it just a lazy commitment that you made to defend your position at the time?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Really?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Yes, really. People care about \$60 million.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are investing \$375 million as the state government.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Your promise was that it wouldn't cost more than \$715 million.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is only costing the Tasmanian taxpayers \$375 million.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Will you apologise for not being honest with them? You've broken your promise.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I haven't.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You have. Do you just say words and they don't mean things?

**CHAIR** - Order, Dr Woodruff.

## PUBLIC

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I made it very clear during the election campaign, in full openness and transparency, Dr Woodruff, that we will be investing \$375 million and the rest will be coming from private resources.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - That's not the question I asked. It was about the \$715 million promise you made to Tasmanians that the stadium would cost no more than that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - And I then promised \$375 million, which is less, in actual fact.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - A different promise. So, you -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We invest \$8.8 million a day in Health and if you multiply 8.8 by 42 it comes to about \$375 million - so there you go.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Right - promises one day and change them the next.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Premier, it's clear that you're not sure how the public-private partnership would work. Is there a big risk here that the taxpayers will be left with the bill for a half-finished stadium?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Private investment in stadia is not unusual and Optus Oval in Perth would be a good example of that. We have had some interest in terms of private development so I'm enormously confident that we will have private interests when it comes to the stadium because it's a big opportunity. We will provide, in a very open and transparent way before the end of the year, the timeline I just gave to the answer to your previous question in terms of the way forward when it comes to the model we will use to attract private investment.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, the government has entered into a strategic regional partnership with both the west coast and east coast councils. Can you tell me why those regions were chosen and what outcomes you expect from these partnerships?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, and I thank the respective mayors of each region for their cooperation. I have had particular dialogue with west coast mayor Shane Pitt over these matters, particularly on a key area of need and partnership, worker accommodation. By working together in partnership, we can overcome these challenges and the west coast has considerable challenges when it comes to employee accommodation across the public service in terms of schools and health, as an example.

We now have two signed MOUs with our regional partners on the west coast and east coast. In 2023, we provided over \$1 million to support priority projects under the partnership agreements and this Budget provides further funding which honours the commitments. The partnerships will now move to State Growth for implementation.

The west coast is remote and unique and we know from our discussions under the partnership that the greatest challenge they face are people and workers. This means helping them to recruit and retain more essential service workers such as teachers, childcare workers and health workers, as well as providing housing for these workers to assist the community with their economic diversification and support young people when it comes to development of their skills and training.

## PUBLIC

The east coast may look a little different, but they too have very similar needs in some circumstances, including workforce development. Finding people is difficult right across Tasmania but is accentuated in outlying and regional areas and we need to be finding workers, housing them, delivering a robust visitor economy and improving liveability and essential services.

As part of our 2030 Strong Plan, we are delivering \$10.2 million into these two partnerships, which include key worker accommodation and a number of other agreed priorities under our partnerships with the two communities. I expect we could achieve over time stronger regional communities, improved essential services and a more stabilised workforce for business and industry in those regions. That is the key thing.

Another key thing was also ensuring that strategic regional partnerships are not just between councils and state government but also involving key industry sectors on the west coast, such as mining, salmon, tourism, who are key partners there, and on the east coast involving other key partners as well, and I thank the mayors of Break O'Day and Glamorgan-Spring Bay for their leadership and willingness to work together on those matters.

**Mr SHELTON** - Following up on that, given that yourself and -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Point of order, Deputy Chair. That's not in the Standing Orders, that's a second question.

**CHAIR** - State your point, Mr Shelton.

**Mr SHELTON** - Well, others have had continual questions and extended that line of questioning.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - No, we haven't. It's because of the rotation.

**CHAIR** - I do allow a degree of latitude in the questions. There has been a number of occasions where I could have pulled a couple of members up a little shorter than I did, but I'm trying to give a little bit of flexibility here.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, I am sure the mayor of Break O'Day, Mick Tucker, has been in your ear about Break O'Day being one of the most tourism dependent areas in Australia. How good will it be to have a team of Tasmanian football men and women running around the mainland with Tasmania on the front of their guernsey's promoting Tasmania as a tourist destination?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - This is really sickening PR, really sickening, and an abuse of scrutiny. You should be embarrassed to answer that question in a scrutiny committee.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've put on the record many times, Mr Shelton, about what it means for the whole of Tasmanian, including rural and regional Tasmania, particularly around aspiration in regional communities for our young Tasmanians. Thank you for the question.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Back to the GBE question, it does have a significant impact on not only the budget but the future of the state. Essentially, there is a cultural problem across a number of our GBEs in terms of their attitude towards Tasmania. They seem to be making decisions in

the best interest of their organisation, not necessarily Tasmania. The only thing that you've mentioned is a redraft of the shareholder expectations and a nice chat and a level of concern. Surely that's not going to fix the problem. What other steps are you taking to fix the issues we have with our GBEs and some of the terrible decisions they're making?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I believe that I have outlined this quite significantly in terms of the charter and ministerial oversight as well and my desire.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - That does not give you a legal right to instruct them, do they? It's just an instruction.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's my clear expectation and we are the government of the day. There will no doubt be other governments of other colours in some time in the future and I would expect that the GBEs would follow the government policy there as well without their commitment. What I've come to appreciate and realise is that we do need to ensure that our GBEs and Southern companies are very focused on the team Tasmania approach. We highlighted it also in our Liberal fiscal strategy that we outlined in full transparency at the last election. One of the key fiscal objectives is requiring government businesses to deliver outcomes consistent with Tasmanian Liberals policy objectives: Deliver services to Tasmanians at the lowest sustainable cost while growing our economy and engaging with business and community in a constructive manner.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - But they're not, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You could point to examples where they-

**Mr O'BYRNE** - All day, all day.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You could point to those examples and I will take feedback from the community that they can do far better when it comes to this. I agree with you and that's why very deliberately in our fiscal strategy objectives, in the last line 'and engaging with business and community in a constructive manner'. Now that's there for a very clear reason Mr O'Byrne and the reason is the question that you've just given me regarding my expectations and the feedback that I get. I look forward to GBEs later on in the year, where we can further outline not only my expectations, but ministerial expectations, the charters as well, and hear from the GBEs themselves around how they're going to ensure continued focus on being constructive for stakeholders and getting stuff done.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, in an earlier answer, the Secretary outlined saving strategies over the next year. I've written them down and rounded them up. They're about \$1 million this year, \$2 million the following year and \$3 million the year after that. There's been a question broadly about what's a frontline service and what's not. Is Service Tasmania considered to be frontline and is Service Tasmania likely to see any cuts or even closures of Service Tasmania centres?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Good question. They are absolutely frontline and they are not subject to the efficiency dividend.

## PUBLIC

**Mr WINTER** - Are there any aspects in the department or any components of the department's work that are seen as being able to be not frontline in terms of where these savings are coming from?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Further to the answer that Ms Morgan-Wicks gave in terms of how we can achieve possibly more savings than required, or stated if I can put it that way, but Kathy, would you like to talk about that from an operational point of view?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - From an operational perspective, in addition to the establishment management project we've been undertaking to optimise our budgeting for staffing and to reflect their actual workload variations that are recorded within the department, other opportunities for savings - and I'm aware from speaking with other heads of agencies - we'll be looking for efficiencies, for example, in supplies and consumables, efficiencies in relation to travel. We have greatly benefited through the COVID pandemic in relation to the uptake of online meetings, including encouraging our other states and territories and Commonwealth colleagues to participate in online meetings rather than always face to face.

In relation to fleet management, making sure we have optimised the use of vehicles and allocation of vehicles. Looking at, for example, our lease expenditure and accommodation across government. We often have changing levels due to machinery-of-government changes, for example, which impact for particular departments, where groups may move from one department to another, which then impacts on our accommodation where we may be able to achieve a saving.

Those are various examples. As heads of agencies, we absolutely know the pressure that is on our employees and our commitment to deliver the priorities of the government, and also the effort to actually recruit employees and the time spent to do that. That is why we do look to initiatives such as the establishment management, supplies and consumables or other non-employee items in order to deliver efficiencies in the Budget.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, your communications office has now ballooned out to 12 FTEs. Is your communications office subject to any of the vacancy control or efficiencies you've outlined today?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Resources have increased for all MPs, including the Labor Party, including the Greens, as I understand it. And, of course, we have more members of Parliament now -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - And all the MPs.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sorry?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - All MPs, as you say.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - All MPs, yes, that is right, isn't it?

**Mr WINTER** - Yes, to my knowledge.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have more MPs and a broader ministry as well.

## PUBLIC

**Mr WINTER** - In terms of that, Premier, we have new arrangements, we have 35 members of parliament. How have you allocated the staffing arrangements across members of parliament? Have there been any increases for independent members. for example, as a part of the new parliament?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I had engagement, obviously, with yourself, the Leader of the Greens, and the crossbench after the election. It was noted that additional resources to support the effective functioning of the House of Assembly due to its increasing size and focus on a collaborative approach would be appreciated. We've worked on developing and determined to provide initial half an FTE per member to use at the party's discretion. That is about greater engagement and also occupational health and safety for existing employees. In terms of staffing per House member, each member is nominally allocated 1.5 FTE and a further \$130 000 staffing allowance. We have indicated it's very much up to the discretion of each member how this allocated on a dollar basis to their staff.

To recognise party status, there is an additional staffing allowance for those parties with three members, 15 per cent additional for between three and five members, and 25 per cent additional for five members, I'm advised. I recognise there'd been some ambiguity in the past but in this new constructive parliament I've been seeking to formalise these arrangements so all members can be clear on their entitlements.

**Mr WINTER** - Are you able to table the staffing allocations across the members of the different parties and independents?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Of course. I'll take that on notice.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, can you breakdown the \$775 million for the stadium figure so that we can see what was submitted to the planning commission so that we can see what it does and doesn't include? I want to know, for example, does it include contracts that have already been awarded, such as for design works; and does it include the costs of the new access road, the bus mall, moving the Goods Shed and the underground car park?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question and I am happy to answer it, as Mr Street will also be happy to answer some of these questions. The Project Of State Significance submission is a planning document and I'm sure we've got the WT partnership document that Ms Johnston asked for, I believe, will be applied in coming days.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Would you like to take that question on notice if you don't have the information at the table?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can take that on notice if you like or I can invite -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It's a straight question about whether they're included.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can, but I'd like to provide as much information as possible as quickly as possible, so I'd like to invite Anne Beach to the table for a few questions if you'd like to just touch on that, notwithstanding Mr Street's direct responsibility for this in terms of the stadium infrastructure.



## PUBLIC

Thank you, Anne, who is the Chief Executive Officer of Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Thank you, Premier. It's the same question I asked you. Does the \$775 million for the stadium figure include contracts that have already been awarded, such as for design work and the costs of the new access road, the bus mall, moving the Goods Shed and the building of an underground car park?

**Ms BEACH** - The \$775 million is for the stadium works. The project budget does include consultancy work, so it includes the construction development costs which include consultant fees, headworks, contingencies and resourcing, as well as escalation so that does include contracts issued today as part of that full budget.

The car park is included in our planning application because it will be supporting the stadium, but it is a whole-of-precinct outcome so that's not included in the project because it's not specific to the project. It's a whole-of-precinct car park. It won't be open to the public as such as more facilities support the precinct outcomes. It's included the planning application to make sure we have the ability to have approvals there to take that element of the precinct development to market.

The northern access road is a pre-existing commitment. There's funding in the budget to develop the design for that and that's being progressed separately. The bus transition is linked in with the northern access road, so we'll work through the development of that as part of the landscaping of the site.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Thank you. You didn't answer about moving the Goods Shed and the actual bus mall.

**Ms BEACH** - It's not a bus mall. It's a transition space. The northern access road will have a terminal end, so it'll have a turning space and the bus drop-off area will be integrated into that. So, they'll be integrating the northern access road in with the landscaping of the plaza in that space and we'll manage that from a whole-of-precinct approach.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Okay, thank you. Premier, your government's summary report to the Tasmanian Planning Commission says:

The operating assumption is that any residual funding will be borrowed.

This is backed up by your state Budget, which says:

Additional expenditure outside the forward Estimates is anticipated to be met through short-term borrowings by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

You're clearly spending more than the \$375 million you promised Tasmanians and are planning to borrow more to cover those expenses. Are you really going keep pretending that this complies with your election commitment?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We're simply going to invest \$375 million, and we will.

## PUBLIC

**Dr WOODRUFF** - What about all the rest of this stuff? How is that going to be paid for?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I said \$375 million is the Tasmanian government contribution into the Macquarie Point precinct and there will be a federal government contribution as well of \$240 million and we expect to attract private investment. I mentioned in my previous answer where the interest has been in terms of areas of private investment as well.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You are ratcheting up the costs. The stadium's obviously getting more and more expensive as we go on, so are you still pretending to Tasmanians that it's going to be private investors who are going to pick up the tab?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not pretending, we will do.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Like the fairy private investors?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Dr Woodruff, there has been private investment in stadia infrastructure across the country, okay? Perth is a very good example of that. There is private investment in lots of enabling infrastructure projects and I hold the firm view that private investment on what is a -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Loss-making stadium.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It will be, by your own financial assessment.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You say that, but compared to other stadia it is very favourable in terms of the output, but you are forgetting the broader economy, you are forgetting the impact of an AFL team and the entertainment that will be attracted to come to Tasmania, and the private investment that people make into supporting surrounding infrastructure to support the precinct and the stadia as well. There's a lot to be considered here. I recognise your opposition, which as far as I can tell must only be political, because here we have a virtual wasteland -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It wasn't going to be that way; that's what you've created, unfortunately.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - with sewage works and an ex-port, and what we've created is an urban renewal project which Tasmanians will be proud of and I am looking forward to that and all the benefits from that.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Have you had any discussions with Hawthorn about continuing to play matches in Launceston?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I haven't directly, beyond 2028.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Would you consider it if it stacks up?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am sure minister Street would have engaged this but discussions are happening.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - I have a question on the stadium. There was some media commentary around the figure that was used, the \$715 million to \$770 million, and there was some information given in the media that that is the current sort of estimate based on what is being planned. I understand in the commentary there was talk that that figure may change, go up and down depending on what's in scope and what's out of scope. That is obviously of interest to Tasmanians, so could you expand on that and explain that?

**Ms BEACH** - Yes, that is absolutely right. Cost planning is a dynamic process and it's important to note that what we've put in to the Planning Commission is at the concept stage, so it's very early in the design stage, and we've included a cost estimate to inform the economic analysis that supports that integrated assessment. It is not the final figure and we're not yet at final design so we have quite a long way to go. We're working through the schematic design and then we'll go through the detailed design that will go through 40, 60 and 75 per cent as part of that contracting process.

As we go through that, we'll be refining. It's important to note, as the Premier said, what we've submitted here is for planning approval, it's not for cost approval, and we've included the full spectrum of activity that would be delivered over time in this space. As we go through that refinement, we can pull back some of those assumptions, so there'll be per square metre rates where there's a fair bit of buffering there. We've allowed for some flexibility. There's quite a bit of contingencies. As we work through the detailed design process we can unpack some of those assumptions and we will find the budget will go up and down on a weekly basis as we work through.

As you can imagine, there's block allocations, as you'll see in the architectural drawings in attachment A to our submission. As we allocate specific rooms, put in doors, adding all those extra wall allocations, unpack the level of finish we're going to have in specific areas, determine what food and beverage will be where, all that level of detail provides a level of specificity that allows us to specifically cost those elements. It is a very early working cost estimate that will continue to change right up until that final design and we have included some contingency in there, so we expect to be able to manage this to budget.

**Mr SHELTON** - I could ask a lot of questions about the positive outcomes of the AFL team and the stadium but I won't. My question is about the government actions on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy to establish a kids' clinic. Can you provide information on how many clinics are established and how you will know that the whole strategy is working?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton. The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, It Takes a Tasmanian Village, was launched back in 2021 with an investment of \$100 million for a four-year strategy for children and young people aged between zero and 25 years of age. We're now in our third year of the strategy and the establishment of kids' care clinics was a key part of our commitment in the strategy, as you've highlighted. There are now 18 kids' care clinics established. There are 12 in southern Tasmania, four in the north and two in the north-west and to date they have enabled over 5000 appointments for more than 1700 vulnerable children to access community-based multidisciplinary paediatric services. These are free services, I would add, so they assist vulnerable families with cost-of-living pressures, as you can particularly appreciate in recent times.

## PUBLIC

A total of \$6 million over three years was allocated for the establishment of these clinics that provide targeted health care as well as support for vulnerable children and families with a focus on early identification of children's and young persons' particular health needs and also wellbeing concerns.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It's a pity you set up and funded a taskforce which was counter to the commission of inquiry's recommendations, and you're not closing Ashley.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Chair, these are important so if I may just finish very quickly. The clinics are based in local facilities, child and family learning centres, neighbourhood houses and outreach services. The first was established in Kingston Neighbourhood House. All kids' care clinics are run by the Tasmanian Community Paediatric Team. In the second half of 2024, we'll be evaluating how the strategy is going, what is working well and what might need to be improved upon - good evaluation should always do that - as we move towards the next four-year plan. There are ongoing commitments but we look forward to the next four years as well based on continuous improvement, of course.

**Mr WINTER** - Does your government have any plans to privatise parts of the Public Trustee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Minister Barnett has responsibility for these areas. We recognise the important work of the Tasmanian Public Trustee providing essential services to the community to manage and act as trustee, attorney, executor -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Sounds like you're leaving the door open.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - or administrator for financial affairs. Since the 2021 review of the Public Trustee by Damien Bugg AM KC, the Tasmanian Government has been progressing reforms to the administrative and operational practices of the Public Trustee, completing 26 of 28 recommendations.

I thank the Public Trustee, led by CEO Todd Kennedy, for their engagement and commitment to implement the recommendations and would like to acknowledge the considerable effort the Public Trustee has put in to improve client satisfaction.

In July 23, the Treasurer directed the Tasmanian Economic Regulator to inquire into the Public Trustee's fees and charges for clients required by legislation to use the Public Trustee's services. The regulator delivered the report of the inquiry to the Treasurer and Attorney, I'm advised, in February this year. The Tasmanian Government will release the Tasmanian Economic Regulator's report in due course.

Both the Economic Regulator's report and the 2021 independent review into the Public Trustee have raised questions about the appropriateness of the business model for the Public Trustee and the Regulator, suggesting that there may be merit in more closely examining other administrative models for the business.

To provide assurances to government on structural change of the delivery of regulated services of the Public Trustee and what represents a best-practice approach to deliver more effective, efficient and cost-effective services to clients, the Government will conduct a short, independent review of the Public Trustee.

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The independent review will also provide advice on whether the commercial will, estate and trustee services currently provided would be transferred to the private sector to allow the Public Trustee to focus on the delivery of -

**Mr WINTER** - You are privatising the Public Trustee?

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You're actually going to get rid of the Public Trustee.

**CHAIR** - Order, Dr Woodruff.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, how can it be the Public Trustee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are all working through this and we do not need to raise our voices.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I am just concerned about where you are working towards - privatisation.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay. To allow the Public Trustee to focus on the delivery of non-commercial services and recommendations of the Regulator's report. I am advised the anticipated independent review will take six to eight weeks to complete.

**Mr WINTER** - What components of the Public Trustee's current operations are your government considering privatising?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As has been stated by the Attorney-General, Minister for Justice Guy Barnett, and Michael Ferguson, the Treasurer, it will be restructured with the commercial will, estate and trustee services currently provided to be transferred to the private sector.

Now, we have spoken about how we came to this, in terms of Damien Bugg's recommendations, and -

**Mr WINTER** - You put a media release out one minute after I asked the question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we've hardly drafted a media release in one minute.

**Ms DOW** - You must have a lot of resources in your comms office, Premier.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Both the Economic Regulator's report and the 2021 independent review into the Public Trustee raised questions about the appropriateness of the government business model, the Public Trustee, given the competing tensions between maximising revenue and protecting the interests of vulnerable clients.

So, we've been into a model that best protects the interests of vulnerable clients and that is the matter.

**Mr WINTER** - You've talked about the issue here, which is the vulnerable clients - this is about them. How can their interests be better served in the private sector rather than in the public sector? I mean, how low has your government possibly got to privatise the Public Trustee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I say, the Public Trustee will -

**Mr WINTER** - Is this a money thing or is this an incompetence thing?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is a better delivery of services thing.

**Mr WINTER** - The question was, Premier, how can these services that protect vulnerable Tasmanians, the most vulnerable Tasmanians, possibly be better served in the private sector than in the public sector?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The changes that we are making, as we have said, and it's been articulated by the Attorney-General and the Treasurer, is about ensuring better services, particularly for vulnerable Tasmanians.

**Mr WINTER** - How, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There has been recommendations put forward and we're listening and acting on a number of those recommendations. It is about continuous improvement, as I say, better service delivery, better supporting vulnerable Tasmanians.

**Mr WINTER** - What are the amount of savings that are planned to come from this change? Is the Public Trustee exposed to your efficiency dividend?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There will be a restructuring analysis to determine the final model and any investment that we continue to make will be clearly articulated.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - This is a shameful announcement from your government and it just shows how terrible your priorities are. We have been talking about failing to invest in critical health and social infrastructure by choosing to fund things like the stadium and all manner of other things which are not on the top list. However, I never would have dreamt that under your government you would privatise the Public Trustee, after everything that organisation has gone through. After the work that has been done building up the Public Trustee, after the dark days in the Bugg review, it has turned around. At this point you are actually going to pull it out from underneath the most vulnerable Tasmanians. How can you honestly call this -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It will actually make it better.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Why do you not put the work into the public employees and the organisation so that they can do the job, which you apparently think they are not doing properly, that you think the private sector is better at doing? Why don't you do that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is about protecting vulnerable Tasmanians and improving the service to vulnerable Tasmanians.

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**Dr WOODRUFF** - Give me an example around Australia where it has been better for vulnerable people for the private sector to come in, profit-making, and look after their interests, especially vulnerable people. Give me an example of where it is better?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Some services might be closer -

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Give me an example of why you think this will be better? You can't.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There has been a number of reports done. The economic regulator's report recommended it, was it in February 2024? Have you read the report?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Are you doing the job as Premier looking after vulnerable Tasmanians?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, absolutely, more than any other government in the history of Tasmania.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, let's talk about your priorities on putting money into the stadium. One of the other things you are not costing, money that could be going into vulnerable Tasmanians that the Public Trustee represents, is going into paying to get entertainment to Tasmania.

What has been costed for the requirement for the state to pay for event attraction funding in the stadium budget that has been proposed? How much money is going towards attracting events to Tasmania? Because they're sure not going to come by themselves.

**Ms BEACH** - The analysis included in the planning application is full cost, so they are not necessarily new costs. So, this is not in assumed any additional event funding as part of the project funding.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I didn't understand. It is the case, is it not, that we will have to spend the money to attract events? How much has been costed for that?

**Ms BEACH** - The analysis has looked at considering a number of different costs through the stadium development. The project does not assume any of the project funding will go towards event analysis. Event funding on a year-to-year basis is a decision for the government from its event allocation each year.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - So, it's a future cost that is not put into the project? That will come out of another part of the government budget towards attracting events to go to the stadium?

**Ms BEACH** - Event funding is an allocation the government would make each year.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - But it is stadium-specific event attraction that will come out of other budget areas?

**Ms BEACH** - It would be a decision as to the event funding allocated that year as to what it is spent on, so it may not be an additional spend.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Premier, your Gender Budget Statement confirms that about 11 per cent of girls and women aged 15 to 24 are not engaged in work or study. That is way above the national average of about 7 per cent. What are you doing to change this? You have your High Vis Army which is great for the men because we know that only 3 per cent of women get involved in construction. Are you targeting women in employment between 15 to 24?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As you've correctly pointed out, and thank you for the question, in terms of the High Vis Army. it's available to everyone, first -

**Mrs PENTLAND** - But it does favour men, being only 3 per cent of women involved in the construction industry.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and there has been work to improve that, as I understand it. I remember there was significant effort years ago, and quite possibly still is, I expect, to have more women engineers as well. When it comes to women's representation across a number of fields, representation in politics, the Tasmanian three-year trend, as demonstrated on page 27 of the Tasmanian Gender Budget Statement, is improving. We're better than national comparison. Women in leadership and managerial roles is improving comparable to the national average. Women in self-employment is steady and is comparable to the national comparison. Flexible working arrangements are improving and better than the national comparison.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Just specifically to 15- to 24-year-olds, if you look at that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I want to commend the Department of Premier and Cabinet and others who have worked on the 2024-25 Tasmanian Gender Budget Statement. It is very comprehensive and it's being improved upon every year, which is commendable and important. I am very proud of the fact that our government produces a gender budget statement.

I want greater participation of women in our workforce. Tasmania has fared well in recent years when it comes to participation in the workforce. I stand to be corrected, but the figure of about 140,000 women participating in the workforce was, at some point in time, a record, which was very pleasing. No doubt you can point to areas of continuous improvement there.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - We've been a tourism, obviously, minister, as well, we know that 58.6 per cent of women are in hospitality. Would that be an area where you could identify some incentives for 15- to 24-year-olds to engage where there's going to be a larger uptake with women in that industry?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The industry is performing well already, you're saying, but you'd like to?

**Mrs PENTLAND** - In reverse to the construction industry, we know that there's 58.6 per cent in Tasmania women that are engaged in hospitality. Obviously, that's more than men. So, perhaps you could incentivise 15- to 24-year-old women to get involved with tourism to help bridge that gap of the difference between 15 and 24.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm well aware of your experience within the tourism and hospitality sector so I'd be more than happy to engage with yourself and ideas that you have. We engage



continually with the hospitality sector. That could be a part, we've got the Boosting the Future of Hospitality and events commitment and \$3 million investment into the Greater Customer Experience program by the Tasmanian Hospitality Association. It will provide free support to tourism and hospitality businesses across the state. I'll be interested in your ideas and thoughts on this because of your experience within the industry sector.

**Mr SHELTON** - To follow on a similar line of questioning, congratulations to the Premier and government for the budget gender statement. It is wonderful. What percentage of women are in senior leadership positions in the State Service? And what efforts are being made in the State Service to ensure workplace equality and respect?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I appreciate that question very much.

Can I also just say to Dr Woodruff, I mentioned the February 2024 report when it comes to the economic regulator. It is February 2024, but released today.

Women make up about half of the Tasmanian community, so it is important they are equally represented in positions of leadership and decision-making across our State Service. In 2016, our government set a target of women holding at least 40 per cent of senior executive positions by 2020. We achieved that ahead of time, Mr Shelton, and exceeded it. In fact, as of June 2024, women now occupy 54.8 per cent of senior executive roles, based on paid headcount. In addition, all agencies have committed to the Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Standards and have developed agency action plans to report against the standards.

A key initiative in supporting women across government is the Women Supporting Women in Leadership program that supports and mentors women in the State Service in their leadership journey. In November last year, the Women Supporting Women program launched its leadership strategy 2024-27, which aims to provide more opportunities for women in leadership to share experiences, learn new skills, network and develop leadership capacity. An action plan to support and promote women's wellbeing is developed each calendar year and is contributing to a more inclusive and equitable workplace across the state sector.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, there's been a number of scandals that have been outlined from the Public Trustee over the last few years. We had an elderly man in hospital having his lease terminated and his home cleared without his knowledge, a woman was prevented from using her own money to buy Christmas presents from her family and there's been compensation claims for young children. How will privatising the Public Trustee help those vulnerable Tasmanians who have been so badly let down?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is not privatisation of the Public Trustee. There have been many reviews recommending significant improvement across the way. Some services will be brought closer to government, such as the Department of Justice, and what you've just outlined is what we want to avoid. The decision has been made following extensive consideration of the 2021 independent review and the Tasmanian Economic Regulator's recent inquiry into the Public Trustee's fees and charges, both of which raised questions about the appropriateness of the existing government business enterprise model.

To provide assurance to the government that the structural change represents the best-practice approach, an independent examination will be undertaken to inform detailed planning for implementation. This examination will cover matters relating to determining if the

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Public Trustee is fit for purpose, including if it achieves effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery to the Public Trustee's core client groups, including representative persons and other clients required to use Public Trustee services; is sustainable under the structural model prescribed in the *Government Business Enterprise Act 1995*; and the suitability of an agency model as the new structure for delivering effective and efficient services to the Public Trustee's core clients.

**Mr WINTER** - Won't privatising the Public Trustee reduce the ability of your ministers and to have that oversight that's been so badly let down for Tasmanians who are supposed to be looked after by the Public Trustee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Subject to being informed by an independent examination, it is anticipated that the new arrangements will be implemented in the next 12 to 18 months. As to investigating commercial services to the private sector, these services that are not the Public Trustee's core services, okay? The services you're referring to will be closer to government to avoid the cases you outlined.

**Mr WINTER** - What are those services that you're looking to privatise?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I say, we'll be working on these matters and the Attorney-General will be working through these matters. I can go through some of the key findings.

**Mr WINTER** - I don't need to see that; I don't need to hear that. I was asking what components of it are you looking to be privatised?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll work through these matters, but the core services, we want better services for vulnerable Tasmanians. We've had the economic regulator's report -

**Mr WINTER** - Do you think the answer to that is to commercialise it?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Why didn't you explain it to the Legislative Council? You put out a media release the second he finished talking this morning.

**CHAIR** - Dr Woodruff, please let the Premier -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Timing? Didn't want to front the Legislative Council members?

