



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP

Tuesday 24 September 2024

MEMBERS

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC (Deputy Chair)

Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

Hon Mike Gaffney MLC

Hon Cassy O'Connor MLC

Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Chair)

Hon Meg Webb MLC

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 Development Corporation

Craig Limkin

Secretary, Department of State Growth

Todd Babiak

Chief Executive Officer, Brand Tasmania

Noelene Kelly

A/Deputy Secretary, Community and Government Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Denise McIntyre

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

Cynthia Heydon

Deputy Secretary, Transport and Infrastructure, Department of State Growth

PUBLIC

The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.

CHAIR - Thank you. I'd like to welcome everyone here to our second day of budget Estimates. We welcome Premier to the table and obviously your team and those that are not at the table and behind you that will often fly papers across the room very smartly. I've seen it for many years. So Premier, I'd like to introduce our team at the table. To my right I have the honourable Meg Webb, the honourable Rosemary Armitage, Tania Rattray, the honourable Luke Edmunds and the honourable Cassy O'Connor.

We have an apology from the honourable Mike Gaffney who may be here a bit later today. We're not quite sure. We have secretariat support with us. We have Julie Thompson and we have Craig Muir, and we also have Gai on Hansard. So, we are going to start with your responsibility as Premier for the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and so if you would like to introduce your team at the table and perhaps provide an overview to the committee, and there may be some overview questions. But I do hope to get out of overview fairly soon and get into 1.1 which is Strategic Policy and Advice. Thank you, Premier.

DIVISION 9 (b)

(Department of Premier and Cabinet)

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much, Chair. And I thank the committee for their time today and opportunity to be scrutinised. With me today to my right is the secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Kathrine Morgan-Wicks, and Shane Gregory to Kath's right is the associate secretary of DPAC. To my left is Ned Whitehouse, my chief of staff. I do have a short opening statement, Chair, if you would indulge me in that.

CHAIR - We certainly will.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The 2024 Budget provides the investment we need to deliver our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, which includes taking action on the things that matter to Tasmanians: the cost of living pressures; health; housing; and a stronger economy; and support for our communities. In this Budget and across the forward Estimates, we are providing over \$550 million in cost of living relief to make life more affordable.

That includes our energy bill relief payments, half-price bus fares, healthy lunches in schools as well as helping Tasmanians buy their own home by stamping out stamp duty. The Budget, importantly, fully responds to the recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry. It is our responsibility, as the government of the day, to meet our obligations to victim survivors and others who gave evidence and to begin to make the significant changes we need to keep children and young people safe; indeed, to drive that change.

Funding of \$423 million over four years is provided by the Budget to implement the 191 recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet is leading this work in close collaboration with other agencies. This funding, together with 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 keep children safe, to appropriately compensate those who suffered harm.

Yesterday, I tabled the updated suite of routine disclosures, and I do the same here today. As members know, this routine disclosure relates to the Commission of Inquiry and the tables

PUBLIC

are always updated and published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website with the latest published last week on 17 September 2024. I also table today, as I did in the lower house committee, the new Department of Premier and Cabinet structure, an update on Service Tasmania and the services they deliver to Tasmanians including our new digital portal, an update on the recent severe weather events and grants applied to and paid to date.

As I advised the other place, in 2025 I will be chair of the Council for the Australian Federation. This forum provides for state and territory leaders to discuss and resolve important issues independently of the Commonwealth. I am excited to be leading this forum, given the significant intergovernmental issues including addressing the nation, including domestic violence, disability reform, health funding reform and education funding reform. Lastly, Chair, the 2024-25 Budget for the Department of Premier and Cabinet totals \$671.6 million, with much of the additional funding attributed to \$59.4 million for Homes Tasmania, \$40.5 million to progress the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and \$11.4 million to support the implementation of the disability inclusion bill. Thank you, Chair, and I welcome your questions.

CHAIR - Thank you. Before we start, I'd just like to congratulate Ms Morgan-Wicks on her appointment as the secretary.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Thank you very much, Chair.

CHAIR - So moving over to this one and leaving health, which we covered off on yesterday.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think we should also congratulate the Premier on having Ms Morgan-Wicks because I think that's a real coup.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much. I agree.