**CHAIR** - Dr Woodruff, order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - These are the Estimates of the Department of Premier Cabinet. We have had the 2021 review and the Economic Regulator report. Are we to ignore all the findings in those reports, is that what you're saying we should do? The regulator wasn't able to assess whether the Public Trustee's fees and charges reflect the efficient cost of service delivery for individuals. The Public Trustee's costs are too high and the average cost of providing services to representative persons in Tasmania was among the highest in the country and more than three times higher than in Victoria, where a supported decision-making model has already been implemented. Why wouldn't we want to continuously improve not only the services to vulnerable Tasmanians but the cost of services?

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**Mr WINTER** - So, you think that commercialising this service is a good way to improve the Public Trustee?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What I'm saying is we need to improve our services -

**Mr WINTER** - So, you've given up on it and you're going to hand it over to the private sector because you can't manage this and you can't protect those vulnerable Tasmanians.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, on Mr Shelton's recent interest in the area of women in the public service, will the government commit to the Commonwealth Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reporting?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question and I am happy to provide an answer about that.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Will your government commit to that reporting?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am happy to consider WGEA reporting and take that on notice. We report on a number of matters in terms of gender information but -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Can I take that as a question on notice?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, if you'd like. Happy to answer it, too.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - The cost estimate on the stadium of \$775 million in the financial impact report does not include \$55 million of so-called value management strategies, in other words, critical stadium infrastructure such as LED ribbon lighting, PA systems, audiovisual equipment and food and beverage fit-outs. The Macquarie Point Development Corporation's financial impact report says it is unprecedented and unlikely for the private sector to engage in this type of investment. Premier, will you be truthful with Tasmanians and admit that these costs will just become an extra stadium debt?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Dr Woodruff, I respect your position when it comes to the stadium. I don't agree with it, but you have a position. We're investing \$375 million into enabling infrastructure like we invest into schools, hospitals, roads, bridges - and we can have both. We can invest in essential services, we can invest in frontline services - which we are and will continue to do - and we can invest in enabling infrastructure, as every state of Australia has. I am not of the view that Tasmania needs to be a special case where we miss out.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - So, do you disbelieve that assessment? I'm just finishing up on this, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Dr Woodruff, I have given the call to Mr O'Byrne.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Thank you, Chair. My question through the Premier is to Ms Beach following on from the question from the Tasmanian Greens on economic modelling. The paperwork in the proposal released last week outlines a 1500-seat conference centre or the ability to host that. Why was that number arrived at and what would that mean in context to the conference market in Hobart and Tasmania?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question and I appreciate that very much. Ms Beach, would you like to answer that question?

**Ms BEACH** - We looked at a few different options and we did go for 1500 persons seated as you noted. And that's important because there are a number of offerings already in the CBD and more broadly, but particularly in the CBD. It was important that we got offered above 1100, which we're already able to offer.

**CHAIR** - The time being virtually 11.00 a.m., I'm going to suggest that we have a break for approximately ten minutes. We'll be back here at approximately 11.07 a.m.

**The Committee suspended from 10.57 a.m. to 11.08 a.m.**

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Election spending. So, Premier, how much discussion was there during the campaign about the level of election spending that was appropriate? Given February's budget outlook report confirmed just how unsustainable the state's finances were, how was it decided to announce a further \$1.4 billion in new spending? If you had your time again, would you make the same promises, or do you think you would be more prudent?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. We, in my view, invested wisely in making the decisions we made, not only to support local communities but also, importantly, on infrastructure, upgrading hospitals, reaching into primary healthcare services, for example, when it comes to GP services, GP guarantee, and those areas of responsibility that really fall within the Commonwealth.

But Tasmanians only really care about the services themselves, not who delivers, so we're reaching in to support that, notwithstanding the good partnerships we've had with the urgent care centres and the like. So, I'm very comfortable with the commitments that we made. We're very mindful of the investments that we're making to ensure that they could lead to a sustainable budget position.

Most Tasmanians would agree that we're investing in the right areas, including health and education and public safety and infrastructure, and that's reflected in the Budget where we have got that balance right between a sensible pathway to surplus and investment in appropriate areas that Tasmanians care about, reaching into the cost of living, for example, and supporting Tasmanians through what has been a nationwide, if not global, cost of living crisis. The renewable energy dividend was part of our commitment in terms of supercharging the renewable energy dividend, housing infrastructure, for example.

So, I am comfortable with the level of investment we're making. This was, combined with our fiscal strategy, sensible, measured in response, and, in comparison to the other major political party vying for government, being the Labor Party, far more sensible.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Can you just expand on the Commonwealth part, like just the Commonwealth responsibility? Are we picking up the price tag for the Commonwealth responsibility because they are not delivered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What I am saying is that the Commonwealth have that responsibility for primary health care largely, whereas we're in charge of the acute care service delivery when it comes to our hospitals. My view is that when it comes to attracting GPs, for example, and

more primary healthcare services, the Commonwealth could do a lot more. We are finding we have GP services that are stretched, particularly in regional areas, and that is why matters such as our 9000 bulk billing appointments, the GP guarantee and the employer service model that I announced in January 2023 with the Prime Minister are important. Urgent care centres are again a Commonwealth investment but they are also in partnership with the state government. The Commonwealth really should be grabbing the primary health care bull by the horns rather than neglecting it, and we are reaching in to boost it, along with reducing red tape when it comes to pharmacies and the like as well, which I have spoken about in parliament before.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, this Budget has \$8.3 million to expand Service Tasmania's digital services. What does that mean for Tasmanians and what will the funding deliver?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much for that, Mr Shelton. As members may know, Service Tasmania's digital portal myServiceTas was launched in April this year. This provides Tasmanians with a secure single myServiceTas login so they have access to Tasmanian government services in one place, anytime, anywhere.

In the first five months, 42,000 accounts have been created, and as of 8 August this year, just over 7000 car registration renewals and 2600 driver licence renewals have been successfully processed. Tasmanians can also check their driver's licence or registration, check demerit points or sign up as a new driver to the Plates Plus course. Importantly, this new service complements all existing Service Tasmania facilities, the 27 locations of the phone services and the website. The digital portal adds to the suite of options to deliver government services and is not replacing any services that exist already.

Local Tasmanian business Intuit worked with us to build this first-of-its-kind portal in Tasmania. We committed \$4.3 million in the 2021-22 Budget, I remember that, and now we have committed a further \$8.3 million over four years to keep this great new tool operational as well as developing further services on the platform. For example, a new service added to the portal on 29 August was to give landowners the ability to apply for a fire permit or to register an intention to burn. Additional upcoming services will include temporary upgrade permits for heavy vehicles for transfer and disposal of vehicles, bulk vehicle registration renewals for organisations who operate vehicle fleets that help Tasmanians and businesses get their business done in an easier, more effective way.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, I want to ask about caretaker conventions. During the recent election, there was a €50 million payment to Finnish shipbuilder Rauma Marine Constructions (RMC). During the Public Accounts Committee inquiry, the former chair of TT-Line, Michael Grainger, outlined that he had advice, which I think was via Treasury, that this did not trigger a need to tell the minister and therefore trigger caretaker conventions. Was DPAC consulted about this advice and can you or the secretary explain why variations to existing transactions do not trigger caretaker conventions?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. As to caretaker conventions, Ms Morgan-Wicks can speak to that in terms of DPAC advice and the like, noting that Ms Morgan-Wicks was not secretary during caretaker.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - In relation to caretaker conventions in themselves, they are published and managed by DPAC and are available on our Department of Premier and Cabinet

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website. I was not the secretary of DPAC during the caretaker period so I cannot comment in relation to advice provided by the then secretary of DPAC in relation to that matter.

**Mr WINTER** - Can you take that on notice, then, just the specific question about whether DPAC was consulted about the advice of the TT-Line?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Mr WINTER** - Thank you. Further to that line of questioning, is it your view or DPAC's view that the advice that existing transactions don't trigger caretaker conventions applies regardless of the quantum of the variation? In this case it was \$80 million that TT-Line was advised didn't trigger caretaker. Is there a quantum that would trigger caretaker conventions?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of a key set of criteria?

**Mr WINTER** - For example, if it had been half a billion dollars, would that have triggered caretaker conventions?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have section 4 of the guidelines for caretaker conventions, major contracts and amendments, which may provide further information for you but I can get that information if we've got it. It is on a case-by-case basis, I'm advised, to note dollar value.

**Mr WINTER** - Regarding the arrangements that were in place during that, are you satisfied that the TT Line, a government-owned business, was making decisions to pay \$80 million of Tasmanian taxpayers' money to an overseas shipbuilder? Was there any point in time in which your government was engaged in those conversations and if so, what was that engagement? Are you satisfied that they made that decision without your government signing off on it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That is a question best asked to the shareholder minister at the time.

**Mr WINTER** - You are the Premier.

**Mr WINTER** - I wasn't engaged with it, but we're happy to provide some further advice in terms of criteria and the like.

**Mr WINTER** - Do you think it's okay that TT-Line made a decision to bail out a Finnish shipbuilder without seeking the approval of your government to do so with \$80 million worth of taxpayer money?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's very important that our government business enterprises and state-owned companies operate in an open and transparent way and I expect a team Tasmania approach to these matters. If there needs to be further refinement of the caretaker conventions and indeed the criteria, like we do across all of government, we want to have the best possible system.

**Mr WINTER** - The question still hasn't been answered.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, my question is in relation to the cost of the stadium. Ms Beach confirmed earlier that the moving of the Goods Shed and the building of the

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underground car park have not been included in the submission for costs on the stadium, the \$775 million. Can you please tell me any information you have about how much they're expected to cost?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I wouldn't have that information at hand.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Maybe Ms Beach could?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm impressed with the very pragmatic approach to the Goods Shed, though, and the visuals there with the see-through roof to be able to visualise the Cenotaph as demonstrated in some of the pictures. It looks very impressive and takes into account -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - The question is how much is it going to cost to move, along with the car park?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That will be determined. I'm not sure if we have any figures, but again, this is a planning matter.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Can you confirm for Tasmanians that you have or have not costed the move of the Goods Shed and the building of an underground car park, which are both required for the stadium?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I named a number of matters this morning. Ms Beach, would you like to speak to this, please?

**Ms BEACH** - We are currently scoping up the car parking and our intent would be to take that to market, to test the market to see the response to that.

In relation to the Goods Shed, there are a couple of different options. One is that it is disassembled, stored offsite and then reassembled in the location we have outlined in our POSS application, which is to the north of the site where the original tram shed was located to align with the rail lines. Another is that we try and relocate it as one parcel and we have had some representations to suggest there are some businesses that can do that. We will need to go through a process to test the different options to work through which of those is the most feasible and cost effective.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Can you table any information you have that has been done on the preliminary work in costing the move of the Goods Shed and the building of the underground car park, please?

**Ms BEACH** - That work is still very preliminary and will involve market testing and we're still working through the options.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, the original cost for the stadium was \$715 million, with funding to come from the state of \$375 million, the feds for \$240 million and the AFL for \$15 million to bring to a total of \$630 million, which left a shortfall of \$85 million that you have been saying the private sector will pick up. Last week, we heard that your promise was broken and the price has actually increased to \$60 million. We also found out from the budget papers that there is an extra \$55.2 million in so-called value management strategies that Tasmanians will be paying for, so the current cost is now estimated to be \$830.2 million,

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a shortfall of \$200.2 million. We've just heard that doesn't include moving the Goods Shed and the cost of building the underground car park. Are you still pretending that the private sector is going to pick up that tab?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, it will. I thought you said it would cost a billion dollars.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, it's obviously going to cost more than a billion dollars, just like retrofitting the ACT stadium cost more than a billion dollars.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I don't know, but anyway, we're putting \$375 million into it.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You're pushing it that way?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's a good investment and it will be funded by the private sector and, gee, I look forward to it because it's fantastic. I just don't quite understand what the Greens have against jobs and aspirations for young people. I don't quite get it. This is a huge opportunity for our state -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You're so out of touch with reality. You're just playing with this money, an extra \$200 million-plus on top of what you've promised. It's just a game for you, isn't it?

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - My question, Premier, it is not related to the stadium. Over the last decade there has been a deliberate policy across departments by government to engage workers on short-term contracts, rolling contracts and casual contracts, quite precarious forms of employment which have made it difficult for people to commit to Tasmania and to get home loans, et cetera. We are at the point now, particularly in Health, where you've institutionalised agency staff and locums, who cost the Health department and Tasmania significantly more money. Do you do you believe that is a problem? If you do, what are you going to do to unravel that? That is one of the biggest issues in terms of dealing with a health workforce.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. There is a challenge, I will agree with you on that, Mr O'Byrne, not unlike the challenge of our community sector, for example, when it comes to the importance of compounding indexation to support their growth in terms of their support by moving to five-year contracts. It's all about providing that certainty and being able to secure that workforce. The more certainty you can provide, the more secure the workforce will be and the more likely people will be to stay in Tasmania. I understand the reason for your question. When I was Health minister, we announced back in March 2023, if my memory served me correctly, putting Ambulance Tasmania employees and paramedics on permanent contracts, which is certainly leading into that space you are talking about regarding more certainty and less contractual basis.

Locums have been a problem for a long time, which is why we're working with organisations such as Brand Tasmania on workforce attraction and the work they have done. I commend Brand Tasmania on attracting a workforce. I haven't been to some of the information sessions. Certainly, our Brand Tasmania stand in terms of workforce attraction stands out and is attractive to people to enquire about working in Tasmania.



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The State Service has experienced growth in its workforce over the past year and as at the end of June 2024, the Tasmanian State Service headcount increased to 36,931 from 35,275 the year before, reflecting an increase in 1696 employees. Over 6400 positions were advertised externally on the Tasmanian government jobs website. In today's market it is important that we are responsive in our recruitment efforts to ensure we get the right people for the right jobs at the right time to deliver the essential services for the Tasmanian community. The increase in headcount and FTEs since 2023 demonstrates the net growth in employees in the Tasmanian State Service and the success of filling those vacancies.

I'll provide one example to you in terms of moving from fixed to permanent for our paramedics. ED1 was reissued on 29 July this year to incorporate commitments from the 2022 public sector union wages agreement to allow permanent part-time employees to have their appointment varied to include additional hours worked regularly for at least 12 months on an ongoing basis. We're funding those hours, as an example.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - We've heard this morning about the changes to the Public Trustee. What would it take for you to privatise a GBE? Mr O'Byrne accurately pointed out some of the failings of the state's GBEs. Is the government actively considering privatising any of them?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Firstly, the changes to the Public Trustee are all about making sure vulnerable Tasmanians are looked after and get better service from the Public Trustee. It's about making it better.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - That could be said about Metro too.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - These changes will improve Public Trustee services for all Tasmanians but in particular vulnerable Tasmanians. We've had two independent reviews into the Public Trustee and we're acting on those results to make it better for Tasmanians. If you have two reviews to say it could be improved, then we must heed those findings and improve services through the Public Trustee for vulnerable Tasmanians.

When it comes to GBEs more broadly, privatisation is not part of the government's agenda in this particular budget. We will not be selling the Hydro and all those things people speak of when we talk about privatisation, but to be able to be in a position to privatise an asset there would have to be a lot of consideration, a lot of consultation, a lot of due diligence and a lot of work done to make sure there is an absolute net benefit to Tasmanians. No decision has been made on selling any GBE.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, I understand that the Sorell Service Tasmania centre is being moved into a new building that's being built for Service Australia. It's rather unusual to co-locate state and Commonwealth services like this. So, what are the benefits for Tasmanians in moving the two together and are there any extra costs?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, for the question. It's not unusual to co-locate Service Tasmania and Services Australia, and already, in Sorell, as you'd be well aware as a local Lyons member, Services Australia is currently a tenant in the Service Tasmania service centre space. Around the state there are a further three co-located service centres which combine Service Tasmania and Services Australia and 13 Service Tasmania sites that act as agents for the Commonwealth business, including Centrelink, Medicare and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The new Services Australia purpose-built facility in Sorell is scheduled for completion in October with occupancy planned for late November. This new centre will offer improved amenity for the local community and make it easier for Tasmanians in being able to do business with multiple layers of government in the one place. In fact, co-location was supported in the Watt independent review of the state service which recommended enhancing service delivery with partnerships with other layers of government.

Sorell, as you would be acutely aware, Mr Shelton, is a growing population centre and this new service centre will provide a fantastic contemporary service that will meet the needs of the community well into the future and my advice is that Service Tasmania is one of the busiest sites, with around 144 customers per day.

And I am also advised that all existing Service Tasmanian staff will transfer to the new site and financial implications for the state are minimal with a small increase in ongoing rental costs and a small contribution towards capital fit out costs directly related to the Service Tasmania model such as IT and other dedicated equipment, and I'm advised that these additional costs can be met within additional operational budgets.

I have some further information to table, Chair, which pertaining to the question that Mister Shelton asked and what's happening. For transparency.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, during the election campaign, TT-Line made an \$80 million payment to RMC without formal approval from you or your shareholder minister. Do you think that is appropriate?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we have been through these matters, Mr Winter, before in parliament and these are big decisions for the government business enterprise to make. When it comes to these decisions, government should be informed of these decisions and the best interests of Tasmanians, as I've said before. Where there are improvements-

**Mr WINTER** - Are you satisfied that your government was informed?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we've been over this. This was a commercial matter for the board under existing contractual arrangements, I'm advised that the board considered this the only viable option, as the alternative was to potentially go back to market for a new ship build. This would have cost around 30 per cent more for what we are now paying and resulted in a significant delay. That's also important to note that given the increase in materials, the vessels are now, assuming, worth more as well. And that decision was made.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, in relation to Rauma Marine Constructions (RMC), there's been evidence provided by TT-Line's board that there's some inconsistencies between the evidence provided by your deputy and their knowledge of what occurred. How have you satisfied yourself that at all times your Deputy Premier and former minister for infrastructure has been open and honest about when he knew that there was a potential bailout required for TT-Line?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, minister Ferguson, the Treasurer, who has done a fantastic job, I have to say, in pulling together this Budget in difficult circumstances. Minister Ferguson has made a very clear statement on the 26 August 2024. Mr Ferguson has been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee as has the TT-Line as well. Mr Ferguson has really done an

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extraordinary job when it comes to pulling together this Budget in very difficult circumstances, and Mr Ferguson has outlined in a statement regarding his decision and disappointment, in many respects, and he provided the Public Accounts Committee with a lot of details regarding the handling of the new *Spirits* and associated infrastructure.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, your Ministerial Code of Conduct requires that your ministers act with honesty and integrity. There is serious evidence now being tended to the TT-Line inquiry, and a media statement issued by the TT-Line former chairman and board, that your deputy's statements have not been accurate. How have you satisfied yourself that the Deputy Premier has been honest with Tasmanians?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Minister Ferguson, the Deputy Premier, is an honest person.

**Mr WINTER** - Have you made any investigations, any inquiries, yourself?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mr Ferguson is an honest person. He has been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee, who will determine a number of matters in relation to the TT-Line inquiry. But I have a lot of time for Michael Ferguson and his honesty.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, we understand your office contacted the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) ahead of the release of the concert of your vanity project: the stadium. Is it true that your office asked the MPDC to change the musician depicted in the promotion because she looked too much like Taylor Swift? Is that because it would be embarrassing to imagine that we would actually be able to attract events like that? Does your office usually engage itself, does your Premier's Office and the government media unit usually engage in the communications plans for the MPDC?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Is this how you are managing things?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am not really sure what you are trying to get at. I have made comments in the past about how good it would be to have Tay-Tay in Hobart, but people say that is not possible but possibly could be. Who knows? Tay Tay, one day, could be -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - My question is do you get involved in that sort of managing of the MPDC from your office?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we work with various areas across government when it comes to matters and I am happy to be open and transparent, as I always am, about the stadium project and I cannot think of a single project that has had more scrutiny than Macquarie Point stadium precinct and the stadium itself. I am happy for people to come down and entertain Tasmanians. We are missing out now - and why would I not want a number of international and Australian acts to be playing in what will be a capacity of some 31,500 thousand people?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Whenever we ask questions about failures of management by ministers in the health, education and housing portfolios, you always say that is a matter for those ministers, but you are actually micromanaging the work of the MPDC ahead of managing the output and the effectiveness of those other portfolios. Is that really your priority?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My priority is to do what I can for Tasmanians.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It does not include people who are waiting for a hospital bed.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To provide the best possible services and, as my time as minister for Health, we increased the FTE in our public hospitals, we upgraded our hospitals or invested in our hospitals to be upgraded -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - What about Mr Jaensch in Children and Young People and Ashley, the children who are still languishing there and you are not engaging in that problem?

**CHAIR** - Dr Woodruff, the call has been given to Mr O'Byrne.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, the Premier did not answer the question.

**Mr O'BYRNE** -. Housing is obviously one of the biggest issues confronting Tasmania. During the election, you announced a levy on short-stay accommodation. There has been no mention of it since the election. What is happening with that? And will you listen to the calls to redirect any revenue from that short-stay levy into supporting homeless services in the important work they do, instead of further into the market?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will take that particular part of the question on notice. We are working on the levy as we speak, in terms of implementation. We have already earmarked, hypothecated, if that is the better word for it, to support housing affordability matters in terms of stamp duty investment. That has already been done. I note your comments about the size of the levy.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Saul Eslake did talk about the revenue side of the Budget. This is one element where you have already announced a levy, where some revenue could be raised. Instead of putting it in the area you have announced, will you move that into supporting homeless services?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are already committed to where that will go.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - So, you are ruling that out?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, because we have already said where it would go. I want to continue that because this is what we committed to. But we are keen to support homelessness services. The agreement we have nationally around the housing initiative altered the emphasis towards homelessness, in terms of that federal and state government contribution. We have that greater emphasis on homelessness rather than affordable housing, which was part of the arrangement we signed up to with the federal government.

Homelessness support needs to be, as I am sure you will appreciate, more than a roof over a person's head. As critical as that is - and I often say that every Tasmanian has that fundamental right to be safe and have a roof over their head, there is more than that. That is why the Budget provides \$46 million each year to help Tasmanians into safe and secure housing. Initiatives such as the 40-bed Women's Housing Service to be developed at Old Bethlehem House will be supported when it comes to this output. The Budget also delivers \$900,000 over two years to establish key development coaches at each Safe Space site, helping Tasmanians overcome trauma and other barriers that can get in the way of someone finding a secure home.

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**CHAIR** - Mrs Pentland.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - There was already two for the independents and JLN, I think.

**CHAIR** - I am giving latitude and being fair and balanced.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Just on the Standing Orders, it is at the discretion of the Chair to give the JLN and the independents two; it's not a requirement. We just had two from Mr O'Byrne.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Dr Woodruff. I have given the call to Mrs Pentland.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Interest on the government debt will rise from \$179 million in 2023-24 to \$441 million in 2027-28. Together with the cost of making pension payments to the remaining members of the now-closed defined benefits superannuation schemes, interest payments will absorb 9.3 per cent of total cash revenue by 2027-28, up 5.6 per cent in 2023-24 and well above the government's fiscal strategy target of 6 per cent. You would have spoken to a lot of business leaders like I have since the Budget was handed down. Do you concede there's a nervousness in the business sector about the amount of debt the state is taking on?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. Well, as I say, the debt is manageable. I thank you for the question. What would make business and industry more nervous is if we had a slash-and-burn approach to the Tasmanian government and budget. That would mean we'd take public funding out of the budget far too quickly, as I believe it was taken out in the 2011-12 budget. That has a negative and constricting effect on the economy and confidence, so it is important to have a managed approach to this. I am not ignoring debt. Your question is a very sensible question and a good one, but our debt is manageable. That's why we want to have greater efficiencies across government while still delivering the services as well. We want a growing economy. I appreciate the reason you've asked the question, but my answer to that is that the debt is manageable but we need to ensure that we achieve our efficiencies as we've outlined in the budget process.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, Labor has called our 100-day plan a gimmick, trying to tell Tasmanians that our government isn't doing anything. Can you put to rest these claims by detailing what the government has been delivering since the 2024 election?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I'm not sure why the Labor Party talk about this as a gimmick because it is a key measure of accountability. On the last day of the election campaign, we outlined our 100-day plan and delivered significantly, including \$250 in energy credits to hundreds of thousands of Tasmanians and \$300 to small businesses. We slashed public transport fares in half, saving passengers many dollars every week. We have abolished stamp duty and 133 first home buyers have now realised their dream of home ownership with the savings as a result of that.

Our recruitment blitz began in April and has already delivered many extra health professionals at the front line. We have launched new incentive packages for nurses and midwives and GPS. We committed to 78 deliverables we set ourselves, with 187 additional initiatives that were completed. We are also ensuring that we continue to deliver over the next 100 days, and the next and the next. It's an important measure of accountability in terms of what we committed to in the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future and keeping us as

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ministers accountable to our commitments working alongside our departments to ensure that we deliver for Tasmanians. It could be as significant as stamp duty relief or as important as making TV in hospital free for patients, which is also part of what we committed to in our 100-day plan. Thank you for the question.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, during the election you announced a so-called stability clause and said:

If re-elected, we will amend section 32 of the *Constitution Act* to provide that if an elected member ceases to be a parliamentary member of a political party for which they were elected, then their seat becomes vacant and a recount occurs.

I can't see any evidence of that in your 100-day plan or your second 100-day plan. How is progress on that going and will it be retrospective?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thank the member for his question but there have been other key matters of priority which have taken precedence over the commitment you refer to. My advice is that we are taking and seeking advice about that commitment, but there are other key areas of priority such as the ones I just mentioned when it comes to our 100-day plan and our next 100-day plan. It is my expectation that they will deliver, which is very important for the Tasmanian people.

**Mr WINTER** - Would your policy apply to members of the JLN who ceased to be members of the party to become independents?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It will not be retrospective and if you were removed from a party, it wouldn't have applied anyway.

**Mr WINTER** - Well, that's not how your policy reads, Premier. Is this a policy that you liked when it suited you when it was the two former Liberals leaving the Jacqui Lambie Network and signing a supply and confidence deal with you? You're quite happy with it? Is this the sort of policy where you just pick and choose when it applies and when it doesn't?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have said it will apply with no retrospectivity. You mention the JLN but it wouldn't apply there anyway because of the circumstances under which they left.

**Mr WINTER** - That's not what your policy said.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Nonetheless, we'll get some advice.

**Mr WINTER** - What's the timeline for the tabling of this bill, Premier?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Your government's been in power for 10 years. Coincidentally, the State of the Environment report that was overdue by 10 years has just revealed to Tasmanians the terrible state of our environment. Do you accept that the poor state of our environment, with more than three-quarters of the indicators showing we're in a bad state and declining, is the result of your government's decision-making and your policies and actions?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There are a lot of areas we're invested in supporting sustainability and our environment. I was pleased to see the Tasmanian State of the Environment report tabled in parliament by Mr Ellis, the Planning minister.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It's a pretty devastating read.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The report has been prepared by the Tasmanian Planning Commission and I note the responsible minister is the minister for Planning. I acknowledge the important role the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania has also played in contributing to the data and reviewing reports for 17 of the environmental indicators, as well as providing input through the preparation of case studies and other feedback where appropriate. The State of the Environment report is an important means of documenting baseline environmental data, trends and risks across Tasmania and is a significant body of work. The report is broad ranging in scope, significant in length and highly technical in nature a. It touches on many areas of government, I accept that, but also industry, community responsibility and -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - The question, Premier-

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is important that we take the time to consider the findings, seek advice and formulate a measured and consolidated response to the report. I can also say -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Do you accept that your government's policies have contributed to the state of decline? That is the question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What I accept is the need for continuous improvement. I accept that there's been many areas where we have invested in Tasmania alongside community groups, as well being identified in the report and the importance of the volunteers and the Landcare grants and all those types of things. The report itself is a combination of many hours of work by individuals and organisations, environmental organisations, research bodies and government agencies assessing environmental conditions and trends, authoring case studies, contributing data sets and contributing to quality assurance processes, including EPA Tasmania. BirdLife Tasmania, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, University of Tasmania -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - To the question, Premier.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The report makes 16 recommendations across a range of areas including managing waterways, and we've had a huge improvement when it comes to the natural resource management of our waterways.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Point of order, Chair, 45, relevance. I understand that the Premier is going through, but can he please come to the question?

**CHAIR** - Dr Woodruff, I can't direct the Premier. He can continue to answer the question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I do not accept the premise of the question, so the answer is no.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Had no impact in a negative way at all?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I do not accept the premise of the question. I remember in the late 90s when I was chairing the Mersey Natural Resource Management Group, where we had fishes, irrigators, dairy farmers, environmentalists, all key stakeholders along the Mersey River where we produced a -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Chair, Can I move to my next question? Since the Premier will not answer this one.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, this is important because it is important that everyone works together on continuous improvement.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Hold on, hold on. Let us just be real about what is happening in that report. Do not talk about continuous improvement when you are destroying forests, when you are doing no action. Well, can I move to my next question?

**CHAIR** - No you may not. You have used your two -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - No, I have not, Chair. Excuse me, I did not, I was trying to draw the Premier to the question. Are you prepared to have species go extinct? Is that the legacy you want? No action at all. You make no commitment to change on the basis of this terrible report.

**CHAIR** - Dr Woodruff, Mrs Pentland has the call.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, you know, it will be your legacy.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Dr Woodruff, we will consider the highly technical report and in a very considered manner respond to the recommendations of which I would value your input and others around.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You have got thousands of pages of input, just do something.