CHAIR - So there we are. First question in the overview goes to Ms O'Connor. Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, yesterday in Estimates for the other place, you told my colleague Dr Woodruff and the committee that the state is investing \$375 million into the stadium, not one cent more. But that's not true, is it? We've got \$145 million that's expected to be carried as debt by Mac Point Development Corporation. There's an extra \$55 million that hasn't been accounted for in kitchen, lighting, security, et cetera. There's the northern access road, bus rapid transit, \$445 million to make the stadium work. You've got to relocate the goods shed, and we don't know how much that would cost or even if it's possible. Then, of course, the general government sector will carry the ongoing rolling losses of the stadium. It is not true, is it, to say that the state of Tasmania is investing \$375 million and not one cent more?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's what we are investing, Ms O'Connor. I made that very clear at the election, that we will be investing \$375 million into the Macquarie Point stadium, and an exciting investment that it will be. We went through this in quite some detail yesterday. We've reached what I believe is a very exciting milestone when it comes to our application for our multi-purpose stadium at Macquarie Point. We've submitted that and it is now being assessed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission as a project of state significance. Of course,

PUBLIC

this is quite a submission, I have to say. As I said yesterday, I cannot think of a project that has been so heavily scrutinised in this state.

Ms O'CONNOR - Pity you haven't told the truth about what it's going to cost though.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I have said we'll be investing -

CHAIR - Honourable member, please let the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will be investing \$375 million, Ms O'Connor. Happy to be held account to that when the time comes. The other aspects of course, we expect private investment in the Macquarie Point precinct and stadium. Can I assure you that we have drawn a line in the sand. It will be \$375 million which we will invest once. Of course, we invest \$375 million into our health system every 42 days. So that provides some context for you. I recognise that the Green party have been consistent in their opposition to the stadium. That is the view of the Greens. I disagree with it. In respect of the decision you've made -

Ms O'CONNOR - I think the majority of Tasmanians.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I would disagree with that.

Ms O'CONNOR - The last election result -

CHAIR - Can we just have one person question and then response and then the Honourable Member can say something after that. It just gets too untidy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I say on the scrutiny, Ms O'Connor, this will continue to be the most scrutinised project in history, and I've been through the pulp mill scrutiny as well.

CHAIR - And so have some of us.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And that was significant. But when I consider the stadium, which has been through the Public Accounts Committee and no doubt still will be, question times in the lower house, budget Estimates in 2022-23 and this time around, the submission, of course, to the Planning Commission is some 260-page summary report supported by nearly 4,000 pages of expert advice and reports, all available for both the Tasmanian Planning Commission to assess the project and the community to see the work that is being done. This process and pathway were selected by the parliament, which led to the creation of extensive project assessment guidelines which were informed by consultation. So -

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier -

Mr ROCKLIFF - - I'm happy to go through more in terms of the planning, but -

Ms O'CONNOR - I just want to get to the bottom of the finances.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure, \$370 -

Ms O'CONNOR - You also said yesterday that we are investing once, just once. But your own financial impact statement report which was lodged with the planning commission

makes it very clear that the government sector - that is, the people of Tasmania will be investing over and over again at a loss, and that's coming out of the wealth of Tasmanians. That's a choice, you know, that your government is making to cut \$81 million out of education across the forward estimates, \$130 million out of health across the four years. Then you tell this untruth. It's unarguably an untruth to say we're investing once, just once. The state has to invest over and over again, and that's carried by Tasmanians.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I would respectfully disagree because I've made that commitment. I would also point to the fact that - and other investments we're making across government, the frontline services that Tasmanians care about in health. We're investing the frontline services. There will be more nurses, more doctors, more paramedics in 12 months' time. Investing in education, investing in frontline services to keep our community safe. But we can do both. So, my view is that investing the \$375 million into the stadium -

Ms O'CONNOR - And the rest of it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - - and the \$240 million which is being invested by our federal government as well, and including private investment will create significant enabling infrastructure which attract more private investment, which will support an improved public transport network. Irrespective of a development at Macquarie Point, whatever that might look like, we've committed to the rapid bus transit in the northern suburbs, and other associated infrastructure in terms of that corridor. This is an exciting, enabling infrastructure project. You disagree with it, but -

Ms O'CONNOR - Lots of people disagree with it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I am finding more and more people actually agreeing with it as they become more aware of the bigger picture. You know, a lot of it was wrapped around the AFL agreement, which you and I have spoken about on many occasions. That is part of it, and yes, it enabled us to secure our AFL team in terms of investment in the stadium. But you know, there's so much more than that.

It's creating and enabling economy, not only around the AFL team and associated entertainment that it will bring but also will be well utilised, like other stadium infrastructure across the country, of which I am informed is around \$8 billion in terms of the stadia economy nationwide. Possible more now, when I quoted those figures a couple of years ago because the success of Adelaide Oval, the success of Optus Oval, other stadia around the country supports further investment, which is and can only be a good thing.

Ms O'CONNOR - So you say. I am happy to leave it for now, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Edmunds.