**CHAIR** - Order, Dr Woodruff.

**Mrs PENTLAND** -. This Keeping Children Safe document that you have tabled today, on page 10, it has the notifications of state service employees' suspensions from duty as a result of allegations of child sexual abuse. There are 32 employees on this list and you said that a reason for them being suspended without pay would be working with vulnerable people registrations being suspended. Could you just let us know how many of these 32 have had their registered working with vulnerable people registration (RWVP) suspended and also how many of these 32 employees are on full pay?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. If you just allow me a minute to work through this. We went through some of these matters I know in the scrutiny hearing.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - I did ask that question. It was taken on notice. It is going to be published today. I do not know if it's been made public already, but you have answered some of those questions.



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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The question on notice, I understand, has gone back to the committee?

**Mrs PENTLAND** - It has, yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Perhaps I will throw to Ms Morgan-Wicks to provide detail on that question.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Thank you. Through the Premier, Mrs Pentland, we prepared an answer on the data relating to registration suspensions for working with vulnerable people in the question on notice, but noted that related to the table at the previous scrutiny hearings. I would need to take on notice to do a further update to the RWVP just in case individuals have changed within this list of 32. I just want to check back to that data and make sure I am giving you the correct information.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Can you give some information on the 32 that are on full pay?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, this list on page 10 of the document tabled or the routine disclosure that is on available on the DPAC website is the length of suspension for state servants currently suspended on full pay.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - So, they are all on full pay?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - All 32 on that list are currently suspended on full pay.

**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, I note that no member yet today has asked you about what action is being taken right now to make life more affordable for every Tasmanian. So, my question is, can you, the Premier, outline what the 2024-25 Budget delivers in terms of cost-of-living support?

**Mr WINTER** - We read the Budget. So, it sort of gave it away.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - We read the media releases.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Good and I thank you for -

**Mr WILLIE** - You can read the Budget. It is there.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thank you for reading the Budget and acknowledging the significant effort that we are investing in, quite rightly, I have to say due to the cost-of-living crisis globally, nationwide, and Tasmanians are not immune to that. That's why we're investing \$550 million to support cost-of-living measures. Now, that includes around \$450 or \$460 million in concessions moving forward as well; \$250 renewable energy dividend for households and \$300 for small businesses.

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I've mentioned before, cutting public transport fares in half - so, ferries and buses for example - which is having a significant benefit. There's also, for example, an expansion to the Ticket to Play with \$100 vouchers now available for children of people who receive the Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement in the previous financial year. There's a Ticket to Well-being program as well, which is \$100 for those listed in the Services Australia healthcare or pensioner concession card to use for registration and membership costs.

Two thousand 2000 more loans for the no interest loan scheme - the NILS do a fantastic job. Continuing to related energy efficiency measures in social housing properties as well, and - a really important one, not just for cost of living, Mr Shelton, as you appreciate, but for education engagement, when it comes to expanding the school lunch program as well. That is a cost of living measure but the anecdotal feedback that we've got as a result of that investment is that we are engaging young people, and some young people with their first time in education, as a result of supporting a healthy lunch at lunchtime, which I am proud of, in that sense, but it highlights the vulnerable circumstances with some people.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, you have, to my knowledge, three current confidence-supply agreements with Mr O'Byrne and the two former JLN members. Ms Johnston has recently described what she has as a working arrangement rather than a supply and confidence deal, and then I read in the press only the other day, I'll quote Mr Jenner, he added that a 'verbal confidence of supply agreement' between himself and the Premier remained intact for the time being.

Can you outline what is in that verbal supply and confidence agreement and what certainty can that provide to the business community that's certainly looking for confidence at the moment?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Just that. Verbal agreement, shake of the hand.

**Mr WINTER** - What are the terms of this verbal agreement?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Confidence and supply.

**Mr WINTER** - On what basis?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - On the basis of, well -

**Mr WINTER** - Did you know he's about to vote against the Budget? So, he's about to vote against supply next week. He's announced that. So, you're saying that you have a verbal agreement with him about supply and confidence at the time when the person you've made a verbal agreement with says they're about to vote against the Budget. So, what sort of agreement is that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, firstly, I do appreciate the confidence and supply agreement from the crossbenchers that have given that commitment in terms of written commitment, and I welcome that and I thank crossbenchers for providing that stability, and I am very happy with the functioning of the parliament, the new 35 members.

We have not got everything through. Most things, we have. Other parties have got matters through as well, which is the will of the parliament, which is good. It is working well. My view

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is that it can increase in terms of stability through good communication, open dialogue, being pragmatic, being sensible in our discussions, engaging with each other, a government that has a sensible approach to crossbench negotiation, a government that is not arrogant, but a government that is willing to be pragmatic with matters forward. My personal view is that the parliament has worked well. There have been opinions on the floor of the House and elsewhere, and individual members have the right to do that, but I am confident that, moving forward, we will continue the stability in the interest of Tasmanians.

**Mr WINTER** - In the same month as your coalition agreement with the Jacqui Lambie Network ended, 570 jobs were lost in Tasmania, which makes up to over 6000 since you first took the Tasmanian government to minority. Do you see the relationship between confidence and jobs and a strong economy? And what are you going to do to resolve these issues so that you have proper confidence supply agreements in place with the crossbench?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I think you are putting too much emphasis on the JLN agreement in terms of the 570 jobs. We have created 47,000 jobs.

**Mr WINTER** - You are the one that said minority government would crash the economy, crash jobs and crash our health system.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I also accepted responsibility for forming a government in the best interest of the Tasmanian people, a government which has the confidence of crossbench and, in terms of supply and confidence, a parliament working far more effectively, in my humble opinion, than 12 months ago because we are all in this together. There is an element of robustness in terms of how we approach our different perspectives, as we should. There is also, in my view, an element of trust that we have all been elected by the Tasmanian people. More members of parliament and the Tasmanian people would expect us to work together in a common-sense manner. I do not believe the Tasmanian people expect us to agree on everything, but what they would expect us to do is act in the best interests of Tasmanians and not be disruptive.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I want to ask a question about the circumstances surrounding Ms Gale's resignation as the head of the State Service. Can you please tell me whether it was her decision to resign or yours, whether you were surprised at her decision to resign and why the position was not advertised? In saying that, I want to in no way reflect on the qualities and qualifications of Ms Morgan-Wicks. But, in light of the commission of inquiry, don't you think we should have advertised that position, just to give confidence to Tasmanians about our processes in these matters?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have an enormous amount of confidence in Ms Morgan-Wicks. She is a very capable person that led Tasmania through the pandemic in many respects in terms of the Health responsibility and a large part of the commission of inquiry responsibility. It is the premier of the day's call, as it has been previously, to appoint the head of the State Service. I appointed Ms Morgan-Wicks, and Ms Morgan-Wicks is doing a fantastic job.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - What about the first part of the question about the decision for Ms Gale to resign?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It was Ms Gale's decision.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, your government has made no progress on treaty and truth-telling in the three years since Peter Gutwein, as then premier, promised that action would be taken. There was, as you know, an encampment outside parliament a couple of months ago and you met with members of the Aboriginal community and promised that you would act. Is it your intention to legislate a process for treaty and truth-telling for lutruwita/Tasmania in this term of government?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There are a few different schools of thought here between Aboriginal communities and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC). My understanding is the TAC wants a legislated treaty. In my view, there needs to be a broader conversation involving the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and the Tasmanian community as well. Everyone has to be brought along this journey. I'm engaging with Aboriginal communities. I stand to be corrected in terms of the exact date, but I believe I'm meeting the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance (TRACA) on 1 October, for example. On country, at the end of this week, as well, on the wukalina walk where members of the TAC will also be accompanying me there - listening, learning, trying to find a way forward.

I was as disappointed, as everyone else was, with the outcome of the referendum in October last year. It did highlight, if nothing else, the significant gap still when it comes to incarceration rates, educational attainment, life expectancy, job opportunity. We have failed as a nation, when it comes to the support of our First Nations people and we need to do far better. That is why my focus is on those areas of Closing the Gap but also continuing along the truth-telling journey.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Will you create that process, will you commit to enacting a process, which is what Peter Gutwein committed to, whether through legislation or another process, by the end of this term of government?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll be seeking advice from the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as to the best way forward, but my focus will absolutely be on those areas of Closing the Gap, those areas I speak of. There are also a lot more areas when it comes to the need to close the gap. We are held accountable as government across the nation when it comes to reporting and the like.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Back to this again, page 10, is confirmed that those 32 workers under investigation have been suspended on full pay. Why isn't there an automatic suspension put on their Working with Vulnerable People accreditation? I understand they're entitled to a fair investigation and the presumption of innocence, but if it is deemed that they're unable to continue work, shouldn't that extend to other community activities?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Probably just to add to my previous answer, noting that the 32 on page 10 are currently suspended with full pay, the table on the previous page notes that 34 public servants are currently suspended in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse. That's towards the bottom of the table there: currently suspended with active ED5 investigations underway. You will note that difference of two. In terms of each of the employees, it may not necessarily be a requirement of their statement of duties to hold a registration to work with vulnerable people. That will depend. Not every single member of the TSS is required to hold that registration. We are, however, looking through the commission of

inquiry recommendations at extending the number of public servants required to hold Working with Vulnerable People registration.

When we do receive a notification of an allegation of child sexual abuse, we're obviously alerting all relevant authorities. We will also seek to alert the registrar of vulnerable people. If an employee, for example, held a registration due to their work to manage a hockey team or a soccer team in their private life, it would alert the registrar that we had made that report of an allegation of child sexual abuse. We are trying to make sure that every single relevant authority is aware if we, in the public service, receive that type of allegation of child sexual abuse.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - A different question now. Have you sought advice from TASCORP as to how a change in the credit rating would affect borrowing costs?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have not personally. It's a good question for the Treasury Estimates, Mrs Pentland, but the direct answer to your question is: I haven't sought advice from TASCORP.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, Labor insists on erroneously claiming that the 2024-25 Budget includes more than 700 forecast job losses. From my understanding of the Budget and the information provided, in the Treasury forecast over the Budget and forward Estimates, there is a net forecast increase in the numbers of Tasmanians employed across the State Service. Can you explain how the Budget supports this net increase?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, for your question and understanding of the Budget, which is important.

**Mr WINTER** - You've given him so many Dorothys he's had to get some new ones in.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr WINTER** - He's run out of Dorothys.

**Mr SHELTON** - Well, I am talking about the Budget.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Employment has sustained record high levels for nearly three years. In fact, as of August 2024 the unemployment rate of 4.3 per cent continues Tasmania's record run of low unemployment, nearly three years at or below that mark. In August 2024, there were 281,078 Tasmanians in work, including 137,105 women in work and I mentioned the figure of 140,000 before. A total of 46,000 jobs have been created since March 2014 when we were elected to government. The unemployment rate is 3.6 per cent lower than the 7.9 per cent at the peak of the former government. Tasmania has the strongest wage growth in the nation, recording a massive 5.1 per cent for the year to June 2024. The annual growth rate is a full 1 per cent higher than the national average and represents the largest annual growth in wages for Tasmania since the ABS started measuring in 1998.

An important part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future is creating jobs. We need to ensure that Tasmania remains the best state to live, work and raise a family. Participation rates are often brought up as well for discussion and so they should. The participation rate of 60.8 per cent for August is in line with the 10-year average and higher than it was in March 2014 when we came to government. It's well understood that Tasmania's

participation rate has been lower than the national rate due to the age profile of our state's population and hence a smaller labour force when it comes to the demographic.

We've announced our population policy as well. I've mentioned the median age in Tasmania a number of times and how it has increased over the last 50 years. There is a need to shift that demography to increase and enhance our productivity in Tasmania, and a number of our policies go some way towards that.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, how much public money did you spend on your Facebook and Instagram ads for your political pages last financial year?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can get that figure for you if you like, but it is good information being provided to the community and more recent information.

**Mr WINTER** - Speaking of that, Premier, how do you assess what sort of content is applicable for public spending to be spent on? For example, you've got ads with you in front of a car saying, 'Vote 1 Jeremy Rockliff', that appears to have been subsidised or advertised, paid for by public money. There's a raft of posts that have been boosted that don't appear to have any actual public information that Tasmanians need to know. What policies are you using to ensure that public money is being properly spent on the basis of public information, not on your own political needs?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding is that the information we support through advertising is information that would be helpful to Tasmanians. I can get a breakdown of costs if you like, Mr Winter. I am happy to provide that.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, is there a DPAC policy, for example, which is used to make decisions about what content is being sponsored using taxpayer money?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - With the content we sponsor it is important that it is good information for the Tasmanian community. I stand to be corrected, but recently we had the emergency cuts which I believe was supported through investment of advertising as well, or sponsorship, as you call it. That is good information that people should be aware of in terms of access to grants and the announcements that we made, not political information.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, you had a video last week with you pouring water down a drain that appears to have been sponsored. Was that taxpayer money used to sponsor that particular ad?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That was about the Budget, as I understand it.

**Mr WINTER** - And you felt that was good information?

**Mr SHELTON** - They're out there fixing the roads and all.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will seek information around the examples you use in terms of sponsorship in the interests of full transparency.

**Mr WINTER** - So, you will take that on notice, is that right? Thank you.

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**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, you talked before about closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Tasmanians and I note that Ashley Youth Detention Centre, which has an over-representation of Aboriginal children, remains indefinitely open on your watch. In this year's Budget you have only committed \$600,000 in this financial year, but nothing at all in the forward Estimates towards Closing the Gap and you have previously said that your focus on Closing the Gap means that is an excuse for you not to pursue a truth-telling process or treaty bill.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I didn't say that.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You actually did in parliament; that was your reason. Can you explain why you have failed to provide any funding towards implementing Closing the Gap in the forward Estimates?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Closing the Gap is our focus and -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Where is the evidence that you care? It's not just words.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can seek some information for you. Our Budget includes \$600,000 -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Yes, this year.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - to progress commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including the development of a second Tasmanian implementation plan. This funding is in addition to the \$5.3 million Closing the Gap capacity-building grants funds provided to Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations in 2023 to build their capacity to deliver services in their local community and specifically address Closing the Gap targets. The national agreement, developed in partnership between state, territory and federal governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, commits to a new way for our government and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to work together to improve the lives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, to the question - why haven't you put any money into the forward Estimates for this?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This Budget includes \$600,000 -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Only this year, not in the following years.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Our agencies, as part of their existing approach to these matters, also invest in Closing the Gap -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - How much in the forward Estimates?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Closing the Gap is part of our heads of agency performance agreements as well.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, your government has not tabled a Closing the Gap annual report since 2022. This is your priority issue for Tasmanian Aboriginal people. When will you table the next report and how are you proposing to develop a second implementation plan if

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you haven't even reported on the government's progress towards Closing the Gap for two years? You have no money in the forward Estimates and I don't accept that pushing it into other agencies to do that work without any money is meaningful.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I mentioned the \$600,000, but future funding is being considered after the new implementation plan is complete. That will be considered in future budgets as well. That new implementation plan funding in this year's Budget will continue activity and maintain the Commonwealth partnership.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - But you haven't reported on 2022, so what's going on? You haven't reported on your implementations for the previous period, so how can you talk about developing a new one when you haven't actually reported since 2022?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The annual report, I'm advised, will be ready this year.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - The annual report from two years ago, and the annual report for last year as well?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We've been working very closely with stakeholders, as I'm advised. A report will be ready this year, as I understand it.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Two annual reports that you have missed plus the one this year. So, three annual reports?

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Just checking, Chair. Reports for 2022, 2023 and 2024? Annual reports are meant to be annual.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I accept that, and other jurisdictions have similar arrangements to Tasmania, but we will endeavour to release the report as soon as possible, but also make that commitment.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Can you see why Aboriginal Tasmanians don't think you're sincere when you're using this as your excuse not to progress treaty and truth telling?

**CHAIR** - Order. Mrs Pentland has the call.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - It's again been confirmed today that your stadium depends on securing a substantive private investment. Isn't there an onus on the government to lock in something soon? Or are you prepared to start the project of this size on the hope that public-private partnership (PPP) will be secured somewhere down the track?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thanks for the question. I reiterate our investment of \$375 million. I outlined this morning a timeline around our work regarding PPPs, but also other ways we can attract private investment and the models that we will use, and I expect that to be for public consumption at the end of this year. We do have some time and we want to lock in a private investor sooner rather than later, but I'll be working through the process now and updating the community when we finalise the model moving forward.



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**Mrs PENTLAND** - Do you regret the lack of early engagement with the RSL? Has that relationship been damaged permanently?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I believe we can work with the RSL in very constructive way. A number of members of the Returned Services League that have contacted me that have an opinion that is supportive of the new stadium. We've had good conversation with the CEO of the RSL and the acting president of the RSL in recent times, which, I've said before, and our Minister for Veteran Affairs has as well, in terms of progressing a good neighbour charter, for example, good consultation with the RSL moving forward and I believe that we can create something very special but also very respectful of the Cenotaph and, acknowledging the importance of this, with the RSL moving forward.

I do acknowledge some of the concerns and I'm very minded to engage in a very positive and constructive way with the RSL as a key stakeholder. I believe we can create a Macquarie Point precinct which can complement and respect our returned servicemen and women.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, you've mentioned the commission of inquiry in the Budget. Can you just brief the committee on the commission of inquiries costings and the timeframes around that place?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I can. In the interest of time, we're committed \$424.5 million in the 2024-25 Budget and forward Estimates for the ongoing implementation of the reforms. Building on the funding of the \$55.1 million provided last year, and this includes \$97 million for 2024-25. The funding will further enhance how agencies work together to improve systems and processes as we progress the recommendations to create a child-centred system through the Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing governance structure. Agencies are taking a coordinated, proportionate and strategic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people, while ensuring that we continue to address all recommendations of the commission of inquiry. I mentioned these in other areas of scrutiny, but some of the initiatives include:

- \$42.4 million for the Department of Education, Children and Young People;
- Providing about \$34 million to continue to support a child-centred, rights-based approach to reform the out-of-home care system, much needed for the partnerships between government agencies and the community services sector;
- Approximately \$4.8 million to progress reform to the Tasmanian youth justice system, including the development of a youth justice model of care designed to support a therapeutic approach;
- \$1.2 million for school education focusing on complaints management, reducing harmful sexual behaviours and education regulation;
- \$17.7 million to the Department of Health to support the continual development of a child safe culture in our health services, provide mental and physical care for children in detention and implement a new human resources information system;

- \$10.9 million for the Department of Justice to continue to lead a coordinated cross-government approach to the 54 commission of inquiry recommendations requiring legislative reform and ensure we have the right legal framework in place to protect our children and young people; and
- \$12.8 million for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to support initiatives such as the \$8 million to continue the work of the arts centres to provide immediate trauma care, and \$2 million for the management of information for protection of children.

There are a number of other initiatives, including \$700,000 to establish the new Commission for Children and Young People, \$2 million to provide support for victim survivors and whistleblowers-

**Dr WOODRUFF** - In the interest of time, could the Premier please be brief? We've only got a little, a few minutes, left for the scrutiny committee.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is a very important question and I thank you for it.

**Mr WINTER** - Have you or any of your ministers, to your knowledge, had any discussions about the TT-Line potentially needing to berth its new ships in Singapore until the new infrastructure is completed?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I say, we're taking advice on matters relating to the infrastructure and we have Mr Ben Moloney and Peter Gemell as well and when we work through the infrastructure and the way forward, I will then make decisions on the ships and where they are berthed in the interim and those matters.

**Mr WINTER** - The question though, Premier, are you or your ministers or TT-Line considering berthing the new ships in Singapore?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll make these decisions -

**Mr WINTER** - It's a yes or no, really, isn't it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There could be a number of options we're considering, Mr Winter.

**Mr WINTER** - So, Singapore is -

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we could consider a number of options and there is no option we are ruling in or ruling out. There has to be a sensible way forward but the first piece of the challenge, if you like, is securing the berthing infrastructure as soon as possible.

**Mr WINTER** - Why would Singapore be considered as a location to berth the new ships? For what purpose would they be there?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We need to make decisions on the berthing infrastructure first and then make informed decisions on when we bring the ships online and as soon as possible, clearly, but -

**Mr WINTER** - Do you accept that there is going to be a period of time where our new ships are going to have arrived and there will not be appropriate berth infrastructure available for them to operate from?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That is a challenge, clearly, but I need to be able to get the right advice to make informed decisions on the way forward, Mr Winter. You would appreciate that there will be options on how we can best utilise our investment in the two new ships, but we need to make sure we get the decisions around the infrastructure right.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, at the recent Liberal State Council meeting, a scheduled motion on the future of the greyhound racing industry was shunted to the end of the day and then never debated. Are you afraid to hear your membership's views and that they might be opposed to the industrialised cruelty of animals in racing?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I'm not, I welcome it. I have been in a number of Liberal Party state councils where the motion has been debated and argued very vigorously by the proponents of the motion in terms of a policy idea of ending greyhound racing and I commend them for it.

**CHAIR** - The time for Estimates of the Premier has expired. We will have a short five-minute break and proceed to the examination of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality.

**The committee suspended from 12.37 p.m. to 12.45 p.m.**

**CHAIR** - Welcome, Premier and Minister for Tourism and Hospitality. Minister, please introduce the persons at the table for the benefit of Hansard.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair. To my right is the acting CEO of Tourism Tasmania, Vanessa Pinto, and the secretary of State Growth, Craig Limkin, and to my left is Ned Whitehouse, my chief of staff. I have a very short opening statement, Chair.

**CHAIR** - All right, I will just get through this. The time scheduled for Estimates of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality is one hour. The resolution of the House provides for a minister to provide additional information to a committee either later that day or in writing as an answer to a question taken on notice. To submit a question on notice, the member must first ask the question to the minister and the minister must indicate they will take it on notice. The member must then put the question in writing and hand it to the committee secretary so it can be included in correspondence to the minister.

I do remind everybody that the microphones are sensitive so I would ask you to be mindful of Hansard and be careful when moving your folders, documents and water glasses around the table. Also, it is difficult for Hansard to differentiate when people are talking over each other, so I would ask that members speak one at a time to assist with this. Premier, you indicated an opening statement.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much, Chair. I'm very pleased to be here today to answer the committee's questions relating to our government's ongoing investment into the tourism and hospitality industry. Our tourism and hospitality industry is an economic powerhouse house and I'm absolutely thrilled to be the minister once again. It injects some \$3.5 billion dollars in visitor spending into the Tasmanian economy each year and employs 50,000 Tasmanians, which equates to more than 12 per cent of Tasmanian employment.

The 2024-25 Budget drives the delivery of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future and cements Tasmania's reputation as a world-leading destination that will continue to go from strength to strength. The Budget secures more than \$31 million in additional funding for the state's tourism sector over the next four years, demonstrating our support for the industry. The Budget also invests more than \$10 million into the hospitality sector over the next four years to deliver workforce growth, job-ready training, visitor attraction and business support. We are backing in our tourism and hospitality industries, making sure Tasmania remains a world-class travel destination.

I am very proud of the work being undertaken by our key tourism industry partners, the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (TICT), the Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) and our four regional tourism organisations, to grow our visitor economy and support our local businesses. I'm also very proud of the unique offerings, experiences and products being developed and offered by tourism and hospitality businesses across the state. I look forward to continuing to work with the industry to grow our visitor economy and capitalise on our competitive advantages. I'm also very proud of the work of Tourism Tasmania, particularly when it comes to the very good marketing it undertakes for the relatively small investment compared to other states. The bang for our buck when it comes to the investment we put in and in return, an incredible \$3.5 billion visitor economy year on year as it's been in recent times is a credit to all involved. I welcome your questions today and am happy to provide further information as required.

**Mr WINTER** - Can you confirm you've set up a Cabinet subcommittee to oversee the *Spirit of Tasmania* project?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There is a Cabinet subcommittee for *Spirit of Tasmania*, yes.

**Mr WINTER** - When was that set up and who's on it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll have to take the question on notice in terms of when it was set up. It involves shareholder ministers, me, and that's it.

**Mr WINTER** - So, that's you, minister Abetz and minister Ferguson, a three-person subcommittee. In terms of the decision by minister Ferguson to step away from the Infrastructure portfolio, do you think it passes the pub test that the same minister who seemed to be resigning from all responsibility for this project is now sitting as part of the three-person subcommittee overseeing the rescue of the project that he has already taken responsibility for having put in this position in the first place?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, he is the Treasurer.

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**Mr WINTER** - So, what changed when he left that portfolio? He's still on the subcommittee, he's still a shareholder minister for TT-Line and TasPorts and he's still overseeing the project, so what's actually changed?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm the Infrastructure minister and I take a very deep interest in the project and the way forward when it comes to our intervention, if you like, through the employment of Ben Moloney and Peter Gemell. The subcommittee of Cabinet is one thing, but more important is the stakeholder engagement moving forward with industry stakeholders.

**Mr WINTER** - Are you aware that senior staff at one of your GBEs is openly telling people you plan to park the ships in Singapore in order to save money and the embarrassment of having to park them here in Tasmanian waters?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll make these decisions when we have the required information before us to make these decisions. I need to do due diligence on the infrastructure and the berthing.

**Ms BADGER** - As the minister responsible for the activities of the Coordinator-General, I've got some questions on the tourism expression of interest process and the web portal that gives updates on the accepted concepts. The public relies on the accepted concepts web portal on the Coordinator-General's website for updates on the projects. Businesses also rely on it for confidence. Some of these projects are highly controversial. You would appreciate that many people love these places affected by the projects, so they want to be kept up to date. There are multiple examples of inaccuracies, including projects that have been withdrawn for more than six months, but they're still on the site without it being updated. Can you please ask the Coordinator-General to apply his coordinating skills and see that the website is updated much more frequently? For example, weekly would be good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. We do want to provide timely information for the community. We take our responsibilities in managing the extensive reserve estate very seriously and remain committed to delivering the tourism expression of interest process, given the important role it plays in facilitating sensitive and appropriate tourism projects within Tasmania's national parks, reserves and the Crown lands. From the Maydena Bike Park, Derwent Valley, Freycinet Lodge on the East Coast and the Blue Derby Pods Ride in the north east, we have been seeing great projects, great successes with the help of the tourism EOI process.

**Ms BADGER** - They're great and they're all up-to-date on the website. Just looking at the ones that aren't up-to-date - the accepted concepts, not the projects that have come through the EOI process.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I will take advice

**Ms BADGER** - Happy to take that on notice -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - and ensure that we have, unless anyone else at the table has some information that will be of assistance to the member for Lyons.

**Mr LIMKIN** - The Department of State Growth supports the Coordinator-General on their administration functions. I'm more than happy to work with our business services team to

ensure the website is updated. I don't know about weekly. We continue to update them regularly. But we will work with the Coordinator-General to make sure that they are contemporary and continue to inform the Tasmanian community.

**Ms BADGER** - Great. Yep, certainly more than six months. Appreciate that.

A recent RTI has revealed that the Office of the Coordinator-General has incurred \$300,000 in travel and entertainment expenses. This sits on top of an extraordinarily high wage. These are extraordinary numbers for an office designed to facilitate projects which are generally either stalled or withdrawn. Premier, how many projects of the Office of the Coordinator-General successfully progressed to full operation in the last three years?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is the Tourism and Hospitality output. I'm happy to provide answers to your question. It is in the Major Investment session and Mr Perry will be here for that, which is at the end of the day. More than happy to get Mr Perry at the table to answer your questions in an open and transparent way.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - What is the government doing to keep simulating the winter visitation? We saw a drop-off when Dark Mofo took a year off. And how about in the northern half of the state?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The winter visitor economy has always been a challenge and we've had one-year hiatus of the normal Dark Mofo, albeit we had some aspects of Dark Mofo, including the swim, Winter Feast and the like. When it comes to Dark Mofo taking a break this year, we secured events across Tasmania to boost those visitation numbers that I spoke of before. As part of our commitment of supporting winter events, we provided \$100 000 for eligible events to secure funding through the winter edition of our Event Marketing Tasmania program and this funding to your question was fully expanded with 11 events supported, including the Beaker Street Festival, Festival the Voices, The final Huon Valley Winter Festival and the Tassie Scallop Fiesta in the north.

Hobart also hosted the Australian Hockey Men's Masters Tournament, with over 4000 competitors, which was great and boosted the Southern occupancy rates by more than 70 per cent. In addition to attracting and growing event content, we are heavily investing in our offseason tourism campaign. This offseason campaign is part of our largest ever investment in the winter marketing initiative aimed at boosting visitation to the regions as well as supporting jobs and businesses during the traditionally quieter travel period between May and August.

This year's campaign by Tourism Tasmania invited Australians to become a winter person and immersed themselves in a truly unique Tasmanian Offseason holiday and worked very well. Offseason offers were available across Tasmania between May and August. More than 445 tourism operators were involved in the campaign, providing 661 unique winter experiences and events for visitors to book.

We have increased investment in marketing, which saw advertisements in NSW, the ACT, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania across multiple platforms and funded important content partnerships with Broadsheet Media and Qantas. Of course, the offseason also include investment in airline partnership to boost capacity, drive demand and encouraging booking throughout winter and the shoulder seasons and we also are delivering a \$500 000 Regional Hospitality Revival Fund which provides grants to support

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hospitality businesses in regional Tasmania and continuing to deliver our visitor economy strategy, providing \$12 million to attract more events in business events to Tasmania, invest in our tourism and hospitality workforce and deliver a 10-year visitor economy infrastructure plan and there was a function in the north, your question on the weekend my daughters attended the Junction Arts Festival as well to try and boost other numbers there.

Albeit this is spring, but winter is always a tough time for the visitor economy. It's resilient, however, but looking forward to Dark Mofo coming back next year and a marketing campaign continuing.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - I met with the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, who have a fabulous idea for a convention centre in Launceston. Is the government delaying a feasibility study into making a Launceston Convention powerhouse?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not that I'm aware, that we're delaying anything, but-

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Will you commit to a feasibility study for Launceston?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, a key action under the Visitor Economy strategy is the development of a demand and feasibility study for new convention facilities in Launceston. This budget is allocated \$300 000 for this work and under our plan for Tasmania 2030 strong plan for Tasmania. We have also committed \$250 000 towards a Northern Tasmania Festival infrastructure plan as well.