CHAIR - Sorry. Thank you. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - We'll return to that topic later in the day, anyway. Some overview matters I wanted to cover. One is just a departmental related set of questions around RTI data that I hope you might be able to provide just as an update. I am interested in getting data and stats on the turnaround time from receipt to determination for all the DPAC, departmental RTI requests for the 2023-24 financial year, and to be able to compare that to the previous financial

PUBLIC

years. So as part of that, what I'm imagining you can give me is the number of RTI applications received, what proportion were determined in full or in part, or refused, and the number of days on average taken for each of those categories.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms Webb.

CHAIR - Are you catching all those questions, premier?

Ms WEBB - It was sort of a set of -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got the gist of them.

Ms WEBB - You've probably got a table of some sort, which I would be happy for you to table with us, just so we can collect the data from you and move to another question to interact in more details.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. It's not possibly in the format that you require. So, you know, increasing our transparency and accountability to the Tasmanian community -

Ms WEBB - I'm going to ask RTI related questions more broadly in a minute, but this is just about DPAC data, primarily.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. If we look at the DPAC determined 63 RTI applications within the 2023-24 financial year, and of these applications, 39 were departmental, 18 were addressed at the premier's office, one was assessed to the minister for Science and Technology, one was assessed with the minister for Local Government, and four were transferred to other ministerial portfolios for assessment. And the data - yes. The number of applications for assessed disclosure determined, 63. The total of 63 determinations includes 55 applications received in 2023-24 that were completed, and eight applications received in the 2022-23 period, and determined in 2023-24 period.

A number of applications determined on time, 48. Yes, 48. A number of applications determined on - not determined on time, my apologies, for 15. Number of applications transferred in full with 11. A number of applications, information fully released, 20. A number of applications, information partially released was 17. A number of applications where all information was exempt was two. And a number of applications to [inaudible] was two. Just to provide that data to you, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - One of the things I'm interested in is whether you have any predicted changes in staffing or funding resources allocated in this financial year 24-25 to RTI responses within the department compared to previous financial years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. Thank you for the question. In terms of uplift and resources?

Ms WEBB - No, this is just about your departmental resources that are utilised to respond to RTIs. I'm just focusing on the department with this little set of questions. Then I would like to ask about uplift separately.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier, we have three RTI officers in the department, which is an uplift from last year, and one delegated RTI officer.

Ms WEBB - That would be the same resource consistently over the years. Like, we're not going more, going less.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier, so my understanding is that that is an increase in terms of allocation of officers from the previous year, and that is to note also the work that is underway under the RTI uplift project.

Ms WEBB - Yes, can I ask a question about the RTI?

Ms O'CONNOR - Very slow work.

Ms WEBB - I'd like to ask a question about the RTI project, if that's okay, knowing that back in the 2022-23 Budget, there was half a million dollars, \$500,000 allocated to that. Questions I asked in parliament of June this year indicated there was \$93,000 or just over had been spent on the project, mainly on employment expenses. One of the things I am interested to know is where we're up to with expenditure on that project. What funding for the RTI project was allocated in this Budget? How many staff does that represent? Could you describe the staffing for it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, so this is the RTI uplift project.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So it's all an important part of our transparency agenda. It was initiated and I think alluded to in 2022 as part of our government's interim response to the Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian government's response to child sexual abuse in institutional settings. Now, the commissioner of inquiry made a recommendation in its final report, a recommendation at 17.8 which relates to reforming information sharing and access processes, including a recommendation to review and reform the operation of Right to Information Act 2009, and Personal Information Protection Act 2004 to ensure victim survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts can obtain information relating to that abuse.

Now, the government has agreed to all commission of inquiry recommendations and has committed to delivering this recommendation by July 26. Now, to the funding. At that time, \$500,000 was committed to support the uplift of RTI capability and practiced in the public service with the provision of centralised training, building skilled RTI practitioners and reducing key person dependencies in agencies. Over the last calendar year, 2023, a project plan was developed which established a project governance structure, a discussion paper exploring issues for RTI in Tasmania and opportunities for strengthening service provisions prepared and circulated, and a communication strategy was developed and internal - and public or stakeholders' surveys were conducted.

A proposal was obtained from the University of Tasmania to develop modules for RTI delegates. Now, additionally, departments and agencies made improvements to RTI processes by recruiting additional staff, streamlining processes, waiving fees for victim survivor applicants and their representatives and ensuring applicants receive appropriate clinical support if the information released may be traumatising. In 2024 the RTI uplift project steering committee has continued its discussion and revised the focuses of the project to ensure the alignment with the commission of inquiry recommendations to form a response.

Importantly, DPAC has partnered with the University of Tasmania to develop the comprehensive training materials with a contract being signed in August this year and work commencing. The uplift project will focus on delivering a comprehensive suite of training models for all Tasmanian state service RTI delegates and other resources to ensure consistency in decision-making and processes across government while the commission of inquiry response focuses on legislative reform. Do we have any other matters?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier, so there is \$250,000 in the 2024-25 year in relation to the RTI uplift project, and that money is funding the project manager for that project and also the training that the premier has just mentioned.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Can I just follow up, because you mentioned the discussion paper and I've got version 4, which I think is the most recent version, here? There was sort of some ironic necessity at different times to get updates on this project by RTIing information that wasn't readily available and there were barriers there. But that irony aside, I note the discussion paper version 4 has a statement in it that says, 'The assumption within agencies and ministers' offices that assessed disclosure must be used simply because the request for information was framed as a request for assessed disclosure should be actively challenged.'

That's a statement I utterly agree with. I do understand that the uplift project steering committee minutes from 13 August included the statement, 'The head of the state services has' - 'The head of the state service be asked to write to heads of agency to consider reviewing routine disclosure practices,' and I'm wondering if that action has been taken at the request of the - or at the indication of the Uplift Project steering committee.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Kathrine.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier. So, in relation to that, Ms Webb, I have regularly spoken to secretaries, for example, in relation to commission of inquiry about increasing the information that is disclosed to the community about action that heads of agencies are taking in relation to complaints regarding child sexual abuse, as an example. So certainly, I mean, I have been appointed since April 2024 and I have been taking every step to determine if there is activity or projects underway whether that can actually be actively disclosed, for example, before we receive that RTI request.

It is in a very difficult space, if I may comment, in relation to RTI. It is very difficult to actually attract and retain officers that are willing to work in an environment which is under heavy scrutiny and is attempting, you know, to apply, and we have to stand by the decisions of particular RTI officers when they are making these decisions. I'm not interfering, for example, with the decision RTI officers in my team are making, but I'm often asked to explain the consequences or back my officers in in terms of their decision-making. But I know that we have a lot to improve in relation to RTI. I'm aware of that from, you know, other departments in which I worked. But I also need to work to make sure that we have positive support for the RTI officers that are choosing this as a career and trying to make these improvements in, you know, a very scrutinised area of comment.

Ms WEBB - Sure. Thank you. There's a JLN agreement RTI review. The Uplift Project isn't being put on hold while that's occurring, I take it. We're still implementing things under the Uplift Project?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we are.

Ms WEBB - Because in terms of the Integrity Commission review we heard yesterday things are sort of on hold until that's done, so I just wanted to check that that same dynamic wasn't occurring in the RTI space.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, it's not.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, I want to go back to your statements which lack credibility about the stadium only costing Tasmanian taxpayers \$375 million. Why aren't the costings for the removal of the historic Goods Shed available, and what is your understanding of what it will cost to move the Goods Shed, and who would carry that cost?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, Ms Beach from the Macquarie Point Development Corporation spoke about these matters yesterday, and I can assure you, Ms O'Connor, that the investment I'm making into the stadium is \$375 million. And if you would like to ask Ms Beach further questions -

Ms O'CONNOR - I'd like to ask you, because you said you'd be managing this project to within an inch of its life.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You remember that, do you?

Ms O'CONNOR - It would be really helpful to know, given you've got such a close management role in the finances of the stadium, what your understanding is of what it would cost to remove the Goods Shed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms Beach put that on record yesterday. I'm happy to provide some -

Ms O'CONNOR - Could you? The question is being asked of you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and I'll refer to Ms Beach's statement. What I'm saying, Ms O'Connor, is that the contribution from the state Government will be \$375 million and the contribution from the federal government is \$240 million. A good partnership on that urban renewal project. What's being missed in all this is that it's more than just the stadium itself; it's the development of the Macquarie Point site, and which is a significant opportunity, given it is way underutilised, a wasteland, effectively. A sewerage plant within those boundaries.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, there's another cost.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but that was always going to be part of removal anyway.