Now, these two projects will have different outcomes obviously, and the respective in terms of the respective stakeholder groups, governor arrangements and research requirements will overlap no doubt. But I'm advised that the Department of State Growth has included stage one of the demand work for the Convention Centre study within the scope of the Northern Tasmania Festival infrastructure plan as well.

And this will deliver a more integrated and comprehensive analysis of opportunities to grow northern Tasmania events and the Department of State growth has executed a funding agreement with Visit Northern Tasmania to manage the development of the Northern Tasmania Festival Infrastructure Plan and this agreement will include stage one of the demand work for the Convention Centre study and the initial piece of research will then inform a more detailed feasibility study of the convention centre, for which a separate \$300 000 has been allocated, I am advised.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, just recently the Tasman Hotel was named among the top 50 hotels in the world, voted for by international experts from the hotel and travel industry. Tasmania's tourism hospitality industry has enjoyed a string of prestigious awards both nationally and internationally in 2024. What impact do these achievements have on the industry?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, for the question, I congratulate the Tasman Hotel and congratulate all those involved in the precinct, and I took great interest in the development of that site and saw it grow from a huge hole in the ground to the respectful way they have managed the heritage and the Art Deco buildings as well, and it has been a really top-class effort and these awards are a reflection of the tourism and hospitality operators more broadly and their dedication to delivering what is top tier products and experiences.

One of the world's biggest global news outlets, The New York Times, has listed Tasmania in its top 52 places to visit in 2024. A very proud achievement and Tasmania was only one of two Australian locations to make the annual list, alongside Brisbane and other global destinations such as Japan, Iceland and Chile.

It has a very big global following in terms of The New York Times, which I commend all our operators for that. We have got the wukalina Walk listed in The Times's world greatest places, which I will be experiencing later on in the week.

Devonport named Australia's top tourism town as well. Tasmania made 29 on The New York Times 2024 list, having previously made the list in 2018 and number 33 that is the much-anticipated list compiled annually by New York Times travel editors and travel experts, who select the most desirable travel destinations.

Of course, you mentioned the Tasman Hotel which was named among the top 50 hotels in the world, voted for by international experts and from the hotel and the travel industry and this is fantastic international recognition. It's one of a growing number of high-end and luxury accommodation businesses investing in Tasmania that is creating jobs, that's boosting our economy, adding confidence to Tasmanian tourism and hospitality sector and developments from international brands including Novotel, Double Tree by Hilton and Crowne Plaza are a testament to the strength of Tasmanian brand tourism industry and unique hospitality offering.

I congratulate everyone for their recent success from The Tasman to Devonport to wukalina Walk. It is quite an achievement.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, when did you first become aware that the new *Spirits of Tasmania* would not be operating this summer, and how was that communicated to you?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, there's been quite some dialogue since the election on these matters. I can find a timeline for you if you like, Mr Winter. I believe I have answered these questions already in parliament. For the record, the most important thing for me is to ensure that we can get these ships up and sailing up the Mersey River as soon as possible.

**Mr WINTER** - So, you're taking on notice the date on which you found out?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm happy to take these matters on notice. Absolutely.

**Mr WINTER** - When did you tell the tourism hospitality industry that these *Spirits* wouldn't be operating this summer?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, wanting to engage, we had a forum with the tourism and hospitality stakeholders a month or two ago, and I have a Premier's visitor economy advisory council as well, and we work through these matters about various options and timeframes. Again, I'm still taking advice on matters pertaining to the berth 1 and 3 infrastructure.

**Mr WINTER** - You'll be aware that particularly on the north west, there was a huge expectation that the *Spirits* would be operating this summer. I sat across from hospitality operators in Devonport who told me how excited they were that the *Spirits* were about to start operating and I had to tell them that it wasn't going to happen. Why wasn't it communicated to



the industry, to those businesses either in hospitality or tourism that this wasn't going to happen? Do you understand the investment that they have made? Their time, energy, their capital that's gone into gearing up for these new ships that hasn't happened. Why was the communication so poor with them?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we are communicating with the tourism sector, including West by Northwest, they're a key stakeholder in this and we did have a roundtable - for want of a better word for it - in recent times, including the Mayor of Devonport was there as well and engaging in key stakeholders wanting to keep the communication channels open. I've provided that commitment and we will ensure that we are communicating effectively. I understand the disappointment, Mr Winter. I'm very disappointed. You're disappointed. They are disappointed. The Mayor is disappointed. There is not a single person that I've ever met that's not disappointed about the delay of these ships that the associated infrastructure

**Ms BADGER** - Premier, one of the problems that Tasmanians have with the tourism EOI process is the lack of transparency. Looking at that web portal, I'm particularly curious about the Circa Morris-Nunn floating hotel concept for Recherche Bay. The website says it's been an accepted concept but it appeared years ago and there hasn't been anything since. On the website one condition is very clear that proponents must demonstrate significant process towards seeking project approvals in order to continue in the EOI process and they have to give that proof within six months of being accepted. In adhering to that condition, as it hasn't happened with this project, can we assume that the Recherche Bay proposal has been withdrawn or discontinued by the Coordinator-General?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much for the question. I'm more than happy to put these questions to the Coordinator-General later on. My apologies, I was interrupted because I want to provide an answer to your previous question as well. As per the established process and change to project status, such as withdrawals, are noted at the relevant subsequent assessment panel meeting to the change. Then they are progressed through the normal processes including probity and other sign offs before the website is updated. It is a lot of surprise that there may be differences between RTI materials and the website on occasion because of timing. There's no attempt to hide any withdrawals and the OCG will investigate whether any changes should be made to internal processes for maximum efficiency and transparency in light of the timing.

I am made aware that on Monday 8 July the Cradle Base Camp experience submitted by the Tasmanian Walking Company was incorrectly changed to project withdrawal as a result of an administrative error. This error was rectified on 12 July and the website listing was changed back to the correct status which is in which is in formal assessment and approval processes such as reserve activity assessment underway, if I've clarified at least the first question.

**Ms BADGER** - Premier, after COVID there was a growing recognition from destinations around the world that are reliant on nature-based tourism, such as Tasmania, to shift towards a regenerative focus at low to no impact with high yielding opportunities and New Zealand's really led the way in this space. They've made it a mission to become a dark skied nation. They have three dark sky sanctuaries and five reserves. Tasmania has far superior dark skies, Premier. When are we going to get a dark sky sanctuary in south west Tasmania, as has been proposed by several community groups? What steps are being taken?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. I was recently in the Tasman district and had a briefing from either the council or sectors of the tourism, because I had a roundtable, with the tourism sector and they spoke about this a lot. There are some criteria around dark skies in terms of the breadth of it and there is some work to make sure it fits within that criteria. I'm just going from memory here, but you're right in terms of Tasmania continuing to be the drawcard for our natural landscapes and visual fields as star attractions.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Can I just add to that, Premier? The International Dark Sky Association recognises that south-west Tasmania is one of the highest-rating dark sky areas on the planet and are willing to help in any way possible. As minister, have you or will you engage with them to help progress the proposal?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'd be very interested to work with them. I will put on record a few matters pertaining to this question.

We have significant reserve estate in Tasmania. We're fortunate to have over 800 reserves offering an array of locations, including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area where people can enjoy attractions free of any light pollution. Dark sky and tall tree tourism proposals can help grow our visitor economy, create jobs and deliver new tourism offerings. If proponents are considering these opportunities within our parks estate, I encourage them to engage with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service to learn more about the expressions of interest process which supports appropriate tourism projects within our unique parks and reserves.

I am interested in this. I wasn't aware of this tourism opportunity until a couple of decades ago. Who's the planetarium chap, Martin, in the north?

**CHAIR** - George.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - George. Who said that, the Chair? He came out to Sassafras and talked about the stars and all those types of things and said that light pollution is the biggest killer of these opportunities, so it sparked my interest all the way back then and then reacquainted my interest when I went to the Tasman the other day and spoke to a number of people who are very keen to get this up and running. Notwithstanding the engagement with Parks, as I've said, I would be interested in meeting proponents to get an understanding of their objectives.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - I guess the proponent has to be the Tasmanian government as the landowner of the national parks in this case. No other tourism operator can declare that area -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, the people behind the idea to push the Tasmanian government to this area. Are there any limitations to this that we can think of from the tourism sector? Anyway, I'm a big supporter of it. I don't know too much about it but I'm interested in it.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Premier, do you concede that tourism businesses, especially in the north and north west, have planned around the new *Spirits* coming online? What would your message be to those businesses who are now going to feel significant financial pressure while they wait for the new ships to commence operation?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've reflected my views when it comes to the *Spirit* readiness, or lack of. I acknowledge that a number of operators may well have invested and planned for the arrival of the new ships. The two existing ships will still be running and operational, so there's still

that opportunity there and there's still the need to invest in increasing the demand of the two existing new ships. Of course, 40 per cent more capacity for freight and passengers will bring more visitors to Tasmania and allow our exporters to export more high-quality produce.

I empathise with those who have made decisions. I've already put on record my feelings around that. As part of our \$12 million investment into the visitor economy strategy, we're committing significant funding to deliver priority infrastructure projects that will help us prepare for the arrival of the new *Spirits*.

We have coupled this with an additional \$4 million to Tourism Tasmania for marketing initiatives that will drive visitor demand. Tourism Tasmania continues to work and will continue to work with the *Spirit of Tasmania* opportunities to encourage visitation to the state to ensure the increased capacity provided by the ships is optimised, including for our regional visitor economies.

In addition to these investments, we're working hard to maximise visitor numbers for the 2024-25 season. In line with past practice, TT-Line will continue to offer additional day sailings to meet demand over the peak season. Tourism Tasmania will deliver its off-island summer marketing push with their Come Down for Air spring/summer campaign. Tourism Tasmania will also work with peak industry bodies to design an intrastate marketing campaign to encourage more Tasmanians to travel within our state and visit local hospitality venues. Indeed, we're investing some \$5 million through our Events Tasmania Attraction Fund to secure more events and businesses events to the state. I've already mentioned Devonport in terms of their recent award as well.

I convened a tourism roundtable in August and will meet the tourism stakeholders again on 1 November to provide a more detailed update on the progress of the new *Spirits* and the enabling infrastructure. As I've said to Mr Winter, I recently met with the Premier's Visitor Economy Advisory Council, and T21 meetings, to ensure a strong united approach to these key issues and opportunities facing the industry. I know that Tourism Tasmania regularly communicates well with the industry and has just finished their second industry update roadshow for the year, visiting all regions across the state.

Additional day sailings, which has been put on the table when required, has always been the policy of our government and that will continue. TT-Line has run double sailings during peak passenger and freight periods to cater for increased demand. Last financial year the company ran an absolute record number of 199 day sailings, I'm advised. Extra day sailings are provided on the basis of customer demand and will continue to be provided on that basis.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Just a follow-up question. When you provide those extra day sailings and extra trips to and from, what are the passenger numbers? Are the ships full?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll take some advice in terms of the exact occupancy, if I can put it that way. We can find more information for you if you like and TT-Line will be here for GBE scrutiny hearings as well, but if I can find some information to your question I will be able to let you know.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, it was great to see on the front page of the *Mercury* over the weekend that direct flights to New Zealand are recommencing from Hobart Airport in October.

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Could you please outline what the government is doing to make the most of these opportunities?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much, Mr Shelton. I am very pleased that Air New Zealand has confirmed it will resume those direct flights from Auckland to Hobart on 27 October 2024 with three flights per week scheduled until the end of March 2025. The flights will be Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday and this will mean an additional 24,000 international seats inbound and outbound to Tasmania over the next five months.

This is a huge vote of confidence in our state and our tourism industry, so well done to them. It shows the high demand for our unique tourism offerings and world-class food, wine and spirits and nature-based experiences and adventure sports such as mountain biking, for example. Tourism Industry Council Tasmania CEO Amy Hills described the return of the New Zealand flights as a sign of confidence and Hospitality Association CEO Steve Old declared it fantastic for the industry.

Tourism Tasmania is continuing to invest in the New Zealand market to grow visitation by Kiwis to Tasmania and we have committed that \$5 million for a dedicated aviation fund to partner with domestic and international airlines to increase capacity and access to new markets and developing an aviation strategy, which is in the stakeholder consultation phase, and our government, through Tourism Tasmania and the Department of State Growth, is working closely with the airlines and airports to strengthen capacity and frequency of flights on Tasmanian routes, especially heading into spring/summer peak season and work is underway on the \$130 million Hobart Airport upgrade, which will see the runways strengthened, and I thank the federal government for that investment of funds - very much appreciated.

This will allow the airport to accommodate larger aircraft and enable direct international flights to Asian hubs, and I know the Department of State Growth and Tourism Tasmania are working hard to establish new international flight routes, attracting visitors from new markets and creating new export opportunities. They'll be able to add value, I hope, to that work already underway when I embark on a trade mission in November, as expected, in terms of meeting with airlines and the like. It is very welcome to have Air New Zealand flights back between the 27 October and March, as I've stated.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, you promised in your State of the State Address last year that you would deliver a cableway at Cradle Mountain. This follows on from a 2018 election pledge for a \$60 million cableway, including \$30 million from state government and \$30 million from the private sector. When will the project start, and what's the estimated cost of it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I stand to be corrected, but I think I saw a *Mercury* article in about 1890. A cable car, 1890.

**Mr WINTER** - Cradle Mountain, you say?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Oh, did I say Cradle Mountain, sorry, I thought you meant Mount Wellington.

**Mr WINTER** - No, Cradle Mountain.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Oh, right, sorry.

**Mr WINTER** - Different non-delivered project.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Because I did say something about Mount Wellington.

**Mr WINTER** - Might get to that later, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Of course, in that state of the state speech.

**Mr WINTER** - Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Both, of course, are progressing now and Mr Abetz made sure of that. I'm a big believer in cableways, cable cars, Cradle Mountain and, indeed, Mount Wellington, because of the low impact, sustainable transport option and also all abilities option for people as well when it comes to accessing our precious areas, but also enhancing our visitor experience.

Our commitment is supported by the provision of \$30 million over the next four years in the 2024-25 Budget.

I have written to the Prime Minister and Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure regarding them to recommit Commonwealth funding for this nationally significant project. We haven't got that funding yet from the Commonwealth but I am pleased to report that we are making good progress on delivering key elements of the master plan.

To your point and Mrs Pentland's point, I know this is a very key project for northern and north-western -

**Mr WINTER** - Do you understand the frustration? It's been six and a half years since -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I understand the frustration -

**Mr WINTER** - Six and a half years is a long time. Is there a DA?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - One hundred per cent I understand the frustration, which is why we've committed still our \$30 million of investment now, but we're making progress on the master plan.

**Mr WINTER** - Right. Six and a half years.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, you've seen the visitor centre there.

**Mr WINTER** - Six and a half years.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You've seen the visitor centre and the Dove Lake viewing shelter as well. We're working hard to deliver both the new Parks and Wildlife Service visitor centre and Dove Lake viewing shelter that are key elements of the master plan and exceptional additions to the Cradle Mountain experience. Work is continuing on the remaining area, including much-needed staff accommodation, the Gateway Precinct development and the key sustainable transport solution in the form of a cableway.

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The Tasmanian Government, through a request for expressions of interest process, sought developers and committed up to \$5 million to help create a high-quality alpine village for the next stage of the Gateway Village Precinct.

Negotiations with the proposed developer and the required related infrastructure planning and development at Cradle Valley, I'm advised, are well progressed. Additional staff accommodation in the Cradle Valley region is an identified priority and the Office of Coordinator-General is continuing its investigations and assessment of relocatable and purpose-built housing options to address this need. The other key element of the masterplan is the improved transport solution between the Gateway and Dove Lake, with a cableway being the preferred option. We remain committed to a sustainable transport solution to connect the Gateway Village Precinct and Dove Lake. We continue to work with the stakeholders and the Australian Government on finding the best pathway forward.

**Mr WINTER** - If the estimate for \$60 million was made six and a half years ago, we know what infrastructure costs have gone up. That's reality. You've allocated \$30 million. Do you have an updated costing for the cableway project?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The latest - I'd have to take that on notice.

**Ms BADGER** - Could I just jump in here about clarity on that funding? The latest business case that was RTI'd in April 2023 said that costs were at \$190 million for the cableway.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Correct.

**Ms BADGER** - There's \$61 million line item in the Budget. Am I recalling correctly, you've said you're allocating \$30 million, and have requested the remainder of the funding from the federal government, which would be \$160 million, as of April last year?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's \$30 million for most of the present time, and request still for \$30 million to at least match that at this present time. Do you have any further information to that, Mr Limkin?

**Mr LIMKIN** - I understand that the Office of the Coordinator-General is currently updating the business case at this stage. We do not have a confirmed plan or updated figure at this stage, but we are in the process of updating it based on the most relevant and recent information.

**Ms BADGER** - I wanted to touch on regenerative tourism again. It's fantastic to see that the Islander Way regenerative tourism project on Flinders Island has been funded. That's the only project that we can see. What other regenerative tourism projects are you investing in and are you investing in opening up niche markets - things like avian tourism or birding, we've touched on dark skies already, and things like geology tourism and even dam tourism, which have a low impact, but bring very high-yielding tourists into the state.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Before I throw to Ms Pinto, can I say I am a big fan of regenerative tourism. I met with the then Flinders Island mayor a couple of years ago, it would have been when I first became tourism minister and Premier, about Islander Way. Not your direct

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predecessor, but the member for Braddon and I were on a unity ticket, would you believe, when it comes to the geo trail across the north-west coast. He advocated very strongly for that, and I do believe that is a good strong tourism offering. There are other unique experiences, as you've highlighted, which fall into that experience tourism but are also low impact in terms of carbon footprint as well. Vanessa, do we have any further information for Ms Badger on the regenerative tourism opportunities?

**Ms PINTO** - The visitor economy strategy that was launched last year in about September has a really strong focus on positive impact. It's looking at the positive impact for visitors that travel to the state, but also for Tasmania itself. A key part of that is looking at where we can seek to leverage and bring to the fore some of the elements in Tasmania that we're all very proud of that fall into that positive impact space. At a localised level, if I can give you an example, the tourism industry council is working really closely with operators all around the state. That's with the assistance of funding that's come through from government as a part of the visitor economy strategy to help operators in the way that they manage their operations to reduce emissions and also in the way that they manage waste, for example. When it comes to specific opportunities, you were mentioning dark skies earlier. Wherever possible, we work really closely with our regional tourism organisations. Discover Tasmania South has also run with that as a part of Dark Mofo this year, positively encouraging local operators in Hobart to turn the lights off after a certain time in the evening to facilitate that. There are a lot of different initiatives that are being undertaken at the moment to look at supporting a position of Tasmania that has a positive impact, not just to visitors but also to Tasmanians.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - I want to ask a question about the Regional Tourism Loan Scheme. What has the take-up been like for the scheme? In what ways do tourism operators know about the scheme? How much has been allocated so far?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. We relaunched it at The Cove, at Bruce and Kim Robinson's place, a number of months ago. The opportunities Ms Badger speaks about, in terms of tourism entrepreneurs, they can avail themselves of this opportunity, I'm sure, through the process. I am not sure how many people have taken up the tourism loan scheme as yet. We could get that information. Craig, do you have the uptake to date?

**Mr LIMKIN** - We can get that for the member.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will take that on notice.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - You said you launched this at The Cove recently. Was there a scheme prior to this one for tourism, or was it just a business growth scheme that tourism operators were tapping into?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There was a scheme like it, if not the same, because I think the COVID beneficiary of that was, from memory, a tourism loan scheme.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - There was a RTALS loan and that stopped pre-COVID, then during COVID there wasn't a scheme.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There was a Tourism Development Loan Scheme prior to that.

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**Ms HURWORTH?** - How much was allocated for that scheme and what was the take-up for that particular scheme?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will take that on notice in the interest of accuracy. Starting with your question on the existing scheme and how much that's been taken up, I think we relaunched it, it must have been a couple of months ago now, from memory.

**Mr SHELTON** - With the discussion around where we're going with tourism and infrastructure and Cradle Mountain, and that sort of thing, I understand that the expression of interest process has been released for the development of a tourism adventure hub at the Dismal Swamp site. Can you please tell the committee more about this project and the benefits to the north-west coast of Tasmania?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, I am pleased about this. This was an election commitment from the federal government back in 2022. I have been engaging with Senator Anne Urquhart on this and a number of other matters around this. We worked hard to achieve the signing of the \$12.5 million deal between the Australian and Tasmanian governments to attract tourists to the far north-west coast. Under the agreement, \$12.5 million will be provided to allow the remediation of the old Dismal Swamp site and the development of a tourism adventure hub to draw many thousands of new visitors to the far north west. I was at the opening of the slide a number of years ago where then premier Lennon did the honours of going down the slide, as I recall.

The original study into the project indicates that the tourism hub will create more than 81 ongoing jobs and generate an additional \$12.5 million annually in gross regional product. The project is expected to attract an overall investment of around \$40-\$50 million, providing a significant economic injection into the region. The vision for this site is for it to become a world-class visitor hub for cultural and nature-based experiences within the broader far north-west region, which is expected to attract an additional \$9 million in annual visitor expenditure across the state. We expect the operation to feature a range of accommodation options and immersive nature-based experiences and I was delighted to see the expression of interest for the site released over the weekend following a market sounding earlier this year.

The CEO of West by North West Gabriella Conti said on the weekend:

The Dismal Swamp redevelopment is an exciting opportunity for the far north west, allowing visitors to immerse themselves not only in agritourism experiences and world-class produce, but nature-based experiences in the Tarkine, Australia's large temperate rainforest.

This is welcome. The commitment of the federal government was \$12 million at the time, I believe. We played a role in the state parliament as well with the regulation matters that needed to be upgraded, so it was a good partnership indeed with the federal government.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, I want to ask you about your aviation fund that you announced during the election and is also listed in the Budget.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The \$5 million fund?



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**Mr WINTER** - Yes, the \$5 million aviation fund leveraging all-round opportunities to increase capacity and enter the Tasmanian market. Can you explain how this will actually work, how you'll measure success and how the money will be spent this year?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, good questions. I have some information on it here, but in the interests of time I might throw to either Mr Limkin or Ms Pinto for that answer.

**Mr LIMKIN** - The Department of State Growth and Tourism Tasmania are working with the airports and industry to currently develop program guidelines for that fund. The focus is very much on attracting new entrants to the market so the guidelines and programs are focused on that at this stage. However, it will also provide the opportunity for Tourism Tasmania to use that money for destination marketing if we go into a new market, similar to what government did when we entered the New Zealand market originally. There was an arrangement set up with Air New Zealand and at that time Tourism Tasmania also focused on destination marketing to increase that interest. Ms Pinto will talk about that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is \$5 million over four years.

**Mr WINTER** - Yes, I noticed it's spread out over the four years.

**Ms PINTO** - Yes, that's correct. As we seek to increase capacity through new routes either domestically or internationally and with the increased capacity coming online at Hobart Airport, the focus is obviously on the international market and specifically within Asia, being a junction point for flights coming in from around the world. As the secretary outlined, that focus would be on developing, in parallel with the airport, guidelines around how that funding would be applied and in relation to destination marketing, it would come in the form of marketing that would seek to warm up a market.

The secretary referred to New Zealand. I can note that with the New Zealand flights coming on very soon, it's very exciting for October through to March this year. We've been active in that market in the lead-up just to encourage that market to be frequenting those flights and maximising those bookings.

**Mr WINTER** - What discussions have been held between the management and board of Tourism Tasmania and the board of TT-Line about the delays to the new ships?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Good question for the Tourism Tasmania board.

**Ms PINTO** - The chair of the board of Tourism Tasmania sits on the Premier's Visitor Economy Advisory Council, a very important forum whereby discussions that are pertinent, such as the *Spirits* key matters, are able to be discussed in that forum. That's a valuable environment for those discussions to occur and the Premier noted those discussions have happened just as recently as within this month.

**Mr WINTER** - What view has been expressed by Tourism Tasmania to TT-Line and the government about its reaction to the delays? Have they raised any concerns about the ongoing lack of communication from TT-Line with Tourism Tasmania?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a question for the Tourism Tasmania board, but I expect -

**Mr WINTER** - Not the CEO?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm sorry?

**Mr WINTER** - We have a CEO, don't we?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thought you mentioned the board. We're all disappointed, Mr Winter, and we all want to have open dialogue and strong communication when it comes to these matters moving forward. I've outlined I'm next having a stakeholder engagement on 1 November. We will increase our Premier's Visitor Advisory Council (PVAC) meetings as well, which was an outcome of our next meeting. We normally meet quarterly and we'll have increased meetings to ensure that strong communication is strengthened moving forward. I can't speak for Tourism Tasmania necessarily, but do you want to add anything, Vanessa?

**Ms PINTO** - An important part of the PVAC governance associated with the visitor economy strategy are a series of working groups. We have a demand working group with representatives from Business Events Tasmania, Events Tasmania, ourselves at Tourism Tasmania and the TT-Line. That forum meets on a regular basis to discuss demand opportunities and how we work together. The Premier noted earlier the opportunity with increased day sailings. From Tourism Tasmania's perspective, we would be seeking to leverage every opportunity available to work with TT-Line to market that.

I'd also note that as part of PVAC in 2023, a really comprehensive study was undertaken across the state to look at the degree of infrastructure investment that would be needed in caravan and camping sites. The Premier noted that the government's most recent investment, the latest \$12 million investment into the visitor economy strategy, will provide a foundation for directing that investment in the most permanent way.

**Mr WINTER** - When was Tourism Tasmania told that the new *Spirits* would not be operating this summer?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll have to take that on notice, Mr Winter, and see if we can find that answer for you. We'll see what we can do there. Mr Limkin has an answer for Mrs Pentland.

**Mr LIMKIN** - On the question regarding the latest election commitment, I am advised that it opened on 10 July 2024. The Department of State Growth has had a good level of inquiry to date. We have had three applications received to date. One application has been approved and two further applications are currently under assessment, both in regional locations, one in the west and the other in the south, both in the accommodation sector, which is addressing an essential need program.

**CHAIR** - The time for Estimates of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality has expired. The committee will suspend its proceedings until 2.30 p.m. this afternoon.

**The committee suspended from 1.45 p.m. until 2.30 p.m.**

**CHAIR** - Welcome, Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, to the committee again. Would you please introduce persons at the table for the benefit of Hansard?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To my right is Craig Limkin, the secretary of the Department of State Growth. To Craig's right is Denise McIntyre, the Deputy Secretary for strategy, housing, infrastructure and planning. To my left is Ned Whitehouse, my Chief of Staff, and then Cynthia Heydon the department secretary for transport.

**CHAIR** - Thank you and welcome. The time scheduled for estimates for the Minister for Infrastructure is three hours. The resolution of the House provides for a minister to provide additional information to a committee either later that day or in writing as an answer to a question taken on notice. To submit a question on notice, the member must first ask their question to the minister and the minister must indicate they will take it on notice. The member must then put the question in writing and handed to the committee secretary so it can be included in correspondence to the minister.

I'd also like to remind you that the microphones are rather sensitive, so I ask you to be mindful of this for Hansard. Be careful when moving your folders and documents around the table. Also, it is difficult for Hansard to differentiate when people are talking over each other, so I would remind members only to speak one at a time to assist with this.

Minister, would you like to make an opening statement or remarks?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair, and thanks members for being on the committee. Our infrastructure sector is delivering nation-leading sustainable projects connecting people and places. Infrastructure is critical to our economy. It fundamentally shapes the way we live and it serves the needs of both present and future generations. It is the building blocks strengthening our communities, industries and the economy. Infrastructure delivery also creates deep social impact and generates lasting and meaningful social benefits. If we grasp the opportunity for local employment and wealth generation for small and medium enterprises, it can drive skills development and employment pathways for young people and support better outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged members of our community.

We know that having a strong pipeline of works ensures industry confidence and provides job security. That's what we're delivering. However, we can always improve. Our new secretary has been working on a proposal for our governments to strengthen our planning, delivery and value for money. Since becoming Minister for Infrastructure, I've charged him to deliver this proposal to me by the end of the year so the government can consider the recommendations in the 2025-26 Budget. However, we're not waiting and we are moving forward to further enhance the role of the Department of State Growth's Infrastructure Tasmania division to deliver specific projects for responsible agencies, whether projects or whether bespoke, complex or outside of the agencies or businesses' normal agreement.

Infrastructure Tasmania is already progressing delivery of some significant projects. They had over \$400 million to support Tasmania's growth. This includes UTAS Stadium redevelopment project in Launceston and the Northern Suburbs Community Recreation Hub. They will also deliver the early works and construction of a Pontville site.

We will further enhance our project assurance framework and delivery agencies to ensure the state's infrastructure projects are being effectively developed and delivered on time, on budget, and in accordance with our government's objectives. A stronger governance framework will be in place to focus on sound investment; value for money; the client's interest and outcomes; encourage collaboration; draw upon the combined breadth of experience across

interested parties to deliver the best possible outcomes; define roles and responsibilities for the delivery agency; client agency and related parties; identify a single point of contact for intra-government and external communications and stakeholder engagement through an agreed communication strategy and stakeholder engagement plan protocol; provide a single point of financial accountability and reporting lines from business case to readiness for service; leverage the site's project assurance framework to monitor and provide timely reporting on project status; emerging risks and issues; mitigation actions; create flexibility to adapt and respond to changing circumstances throughout the project life cycle; and facilitate smooth transition from construction to operation with an appropriate transition period.