Ms WEBB - So you were always planning to develop it for something special, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's correct, and -

Ms WEBB - There was always the opportunity for that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. And my view is -

Ms O'CONNOR - But back to the question about the Goods Shed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I can ask Ms Beach to -

CHAIR - I'd really like to get out of overview and we have infrastructure later in the day.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which is -

Ms O'CONNOR - I understand that, Chair, but I think it's important to establish to the greatest extent possible what this stadium and its associated works are going to cost the people of Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$375 million, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is not true. You can't say that. Your own financial impact statement makes it clear you're going to load Macquarie Point Development Corporation up with at least \$145 million in debt. You're scratching around for private partners. What happens if they don't come through? The people of Tasmania will pay the cost overruns, the subsidies for 30 years, and you won't even tell the committee what your understanding is of what it would cost to remove the Goods Shed and put it up near the cenotaph.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which looks great, I reckon. The, you know, heritage value of the shed being moved, viewing of the cenotaph through the roof there.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, great.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which I think is tremendous and -

Ms O'CONNOR - The RSL doesn't.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the RSL have certain views. We're agreed to have a good neighbour charter with the RSL. There are mixed views amongst some of the RSL membership, and we're wanting to ensure that the stadia project and the Macquarie Point Precinct is very respectful of our servicemen and women.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I ask, premier - sorry. Okay. Thank you. Can I ask, do you expect the private sector to fund the development of the multi-storey car park that's planned? I read yesterday you thought that you could get the private sector to help out with the northern access road. Would there be a toll on that road so that a private company could return a profit? Because we know the private sector is not going to invest in a loss-making venture. Who's

PUBLIC

going to pay for the multi-storey car park and the northern access road and the removal of the Goods Shed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're expecting great interest from the private sector when it comes to the stadia project. We've already had interest. You know, it's an exciting opportunity, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - But just answer the question. Who is going to pay for the carpark?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are expecting private sector investment when it comes to the stadium project, and \$375 million will be invested from the Tasmania government on the project.

Ms O'CONNOR - And the rest of it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you know \$240 million from the federal government as well. And, you know, we've drawn a line in the sand. We believe it's a good investment.

Ms O'CONNOR - The tide's coming in.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A good investment for the Tasmanian community, and yes, it will secure an AFL team but also 4,000 jobs in construction. There will be many opportunities for private investment and further economic generating activity.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just to finish on this line of questioning, because you have not answered the question yet, do you expect Macquarie Point Development Corporation to borrow in order to move the goods shed, and do you expect the private sector to fund the carpark and the northern access road. Simple questions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Look, there is some work to go through over the course between the planning system - and this is a planning document, in terms of the submission. We will invest \$375 million into the stadium.

Ms O'CONNOR - And the rest of it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, \$375 million. I am happy to provide - to ask Ms Beach to come to the table and answer some of your questions. I take great interest in the project, of course, but the project is the most scrutinised project that I can ever recall.

Ms O'CONNOR - But you are not even answering these questions, and you are pretending it is being heavily scrutinised. Here we are trying to scrutinise you on it, and you are avoiding the questions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, there was -

Ms WEBB - Who is paying for the goods shed to be moved?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Who is paying for it?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are investing \$375 million into this project.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's not the question.

Ms WEBB - Who will pay for the goods shed to be moved?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, this was carried through and worked through yesterday with Ms Beach.

Ms O'CONNOR - What's the answer then?

Ms WEBB - What is the answer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am happy to ask Ms Beach to come to the table, if you like?

Ms WEBB - Surely you can answer the question. In the general terms, who is paying for the goods shed to be moved?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will take you through the process.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are supposed to be managing this within an inch of its life.

CHAIR - Welcome, Ms Beach.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

Ms BEACH - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Anne Beach, who is the CEO of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation. Thank you, Anne.

CHAIR - So the question is, who is paying for the goods shed to be relocated? That's the question.

Ms BEACH - Thank you.

CHAIR - And the only question. So, through you, Premier, the Corporation will lead that project with the existing funds that we have.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you have some costings on it?

Ms BEACH - We are working through that. As I noted yesterday, there are a couple of things we need to consider here. There is a couple of different ways we can relocate the shed. One is it can be dismantled and then re-assembled, and the other we can look at potentially moving it as a whole building. We will go through a process of going to market to test the best way to do that, and there are a few ways that we have looked to fund that, and using the existing funds that we have.

PUBLIC

One of the things that we have done to be fiscally responsible, because we are a public non-financial corporation and maintain our own funds is we have a reserve fund. So, where we manage our capital projects, and savings we make we retain, and we will use that to manage any additional costs and things that pop up along the way, and that is how we seek to manage the goods shed relocation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I just ask then, you must have indicative costs of those options that you talked about. Are you able to give the committee your best indicative costs of what it would cost Macquarie Point Development Corporation to move the goods shed?

Ms BEACH - We need to take this to market, so it's really important we don't indicate to the market a price.

Ms O'CONNOR - Five million, ten million?

Ms BEACH - Can I come at it a different way?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, Ms O'Connor, Ms Beach has answered the question.