It is clearly an exciting time for infrastructure development in Tasmania. We look forward to delivering on the pipeline of projects to support the state's continued growth. The importance of infrastructure investment is highlighted by the flow on effects. It is across the civil, commercial, domestic, residential sectors right around the state and the \$5.1 billion infrastructure investment will deliver key job-creating projects, providing new and upgraded assets across our health system, roads, bridges and schools.

We're making critical progress with the development of Tasmania's largest ever transport infrastructure project, the \$796 million new Bridgewater bridge, supporting more than 1000 jobs, including the creation of close to 700 new jobs for Tasmanians. Importantly, and by design, a significant portion of the project's design and construction activities have been delivered through subcontracts with Tasmanian businesses, with more than \$12 million being spent with local contractors each month as we approach the bridge's mid-25 completion.

I'm pleased to say that is part of the greater Hobart traffic solution. Construction of the Transit Lane Connector project has now also started to create an extension of the Southern Outlet with an additional traffic lane between Davey and Macquarie Streets. Indeed, we are getting on with the job of delivering infrastructure projects in all corners of the state. I thank everyone for their involvement in that and, of course, included in that is also the critical importance of training and workforce development, which I can come to a bit later.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, I'm going to kick off with an e-mail that I received from one of our constituents late last night. Ronnie from Zeehan wrote to me about the state of the Murchison Highway. They say:

The potholes are causing damage to about three to four cars daily. State Growth, being the government, are doing very little. To put a claim into Stornoway, you need to jump through hoops. People on the west coast can't afford to buy new wheels or tyres every time we need to go up to the coast for medical reasons, and Rockcliff is telling the media we have the best roads in the country. The man is delusional. We need your help.

Premier, what do you say to Ronnie from Zeehan, and when are you going to fix the potholes with your pothole blitz on the Murchison Highway?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question and thank you to Ronnie for expressing this view. I did receive an e-mail similar to that, it would have been last night. I'm not sure if it was Ronnie or another person that was very concerned about the state of the roads and potholes and others, of course. There are significant potholes around the state road network, including

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on sections of the Bass Highway between Deloraine and Latrobe in the north-west as a result of the severe event that started in late August.

We are well underway with our pothole blitz around the state and maintenance contractor, Stornoway, has three crews working on the Bass Highway, as well as crews on other roads to complete longer-term repairs.

We are committed to longer-term management of the state's roads, ensuring they are not only maintained but designed for longevity and road user safety.

As the new Minister for Infrastructure, I have requested a briefing from the department about construction standards of our roads and whether there are improvements that should be considered. The 2024-25 Budget includes \$117 million in funding allocated to bridge and road maintenance for this financial year. I would like to thank road users for their patience during what has been a challenging time.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, the question was in relation to the Murchison Highway and when those potholes will be fixed.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and we can come to that in just a moment. As I say, we have made the commitment, \$117 million.

Incidentally, the public can make claims for compensation for vehicle damage that occurred on a state road, and they are encouraged to check the Transport website if they believe they do have a claim.

A number of roads across the state were impacted by this weather event in recent times, including the Lyell Highway, Highland Lakes Road and Lake Dobson Road. I am aware of the significant number of potholes more broadly. I thank people that have provided me with feedback. We can get an exact timeline on Murchison if you would like.

**Ms DOW** - That was the question.

**Mr LIMKIN** - Since 26 August 2024, 270 potholes have been identified on the Murchison Highway, with 156 repaired in the last week. So, not this week, last week, with crews using hot mix where possible to ensure a long-lasting repair.

Maintenance crews have been working on both the Murchison and the Rigley Highways everyday this this week and last week and will continue to do it until we have finished them. Well, I appreciate road users are concerned about the issues and we are prioritising the work as quickly as possible. I have also indicated to the West Coast Mayor last week similar information and committed to keeping him informed on the progress of the highway as quick as possible.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, why did it take up to two weeks for you to provide a statement or any form of information around the dangerous potholes that had developed across our road network right across the state? What did you learn from your briefing that you sought on potholes and your pothole blitz? What actually is your pothole blitz? Can you outline exactly what it is or is it just another slogan from your government?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, we were very exercised in terms of power reconnections over the two weeks of the extremely bad weather. Important to stand up the grants and the support for Tasmanians that are impacted by extreme weather events. I detailed a number of, if not all, those grants this morning in my Department of Premier and Cabinet Estimates where we have reached and supported Tasmanians for a variety of reasons.

I applaud the road crews around Tasmania that are working on fixing the potholes in recent times.

**Ms DOW** - What did you learn from your briefing Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have sought a briefing because we have to fix the potholes clearly, and that is the pothole blitz, but it is broader than that. I get a lot of feedback from the community in terms of the state of our roads, how can it be improved. Aware of infrastructure ministers' comments on a number of these matters, I get feedback directly.

**Ms DOW** - Yes, but what are you doing about it Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I get regular feedback, either through social media, more directly from former employees of the Department of Main Roads, for example. I am taking great interest in these matters. One, ensuring that the roads in terms of new roads are well prepared, good base, using the right materials. I want to ensure, when it comes to road repairs and contracts and the like, that we have the right emphasis. I am also interested in consulting with industry around these matters and wanting to get industry players around the table so they can talk to me and I can listen to them about how we might improve the situation of our roads. Extreme weather and rainfall does impact on our roads, and as I said -

**Ms DOW** - Not only that, though, Premier, you have new roads like the road that has just been completed, the Bass Highway at Table Cape that has only been down for a matter of months and it has already got huge potholes in it. Why are the roads deteriorating in the timeframes that they are?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, that is what I am seeking answers to, honourable member. Let us be very considered in all of this. I am interested in feedback from industry, those that repair roads and those that make our roads and see what can be done for improvement. One, do it first and do it properly, but also the immediate priorities around the pothole blitzes, I say, the consequences of not having those fixed in a timely manner, albeit the road crews have been out there in very difficult conditions for the last number of weeks doing just that. I commend them for it and just talking to the lads on the side of the road the other day about some of their experiences and ideas, I take that back and I want answers on how we can improve the road network.

**Ms DOW** - I think everybody does, Premier.

**Ms BURNET** - Premier, thank you for your introduction and talking about such things as the Bridgewater bridge and how that is a project which has been on time and on budget. I know that we have quite a number of projects in the pipeline, particularly after reading the Macquarie Point project of State Significance papers. Clearly, it was quite good timing, really, to be able to see those papers. But, given the projects that we have - the existing projects such as the Southern Outlet, the Bus Rapid Transit, Tasman Bridge, the corridor projects, which are

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being funded in conjunction with the Australian government, and, also, given that we've got a significant housing shortage and ageing infrastructure in our schools and hospitals, and a housing crisis, do we have the capacity to deliver any of these other projects on time and on budget?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question and we'll endeavour to do all we can to ensure that they are on time and on budget. I'm happy to further explore your question but I want to pick up on one of the areas that you raised and that was the Tasman Bridge.

The Tasman Bridge was opened in 1965 and it carries among the highest volumes of traffic of any part of the state road network, more than 70,000 vehicles per day. Pedestrian and cyclist safety has been a concern for some time due to the narrow shared-use pathways and the height of the safety barriers both on the water and roadsides of the paths.

I'm aware, of course, of a 2016 coroner's report that recommended structural modifications to the bridge for reasons of human safety. This is a serious and highly sensitive matter that requires respectful and responsible discussion.

The bridge is also a highly visible landmark and, with very high usage, there are public expectations in relation to this project that need to be addressed, which is what I'm doing today.

The coroner's report was the basis for the Tasman Bridge Upgrade Project and, in 2020, the Australian government committed \$65 million, matched by a \$65 million contribution from the Tasmanian government for the total investment of \$130 million. The key objective of this upgrade was and continues to be human safety. I am pleased to advise that objective will be delivered.

The original design concept for the bridge released in 2022, was for the construction of cantilevered three-and-a-half metre wide paths and safety barriers. Since that time, more detailed engineering investigations and modelling of the bridge structure above and below the water has found that the wind load and additional weight of the proposed new pathways on each side of the bridge would have potential to overload the foundations during extreme wind events. These investigations found that the additional cost of strengthening the foundations to accommodate that design would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and be extremely difficult to undertake, according to expert advice I've received from the Department of State Growth.

In short, the very large cost increase and difficulties in construction have made the original concept of three-and-a-half metre wide pathways unviable, but, given the importance of this project, however, we've been determined to press on with an alternative, keeping in mind the key objective of human safety. We have undertaken detailed wind modelling to determine that it is possible to construct a three-metre high safety barrier on the water side and a 1.4-metre high roadside barrier over the length of the bridge without compromising its structural integrity.

While the amenity that may have been provided by the three-and-a-half metre wide pathways is not achievable due to engineering constraints, we have determined the project can be delivered with the provision of widened sections of pathway to allow passing and will improve pathway connections on either side of the bridge.

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We have shared this information with our Commonwealth counterparts and they are understanding of the outcome. This information that I'm providing today has been shared with key stakeholders on a cross-agency working group, as well as Lifeline. Now, there are a number of individual stakeholders who have been personally informed, and I thank you for the question.

You mentioned the Tasman Bridge and I thought I should update the committee at the earliest possible timeframe.

To your very good question on our capacity for delivery, I can speak to the 10-year infrastructure pipeline, which was most recently updated in October 2023, capturing commitments in the 2023-24 state Budget, the pipeline includes around \$27 billion in infrastructure projects. Since being first released in July 2018, the pipeline has doubled from its original \$13 billion in listed projects. The 10-year pipeline allows our key infrastructure leverage schedule to be planned and executed more efficiently, making sure each dollar invested has the largest possible positive impact on our economy. Importantly, this kind of investment not only delivers the infrastructure our state needs for tomorrow, but it creates jobs, keeping businesses operating and provides a cash injection to the local economy, as I referred to when it comes to the Bridgewater bridge, but we are committed to continuing to improve the pipeline through engagement with industry.

The industry reference group is led by Infrastructure Tasmania to ensure the pipeline is relevant and meets those key industry needs. In April 2024, the Secretary's board requested the pipeline update align with the budget cycle. The next update is to be conducted following the release of the 2024-25 Budget and will be released publicly before the end of this calendar year. Aligning the update with the next budget ensures that industry and asset owners have access to that up-to-date information about the status of the infrastructure projects, particularly projects that are funded through the State Budget.

**Ms BURNET** - Regarding the second part of my question about the priorities, we have the possibility of having an AFL stadium built. There are all these things that have been on the books for quite some time. How will those priorities land?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I believe that you're asking me a question about the priority of the same project as opposed to priority of other key projects, which I think's the point that you're making.

We can deliver all, in my view, given that the completion for the stadium project is July 2029. Midway through 2029 is the information that I have, so, we have to go through the planning and process the priorities you've highlighted in other areas, but we'll continue maintaining our roads, developing infrastructure buildings, upgrading hospitals.

We have a lot of health infrastructure to continue developing as well, particularly in mine and Mrs Beswick's electorate of Braddon, but the stadium should not impact in terms of the delivery. We're aiming for end of 2028 but it may well be a little later. I believe that we can do it and many others.

Given what I have just said about the construction of the Bridgewater bridge, which has gone extremely well in terms of progress to date and that'll be completed, my expectation is by the middle of next year. While the workforce won't be directly transferable to the stadium, I'm advised, but there may well be some transferability in terms of skills, but I'm not advised that



it will be directly transferable. I believe we can finish the projects that we've committed to. It's been difficult with the disruption of the pandemic in terms of supply chains, workforce development and the like, but our investment in skills, I would hope and expect, will help facilitate projects being on time.

**Mrs BESWICK** - Your government has made it clear that the Saul Eslake report was released too early for the Budget to be properly considered this year. When it comes to the infrastructure spending, how likely are we to see some of that advice being taken into the next project?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for that question, and it did land a little late for the Budget development in terms of Mr Eslake's report. That's not the fault of Mr Eslake, it's the just the Budget process in this election year. The Treasurer and I have both said that we respect Mr Eslake's views on matters. We don't always agree, but we'll take his advice seriously and continue to engage with Mr Eslake and, no doubt, some of the areas that Mr Eslake has put forward will be visible in the next budget that we deliver. Thank you.

**Mrs BESWICK** - Are we likely to see the prioritising of some infrastructure based on that, like, of the ratio of the social and economic benefits consideration?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we will make these decisions. We have a plan moving forward with upgrading our hospitals; \$188 million to invest in our schools and upgrading our schools. We will, by the beginning of next year, have Legana and Brighton completed. But the north-west mental health precinct - I am sorry, I should have mentioned Ms Dow's electorate as well, of Braddon. We will make these considerations in a sensible way that reflect community needs and sentiment.

**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, abandoned and derelict vessels are a concern across Tasmania's waterways, in particular, in the Tamar River, where they are an unsightly environmental mess and, at times, a navigational hazard. Given the historic limitations of the current laws in removing the vessels and recovering costs from the owners, what is the government's plan to address this?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thanks, Mr Shelton, for the question. Derelict vessels, as you would no doubt agree and I have seen the Treasurer speak of this, often present risk to navigation, the safe use of waters by the public and the environment. Vessel owners have the ultimate responsibility for their vessels. It is, therefore, important that vessel owners are held to account for the cost of managing and disposing of the derelict vessels as you have termed them.

We are committed to, at the last state election, introducing tougher laws to fix the growing problem of abandoned and derelict vessels as part of our commitment. The Department of State Growth is preparing a policy position paper for consultation this year, which will inform the legislation that the government brings before the House.

The improved laws will include new powers to require evidence of regular maintenance, to inspect vessels and recover costs of rehabilitation from owners. They are intended - this is the legislation or the laws - to empower authorities to board and inspect vessels where they represent a navigational or environmental risk, including in cases where ownership of these liabilities is contested by owners or estates of deceased owners. The derelict vessels are a particular problem in the Tamar River. That is why I mentioned the member for Bass, the

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Treasurer, Mr Ferguson, on these matters where a number have been left abandoned, including as a result of bankruptcy and the death of owners as well.

Since we announced this policy, there has been another incident where a sizeable vessel, the *Wyuna*, broke its anchor and drifted onto a reef in the lower reaches of the Tamar. I am looking at the Chair here, as the member for Bass. If not for the fast action of TasPorts in this circumstance, the towage operators, this could have resulted in a very significant navigational and environmental hazard. Abandoned vessels have been allowed to legally shift from privately held assets to expensive public liabilities, with some owners, including the beneficiaries of deceased estates, having no legal responsibility for the cost of remediation.

So, we will act to enforce stricter responsibilities on owners, including being registered and keeping the vessel in regular maintenance in return for the privilege of enjoying our public waterways. I look forward to bringing this legislation to parliament to contemporise the law and hold boat owners accountable for their deteriorating private assets before they become public liabilities in that sense.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, I am still not clear exactly what your pothole blitz is, whether or not it has additional funding allocated to it, and, in fact, who is actually paying for your pothole blitz.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The funding for has increased from, I think, \$112 million to \$117 million this Budget. It increased funding -

**Ms DOW** - The maintenance?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Maintenance, more broadly, which includes \$31.2 million from the Australian Government in 2024-25. This included \$50.2 million for three regional road maintenance contractors-based services. The remaining is for pavement resurfacing and line marking, bridge maintenance, bridge and pavement renewals, tree safety risk management, roadside mowing and slashing, and digital asset capability improvement across the state road network, and any costs related to the impact of extreme weather events on the state road network, or initial cash flow from the infrastructure maintenance budget, pending a decision to apply for funding assistance through the Australian Government's Disaster Recovery funding arrangements for eligible events.

**Ms DOW** - Will you be applying for funding from the feds for your pothole blitz?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, if it comes under the Australian Government's disaster recovery funding arrangements, possibly. Indicated to the affirmative there.

**Ms DOW** - I mean, yes, there was an extraordinary weather event, but potholes on our major road corridors aren't a new thing, Premier. They've been occurring now for years, particularly on the Bass Highway. You can't attribute it all to a one-off weather event.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Water is the enemy of roads, as I've said.

**Ms DOW** - Climate change is, it seems.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If you're talking about sections of major highways, including the Bass Highway, and, loath to talk about the area close to where I reside, Parramatta Creek and the like, you've been there many times, and it's frustrating, I'd have to say, bloody annoying for me, for you, for road users -

**Ms DOW** - Not just annoying, it's very dangerous. Incredibly dangerous, particularly at night.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've said that. Danger. I want roads to be built and built properly, fixed and fixed properly. I want to get to the bottom of how we can improve our road -

**Ms DOW** - When do you expect to be at the bottom of that, Premier? When do you think you'll know what your further actions will be around the road network, pavements, what you need to do as a government to improve road surfaces across the state?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Firstly, I have to get to the bottom of what is the real problem. Weather is a problem, you have to acknowledge that. But are there other factors as well? We've already reached out to the Civil Contractors Federation. In terms of that organisation, we want to get all key parties together. This is in train and being worked through now. I want to sit round the table and talk to people who have far more experience in the road maintenance and road building game than I have and will ever have.

**Ms DOW** - How long do you expect that to take before you come to some sort of decision?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm hoping to convene that in the next number of weeks. I would expect, albeit I have trade missions and the like coming up, but we'll get that happening as soon as we possibly can. When I get feedback directly - and I get some pretty direct feedback, some of which is not suitable for public consumption on social media - from people who had skin in the game in this area, and I know people go back to the Department of Main Roads days, the old DMR. Things are a bit different now in terms of heavy vehicles. We have B-doubles, number of vehicles, et cetera, I have people talk to me about the type of gravel we use and some of the gravel's got too much sand in it, therefore it washes away from the aggregates and it creates a challenge.

**Ms DOW** - Would you agree that your government has lost the ability to build a road to the Tasmanian road conditions?

**CHAIR** - Order. I have given the call to Ms Burnet.

**Ms BURNET** - I want to go back to the stadium proposal, and appendix N in the report. I don't know if you read that one. The executive summary has a significant number of projects and the costs associated with each of those, things like the northern access road, which is touted as \$33.9 million, the event bus plaza, \$16.2 million. It talks about a Collins Street redesign and a possible active transport bridge. There are considerable costs associated with those. In all, there's a cost between \$174.3 million and \$186.78 million. Some of these have not been funded. How do you intend to prioritise these projects?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've covered this a fair bit today, earlier on the day we had Anne Beach from the Macquarie Point Development Corporation here, who would be more than happy to

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provide a one-on-one briefing with you, I am sure. We talked about private investment opportunities and unlocking that potential, but this is a broad urban renewal project.

**Ms BURNET** - An expensive one.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, yeah, but we have to grow with the times and get with the times, frankly, and ensure that we do provide opportunities through investment in key enabling infrastructure. The stadium is part of that, but the precinct, whatever was built there, albeit the stadium, infrastructure needs movement of people in and out quickly, accepting that would need upgrades of infrastructure. We need upgrades of infrastructure right across the state as the population increases and things are built and those types of matters.

**Ms BURNET** - I do not think that has really answered the questions. Obviously, making a city better is one thing, but as far as the priority, this list is long and it's vast. It includes park and ride, it -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's great. There was no park and ride. You'd be happy with that.

**Ms BURNET** - I am happy with park and ride. It's a considerable expense in relation to delivering this project.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is good for the people. Park and ride facilities, it's great, reduces traffic congestion.

**Ms BURNET** - Premier, it is the cost and I will be asking the Transport minister plenty of questions around getting people to and from places.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Often I get questions on the right location: 'Is it this?' and 'It should be out in the sticks', and all those sorts of things which would add to the challenge when it comes to traffic congestion and getting people there. If you go to Melbourne, the MCG, the Rod Laver Arena, Adelaide Oval, stadia infrastructure very close to the CBD and other amenities. We are in walking distance from hotels in the CBD, entertainment venues in Salamanca and elsewhere, and no doubt there will be more close to the stadia as well, where people can walk or use other forms of mobility to these areas rather than drive a car and cause all sorts of traffic congestion. Of course, bus public transport will be critical to this. Not only buses but also the ferry network as well.

**Mrs BESWICK** - You briefly mentioned there about planning for population growth. What are our strategies for planning for population growth? A lot of our current strategies seem to be saying that we're not growing even though we've already hit our population plans 10 years in advance. What are we doing now?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We released our population policy in around early July, the third or fourth, from memory, which was about trying to change that demographic shift, particularly the median age. When I was one years of age in 1971, the median age of Tasmania was 26. It's now 42 or 44. The median age of Australia is 37. Our policies within the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future were all about trying to change that demographic shift through policies about attracting young people here, keeping young people here, and the like. Population growth and increased economic activity are putting pressure, for example, on the greater Hobart area and the road network, particularly across arterial corridors and Hobart CBD streets. Effective

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transport planning and traffic management is vitally important in order for Hobart to retain and improve its liveability, which is a key part of this, and particularly to remain globally competitive in attracting visitors and new residents.

The Greater Hobart Traffic Solution has committed some \$217 million in funding for short and long-term transport initiatives to manage peak commuter demand across the Greater Hobart area. The Greater Hobart Traffic Solution implements key aspects of the Hobart Transport Vision and the Hobart City Deal. These are a number of areas of which we've already - we've got a rapid bus strategic business case, that is happening, Mr Limkin, at this present time as well. Member for Clark, you'd be interested in this as well, from the northern suburbs. There are a lot of matters we're considering when it comes to population growth. I'll point you to Nick, to the population policy which we released, which is extensive.

**Mrs BESWICK** - I guess I mean from a broader infrastructure planning point of view.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have our pipeline.

**Mrs BESWICK** - Great, we've got buses planned in Hobart, but what are we doing -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have our pipeline of works, as I mentioned before. No doubt when we develop the north-west mental health precinct, there will potentially be infrastructure requirements there in terms of upgrades.

**Ms McINTYRE** - We have a comprehensive plan. We are working on 10-year strategies across Australia in terms of infrastructure - road and bridge infrastructure, bus network planning. We're doing a major network plan in the greater Hobart area, we're looking at a rapid bus transport network for Hobart. We're also working on a broader Keep Hobart Moving strategy. Hobart is obviously or potentially the most congested city in the state at the moment. We will then roll out these plans to the other urban centres.

**Mrs BESWICK** - What's the time frame for some of those?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We already have a draft Keep Hobart Moving plan. It's been out in the public domain. A public consultation will be going to government for endorsement in the coming weeks. We're already started work on business case for the rapid bus network. We're working on the ferry masterplan, the expansion of ferry services and building ferry infrastructure along the Derwent. We are working on road upgrades as well.

**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you, Chair. I will talk this afternoon about highways and roads and that sort of thing. I can recall in 2014, the Midlands Highway upgrade and the fact that the Midlands Highway was falling apart under the previous Labor government. On the bottom end of that highway, there is the Bridgewater bridge, which was only ever talked about. It is now growing before our eyes. Can you provide some perspective of the scale of this infrastructure project as well as update the committee on when we can expect to drive over it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, for that. I remember a lot of the discussion about the Midland Highway and I recall the former Minister for Infrastructure calling it a goat track, although I do not think he was Minister for Infrastructure when he called it a goat track. That was in around 2008, from memory. The Bridgewater bridge project is the largest transport infrastructure project in Tasmania's history and we are very proud of where we have come to

in terms of this. Those of us who regularly traverse the existing causeway and the bridge - in fact, some 20,000 vehicles do this every day - would have seen the progress on the side of the river, coming into Hobart on the left-hand side. The independent Major Assessment Panel approved this \$786 million project which was the first to utilise the Major Projects Assessment process.

The new Bridgewater bridge will feature a four-lane standalone structure and a three-metre-wide path for pedestrians and cycles. It will include great separated interchanges on each side of the river, enhancing traffic efficiency and safety for motorists. It would also provide a huge boost for the local economy. I have mentioned already supporting an estimated 1000 direct and indirect jobs and a minimum of 25% of those new roles to be recruited from Brighton, Derwent Valley and Glenorchy municipalities, which is fantastic. My advice is, to date, that the project remains within budget and on target for construction completion in mid-2025.

The project's purpose-built precast concrete production facility in Bridgewater is producing 1082 concrete bridge segments needed to build the 1.2-kilometre deck for the new bridge. Currently, an average of 20 segments have been produced each week, weighing between 50 and 90 tonnes and measuring 15 metres wide. Now, they are stored on site before being transported to the northern and southern abutments of the new bridge, where they are lifted into place with special lifting devices and cranes. The precast facility employs around 90 people, which is fantastic, and the project reached a major milestone in mid-July 2024 with completed construction of all 46 of the main bridge piles. I have mentioned the \$12 million, haven't I? Upcoming works include implementing traffic changes near the course by roundabout in Granton, ongoing concrete pours for bridge piers, ongoing production of concrete bridge segments at precast facility, ongoing construction of the new bridge broaches, segments deliveries to the north and south sides of the river Derwent and ongoing erection of bridge segments in the north and south using special segment lifting devices. This has been a very big project that those involved can be very proud of.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, this will be my last pothole question for today, but there will be many more - putting you on notice. I am hoping that you will be able to provide, similarly as you did for the Murchison Highway, a breakdown of the total number of potholes on the following respective road corridors and outline the total number that have been filled to date: the Huon, Tasman, Bass, Channel, Southern Outlet, Midland Highway, Lyell Highway, Lenora, Illawarra Road and East Highway.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The total statewide potholes since the 26 August 2024: South potholes identified a total of 684 and repaired a total of 584. North potholes identified a total of 1132 and repaired a total of 1110. North west potholes: identified 1622 and repaired 1148. Maintenance contractors continue to make a conservative effort to address potholes, including those in the Bass Highway, in addition to managing the impacts from the severe weather across the broader network.

What I will do, if it is okay, because I know this north west figure is of interest to you particularly and understandably, we might see if we can get a breakdown for the Murchison Highway. Is that possible?

**Ms DOW** - I did provide a list. Could I provide that list on notice for each of those corridors?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes. Did you read that into the *Hansard*.

**Ms DOW** - I did give it to the *Hansard*, but we can put it on notice.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, if we can get that for you. Just bear with us on time but we will see if we can get that sorted.

**Ms DOW** - Thank you. My next question is in relation to your budget infrastructure spend. Treasurer Michael Ferguson says your government is spending more on infrastructure. Why is it, then, that you will be spending \$300 million less on infrastructure over the forward Estimates?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have a graph here, on page 119, chart 6.1, Agency Infrastructure Investment 2018-19 to 2027-28. I am looking at budget paper 1. That's outlined there.

**Ms DOW** - Over the page, you will see there is a decline across the Estimates on the next table.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have got the visual presentation there. I think what's important is the work that everyone's done to get the dollars out the door, which has been a remarkable achievement, and increasingly so over the last number of years. That has been no mean feat because our infrastructure has been considerable in terms of our investment moving forward, but you can have investments moving forward -

**Ms DOW** - The point is that you are actually spending less, \$300 million less. Why is the Treasurer espousing record spending when you are actually spending less?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is a \$5.1 billion committed infrastructure investment in the Budget, which is significant: \$1.9 billion in roads and bridges and other transport infrastructure over the Budget and forward Estimates; \$649 million over the Budget and forward Estimates on hospitals and health facilities, which is 12.75 per cent of total infrastructure spend; \$359 million on schools and education infrastructure, that is more than 7 per cent; \$356 million, again 7 per cent, in infrastructure supporting tourism, recreation and culture; and the \$1.2 billion to be invested in infrastructure by government businesses, which is 23.5 per cent of total infrastructure spend in that sense.

It is important to continue this infrastructure spend because, as Andrew Winch said recently, all the dollars spent on investment in infrastructure ends up in cafes and service stations and shopping centres around Tasmania, Andrew is the CEO of the Civil Contractors Federation. This is significant. This financial year's investment is more than four times that of the previous government, which is significant. Not only is it significant in terms of the dollars when it comes to the investment, but also what we are getting out the door as well.

**Ms DOW** - The Treasurer is saying that you are \$5.1 billion. I am not getting the answers.

**CHAIR** - I can't help you if you don't like the answers. Please ask another question or I will move on to Ms Burnet.

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**Ms DOW** - The Treasurer says that you will be spending \$5.1 billion on infrastructure over the next four years.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms DOW** - In reality that is half-a-billion dollars less than your first budget as Premier two years ago. How is that anything else other than a cut to infrastructure spending?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Are you saying we did well in the first year?

**Ms DOW** - Not at all, no. You say that you're spending less but you're saying that you're spending more. I just want you to be truthful.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we are. It's there for everyone to see. So, was it \$4.3 billion in last year's budget and \$5.1 billion in this year's? Anyway. It's significant.

**Ms BURNET** - Back to the stadium, Premier. Already, we've gone over \$60 million in the likely forecast, or the spending for the stadium. It's up to \$775 million already. On that front, that means it would be one of the most expensive pieces of infrastructure per head of population, at about \$1347 per Tasmanian.

If we go back to this list of infrastructure projects, there's a significant amount which haven't been funded. The northern access road hasn't been properly funded, the funding is not identified for the Hunter Street car park and even the event travel behaviour campaign, really vital to get this project over the line in anybody's books because you can't have a dysfunctional transport system, that's unfunded as well. Who is actually going to pay for these unfunded projects?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The public infrastructure projects?

**Ms BURNET** - Yeah, these are public infrastructure projects.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Firstly, I think you're making an argument that if it wasn't for the stadium, that all those projects would be funded. Is that what you're saying? I think that's what you're saying, or won't get done?