Ms BEACH - So in terms of the money we have got available -

CHAIR - We have got a supplementary from Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - So you are using money that you have squirrelled away, essentially, managed to save elsewhere and capitalise in some sense. So how much is that currently sitting as an amount available for Macquarie Point Development Corporation? How much is in that bucket?

Ms BEACH - I don't have that figure in front of me, but I can provide it.

Ms WEBB - We could pick it up later, perhaps, when we come back to infrastructure.

Ms BEACH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. The intention of my question is, you must feel that you have enough in that bucket to be able to afford to pay for it, if that is the bucket that is going to be used, so I am just interested to understand the size of the bucket.

CHAIR - Is that a question?

Ms WEBB - No, that's it. She's going to come back later, when we come to infrastructure.

CHAIR - Apologies, I missed that. So, we will get that later. Was that your question, honourable member?

Ms WEBB - No, that's fine. I appreciate that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So if we are able to take that on notice in the terms of that question, we can -

PUBLIC

CHAIR - And you will come back.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Come back at some -

CHAIR - During the day?

Mr ROCKLIFF - During the day.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Or when we have accessed the information.

CHAIR - Right, okay. That's fine. Premier, I have a question, and it may not fit in this area, but I will give it a go. The announcement yesterday by the government that the public trustee will be brought into the government as a department, and there was a media release from the Chair saying that the board was surprised by the government's announcement. Can you give us some indication of perhaps why the board would be surprised, why there had not been a conversation and what is at the back of that particular announcement?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. I understand the Attorney-General was available for scrutiny today when it comes to this.

Ms WEBB - We had him yesterday.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand the board met with the Attorney-General last week, and we are committed to ensuring the public trustee's position to best serve the needs of vulnerable Tasmanians, of course. We carefully considered the findings of the independent review by Mr Damian Bugg, and the -

Ms WEBB - Did he recommend this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - - and the Tasmanian Economic Regulator's Review of the public trustee's fees and charges, as well as the public trustee's response. As a result, the government has determined that we will restructure the public trustee within a government agency with the commercial will, estate and trustee services to be transferred to the private sector. The services that will be transferred to the private sector are commercial services that are also undertaken by the private sector, such as writing of wills, estate and trust administration.

Not the legislative functions that the public trustee has been established to provide. We want to ensure the provision of quality services at an appropriate cost to the Tasmanian community. We appreciate all of the work, indeed, undertaken by the public trustee in implementing the recommendations from the recent reviews, and we appreciate the ongoing support, of course, from the Chair to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients in the public trustee's staff and the Tasmanian community.

But the government will continue to work closely with the board, and the executive management team with the public trustee during the reform process. Any services currently provided by the public trustee that fall under the guardianship administration legislative framework, where orders are made by TASCAT to put in place someone else to make the

PUBLIC

decisions on behalf of a vulnerable Tasmanian, these are what we will be ensuring will remain as a government service.

CHAIR - I am interested in why the government have chosen to go down this path when, I think, most Tasmanians agreed that the public trustee had turned around their business quite significantly. They had been proactive, they had certainly addressed the recommendations of the review, they were proactive, and they were certainly, I believe, had a lot more confidence provided by the community. So why didn't you give them a chance to at least implement what they had been doing in a positive way?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we wanted the best possible service for vulnerable Tasmanians, Chair. And two reviews are done, and -

Ms WEBB - The first one did not recommend this, just to point out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We want to ensure that people get access to the services that they deserve at the lowest possible cost.

CHAIR - But you won't get access to a will through a commercial arrangement at anywhere near the same price.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have gone through the services. Now, when it comes to the services indeed, the reform will focus on the delivery of the services that I have mentioned, and an efficient and effective basis in recognising the move to a supported decision-making framework. We will be seeking expert advice on the most sustainable governance model for the services provided by the public trustee, and that advice is expected to take six to eight weeks. The government will continue to provide significant levels of financial support to the public trustee.

Indeed, the 2024-25 budget provides \$27.6 million over four years to support the delivery of the public trustee's community service obligations and the implementation of the recommendations of the 2021 independent review by Mr Damian Bugg, AM QC. Now, this represents an increase of 75 per cent to the public trustee's community service obligation funding for 2024-25, compared to the allocation in the previous budget.

This includes funding to support the delivery of the public trustee's community service obligation activities, so that \$25.6 million over four years, and it's a response to recommendations from the 2021 independent review into the Public Trustee's community service obligation activities, so that \$25.6 million over four years, and it's a response to recommendations from the 2021 independent review into the Public Trustee and there's \$2 million remaining over two years.

We're committed to ensuring that Tasmanians who need the service of the Public Trustee receive quality, efficient and effective services. It is anticipated the arrangements will be in place in 12-18 months, I'm advised. The government's been working with the Public Trustee during the course of both of the recent reviews and will continue to work with the Public Trustee during this next phase of reform.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Just my final question before I hand to Ms Webb. Just remind me, does this need to go through a process of the parliament? It's not something that we do very often. That's all. So, I'm just interested. Does this new arrangement need to come to the parliament?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm advised it's a potential machinery of government change so it might not necessarily go through the parliament.

CHAIR - So it won't need to come to the parliament.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'd stand to be corrected, but that's the advice I've got.

Ms WEBB - Can I follow up on some questions there?

CHAIR - You can, Ms Webb, and then I'm coming to Mr Edmunds.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. So, the Otter Report came down in February this year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's correct.

Ms WEBB - When was the decision made to take this course of action?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In July 2023 the director of the independent Tasmanian economic regulator -

Ms WEBB - Yes, I don't need the back story. I just want to know when the decision was made to do this.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, well it's important leading up. We directed an independent economic regulator to conduct an enquiry into the fees and charges for clients that are required by legislation to use the services of the Public Trustee. This was a key recommendation from an independent review led by Damian Bugg, as I've said and the Attorney-General and I have carefully considered the regulator's findings and the Public Trustee's response. The regulator made a number of concerning findings regarding a number of matters.

What we want to do is ensure that the operating costs are at the right point. The Public Trustee's operating costs in terms of the findings are too high and the average cost of providing services to represented persons in Tasmania was amongst the highest in the country and more than three times higher than in Victoria where a supported decision-making model has already been implemented. 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 current fees and charges are unlikely to reflect the cost of delivering services and can, in some instances, place a financial burden on clients and require clients to sell assets in order to pay the Public Trustees.

Ms WEBB - But can I just return you to my question, please Premier, because we've got a time limit here. You've just described things, many of which are misleading. For example, the regulator's report has a thorough response from the Public Trustee proposing a range of ways to respond to those concerns raised. I note that it's very selective to compare to Victoria where the supported decision-making involves one point of contact in a three-year order. Where here we support people much better through the system than the Public Trustee has been

PUBLIC

carefully putting place with great consultation with client groups. I presume you didn't consult with any client groups in making this decision, Premier. Is that a yes or a no?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, clearly the report signalled a need for reform.

Ms WEBB - No consultation with client groups, I take it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a question for the Attorney-General. We have made the decision in the best interests of vulnerable Tasmanians.

Ms WEBB - Back to my question about timing of that decision, when was the decision made. Given the report came down in February – you were preparing a budget. The budget doesn't seem to reflect this decision. So, when was the decision made?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, cabinet have been working through these matters in recent months of course; through the report in recent months. I can probably be more specific to that if I can access the information if you'd like.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I'd like that. There're two other questions I have on this. One is, you mentioned delivering better services to clients. So, are you saying that this new proposed approach will deliver better services to those who are within the services that are being subsumed into the department, or in the services that are being outsourced to the public sector, or both those groups? Who will be better off in terms of the services they receive?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well that's the goal. We wouldn't be making the reforms without the goal in both instances.

Ms WEBB - So you're saying they'll both be better off under this new model?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's our goal.

Ms WEBB - And in terms of that then, how much money are you saving through changing to this model, in terms of resource required from the state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's not always about money.

Ms WEBB - No, but I'm asking you how much money are you saving?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's not always about money, Ms Webb. It's about ensuring that people are delivered the right services.

Ms WEBB - Yes. And I'm very interested in that. Will you be saving money under this proposed model?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well it's not about saving money. It's not about money per se.

Ms WEBB - How will the investment change from the state?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's about ensuring we get the right services, particularly for vulnerable Tasmanians.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - What will be the change in state resource allocation under the new model compared to the current model?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This isn't about a budget-saving. This is about delivery of service.

Ms WEBB - I'm asking about a clear, factual description of the difference that will be required in what's required from the state under the new model compared to what's required under this model.

CHAIR - Is that available?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can seek the information if you wish for me, Chair.

CHAIR - Yes, I would like that information.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But it's not about a budget saving. It's about ensuring we have the right services for vulnerable Tasmanians as has been pointed out in two reports.

CHAIR - If it's available that would be appreciated. Thank you. Mr Edmunds, anything on this particular area?

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Just following up, and happy for this to be taken on notice, or come back later. Do you know how many wills and estates the Public Trustee manages?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a good question. I don't have that information to hand, Mr Edmunds, but I'm more than happy to see if I can seek that out.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you, and just a quick -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, the Attorney-General, I'm sure can follow that up for you.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. Also, just interested to know the value of those assets, or potential value or – put on them. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. We'll seek to find that information for you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Final question in overview and then I'm heading to 1.1. Thank you, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, back to the stadium.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's your favourite subject.