**Ms BURNET** - I'm saying that they're not funded.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, I can say that they will get done and you've added up some cost there, of course, above the \$375 million that we're committed to. We're investing \$375 million, okay? The federal government are putting \$240 million into the Macquarie Point Precinct, and we'll expect to get additional funds from the private sector. We went through that quite a bit this morning in Estimates. If you're asking for an update on those individual projects, I'm happy to provide some of that. Do you have any, Craig?

**Mr LIMKIN** - I just want to be clear that these projects that you've listed are actually not part of the stadium. They are transport projects that the government has committed to through various strategies. As Ms McIntyre said, the Keep Hobart Moving strategy has been out for consultation. It lists in there the northern suburbs transit corridor and the rapid bus networks. The Department of State Growth has been undertaking strategic business cases for



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these projects and we continue to do that, as consistent with government policy, to identify the costs and the way forward. Even the northern access road, this Budget contains funding for the department to undertake the preliminary work and the planning work to enable that project to proceed.

**Ms BURNET** - We'll just get onto the bus rapid transit because, from my reading of the Budget, there is very little detail. There was a big announcement in July in relation to how brilliant this was going to be. Where and how much priority are you putting on the bus rapid transit and when will it be delivered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, firstly, I'm very excited about it.

**Ms BURNET** - That's good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We're committed to delivering an effective public transport solution so we can utilise the northern suburbs transit corridor. What I'm excited about is the opportunity of densification along the corridor in terms of mixed housing -

**Ms BURNET** - It's been on the books for a long time.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - which is exciting because it provides that medium-density housing that we spoke about in the population policy, Mrs Beswick, as well. Affordable housing but also close access to a transport corridor as well.

**Ms BURNET** - It has been talked about for a long time with very little action.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Planning for the corridor is being progressed as part of a proposed greater Hobart rapid bus network for which the strategic business case, as we have said, is being developed to examine the benefits, costs and risks.

**Mr WINTER** - Exciting. Another state, another report, another strategy.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am so pleased you are excited. We agree. We are all excited and that is fantastic. Rapid buses have a potential to deliver direct, frequent and high-quality public transport across -

**Mr WINTER** - Minister Abetz was talking about trains the other day.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Greater Hobart and stimulate urban renewal -

**Mr WINTER** - Are you a train guy or a bus guy?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am a 'get it done' guy. Gets things done, I am.

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**Mr WINTER** - Are you serious? 10 years?

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, I am serious and I am going to get it done, absolutely.

**Ms BURNET** - Getting back to the BRT and coming in to the stadium. When is that, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The current strategic business case being developed is considering staged implementation of a rapid bus network which could involve a two-lane busway on the transit corridor, as well as transit lanes and stations on transport corridors in the south and the east of Hobart. If the results of a strategic business case are favourable, a detailed business case will then be required as part of the planning process to request Australian Government funding to design and construct the project.

**Mr WINTER** - I think you have really hit it now.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Planning activities are currently being funded from the broader Hobart Public Transport Infrastructure Planning Fund, where \$38.5 million has been committed by the Australian Government and \$13.5 million from the Tasmanian Government.

**Ms BURNET** - Getting back to my original question, when will the BRT be delivered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are working on -

**Members** interjecting.

**CHAIR** - Order. We are going to move onto Mrs Beswick.

**Mrs BESWICK** - I have had a few councils mention to me that the heavy vehicle income that they get to support their road networks has been the same for the last 20 years. There has been no increase in that despite heavy vehicles obviously getting a lot more income to the government for their registrations and things like that. They would really like some more support to look after their roads with these great big B-doubles and things like that - you know, wrecking them. What can we do there?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. I stand to be corrected but it is the methodology that is the issue. I have engaged with the Local Government Association of Tasmania on this, particularly the mayor of West Tamar and the mayor of Break O'Day when they had those respective roles, if my memory serves me correctly.

It is more than methodology and how it is all calculated that they want some change, to which we are unable to commit at this particular point in time. Minister Abetz may well be the responsible minister for this. Ms McIntyre, do you have any further information?

**Ms McINTYRE** - This is actually funding that is provided through the Commonwealth Government and it is a formula that is developed by the Commonwealth and the Australian

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Government, so it is not state funding. It comes through state Treasury, but it is through the Commonwealth Government.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That is the answer. I was right in terms of the methodology aspect of it and I know the LGAT have been advocating for it. I need to get across it a bit more before we decide if we can replicate on their behalf for some change, but I understand it is a concern to them.

**Mrs BESWICK** - In terms of tenders and development of big infrastructure projects, what is our policy and how well are we implementing policy in our circular economy and using Tasmania's own resources, so things like [inaudible] Australia to build our big bridge?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Big fan of the circular economy and it came up just the other day, I was somewhere about industry or business. It will come to it in a moment, but the more that we can have a circular economy when it comes to closed farming systems, for example, utilising crushed rubber when it comes to road materials, other forms of aggregate, if I can put it that way. We have a Tasmanian industry participation policy, 30 per cent of - the circuit economy question though, could you expand on that please?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We are working on a combination of - so, the government has mandated a 30 per cent component waiting for Tasmanian industry participation plan. There has to be a significant component of Tasmanian industry for use of Tasmanian products in the tender submission and it's 30 per cent of 18 of the total assessment of the tender.

**Mrs BESWICK** - Is it 30 per cent of deals or 30 per cent of the waiting?

**Ms McINTYRE** - It's percentage participation plan is around Tasmanian businesses and employing Tasmanians, but they can actually provide information about use of Tasmanian resources as well. In the civil sector a lot of the input into roads is actually sort of local quarry stones, et cetera. Things like steel are imported, but the majority of materials within a civil road project for example, would be local material.

**Ms BESWICK** - That is well implemented as interest policy?

**CHAIR** - I remind the members' questions are to be directed through the Chair.

**Ms BESWICK** - Sorry.

**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, the freight capacity upgrade program has a low profile, but it's highly important to our economy. Can you please update the committee on the state's investment in this program and what will be delivered for our important road freight sector?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The profile of the freight capacity upgrade program, which is five years and a \$100 million commitment from the Australian and Tasmanian governments to improve state road and bridge network. It's an opportunity to increase freight capacity and ensure continued utilisation of key urban and regional freight routes throughout Tasmania with the strengthening and replacement of bridges and the strengthening and rehabilitation of pavements. The program will contribute to the continued growth of Tasmania due to the

movement of significant freight and support industries that undertake special purpose vehicle and oversize and over mass heavy vehicle movements across our network as well.

The program will maximise certainty for industries with a reliance on freight such as agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, mining and manufacturing industries and minimise long term costs associated with bridge and pavement replacements. Component one of the program, valued at \$40 million, is currently being delivered on roads and bridges statewide, with progress detailed in the following.

Pavement strengthening and rehabilitation project's progress: Construction is complete at 15 sites including seven Bass Highway sites, two on the Lyell Highway and one on each of the Fingerpost Secondary Road as well, the Huon Highway, Midland Highway, Colebrook Road and Esk main Road. Construction is near completion at two sites with one side each on the Murchison Highway and Fingerpost Main Road. The design is being finalised for the remaining four sites which include one site on each of Arthur Highway, Brooker Highway, Lyell Highway and Tasman Highway.

The bridge strengthening and replacement project's construction is complete at Pipers River Bridge. Tenders have been awarded for nine bridges in which carbon fibre is proposed to be installed. Coal Creek Bridge replacement is currently in tender phase. Construction is expected to commence in late 2024, this year. Advertising of tenders is planned for late 2024 for the Ring River bridge, the Wivenhoe rail underpass, Charles Street bridge and Coal Creek bridge, and design is also underway for Sassafras Creek bridge as well.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, in August the former minister for Infrastructure, Michael Ferguson, said it would take four to six weeks to scope the berth 1 project at Devonport Port and determine the estimated cost. It's now been six weeks. Have you received advice about how much it will cost? If so, what does that advice say?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Four to six weeks. So, the six weeks is up. As I've said this morning, I'm still expecting advice to be in in a few weeks' time, in mid to late October. I haven't got any updated advice for you today, but I know Mr Moloney and Mr Gemell are working hard in this area. I want it to be thorough, I want to get it right, and I'll be communicating very clearly with the Tasmanian public on this.

**Ms DOW** - I thought you took over because it's urgent, though.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have to get this right, Ms Dow.

**Ms DOW** - What date did you say that you'd be able to provide advice?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mid to late October, I'm expecting. Probably 21 October and onwards, I would expect that. You can hold me to account when it comes to that, if you'd like.

**Ms DOW** - Last Thursday, you said in parliament that you would be meeting with Ben Moloney and Peter Gemell in the not-to distant future. Has that meeting taken place?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I haven't met them yet.

**Ms DOW** - Last month you told the House that TT-Line would be paying for berth 1 upgrades. The acting chair of TT-Line then told the Public Accounts Committee that it hadn't been determined who would pay. You then told the House that taxpayers would pay. Is your most recent answer correct, or will the money from your patch-up job at berth 1 have to come from the state Budget?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we'll make those decisions when we have all the information before us to finalise that decision.

**Ms BURNET** - Premier, my questions are around Mac wharf 6 and the access road linking that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So berth 6?

**Ms BURNET** - Yes, berth 6. That's right. It seems like there is not a great deal of detail about the Macquarie Wharf upgrades, but given the proposed major works in the vicinity and competing projects, how will you prioritise this upgrade given the Antarctic gateway status is very important to Hobart and the state, and it's worth \$183 million across the whole spectrum of the economy?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, it's huge. I agree with you. This morning you would have been engaged with other committees, but we did speak briefly about berth 6 and my engagement with minister Plibersek on this issue. We had a very constructive meeting last week, which builds on the constructive meeting we had a few months ago. In fact, we had a conversation again earlier this year as well, if my memory serves me correctly. We've engaged three times this year, two face-to-face, around Macquarie berth 6. We're not too far away from an agreement. Our state and federal officials have been working very hard on this in recent times. I look forward to finalising that, getting agreement from the federal minister. I can report that we're both very pleased with the progress when we met the other day - when I say face-to-face, it was video. I was hoping she could see me, but it was video.

**Ms BURNET** - Have the detailed plans been produced in relation to these works?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mr Limkin has been involved in these discussions.

**Mr LIMKIN** - Thank you, Premier. The Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), through the Commonwealth department, provided a user brief earlier this year. Based off the user brief, TasPorts has been working through what the designs need to be to enable to fulfil the requirements of AAD.

The costings that we are negotiating with the Commonwealth on are based off the preliminary design and that user brief, and I do want to say it's a very preliminary design. What we want to do is spend the time to work through with AAD to make sure it is fit for purpose for their new vessel. And, so, we continue with TasPorts to have those conversations. As the Premier said, we are collectively, the department and also TasPorts, committed to finalising a deal so that we can present it to government as quickly as possible with our federal colleagues so that the AAD and Hobart will continue to be the gateway to enter Antarctica.

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**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you, Chair. Well, first of all, Premier, talking about the previous question when it comes down to the Bridgewater bridge and, as a northerner driving down past it, I just get excited all the time when I see the advancement that's taken place every time you come past it. So, from a northerner point of view, it's fantastic to see that one day our -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. The benefits are being spread far and wide. I've got a company on the north-west coast that benefits from it.

**Mr SHELTON** - Yes. One day our trip into Hobart will be that little bit quicker, but in that question I did also mention the Midlands Highway and, Premier, in 2015, the former Hodgman government embarked upon the single largest upgrade of the Midland Highway in the history of our key north-south link. Can you please update the committee on progress towards the completion of the Midlands Highway 10-year action plan and what are the safety benefits of the upgrades?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton. I know you travel far and wide in the electorate of Lyons, including on the Midland Highway as well, and it was back in May 2015 when both the Tasmanian government and Australian government launched the Midland Highway 10-year action plan.

This is a \$605 million commitment over the 10 years - huge investment for the Midland Highway, the single biggest, I expect. With all but 10 kilometres completed, it is a much safer and more efficient highway for all users. Since works began, 24 projects have now been completed, with 40 kilometres of projects completed over the last construction season, and there are currently no significant road works projects underway.

Before the 10-year action plan started in 2014, there had been 16 years, in fact, just 13 per cent - 16 years of the previous government just 13 per cent of the Midland Highway was rated at AusRAP 3 stars. By the time the highway is completed early next year, the entire highway will achieve that 3-star standard. And, as I say, all about 10 kilometres of the 153 kilometres of the Midland Highway work is complete.

We are on the final stretch and are expecting all projects to be wrapped up in 2025. I do want to have a shout-out to all the people that have been working on the highway. I know it's been a cause of frustration for a number of commuters, given the different speed zones which are there for safety and those matters, but we respect the public's patience while these important upgrades are completed.

Some sections of the Midland Highway have been duplicated to four lanes, that's two in each direction where it is warranted, higher traffic volume areas, typically near Hobart and Launceston.

Once completed, the highway from Pontville roundabout to Breadalbane will be about 35 per cent two-lane and 50 per cent three-lane and 15 per cent four-lane sections. The overtaking lanes are strategically located to provide safe overtaking opportunities in both directions of travel. Importantly, there's been a significant increase in safe overtaking opportunities along the Midland Highway with a flexible safety barrier preventing head-on collisions.

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The final project, which is north of Campbell Town, Stage 2 between Campbell Town and Conara, so it's a 10-kilometre piece of road there, is programmed to be awarded in late 2024, this year, pending regulatory approvals including Australian government's environmental approvals and the final section works will include road widening, junction improvements, extending steel shoulders, additional overtaking lanes and installing a flexible safety barrier as well.

A lot of work has been done. I commend the Australian government as well, of all colours over that time, which I appreciate and, most importantly, the people and the contractors that have worked on it.

**Mr SHELTON** - I have had a closer look than most to the highway, so fantastic job.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thought you would, Mr Shelton, given you travel extensively. Of course, you have walked it, haven't you?

**Mr SHELTON** - Yes.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, I find it really concerning that there's no sense of urgency around you making a decision on berth 1, given that economic consequences that each year that those ships are delayed to our economy, particularly in the north-west, in your electorate, and given that you gave a specific time frame to the public that you would make a decision on this. Is it that you have avoided making decisions because you did want to be scrutinised at Estimates about that decision that you make? Or you have you been too preoccupied thinking about berthing the new vessel in Singapore?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The answer to all that is no, that big preamble to the question. We are taking very considered advice on all these matters. We are committed to delivering the key port infrastructure upgrades to the Port of Devonport to support the arrival of *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels as quickly, safely and as efficiently as possible. Tasports has completed initial works at the location of Terminal 3. That is to become a Devonport berth for the new vessels.

**Ms DOW** - We are talking about berth 1, Premier.

**CHAIR** - Order

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - TT-Line received possession of the main site in July and is working to deliver the new Terminal 3 as soon as possible. I understand the angst in the community, I spoke to the Devonport mayor just yesterday when we were at the Spreyton Cricket Club season launch together and I understand the mayor's desire to get this resolved and decisions made as soon as possible.

Absolutely. I agree with you, it is critically important, but what is also important is that we make the proper decision with the best information possible, accepting a few weeks after the six-week time frame. But we have got to get it right, Ms Dow, and I want to have the experts provide me with the advice as to the best way forward, and I could not be clearer about that.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, can you explain the process to confirm the new *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels will be safely able to operate in the Mersey? The process that you have been through to ensure that they will safely be able to do that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Are you referring to the eventuality of berth 3 or are you referring to the berth 1?

**Ms DOW** - Berth 1 in the first instance.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My advice is that these decisions will be made independently of me, certainly, because the harbour master has a lot of -

**Mr WINTER** - That is the question. Can you explain the process on how this works?

**Ms DOW** - What does the harbour master do?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will just explain it, the harbour master is critical in all these matters, providing that objective advice.

**Ms DOW** - Have you had any issues raised with you about the ability for the new *Spirits* to operate in the Mersey?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have engaged with stakeholders, yes, where the questions have been raised with me.

**Ms DOW** - By the harbour master? Marine pilots?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have spoken about this on radio and I've engaged with Mr Kelly to hear his views, as well, as part of my engagement, and I would expect that Mr Gemell and Mr Moloney will also be engaging as well with all stakeholders. Certainly, that is my expectation.

**Ms DOW** - Is it your understanding that tugs -

**Ms BURNET** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, just to go back to the Tasman Bridge, and I understand the sensitivities around this, but on table 6.4 in the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution, page 141 of budget paper 1, the Tasman Bridge funding and the Southern Outlet are put together. There's only \$2 million budgeted from the federal government for this financial year and \$6.7 million from the state. Could you tell the committee how much will be spent on the Tasman Bridge at this point, given your explanation previously?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The total project is \$130 million, which we're sharing \$65 million to \$65 million state and federal. That's the answer to the totality of the Tasman Bridge.

**Ms BURNET** - Given those changes that you hinted at or spoke of -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of the rescoping exercise, my understanding is that what I've spoken about today in terms of the safety barrier and the widening, albeit the cantilever of 3.5 metres is too wide for wind and other structural matters, the rescoping, Ms McIntyre, is that \$130?

**Ms McINTYRE** - The \$130 million is the total budget for the Tasman Bridge pathways and strengthening. The scope needs to be more developed before we can provide detail about



what the actual budget or what the cost will be of the rescope work. There will still be potentially some pathway widening. There will be bridge strengthening. Both the internal and external barriers will come at a really high cost and there will be connection improvements to the pathways at either end.

**Ms BURNET** - That's on either end. I have major concerns in relation to the fact that you can't, effectively, widen that very narrow area to ride or walk, particularly if you have other pedestrians or riders coming towards you. I just can't understand why this cannot be widened effectively for what was a great community concern when there was consultation?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I respect the reason for your question. All the analysis, including wind analysis, if I can call it that, with the wider cantilever of 3.5 metres, the wind and the fact that the bridge was built in 1965, the structural integrity of the bridge isn't at a capacity to take the wider cantilever. That is why we have had to retreat on the width but remain committed to the human safety changes. I'm not an engineer. Denise?

**Ms McINTYRE** - I'd be happy to add a little bit to that. It's not impossible, but it would be at very high cost. There would be work required to the piles to strengthen the piles and the piers to enable further cantilever of the existing cantilever construction.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have the project manager, Robyn Hawkins here. Robyn, thanks very much for joining us at the table. Apologies for my very simplistic explanation to answer the question by Ms Burnet. If you got anything further to add, please.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, you are correct. It is a combination of the wind load that would be generated from the full upgrade which we were proposing with the 3.5 metre paths on each side, and also the weight of those upgrades, the load that effectively puts on the bridge, and the need for strengthening of the structure. As Denise McIntyre mentioned, the cost of that is significantly more than the project budget. As part of the investigation work that we've undertaken, as the Premier mentioned, the bridge was opened in 1965 and was reconstructed or open again in 1977. At that time, it was widened from four to five lanes. Basically, in an extreme weather event, in an upgraded situation with three and a half metre paths on each side with full safety screens, the foundations of the bridge would be over capacity. That is the reason that the project has effectively been rescope to focus on our primary objective, which is to improve safety on the pathways and provide higher safety screens on the water side and the road side.

**CHAIR** - I think we might have a short break for five minutes

**The Committee suspended from 4.01 p.m. to 4.06 p.m.**

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I want to add to an answer. Mrs Beswick asked a question around the local government heavy vehicle matters. I talked about methodology and the like. Ms McIntyre would like to add to an answer if she can.

**Ms McINTYRE** - When I answered the question, I was talking about the Commonwealth contribution, which is a significant amount of funding that's distributed across local government. The state is responsible for \$1.5 million per year distribution to local governments. It has used the same formula since 1996-97. I understand that's what councils are concerned about.

**Mrs BESWICK** - Premier, you've just told us that it's going to be another month before we have an answer to how we're going to upgrade the berth in Devonport. Obviously, we're not going to have an upgrade done by the time the first *Spirit* is ready. What is the plan for where we are going to put that? What are the A, B, and C plans going on there?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - First, we'll consult with the Tourism ministry. I went through some of this today. We will ensure that we respond to demand. The two existing ships will keep operating. We will explore the options of double sailings, as we've always done. That will also ensure that we have further time to ensure that we've got the required statewide infrastructure to better develop for the event of the increase in capacity, most notably a 40 per cent increase in passengers.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Premier, I understand you're back into the infrastructure seat only recently. I might direct this to the department. In terms of the south-east corridor and the south-east traffic solution, one of the bits in the middle which essentially concludes that piece of work is still delayed significantly. Could you confirm that it is now going back to the drawing board in terms of a new design after three or four years of work with the local community?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, we can work through that.

**Ms McINTYRE** - Are we talking about the section between the airport interchange and the first causeway?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Yes.

**Ms McINTYRE** - There has been some minor amendment to the design around the junction of Pittwater Road, to minimise environmental impact. So, it's not back to the drawing board; it's a minor amendment to the design.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - The design that's been out there in the public domain has significantly - well, in the property as you're heading towards Sorell on the right-hand side, it would significantly impact that property. When you say a minor amendment, what does that mean?

**Ms McINTYRE** - There's a minor amendment to move the junction about 10 metres, so around the Pittwater Road junction, to move that 10 metres further into the golf course.

**Ms DOW** - When Michael Ferguson resigned, you said you were personally taking control of the new *Spirits* project. Can you name me one thing that you've done differently to him?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we're engaging in consultation. We always need to engage with the community and tourism sector. Of course, I wear the hat of Tourism minister as well. We spoke this morning about the importance of communication, the Premier's Visitor Advisory Council. We're meeting the tourism stakeholders on 1 November again. I've taken an active interest in this project, including intervening and putting Mr Moloney and Mr Gemell at the forefront of the project in providing me with advice. We'll be making key decisions in this area when we get the information presented to us.

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**Ms DOW** - Is there a design for berth 3 at Devonport?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well -

**Ms DOW** - It's a pretty simple question. Yes, or no?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We need to get the information to see -

**Ms DOW** - Berth 3.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yeah. We need to get the information and move forward. I'm advised that there is a design, but we need to make key decisions around these matters and look forward to the -

**Ms DOW** - Something that's so important and so urgent -

**CHAIR** - Order, Ms Dow.

**Ms DOW** - You seem to be wasting a lot of time. Will you stake your credibility as Premier on berth 3 being delivered, as you have committed, by January 26?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, that's a strategic question, isn't it, but I stake my credibility on everything that I do. I don't get everything right. I give it a red-hot go and we will work enormously hard to deliver these ships and their associated infrastructure as soon as possible. We have intervened, we're taking control of this project and we'll get the job done.

**Mr SHELTON** - My question is along similar lines to Mr O'Byrne's, and you partly answered that. The South East Traffic Solution is an ambitious initiative of the Liberal government to make the highway between Sorell and Hobart a consistent four-lane link. It was devised for the growing community of Sorell and the southern beaches and while it is partly delivered, there are some key elements remaining, namely, the duplication of the two causeways and the expansion of the Tasman Highway between the Hobart Airport interchange and the Midway Point Causeway to four lanes. Can you update the committee on the progress of these projects, please?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for your question. We have the Midway Point interchange and we're looking at the final-stage projects, the duplication of the Tasman Highway to four lanes past the Tasmanian Golf Club and then duplicating both causeways. That will make a big difference in terms of creating that consistent four-lane link between Sorell and Hobart.

To the previous question, it's frustrating to see some of these projects delayed due to requirements under federal environmental laws. Nearly \$350 million of Tasmanian and Australian government investment is locked against these projects, so it's significant. That's an unprecedented investment for the communities of Sorell, the southern beaches. You'll be very familiar with these areas, member for Lyons, Tasman Peninsula and lower east coast.

The next project in the suite of works will be the duplication of the highway from the airport to the Midway Point causeway, and then duplicating both causeways including a second bridge on the Midway Point Causeway as well. We look forward to the fruition of these projects, some way to go, in terms of the south-east projects, some significant investment and

commitment. We look forward to those matters of which you have asked the question and I have answered it. Thank you for your interest.

**Ms BURNET** - Premier, the infrastructure spend, the budget has been underspent nine out of the ten past years and significantly, we were talking about \$502 million in 2021 and \$368 million in 2023.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's the underspend you speak of?

**Ms BURNET** - Yes, that's the underspend. I want to know, you say that you are going to deliver these projects and yet they are not delivered. Can you just talk us through that, please?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and I did refer to it before because we have significant investment moving forward, but as I say, getting the funding out the door and the money out the door and from allocation of budget to start completion of projects is important. We have done, in my humble opinion, really well in terms of the amount of funds we have been getting out the door in comparison to previous years et cetera and will always work hard to ensure that we get to as close as the budget as possible in terms of what we are committed to and what we get actually invested in. Anything further on that Ms McIntyre?

**Ms McINTYRE** - I think the other point too is that we are talking about investment in infrastructure that is being planned, developed and constructed over multiple years and so cash flows are adjusted as projects are developed and delivered. Cash flows are also adjusted a couple of times through the budget cycle in an annual year.

**Ms BURNET** - In relation to Ms Dow's question about the berth. I understand that the Treasurer is still the shareholder minister for TT-Line. He has stepped aside from the infrastructure portfolio. Shouldn't he be stripped of his shareholder ministry position?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, the Treasurer is doing a very good job of being Treasurer. We have a difficult budget in challenging times. We spoke this morning about this in terms of Michael's role as Treasurer and Infrastructure minister. In Michael's time as Infrastructure minister, we saw great progress on the Bridgewater bridge as an example of that, but the Treasurer is the shareholder minister when it comes to GBE's. We have a lot of confidence in the Treasurer to do a very good job, and he is, particularly putting together a budget in quite difficult times that has the infrastructure spend moving forward - but also, that sensible pathway to surplus. It is not a slash and burn budget, but a budget that keeps the momentum going in the economy, keeps employing Tasmanians - a very measured and responsible way forward when it comes to managing our debt and a sensible pathway to surplus.

**Ms BURNET** - I think we would have to disagree on that position.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Thank you, Chair. Back to my question on the Tasman Highway upgrade. That South East Corridor plan was first announced in 2018. Your predecessor announced that in 2020 that the project would commence. It was then due to be completed in 2022. It was then announced that it would be completed in 2023 and then late last year, your predecessor, minister Ferguson said it would be completed this year. In answer to my question, earlier this year, he acknowledged that due to a change in design that they would need to trigger a new *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) referral, which

effectively meant that you're back at square one. It's a bit more than a minor amendment, isn't it, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As Ms McIntyre said, it's not completely back at square one. I wouldn't necessarily characterise it as that, notwithstanding the frustrations I've mentioned in my answers as well in terms of federal environmental laws. There are many areas that the EPBC Act touches and challenging it is when it comes to progress within our state; renewable energy jobs in the West Coast, et cetera. Can you provide further information to Mr O'Byrne on that?

**Ms McINTYRE** - Just to reiterate that we've gone through a fairly exhaustive process in terms of endeavouring to mitigate the environmental impact of this project and we have undertaken an amendment to the design. It's not back to square one at all. It is an amendment to a short section of the design.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Isn't it triggering a new referral under the EPBC Act?

**Ms McINTYRE** - Sorry, I missed the question.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Isn't that triggering essentially a new process under the EPBC Act?

**Ms McINTYRE** - No, it's not triggering a new process. We made, probably two years ago initially, a submission under the EPBC Act. What we've done is we've modified that submission. The initial submission has been modified with some alternate mitigation measures.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - When do you start work?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We're aiming to start work at the end of next year.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - The end of 2025?

**Ms McINTYRE** - When we get our approval. The EPBC approval processes can be quite lengthy. We are aiming to go out to tender-

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Yep, if you'd done the job properly in the first place -

**Mr SHELTON** - The Mornington roundabout is one of the busiest intersections in the state, but it has also been criticised as being confusing for motorists. Thanks to a \$100 million joint commitment by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, this roundabout is now earmarked for a major upgrade. Can you please provide the committee with an update on this infrastructure project?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are aware of the shortcomings in relation to the Mornington roundabout and we're acting to also address those. There's no doubt that the road system in the vicinity of the roundabout is of concern to the travelling public, which is demonstrated by the feedback as part of our planning to upgrade the interchange. During the recent election, we committed \$20 million towards the Mornington roundabout, including the provision of access to the eastbound lanes of the Tasman Highway from Rosny. I know the former minister worked cooperatively with the federal member for Franklin, Joy Collins and indeed senator Carol Brown on this project scope since the Australian Government committed some \$30 million to the Mornington roundabout as part of their election campaign in 2022.

It should be noted that no detail was provided by the Albanese Government at the time on the nature of this project commitment or its expectations and since the election the government has reiterated that our \$20 million commitment would assume a federal commitment of around \$80 million under the well-established proportional 80:20 Commonwealth-State Funding model that is in place for projects such as the Bridgewater bridge and the Midland Highway. This was accepted by the federal minister, I am advised, with a total project budget of \$100 million now committed. I am confident that a greatly improved interchange can be achieved.

The volume of the traffic using the South Arm Highway through the Mornington roundabout has increased by some 40% over the past 10 years. The department conducted a planning study for the Mornington roundabout to recommend future upgrades to improve safety and traffic flow under future growth scenarios and community feedback was also gathered. Our audit acknowledged that the roundabout being located close to the Tasman Highway interchange increases the complexity for users, and the traffic environment at the site is highly complex. You appreciate the substantial implications for the surrounding road network including the Tasman Highway. I want to be clear, though, any remodelling of the interchange for full traffic signalization, let alone great separation, would likely require a large number of property acquisitions involving businesses and residential homes, including public housing. Minimising the disruption of future construction works will also present a major challenge given the highly constrained area around the roundabout and nearby interchange. Ancillary network improvements are being considered as a new access to the Tasman Highway from Rosny at Gordons Hill Rd, which would relieve pressure on Cambridge Road and the South Arm Highway, particularly at peak traffic periods. But you know, I appreciate the reasons for your questions.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, will you commit to delivering berth 3 by January 2026? It's a very simple question that you've failed to answer. I'm concerned now that you're walking away from that time frame.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Are you? Well.

**Ms DOW** - Yes, I am, very concerned.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've been concerned for some time about this. I am taking advice. I will be very clear about the timeline.

**Ms DOW** - Yes, but you're not.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - January 2026 is the contracted date for the completion of berth 3 by the bill appointed by TT-Line. The management of delay risks are the responsibility of the builder, but I will want to ensure that we get Berth 3 completed as soon as possible.

**Ms DOW** - Not by January 2026?

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will inform the Tasmanian people very clearly.

**Ms DOW** - You already have, of January 2026.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, well, in terms of the way forward. So, there you go.

**Ms DOW** - I tell you what, it does nothing to instil confidence, Premier. Right to information documents reveal the price offered by the joint venture let by Hazell Bros was \$374 million before the contract was torn up. Can you confirm Hazell's cancelled project ended up being a million dollars cheaper than the one you eventually entered into with a mainland contractor? Further, can you confirm the Hazell Bros' job was scheduled to be completed in August 2023, five months earlier than the best-case scenario you now have with the new contractor in January 2026?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm happy to take that on notice. It's a matter for TT-Line and GBE.

**Ms DOW** - I thought you were in control of this project.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I want to get things right, alright? I want to provide the right information to the Tasmanian people. Both on the information that I get from Peter Gemell and Ben Moloney, the information about moving forward, I want to get it right. Tasmanians would expect me to get it right -

**Ms DOW** - They do, absolutely.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - And intervene in this project. I'm happy to provide the information for you, if that's possible.

**Ms DOW** - Yes, well, put that on notice. It appears now that you're walking away from January 2026 -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, it doesn't appear that way

**Ms DOW** - Which I'm incredibly concerned about. If you don't make a decision on berth 1 until the middle of October, how on earth are you going to be able to deliver the interim solution by summer for the new vessel? Can you just be upfront for once and be honest about this? Please tell Tasmanians are you're going to shelve the berth 1 interim solution?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm seeking advice on these matters. You would expect me -

**Ms DOW** - It's a fair point, though, Premier, because time is lapsing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I know it is very, very important.

**Ms DOW** - It's incredibly important.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's why I intervened as Premier.

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**Ms DOW** - Yes, but we're not further advanced, Premier.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mr Moloney and Mr Gemell said it themselves in this project. I will have the information, we will move forward, we will move forward with confidence, people will know where they stand, and we'll get this project done.

**Ms BURNET** - I'd like to get back on to the Southern Outlet, so to speak. In 6.4 in the Budget paper number one, we have the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution. That amounts to \$217.8 million altogether, as an overall project. Could you explain how much has been spent so far on the Southern Outlet transit lane, including on reports and compulsory land acquisition?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If I can get that information for you, bear with me just a moment, Ms Burnet. We'll get the breakdown for you just to make sure we're right.

**Ms BURNET** - Do you want me to ask another question while you're -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes. You can ask another question.

**Ms BURNET** - Okay. I appreciate you organising a briefing for me, Premier, which was not forthcoming with the former Infrastructure minister. So, I thank you for that.

Just in regard to current works, road widening, the couplet upgrade and the Macquarie Street lane changes, what safety upgrades are occurring and is this a black spot with high crash history at that intersection, the Macquarie Street intersection with Huon Road?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If we're going to, just to get that information for you. In relation to safety aspects, is that the question you asked?

**Ms BURNET** - Yes, the safeness of that intersection because I'm thinking it's a dangerous intersection. How is this going to be improved?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Now, while we're getting that information, I do have information in terms of the potholes. We have the data from your earlier question and, of the 3488 potholes, 2842 have been filled. The question on notice data, potholes on specified state roads since 26 August 2024, as at today: the Murchison Highway, 279 potholes identified, 179 potholes completed; Illawarra Road, 149 total identified and 149 completed; Bass Highway, 844 identified, 752 completed; Midland Highway, 439 identified, 434 completed; Southern Outlet, 17 identified, 16 completed; Channel Highway, 84 identified and 64 completed.

**Mr WINTER** - Sorry, was that the Southern Outlet in the north or the south?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. I make the assumption it's the northern Southern Outlet, if that makes any sense to you, in Launceston, but I'll clarify that for you.

Huon Highway, 36 identified, 31 completed; Tasman Highway, 108 identified and 103 complete;. I think I mentioned the Channel Highway, 84 identified and 64 completed.



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I think the importance of the blitz cannot be understated, recognising the safety aspects and the frustration. An enormous amount of work has been done, there has been increased funding into maintenance and I'm looking forward to getting greater information through briefings and consultation around road improvements.

Construction on Davey Street between Murray Street and the Southern Outlet to repair the pavement and facilitate the bus improvements work has been completed. Constructing a new northbound transit lane on the Southern Outlet requires changes to Macquarie Street to accommodate four lanes of traffic exiting the Southern Outlet. This project also included an extended peak-period clearway on Macquarie Street to improve traffic flow and to improve greater capacity for the left-hand turn onto Molle Street. The new peak-period clearway on Macquarie Street was implemented in April this year. The next stage of construction involved upgrades to the existing bus shelter and construction of a cycleway on Davey Street. This work was completed in August 2024. The second stage will see construction of the transit lane connector that extends the Southern Outlet with an additional traffic lane between Davey Street and Macquarie Street. The contract for construction of the transit lane connector was awarded and construction commenced on 12 August 2024. That is the advice I have before me.

**Ms BURNET** - It doesn't answer the question, which was about the associated costs, to date, on reports and compulsory land acquisitions.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, that was the first part of the question. I've just answered the second part of the question.

**Ms BURNET** - It's around black spots and crash history

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We're getting that information for you. We're happy to take it on notice to ensure that we get the answer to you whether it's today, or when we finish we'll take it on notice, if that's okay?

**Ms BURNET** - Thank you.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Has the Tasmanian Golf Club received any inconvenience payment regarding the Tasman Highway road upgrades between the Hobart Airport interchange and the Midway Point causeway over the last few years?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - An inconvenience payment?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Has the government paid them anything?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Denise?

**Ms McINTYRE** - Compensation?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Well, not sure what they've been compensated for yet.

**Ms McINTYRE** - There is a claim in play. Both the department, the Valuer-General and the Office of Crown Solicitor have been working through what that might mean. We've had comprehensive work undertaken by the golf course's professional golf team and so we're working through what the compensation needs to be.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - That's not my question. I understand that if there's land that they access, you will need to go through that process. But, between the moment where you triggered a new design which would impact physically on the golf course, has there been a payment from the Tasmanian government to the golf course for inconvenience, or however you describe it?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We will work through a process with the Tasmanian golf course regarding -.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - That's not the question I'm asking. I understand you worked through a process for compensation on acquiring land for the new design. What I'm asking is what has happened up until this point? Have there been any payments to the Tasmanian Golf Club?

**Ms McINTYRE** - No, we are still working through what that means with the golf club.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - So, you've made no payments at all?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We have made payments to their consultants for some of their consultant work, yes, but we do not pay for inconvenience.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - So, there's been no payments from the state government to the Tasmanian Golf Club?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We are working through what that means. We are negotiating with the golf club.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Have there been payments made to the Tasmanian Golf Club?

**Ms McINTYRE** - Again, we probably paid for consultants.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Okay. Could you outline what you've paid?

**Ms McINTYRE** - We'll have to take that on notice.

**Mr SHELTON** - The Sideling section of the Tasman Highway near Scottsdale is well known as a winding route between Launceston and the north-east region. Can you inform the committee of the progress in upgrading the section of road, which is of great interest to the communities in that region?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, it is. The Sideling between Launceston and Scottsdale is well known for its challenging bends and spectacular topography to boot, I'd have to say. The Dorset Council has long regarded the Sideling as a barrier to economic prosperity in the north-east region. The Australian and Tasmanian governments have committed a total of \$120 million for the upgrading of the Tasman Highway from just south of St Patricks River Bridge across the Sideling to Scottsdale. The funding commitment is for upgrading this section of the Tasman Highway to B-double standard, mostly involving straightening of the existing alignment, the addition of passing lanes and widening of the road. The first stage of works was contracted to construction company Fulton Hogan, which commenced in late July 2022. The first stage works were completed in April 2024. Design work is continuing for two sections of the siding from Whish-Wilson Road to Minstone Road and from the Sideling Lookout to Saint Patrick's

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Bridge. The upgrade will make the highway suitable for B double heavy vehicles, including widening of the road ceiling shoulders and straightening of the existing alignment.

To maximise the benefits of delivering this project, a staged approach has been agreed to Stage 1, the Minstone Road to Scottsdale intersection to the Sideling Lookout, is complete. Stage 2, Sideling Lookout to Saint Patricks Bridge by the sidling or an alternative Corkerys Road option. A commitment of \$50 million is allocated to Stage 1 works and \$70 million to Stage 2. That is a total of \$120 million.

The alignment for the Stage 2 section of works has not yet been selected and will be confirmed during the design phase. Consultants have commenced consideration of the Corkerys Road option as opposed to upgrades to the existing Tasman Highway with further concept design work to be progressed during 2024.

Some of the findings today are due to the vertical grades on Corkerys Road alignment between 15 and 20 per cent of the existing Corkerys Road alignment is not suitable for heavy vehicle traffic. There are also challenges on the Corkage Road alignment with horizontal geometry in the form of 90-degree bends. Further work has been undertaken to look at deviations of Corkerys Road to improve the vertical grade. The estimates for all upgrade options exceed the available remaining funding for Stage 1 and 2 combined and as such, they're not considered viable with existing available funding.

Work is continuing to refine options and upgrade opportunities to achieve the most cost-effective benefits for the community and all road users. Community update and consultation on the next stages of proposed improvements to the sideling is expected to commence late this year and I look forward to the completion of these design options and progress on the next stages of this important link to the fantastic north east of Tasmania. Thank you for the question.

**Ms DOW** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, your government promised local refuelling for the new *Spirits* back at the 2021 election. Your deputy said that it would support local jobs. Last month you told the Parliament, When it comes to LNG, to be very clear, our expectation is that appropriate fuelling arrangements will be in place to support the new vessels when they commence into service'. All that's ever been needed to happen for this project to go ahead is for a space to be allocated at the port for the infrastructure, Premier, and the private sector will take care of the rest. So, Premier, why hasn't it happened? And when will the first supply of LNG be used and will it be trucked in?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am advised that TT Line are in the middle of current EOI processes for current and future fuels, that is what I am advised. As members will be aware, the sector is moving rapidly. As part of the EOI process, TT- Line is considering a range of issues including security of supply, commercial considerations and the possibility for earlier compliance with emissions reductions. To be very clear, our expectation is that the appropriate fuelling arrangements will be in place to support the new vessels when they commence in service.

**Ms DOW** - When will that be Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, I have just said that, our expectation is the appropriate fuelling arrangements will be in place to support the new vessels when they commence in service.

**Ms DOW** - So, you still don't know when that is.

**Mr WINTER** - Isn't it true that it will take 18 months from the commencement of this project to actually delivering it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am advised that the first supply of LNG to be used from Tasmania will be delivered to the ships via road tanker and the required facility and method of transfers is well progressed. I understand this method is already utilised by SeaRoad at Devonport port and TT-Line continues to work with the Tasmanian Gas Pipeline to ensure continued LNG supply while the EOI process is underway.

**Ms BURNET** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, just in relation to the Southern Outlet, this is a significant piece of infrastructure, it is going to take years to extend that to Kingston but if it does, and there has been considerable concern by the community in relation to the validity of the project and whether it's the best project for the solution that we need on transport. So, was the idea of increasing bus patronage and reliability before building an expensive road upgrade considered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Bus patronage?

**Ms BURNET** - Yes, bus patronage, bus services before actually building the road.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So, we've committed a \$35 million to provide an additional transit lane on the Southern Outlet along with \$16 million for bus priority measures at Macquarie and Davey streets, and we've gone through some of those matters. The Tasmanian Government committed a further \$7.2 million for these projects under the targeting congestion package, and the Southern Outlet transit lane will operate between Olinda Grove and Macquarie Street as a T3 transit lane.

Can I also say, though, when it comes to supporting the increase of public transport, it's important to recognise that the cutting of the public transport fares in half, whether it be ferry or bus or support a modal shift, or at least encourage it, and the transit lane, as a T3 transit lane, it can be used by private vehicles carrying three or more people, buses, taxis, motorbikes and emergency service vehicles that will support a greater uptake of public transport and carpooling with improved travel times and reliability for transit lane users and the like.

But we do need to - when we announced our half-price bus fares, it was of course a cost-of-living measure - but also important to just encourage that use of public transport as well, which is important.

**Ms BURNET** - I suppose my question, Premier, was has a feasibility study or cost benefit analysis been carried out for this project. I mean, did you consider other measures before going to this most expensive option?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, I can't recall back to the decision-making process at the time. Denise may well have been here. I'm sure we canvassed all matters.

**Ms BURNET** - I know the feeling.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not a reflection on your tenure, but yes,

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**Ms McINTYRE** - I don't think a business case as such has been done, but the Southern Outlet is part of the Huon Highway, which serves the south of the state and it's the only transport route that serves - there is the Channel Highway, but it is the significant route.

So, there really is no alternative but to upgrade the Southern Outlet and the intention has been to have an end-to-end solution effectively from the south to the city and through the city and to maximise and motivate people to use public transport.

**Ms BURNET** - You can do that before you actually build a road.

**Ms McINTYRE** - As part of the process and as part of the development of the work that has been undertaken on the Southern Outlet, we also increased bus services to Blackmans Bay, Kingston and the Huon by about 67 services -

**Ms BURNET** - I'll bring that up with the Transport minister. But my second question is: you talked about circular economy and how important it is, and there's a group called the Circular Economy Huon, which you're probably familiar with, and they put in a submission in 2022 just in relation to the Southern Outlet Transit Plan, they thought it was a bad idea for various reasons and theirs is a very simple solution.

So, again, why wasn't the cheaper alternative - rather than building roads - actually having better public transport, reliable public transport, considered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Look, thank you for the question and I'm not familiar exactly with Circular Economy Huon. I may well have missed some of their correspondence at some point in time. So don't accuse me of misleading but it doesn't spring to mind, a Circular Economy Huon, but Ms McIntyre has detailed a number of those matters in terms of the need for road infrastructure and accepting, we have Park and Ride, Kingborough Park and Ride as well.

**Mr WINTER** - A new bus stop that no one can use.

**Ms DOW** - Yeah, that's a good one, isn't it? It's unfortunate.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The first state-owned Park and Ride facilities opened at Huntingfield, at Firthside, in 2022.

**Ms BURNET** - I went to visit it the other day.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Did you?

**Ms BURNET** - I've been to Firthside, as well, yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - And use of the two Park and Rides have been steadily rising as awareness builds, with approximately 50 per cent of car parks used at Huntingfield each weekday and 85 per cent of spaces in regular use at Firthside. The department will continue to undertake monitoring at different times of patronage and parking capacity. To support the Park and Ride facility, 65 express bus services were added each weekday. Is that where the 67 came from, Denise?

**Ms McINTYRE** - There were a couple further south as well.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much. You're right across it. To improve travel times and provide mode choice for commuters, a small number of express services have been impacted by Metro's decision to suspend 177 trips each weekday since August 2023, but the express bus services will utilise the Southern Outlet transit lane once completed and Macquarie and Davey Street bus improvements infrastructure to improve public transport access from the southern suburbs into Tasmania. I do appreciate the question, Ms Burnet, and don't take this the wrong way, but there seems to be a propensity from the Greens to not like roads much.

**Ms BURNET** - Why would I not take that the wrong way, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Was that right? You don't like roads?

**Ms BURNET** - I like -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm not being smug, I'm just saying -

**Ms BURNET** - I like good solutions and I think there's an appalling approach to - it's a sledgehammer to a nut basically.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, I want to support more public transport services.

**Ms BURNET** - So do I.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I believe our half-price bus fares support that modal shift and I know we'll need to do more. The success and the key to public transport success is frequency and reliability.

**Ms BURNET** - Predictability as well, and being on time.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yeah, reliability -

**Ms BURNET** - It's different.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Right. Okay. That's the key and we've got to get there and I know minister Abetz is working hard on it to ensure that.

**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, the agreement of road funding between the Commonwealth and the state expired at the end of last financial year. There was criticism over the Australian Government's insistence that the funding be on a 50/50 basis rather than the long-accepted 80/20 ratio. Has there been an update of this agreement?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Shelton, for the question. The current federation funding agreement for land transport projects expired on 30 June this year, and we're committed to ensuring that we receive our fair share of Australian Government funding for our state's vitally important roads and bridges projects under the new agreement.

Now, to your question, despite the Australian Government's desire to move to a 50/50 funding split, our government has fought hard to retain the long-accepted 80/20 funding split

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and we will continue to do so. As I understand, every other state and territory of Australia should do and would do as well.

The 80/20 funding split has been supported by successive coalition governments in Canberra and is the funding model that enabled the Bridgewater Bridge, the Midland Highway 10-year action plan, the Tasman Highway works between Hobart and Sorell, and dozens of other important roads and bridges across the state. See how important it is?

It was a \$600 million investment in the Midland Highway, \$786 million for Bridgewater Bridge, 80/20 funding splits.

So, you could argue, I think pretty successfully, but if that was 50/50, the Midland Highway would still be a goat track, as named by former member for Denison, Graeme Sturges at some point in time. Is that right?

**Ms DOW** - I don't know, I wasn't here then. I was talking about the Bass Highway goat track.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I remember Sturgo. He was a good fellow.

**Mr WINTER** - He had some trouble on the *Spirit*, too.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've had some engagement there as well but I do like him very much as a person.

**Ms DOW** - Oh that's nice.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To Mr Shelton's point, I think I've made the point though, haven't I?

**Ms DOW** - I think so. Let's move on. Thank you. Premier, can you confirm that two independent reports from AW Maritime and GHD have identified critical safety risks at berth four at the Burnie port where Strait Link currently operates?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That is a question more specifically for TasPorts. I will see if I can find -

**Ms DOW** - No, that question was to you, Premier. Can you confirm that please?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will see if we can find the information for you. Recently, I engaged with the CEO of TasPorts at QuayLink in Devonport, incidentally, at a project that I understand has been built on time and on budget by TasPorts.

**Ms DOW** - We're talking about the crumbling Burnie Port.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - At Burnie, TasPorts had planned delivery of its Burnie Gateway vision through staged incremental projects that were articulated to report infrastructure plan and informed by further customer engagement, commercial and financial assessments, reviews on site conditions and existing infrastructure. In May 2022, the Tasmanian Government committed \$5 million to TasPorts to progress concept designs and develop a business case.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, my question was very specific. It related to two independent reports and whether or not you are aware of them and the critical safety risks that they have identified.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, we will come to that. The new Burnie mineral strip loader delivered by TasRail will have double the loading capacity compared to the existing asset. As part of TasPort's 2023 Wharf Condition Monitoring Programme, areas of scouring were identified beneath the quay wall at berth four at the port of Burnie, which is the current home of Straight Link. TasPorts has undertaken investigative works to understand the scope of the issue and place controls in place to manage the increased risks, including avoiding loading in and identified area and a dedicated projects team has commenced immediate remediation works to rectify this issue.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, you may not have had this information, but I understand that the risks include the potential collapse of the wharf, which could involve concrete falling into ships docked at the wharf and any people or equipment falling into the water along with large volumes of concrete. Are you aware of those risks?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, as I said, a dedicated project team has commenced immediate remediation works to rectify this issue, I'm advised and I'm very keen to engage further on this.

**Ms DOW** - I am concerned that you're not up to date on this.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm not aware of the concerns. Thank you.

**Ms DOW** - Have those reports been made available to TasPorts engineers or have they been withheld, do you know?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll seek advice on who has the reports and the like.

**Ms DOW** - Whilst you are doing that, could you see if Strait Link has a copy of it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Everyone wants to get the berth for Burnie sorted. I accept that no one is not wanting the action to happen. A dedicated project team has commenced immediate remediation works to rectify the issue and it is a matter of TasPorts. It is an important strategic infrastructure and I accept that.

**Ms BURNET** - The Cradle Mountain cableway was originally costed at \$60 million. It was later revealed when the business case for the cableway was released via RTI, that as of April 2023, the cost would be \$190 million. You stated in the tourism committee that the state would contribute \$30 million and you've requested an additional \$30 million from the federal government. You also stated a new business case is being produced. Will this new business case be able to deliver a radically altered project, or will you be seeking private funding to cover the \$130 million shortfall?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My advice is we're updating the business case rather than doing a new one. It was comprehensive, the business case at the time. The Coordinator-General will be joining us shortly and I've had quite some engagement with the Coordinator-General on this project.



## PUBLIC

We committed \$30 million, the federal government previously committed \$30 million, if my memory serves me correctly, and they've withdrawn that. We're trying, along with the tourism industry, particularly West by North West, which I sure appreciate, to get a further commitment of the \$30 million back for the project. Notwithstanding that, we do need to find a reliable solution to the transport issue.

I do support a cableway, except the Greens probably don't. That being said, a cableway is, in my view, the most environmentally sensitive way forward. All-abilities access, an experience for visitors to Tasmania and Tasmanians alike. There are challenges with, if I recall correctly, widening roads for buses and to cater for increased numbers and those types of things. So, it is very challenging, I am still in favour of the cableway for the low impact that it provides.

The Coordinator-General may well be able to update you on where the updated business case is at when he arrives around 17.30 today.

**Ms BURNET** - So, essentially, you can't tell me where that \$130 million shortfall might come from?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not at this stage.

**Ms BURNET** - Will you take it on notice?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The business case will inform where the additional funds would come from. There may well be a rescoping. I don't want to lead with my chin on this, except to say we've got to find a solution. There's been considerable effort around the Cradle Mountain master plan.

**Ms DOW** - Taking a long time, the Cradle Mountain cableway.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What about the visitor centre? What about the Dove Lake viewing platform? That is huge achievements, which is fantastic. Everywhere around the state, we are getting the job done.

**CHAIR** - Mrs Pentland.

**Ms BURNET** - Sorry, I haven't finished my second question. It's just relating to -

**Mrs PENTLAND** - It is one of those questions.

**Ms BURNET** - On 17 September you clearly stated to Mrs Pentland that you would be open and transparent regarding the stadiums funding regardless of commercial-in-confidence concerns in any public-private partnership. On the same principle, will we see the full unredacted revised business case for the Cradle Mountain cableway released?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll take advice on that. There may be some commercial-in-confidence matters on that. I would generally always start with the principle of being open and transparent, and informing the Tasmanian community. Mrs Pentland asked me the question last week. I cannot remember if that was before the Project of State Significance submission.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - It was, yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You could not be more transparent about the stadium if you tried, I don't reckon. We've got 4000 pages out there that your team, the volunteers, no doubt, Ms Burnet and your hard-working team behind you have been trawling those 4000 pages and looking for every little thing you can get me on in terms of the stadium, I'm sure. Certainly, this has been scrutinised and scrutinised and scrutinised, and will be scrutinised right until the time the doors are opened. All the people criticising it will be marching through the doors -

**A member** - Applauding?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Absolutely convinced of that.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - After I raised a constituent concern about the exit ramp on the Midland Highway at the Kings Meadows Connector, I've noticed the speed of the highway in that section has been reduced to 90 km/h from 110 km/h and that road signs have been installed to alert motorists to slow moving traffic ahead. Although I appreciate some efforts have been implemented, I don't believe reduction in speed limit and the use of road signs is enough to significantly reduce the safety risks road users are experiencing there. Can you please commit to improving the road infrastructure in this area to ensure there are adequate and safe exit lanes?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Safety is paramount. I can seek advice on that constituent question which we've provided an answer to?

**Mrs PENTLAND** - You have, and you have reduced the speed limit and you have got some warning signs there, but I would like to see -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - More infrastructure improvement rather than speed reductions?

**Mrs PENTLAND** - There was a commitment that you would put additional room for the exit lane so that it would lengthen. I just wanted to see where that was at and if you could commit to that project.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. That is a good question. Ms McIntyre?

**Ms McINTYRE** - I think I'm happy to. The department is undertaking some work on a design of extending the exit lane, but also is looking at, or will be modelling, the operation of the roundabout because it seems that the operation of the roundabout at Kings Meadows is actually causing the backup of traffic onto the highway. That will be considered as part of the investigation the department is undertaking.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Is that Launceston City Council for the roundabout?

**Ms McINTYRE** - It's on the border. I think it's between the two. The development that's been, the subdivision that has increased has been approved by Launceston City Council, so the department will work with the City of Launceston in terms of what the best treatment is.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - But you will make amendments if needed?

**Ms McINTYRE** - Yes.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - The proposed Kings Meadows heavy vehicle rest area has raised significant concerns among the Mount Pleasant Estate residents, particularly regarding noise, light pollution and safety impacts on the community. Given that the project is in its current design and appears to lack adequate justification, an alternative location such as the nearby Youngtown industrial area may be better suited. Is this something that the government might reconsider as far as the current location and perhaps moving it to the Youngtown industrial area?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The heavy vehicle driver rest area strategy, as I'm sure you agree, recognises that the proactive management of heavy vehicle driver safety and wellbeing is a priority for Tasmanian road freight operators. Providing infrastructure to support drivers is a key contribution to the effective risk management programs of the industry. The strategy highlights opportunities to upgrade existing infrastructure and the establishment of new facilities to support heavy vehicle drivers to meet their needs for rest breaks, and load and vehicle checks, along the key freight routes in Tasmania. The Department of State Growth is commencing construction of three heavy vehicle driver rest areas in financial year 2024-25 in the following locations: Midland Highway at Kings Meadows, which is what you are referring to; Murchison Highway at Fossey River; and Bass Highway at Westbury, eastbound.

The department is also progressing design for a heavy vehicle driver rest area at Westbury westbound. I am aware there is some anxiety there in Westbury regarding some of those matters and landholders. The Kings Meadows one, what would you like to see happen?

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Well, the proposed design sits behind the Mount Pleasant Estate residents.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Are they worried about the noise?

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Yes, the noise, the light pollution, their kids would play in the backyard, they might keep the ball over, they might get hit by a truck with them pulling into the bay. There's obviously a lot of concerns. The residents there would like to see the area for the trucks move to the Youngtown industrial area, which would probably be better suited for both residents and truck drivers.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Right. I will take that on notice..

**Ms McINTYRE** - I can answer that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You can answer that? Thank you.

**Ms McINTYRE** - The benefits of being around for a long time. A lot of work was done with the Tasmanian transport industry on the location of heavy vehicle rest areas and the Kings Meadows heavy vehicle rest area is basically formalising what is already an existing informal heavy vehicle driver rest area where they stop and check loads, et cetera. The department had been working on putting some form of noise mitigation in place and that's been a long-term negotiation with council. Many other locations were considered in consultation with the TTA but this was the best location.

## PUBLIC

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, the Bass Highway is one of the most important state highways for freight and commuter vehicles alike. A number of commitments were made through the recent election campaign, some of which were contingent on federal funding. Can you please provide a summary of the government's commitment to the Bass Highway, particularly between Devonport and Launceston?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I agree with you and other members that it is a key freight link for our ports as well as the agriculture, mining and forestry industries. It's also the chief means of connection as well, Mr Shelton, for family and friends in the communities on the north-west coast, as you'd appreciate.

Our long-term strategy recognises this, improving safety, which is paramount, and increasing productivity, also extremely important, by providing a more efficient road corridor. In partnership with the former coalition government, we committed a total of \$290 million for improvements on the Bass Highway all the way from Launceston to Marrawah. That comprises \$240 million for the northern roads package stage 2 and \$50 million for targeted upgrades between Deloraine and Devonport.

We went to this year's election with a plan to continue this investment in the Bass Highway, including \$20 million towards a consistent four-lane link between Launceston and Deloraine, \$40 million for the highway west of Wynyard and \$10 million towards upgrades between Deloraine and Devonport.

In 2018 we made a commitment to upgrade the Bass Highway between Launceston and Devonport, including identifying safety upgrades for the section between Deloraine and Latrobe. In 2020 work commenced on the corridor strategy, identifying deficiencies on the corridor from Launceston to Devonport.

The Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport corridor strategy was released last year and as we said during the recent election campaign, that strategy identified 66 potential improvements for the 91-kilometre section between Hadspen east of Port Sorell Road, and we will prioritise the duplication of the highway between Hadspen and Deloraine to deliver that consistent four-lane link with this high-volume road which has been progressively realigned to bypass towns, thereby enabling this full duplication. We've committed \$20 million to this investment and expect the Australian Government to co-invest.

In 2020 in the Australian and Tasmanian government budget process, a total of \$50 million was committed on targeted upgrades between Deloraine and Devonport. Six priority upgrade projects were identified in the Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport corridor strategy and included in the 10-year Bass Highway Action Plan.

Concept design work is underway on the following two high-priority projects: north of Sassafras road widening and Christmas Hills Road junction upgrade and road widening. Preliminary consultation with affected stakeholders has commenced for the north of Sassafras project and broader community consultation for these two projects is planned to commence in November 2024.

Six priority upgrade projects were identified in the corridor strategy and will be included in the 10-year Bass Highway Action Plan as follows: Christmas Hills Road junction upgrade;

north of Sassafras upgrade; Parramatta Creek upgrade; north of Latrobe duplication; Hadspen to Hagley duplication; and Exton duplication.

In the interests of time, the Bass Highway Moriarty Road intersection has also been identified as a priority planning project. This is currently a major roundabout with the Mersey Community Hospital located in the north-west corner. Options assessment, including planning and design works to resolve the conflict at Latrobe between the Bass Highway through traffic and the local traffic will commence in November this year and the concept development for duplication between Latrobe and Devonport will also be progressed, as will the options assessment of the Moriarty Road roundabout.

**Ms DOW** - Premier, given what you and TasPorts know about the crumbling condition of the Strait Link berth at Burnie, are you concerned that you're in breach of your obligations under the work health and safety act and has a report been made to WorkSafe?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - When it comes to matters on the port of Burnie, TasPorts is working with customer Strait Link regarding an identified scour issue at berth 4 at Burnie. The scour issue was identified through TasPorts wharf condition monitoring program in 2023. Since first identifying the matter, TasPorts has undertaken further significant investigative works to understand the scope and significance of the issue, as well as provide input into the project remediation and construction methodologies.

As part of the active management of the issue, TasPorts has implemented risk mitigation measures for berth 4, including avoiding loading on an identified area while remediation works are undertaken. As this work continues, TasPorts teams are continuing to develop planning for a long-term infrastructure solution for berth 4, and noting the importance of this project TasPorts has established a dedicated project team to undertake remediation works as well as develop a long-term infrastructure solution.

**Ms DOW** - Is TasPorts liable to compensate Strait Link if they have to shut down the wharf and is that why no action has been taken, despite the known safety risks?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - TasPorts is and will continue to work with Strait Link and other customers within the port of Burnie to minimise operational disruptions and expedite solutions. It should be noted that Strait Link is continuing to utilise its berth for shipping operations.

**Ms BURNET** - Is TasPorts liable to compensate Strait Link if they have to shut down berth 4?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a matter for TasPorts and Strait Link.

**Ms BURNET** - You must be concerned about that and the significant disruption to the community and the economy.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we don't want disruption, we want to fix it. We want solutions. That's what I'm about, solutions.

**Ms BURNET** - Good, so what action has been taken?

**CHAIR** - Order. Ms Burnet.

**Ms BURNET** - Thank you. Premier, I hope you can provide a solution for this issue about the Leith intersection. As you're aware, up on the Bass Highway the intersection has been problematic for quite some time and the community has raised concerns with me. I went up with Mayor Fuller and Mayor Jarman and also Minister Abetz. The community doesn't feel their requests for a safety solution have been answered. Why haven't their requests for safety upgrades been heeded?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There has been a fair amount of work done in terms of consultation at the very least. I can come to that at a moment, because I know this has been a very big challenge for the local community. There was a commitment, if my memory serves me correctly, of \$10 million for an overpass, which didn't engender a great deal of enthusiasm amongst local residents. There have been very strong advocates for the overpass as well and that's been very difficult.

The upgrading works to the Bass Highway junctions at Short Street and Braddons Lookout Road were completed in August last year, apart from installation of street lights - this is the Leith junction. Temporary lights were installed on the site at the completion of works until permanent lighting could be installed. Permanent streetlights were installed in early May 2024. The junction upgrades were delivered for significantly less than the original \$15 million commitment, with the balance of funds to be reallocated to further improvements to the Bass Highway.

The Department of State Growth will continue to monitor traffic conditions and safety performance to ensure the risk of crashes is mitigated. There has been a lot of discussion around this. I met with a number of residents in April 2021, from memory, and I know there's been a lot of discussion. I've had correspondence from a lot of people regarding this - people very passionate about an overpass, the residents not wanting an overpass, and it's a very challenging situation.

Any further to add to that, Denise?.

**Ms McINTYRE** - Just that the department will continue to monitor how the upgrades are operating.

**Ms BURNET** - What do you think the most cost-effective solution would be? We talked before about the speed limits changing. I can't understand why that's not a solution for that, particularly turning right from Braddons Lookout.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So, you come to that road past Harvest Moon on the left where the river is, then you turn right, you're crossing over northwest-bound traffic and into the southern base lane, which is-

**Ms BURNET** - 100km there.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We did reduce the speed limit there at some point?

**Ms BURNET** - No, it hasn't been.

## PUBLIC

**Ms McINTYRE** - During all of the works there was a reduced speed limit, then it was reinstated.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Look, there are lots of competing issues there including freight efficiency and all sorts of areas.

**Ms BURNET** - It is not a very long stretch.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Safety should be most paramount, of course, in my book. I know it's been challenging to find a solution that covers all those aspects and is supported by the community as well. We'll continue to monitor it, Ms Burnet. I am sure we will hear more from the community that are expressing their concerns.

**Mrs PENTLAND** – Premier, when will the upgrade of the UTAS Stadium commence and how long will it take to complete?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will try and find the answer for you. Mr Street will have a great interest in this, as Minister for Sport and Events. On 4 February this year, we formally announced \$130 million project scope for the University of Tasmania Stadium redevelopment project.

Of course, the project will provide new and improved player, staff and spectator amenities, deliver increased seating options - general admission and premium - including additional accessible seating, importantly, and better spectator experiences with new seating close to the playing field. The redevelopment, once completed, will provide enhanced economic outcomes for Launceston in the region by enabling the attraction of more elite sporting and other events to Northern Tasmania and support the entry of the Tasmania Devils Football Club into the AFL.

Project designs have been developed to a detailed design stage, I'm advised, in consultation with stakeholders. Active engagement with key stakeholders is continuing, including discussions with the City of Launceston in respect to the stadium's proposed transfer. The first package of works, which is focused on match day facility upgrades, is expected to commence in late 2024 - this year - and be completed ahead of the 2025 AFL season.

The Department of State Growth, through Infrastructure Tasmania, is managing the delivery of the project in conjunction with the City of Launceston and Stadiums Tasmania as the future stadium owner and operator.

**Ms PENTLAND** - Given that we're spending \$130 million on it, how many AFL games a year do you think should be played there going forward?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we want to attract good, strong games. At least four.

**Ms PENTLAND** - Does that warrant \$130 million spent to attract four games of AFL?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There could be other uses for the ground as well, as I touched on in my previous answer. Player amenity and spectator accessible seating and all those types of arrangements are very worthy investments to make. We're investing \$65 million of state money into that, and the federal government's investing \$65 million to make up the \$130 million, so

again, it's a good partnership. We've also got AFLW, VFL and VFLW that can also be supported by UTAS Stadium, or York Park, as it's traditionally known.

**Mr SHELTON** - Premier, the South Arm Highway services the growing communities of Rokeby, Oakdowns, Lauderdale and South Arm Peninsula. Can you provide a summary of the government's commitment to increase the safety and efficiency of the South Arm Highway, and when construction is expected to begin?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The highway upgrade at South Arm is co-funded by the Australian and state governments, with \$44 million of Australian Government contribution and \$11 million of state government contribution. As part of the South Arm Highway Corridor Study, it was identified that this section of the South Arm road needed to be upgraded to a dual carriageway to cater for future growth in the area, to provide travel time reliability and to improve safety.

As part of the concept design process, The Department of State Growth has met with the Clarence City Council, the Department of Education and Metro Tasmania officers several times to brief them on the project. Community consultation commenced in December last year and will continue through the concept design stage with our design consultant. Once the concept design has been fully developed, it will go back out to the community for further comment.

The key issue raised by the community in the consultation period was the need for a safe pedestrian access from Oakdowns Parade through to Lauderdale. This is being addressed in the concept design. There are three components of the project: there's Pass Road to Oakdowns Parade through Rokeby; there is the Acton Road and South Arm Highway intersection upgrade - you'd be very familiar with all of this; and Oakdowns Parade to Acton Road in Lauderdale.

The design for the dual carriageway extension from Pass Road to Oakdowns Parade and the Acton Road junction will be progressed in 2024-25, with construction expected to commence in the 2025-26 financial year, depending on receiving all statutory approvals, and the design will be refined to minimise the amount of property acquisition required to deliver the project. Thank you for the question on South Arm.

**Ms DOW** - The defects with the Burnie Port were bounded back in 2023. There's no money in the Budget for upgrades or to address these works that need to be done for the crumbling berth, Premier. I'll ask you again, when will action be taken to rectify it? Why wasn't there a report put to WorkSafe Tasmania, and when did you first know about it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I've just outlined quite a comprehensive answer to this. I'm not sure that -

**Ms DOW** - You didn't answer whether there had been a report to WorkSafe.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm happy to take that on notice for you in the interests of openness and accountability. That was the question regarding WorkSafe.

**Ms DOW** - When can we expect it to be rectified and how will they go about fixing it?



**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have detailed a comprehensive answer for you. TasPorts is working with customers of Strait Link regarding the identified scour issue at berth 4 at the port of Burnie. It was identified through TasPort's Wharf Condition Monitoring Program 2023. Since first identifying the matter TasPorts has undertaken further significant investigative works to understand the scope and significance of the issue, as well as provided input into the project remediation and construction methodologies, which we have been through before. As part of the active management of the issue, TasPorts has implemented risk mitigation measures for Berth 4, including, I am advised, avoiding loading on an identified area while remediation works are undertaken. As this work continues, TasPorts teams are continuing to develop planning for a long-term infrastructure solution at Berth 4 -

**Ms DOW** - How much will that long-term solution cost, Premier? Do you know?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Noting the importance of this project, TasPorts has established a dedicated project team to undertake remediation works as well as develop a long-term infrastructure solution to this. TasPorts is working and will continue to work with Strait Link and other customers within the port of Burnie to minimise operational disruptions and solutions, as I believe I have said before.

**Ms DOW** - When?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have just given you the answer in terms of the work that is being undertaken.

**Ms DOW** - You have not said when those final works will be completed to actually repair it, not just a patch-up job, Premier.

**CHAIR** - Do you have another question, Ms Dow?

**Ms DOW** - Yes, when will it be completed?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am happy to seek advice as to the work and investigations that have been undertaken and see if there can be a timeline for you and the committee, Ms Dow.

**Ms DOW** - I appreciate that, Premier.

**Ms BURNET** - Premier, we have a couple of questions about the condition of Dove Lake Road and the enormous concrete viewing shelter that has been constructed. Dove Lake Road has been pretty much closed off to traffic other than shuttle buses and after-hours visitors, but despite this, the road is in the worst condition in living memory. The bridge over Pencil Pine Creek is also apparently in urgent need of repair. Is this damage the result of hundreds of truck movements during the construction of the viewing shelter at Dove Lake?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am not sure the reason for the condition of the road as you have presented it. I will seek some advice from the team here. Do you have an issue with the viewing shelter?

**Ms BURNET** - As I have said, it is quite a cavernous concrete viewing shelter, so -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Pretty impressive, don't you think?

**Ms BURNET** - My other question is around the fact that it says, 'Please walk lightly on palawa land', as we have done from creation, and yet there's many truck movements that haven't really moved lightly across the country for this construction. How many thousands of kilograms of concrete were needed to build it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll take that back to the design and the scope of the project in terms of kilograms of concrete. I recall the opening day there where tread lightly on palawa land was mentioned in terms of people experiencing The Cradle Mountain precinct. I will have to take on notice the kilograms of concrete question given the level of detail.

**Mr WINTER** - I want to go back to the fifth lane, Premier. Under RTI late last year, I believe we received information around the construction timeline and impacts on people through the fifth lane construction. It's acknowledged there will be significant disruption to traffic conditions in order to construct the high occupancy vehicle lane in the order of six to eight months during the construction, which will require mitigation. It goes on to say this will include the reduction to single lane only for a period of six to eight months. Do you really think this project is worth it when you are putting 10 per cent of Tasmanians on one of the busiest highways in Tasmania, reducing them to one lane of traffic during peak hour?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - People might well have asked the same question about the Midland Highway upgrade and was it worth it when people were disrupted?

**Mr WINTER** - I'm sure you quite understand the level of disruption you are going to create through this.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - People are travelling north or south, which is why I mentioned -

**CHAIR** - The time for Estimates of the Minister of Infrastructure has expired. The committee will commence examination of the Estimates of the Minister for Trade and Major Investment.

**MINISTER for TRADE and MAJOR INVESTMENT**

[5.40 p.m.]

**CHAIR** - The examination of Estimates of Minister for Trade and Major Investment will commence. Welcome Premier and Minister for Trade and Major Investment to the committee. Would you please introduce the persons at the table?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. To my right is Craig Limkin, Secretary for State Growth, to Craig's right is Jenna Cairney, Deputy Secretary for State Growth. To my left will be my Chief of Staff, Ned Whitehouse, and to Ned's left is John Perry, the Coordinator-General.

I have a very short opening remarks because I'm conscious we only have 30 minutes.

Trade continues to be one of our state's continuing success stories. While still being finalised, I'm pleased to advise the committee that this year we expect the value of Tasmanian exports to exceed \$6 billion. This overtakes last year's \$5.8 billion result to become our second most successful year on record behind the 2021-22 year which reached \$6.15 billion and a significant boost on the 2020-21 at around \$5 billion.

Despite the slowing of major economies on recent months, our annual goods export values have recorded a year on year increase coming to coming in at more than \$4.4 billion. Our service exports have almost recovered to the pre-pandemic levels racking up around \$1.1 billion in sales and across the year is estimated that more than \$150 million in sales have been secured with the assistance of our Trade Action Plan initiatives.

I'm sure the committee be pleased to know that these results have not seen our exporters take the foot off the pedal at all. In recent months, we have hosted the Savour Tasmania Inward Trade Mission, a Tasmanian delegation to the Fine Food Australia Trade Exhibition in Melbourne, and supported attendance at Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong. The final touches are being put on our next major international trade and investment mission, which will head to Hong Kong and mainland China in November.

Looking at major investment, the Office of Coordinator-General (OCG) continues spearheading investment attraction and since its inception, has brought in around \$5.5 billion, I'm advised. What's possibly more impressive is that the OCG is currently working on a pipeline of almost \$16 billion of potential projects. These projects come in across the gamut of our economy, including mining, agribusiness, tourism, food production and processing, energy, the digital economy, housing and advanced manufacturing. The OCG is a regular participant on our international trade and investment missions.

Looking forward, we have delegations slated for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Thailand and Malaysia, Korea and Japan, Singapore and Indonesia, the USA and Canada, India, Europe and the United Kingdom. I look forward to updating the committee on these missions in future sessions.

**Mr WINTER** - Thank you, Premier. When I talk to industry, they tell me that nothing is getting done and it's getting harder and harder to build and develop in Tasmania. They've got \$25 billion worth of renewable energy projects that want to get started in Tasmania and they're frustrated. I think you've probably heard some of those frustrations as well.

Despite not having mentioned the word 'Coordinator-General' in a single media release during the election campaign, despite no one I speak to within industry or business being aware of it, and despite it being hidden on page four of your investment policy and having a single line - I've got it here too, Premier - a single line referring to:

These legislative updates will be developed utilising learnings from the Queensland model of the Coordinator-General and major project facilitation.

You've claimed that you have some kind of detailed plan for this. Can you take me through - and by the way, it's not in your first 100-day plan or your second 100-day plan - despite all of that, can you outline what you've done to date in terms of facilitating changes to the Coordinator-General model that will actually allow this state to get moving with the private investment that's stacked up at Bass Strait waiting to come in?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Okay. Part of our first 100-day plan was, of course, updating the act and there was a \$10 million limit -

**Mr WINTER** - You didn't mention the Coordinator-General.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, I'm talking about getting things done. A \$10 million limit in the act constraining the Tasmanian Development Board's ability to invest in projects, keeping Tasmanian taxpayer funds to grow and develop. Through updating the act, the ability of the state to co-invest in strategic projects to benefit Tasmania will be lifted to \$35 million. Done.

**Mr WINTER** - That's not the Coordinator-General but -

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The \$10 million limit was set in 1999. I've just outlined what the Coordinator-General has delivered in terms of \$5.5 billion, \$16 billion in the pipeline. There's a lot of work that goes into investment attraction. I've had some appreciation of this when it comes to the investment attraction initiative of the Sun Cable project, for example, and the enormous amount of work that's required in attracting such an opportunity to Tasmania, fighting off other key locations around the world - I think 30 around the world. Three key locations in Australia working with GBEs, in this case, TasPorts, TasRail and TasNetworks to add value to that investment proposition. A huge amount of work and we're still working through the Sun Cable project, of course, very mindful of the investments we are making on behalf of the Tasmanian taxpayers to support and facilitate those projects. There is a lot of work that's been done in terms of investment attraction and a lot of matters that have been delivered.

**Mr WINTER** - You haven't answered my question. So, it's about your policy - your so-called policy. It says:

These legislative updates will be developed utilising learnings from the Queensland model of the Coordinator-General and major project facilitation.

What work has been done to date in order to actually enact any change?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I think you are rewriting history because that is our policy.

**Mr WINTER** - I'm reading from a document on your website. I'm asking you what you've done.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - With respect, Mr Winter, that has now become your policy which you lifted from our policy. We have a bipartisan approach to these matters which I know will be very welcomed by -

**Mr WINTER** - It's a very simple question. You're not going to distract me. What has actually happened?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We're reviewing the act in terms of the matters that I speak of, which I believe I outlined in my Second Reading contribution when we spoke about the threshold of the \$10 million to the \$35 million. I stand to be corrected. I will go back and check the *Hansard* but I thought I did refer to that.

**Mr WINTER** - So, you've talked about it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we're doing it. We've already done a part of this in the first 100 days and we will continue to find ways that we can support investment attraction -

**Mr WINTER** - Just to the specifics, what are you actually doing? Are you consulting with business or industry ?

**CHAIR** - Order. Mr Winter, ask your next question please.

**Mr WINTER** - That's it. That was the question - to the specifics of the question.

**Mr LIMKIN** - Mr Winter, we have been working with our colleagues in New South Wales and Queensland and also undertaking some policy work regarding this. Both are very different and unique, so let me use New South Wales as an example.

In New South Wales, the Coordinator-General is an infrastructure delivery person. It is not an investment attraction or planning approval process like Queensland. In New South Wales, the Coordinator-General can call in projects for Infrastructure NSW to deliver.

Currently, we do that through relationships and collaborations with agencies. As the Premier announced in his infrastructure hearing, we are already calling in projects without that power to be able to deliver it. What we are doing is we are undertaking a scan of how these models work in other jurisdictions. We're consulting and taking advice on legal matters to make sure that we provide the government options and advice on the best way to deliver it within the Tasmanian jurisdiction as our law. As I said, in the future the plan is to have conversations with the TDR Board and then take a discussion paper so that we can consult with industry and the community about the way forward before the government prepares legislation to introduce in department.

**Mr WINTER** - What additional powers, if any, are you looking to provide the Coordinator-General with?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will seek advice on that.

**Mr WINTER** - So, you actually don't have a policy at all then, do you?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we do. I've got a policy -

**Mr WINTER** - You can't even tell me what powers you want to add to the Coordinator-General.

**CHAIR** - Order, come on.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We're looking at all the options, Mr Winter.

**Mr WINTER** - You weren't looking at anything.

**CHAIR** - All right. Ms Rosol has the call.

**Mr WINTER** - You have a single line in your paper. You have one line.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I know you are starting from way behind the eight ball on this because we caught you out lifting our policy the other day - a rookie error.

**Mr WINTER** - No one had ever heard of this line in the policy.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, you didn't clearly hear of it because you would have referenced it rather in breach of copyright.

**Mr WINTER** - Industry hasn't, business hasn't, nobody had heard of it. A single line, Page 4.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr WINTER** - Can you just explain to me, Premier, as I re-ask the question?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If you'd known about it and read it.

**Mr WINTER** - Can you explain one additional power that you want to add to the Coordinator-General?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We are looking at all options.

**Mr WINTER** - Do you support the ability for the Coordinator-General to rezone land?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I support getting the job done by doing it in the best possible way.

**Mr WINTER** - Honestly.

**CHAIR** - Ms Rosol has the call.

**Ms ROSOL** - Thank you, Premier. This year, 10 Tasmanian companies participated in the 2024 Land Forces exposition. Were any of those companies provided with financial or in-kind support by the Tasmanian Government in order to attend? If so, could you detail who received what?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, we have our defence advocate that supports our advanced manufacturing and defence industries - industries that we should be very proud of in Tasmania. When I consider how far we've come in the last 10 years, Ms Rosol, when it comes to our advanced manufacturing capabilities and our capacity and particularly into that defence industry space now - I'm sure it's probably changed when I quoted these figures a few years ago, but there was \$200 billion on the investment agenda from the Australian Government. I was quoting these figures pre-AUKUS, from memory. There is an enormous ability for us as a state to support that defence industry spend. The investment that we're making is in the defence advocate and we're supporting those companies that would have attended Land Forces. I met a company in Adelaide at Land Forces a few years ago and, as a result, was able to introduce some companies there.

**Ms ROSOL** - Can I clarify whether you funded them to attend this year?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To your question, being mindful of time, I understand that Pivot Maritime received support. Is that right?

**Ms CAIRNEY** - We are still calculating the costs of our stand at Land Forces. Approximately \$250,000 was spent on the Tasmanian stand. However, we do recoup some of the support from the businesses that display at the stand and approximately \$50,000 will be recouped from businesses who contribute to be on that stand. I'm trying to check the numbers of businesses that you have attending, because we had many more businesses, defence companies, representing Tasmania at that Land Forces event.

I also want to put on record that since 2019, more than \$360 million in defence contracts have been awarded to Tasmanian companies.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I mentioned the company before and I'll clarify that.

**Ms ROSOL** - Could we take that on notice, please?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We can provide the details of the \$250,000 for the stand. It was a very impressive stand indeed, like our trade shows are across the world as well, they are very impressive. The information was presented by Ms Cairney of \$250,000 for the stand, but there may well be further advice we can make at another time.

**Ms ROSOL** - Thank you. Currawong Engineering was one of the companies that attended the Land Forces expo under the Defence Tasmania banner, and we know that Currawong produces drone engines for a company called BlueBird Aero Systems, which is majority-owned by the Israeli government and produces drones used by the Israeli military. Given the outrageous devastation that Israel has wrought upon the people of Palestine, particularly in the last year, do you think it's appropriate for the state of Tasmania to be represented by a company that's engaging with the Israeli military in this way?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm very proud of the companies we have in Tasmania and the enormous strides they've made in being very innovative in the defence industry and advanced manufacturing space. I am well aware of the company, and there are many others. We're proud of our defence businesses and the success that they are achieving, thoroughly proud. The sale of defence export or dual-use items to anywhere in the world, including Israel, Russia or Ukraine, for example, is controlled by Australian Government regulation through the Defence Export Controls Branch. The Tasmanian government, I'm advised, is not aware of any products currently being supplied into Israel. Anyone with questions about Australia's exports into defence markets should seek information from the Australian Government.

**CHAIR** - Premier, would you happy to take the previous question on notice, to clarify it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will update the record or provide the information directly to Ms Rosol should it change, but my advice is that the accelerating trade grant, a total of \$3300, was provided to Pivot Maritime to go to Land Forces.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Premier, Tasmania's reputation for producing quality wine grows every year, consistently winning global awards. Currently, only 5 per cent of the wine produced is exported. Does the government have a strategy to support the industry so that it can grow?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We support Wine Tasmania through various measures. We have had a strategic industry partnership program since around 2015, which has supported a range of our agricultural and horticultural enterprises, of which I believe Wine Tasmania, from my memory going back to my primary industries minister days, has taken advantage of. Wine Tasmania will also benefit from some of our election commitments and that will be easily articulated by our Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Jane Howlett. We are including \$1.5 million over the next three years for export market development for our wine industry, as I am advised.

When it comes to our wine industry, it is important that we remain in that very high premium end; that is our capability and that is our market. While we might be a small percentage of the exports of wine in Tasmania, when it comes to the percentage of exports of the premium wine brands, we're a lot higher in that sense. We have built an enviable position over many decades and focus on driving demand, most importantly, quality and value ahead of growth in production. As a result, the sector is in the top 10 of all sectors contributing to the state's economy, attracting some of the highest value in the country and a global reputation, which, given its scale, is tremendous.

The wine industry not only has value because of our exports, but also the visitor economy because of our very strong reputation we have from visitors as well. We must always be in that premium brand space when it comes to that. Sheralee Davies is the head of Wine Tasmania and has been for some time, a fantastic person to work with. She has great strategic foresight when it comes to the industry and, in my humble opinion, has done a tremendous job.

We have to always stay out of that big commodity space. With the impacts of the pandemic trade with China, that affected other states a lot more than Tasmania because other states were in that exporting - I will call it mid-range - product, whereas we exported less of that because of the premium end and the quality of our wine. The impacts of that were less in terms of the matters around trade with China; of course, for rock lobster it was very different, unfortunately.

**Mrs PENTLAND** - Your current trade strategy promises to deliver innovative Tasmanian events both domestically and internationally. Premier, what do we have planned and how are these event experiences chosen?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The trade missions are very important and I mentioned going to China in November. We have a trade mission into the United States commencing on 6 October for less than a week, but very important. One of the key areas that I became aware of when I was last overseas was the importance of exporters to be in market, but also the importance of inviting people to Tasmania. That's where the Cyber Tasmania experience of a couple of months ago was so invaluable, because, as you would probably appreciate, when you visit a place overseas you get a special connection with that place. You meet people and you experience their culture and their friendly nature and you have a connection. The great thing about Cyber Tasmania is that we've got the importers, effectively, coming to Tasmania to immerse themselves in a Tasmanian environment with the producers that they meet personally and again establish a stronger relationship with the state through that experience then perhaps meeting people and exporters in market.

Notwithstanding that, we have had great success with a trade mission to New Zealand in July 2022 in terms of the value of what was invested in that trade mission to the return on



investment. We have to be in the market, but we also have to have people in key markets, so we've got a United States trade advocate. We work with AusTrade when it comes to a trade advocate in China. We are working on getting another trade advocate in the Singapore region and we expect them to be there in April next year.

**Mr PERRY** - That is my understanding.

**Mr WINTER** - The advocate could work from the boat, I guess.

**CHAIR** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To date, the 2024 mission plan has yielded a return of more than \$26 million in commercial and trade outcomes, facilitated over \$3.5 million of investment and 95 full-time equivalents and progressed Tasmanian projects involving approximately \$2.45 billion of potential investment and 500 jobs. The new plan was informed by insights from the International Business Development Network of Tasmania, the trade advocates, international stakeholders, Tasmanian businesses and existing research.

Under the Trade and Investment Mission Plan 2024-27 we are remaining focused on staying resilient and agile when facing economic headwinds. Our priorities include reconnecting into top markets, promoting and supporting trade initiatives that seek market expansion and leveraging new and existing free trade agreements.

In these forums there is often a question about our reliance on the Chinese market, which is a very important market and establishing and strengthening those relationships are very important. It was not too long ago where our exports were some 43 per cent or over 40 per cent in terms of the Chinese market and there was quite rightly a discussion around these tables around diversifying those opportunities and spreading our risk, if you like. While the Chinese market is very important, it's now probably now just over 30 per cent of our exports. That diversification has changed and we have aggressively pursued other markets and opportunities to reduce that over-reliance on the Chinese market, which the rock lobster industry felt the full effects of in early 2020.

**Mr WINTER** - Premier, Hudson Civil were drawn to buy and build a TRANSLink precinct at Launceston Airport on the basis of information provided to them by the Coordinator-General. They were told there was adequate power available at the site yet they have been operating for more than a year after construction was completed and purchases made without adequate power and they have been unable to move into the site that's costing them, they say, tens of thousands of dollars per month. Last time we heard from the government about this was 13 months ago when Michael Ferguson said he was going to meet with them. What's the government's response to this and how's it going to rectify the situation for a great Tasmanian civil contractor like Hudson?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, I can ask Mr Perry to speak to that.

**Mr PERRY** - From my understanding of this particular project that our office did not meet with the proponent that you're referring to, but it was in relation to a prospectus that has been prepared for Translink, which talks about the need to engage around particular infrastructure requirements. I know that we have been providing a range of information to

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TasNetworks around future demand and the need for upgrading the electricity supply into Translink. As for the direct discussions with the Deputy Premier, I can't comment on those.

**Mr WINTER** - It seems to be a huge issue for the company, and it's putting it under enormous financial stress. Is the government looking to provide any compensation to them given the information contained within the prospectus? The prospectus said that electricity supplies would be available to all land titles in the precinct with a 22kV distribution line from Hadspen; it went on to describe the various factors around energy. Here they are unable to fully connect. What are you going to do about this to resolve the situation for them?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We want to ensure that we work with all our potential investors in Tasmania. Our jobs and investment policy continues and focuses on updating legislation to contain mechanisms to plan, deliver and coordinate large-scale projects. The policy noted that these legislative updates will be developed utilising learnings from the Queensland model of the Coordinator-General and major project facilitation. The policy objective, contained on page 138 of the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, is to create a strong and certain investment environment. These updates will provide the private sector with confidence required to invest in Tasmania.

In terms of the specifics of your question and naming an organisation -

**Mr WINTER** - They've been in the media twice. Once in the *Mercury* 13 months ago; once last week, begging for help. You're the Minister for Infrastructure now. They're an important part of our civil contracting business environment in Tasmania. They're really struggling. Minister Ferguson met with them and obviously nothing happened. What are you going to do to facilitate a solution for them?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm very interested in facilitating solutions to investment, so I take great interest in -

**Ms DOW** - Do you meet with them?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I meet with many people. I will seek to gauge and see what can be -

**CHAIR** - The time for Estimates of the Minister for Trade and Investment has expired. We will suspend for 5 minutes and then proceed with the examination of Estimates for the Minister for Transport.

**The Committee suspended from 6.10 p.m. to 6.15 p.m**