Ms O'CONNOR - No. It's not my favourite subject. It's certainly a subject though that a lot of Tasmanians are talking about.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course they are.

Ms O'CONNOR - Particularly since the papers were lodged with the planning commission where Tasmanians have seen that there's already a cost overrun.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Four thousand pages.

Ms O'CONNOR - There's already a cost overrun. Well the financial statement document is not 4,000 pages. It tells an interesting story. Premier, one of the things that the consultants say is that it's unlikely or it's difficult to attract private sector investment for this sort of potentially loss-making infrastructure. Given that your government already signed us up to a dud deal with the AFL -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Great deal.

Ms O'CONNOR - A dud deal with the feds -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Great deal.

Ms O'CONNOR - where we haven't locked in a GST exemption.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Fantastic deal, it is.

Ms O'CONNOR - What faith should Tasmanians have that you will sign anything other than dud deals over private investment in the stadium?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Look the deal that we've signed with the AFL is a very good deal.

Ms O'CONNOR - So you say.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do say that and that'll be proven in time. I know there was a lot of conjecture around this in May last year, but it is a good deal that will be enduring for Tasmanians and I know -

Ms O'CONNOR - Enduring losses.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know that it's difficult in terms of the decisions that we make. We don't make these decisions, you know, that are not in the best interests of Tasmanians from our point of view. I can guarantee that there will be people attending the entertainment, the AFL matches. I am sure you will enter the gates of the new stadium, Ms O'Connor, at some point in time when it's completed to watch a football game.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'd rather watch us play at your park where Tasmanians are already funding the upgrade of your park to the tune of \$130 million.

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$65 million from the Tasmanian government.

Ms O'CONNOR - The total redevelopment though.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And 65 for the federal government. So, 130 in total.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Can I just ask - it's really important that there's clarity on this and maybe you don't have clarity in your own mind - who will cover the cost overruns on the stadium build?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well again we're investing \$375 million.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's not the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And the private sector of course will contribute -

Ms O'CONNOR - Carry the losses.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well the private sector will no doubt invest in this project and manage the project within an inch of its life as -

Ms O'CONNOR - Who will carry the cost overruns, premier? Do you know?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The \$375 million is what the Tasmanian government are putting into the stadium, Ms O'Connor, so -

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just one last one.

CHAIR - No, that's it. That's it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, I'll come back to it.

CHAIR - You will come back at a later time. Moving now to 1.1 Strategic Policy and Advice.

Output Group1 (b)

Support for Executive Decision (b)

1.1 Strategic Policy and Advice (b)

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, not on the stadium.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect, the stadium is relevant to this output, and I'm going to ask questions about the stadium. Premier, who owns the Macquarie Point Development Corporation and Stadiums Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Anne?

Ms BEACH - Through you, premier. So we're a statutory authority of a public non-financial corporation, and I report through to the minister for Sport and Events.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Ms Beach. So we can agree, can't we, premier, that the people of Tasmania, the Crown owns Macquarie Point Development Corporation and Stadiums Tasmania, which means that the \$145 million cost overrun that your own consultants expert

PUBLIC

Macquarie Point Development Corporation to carry as debt which will be transferred to Stadiums Tasmania, that is debt that will be carried by the people of Tasmania, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms O'Connor, I think you're splitting hairs here.

Ms O'CONNOR - No.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think you're trying to muddy the waters really -

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I'm trying to get some clarity on it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When it comes to the capital investment that we're making on the stadium, which is \$375 million. I say it every five seconds when you try and ask me these questions.

Ms O'CONNOR - That doesn't make it true.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it is true.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's how propaganda works.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's not propaganda, it's -

Ms O'CONNOR - We've had repetition, repetition, repetition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I repeat again, in a very calm, measured manner, that this is a controversial project. I accept that. It has been heavily scrutinised, it will continue to be heavily scrutinised. We're in the planning system, as we are now, with a project of state significance. That legislation had to be taken through both houses of parliament last year, come back to parliament again as we committed to. So there are many opportunities for parliamentary oversight when it comes to this project. But the Planning Commission now is -

Ms O'CONNOR - This is propaganda you're not answering the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am answering the question. I keep -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you're accusing me of splitting hairs over a fact. The fact is the people of Tasmania own Macquarie Point Development Corporation and Stadiums Tasmania and they will carry -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but they own DSIP as well and the Department of Health.

Ms O'CONNOR - Therefore, you've said the state's contribution will be \$375 million. But there is also this extra \$145 million at least which will be loaded on to Mac Point Development Corporation as debt. That makes, at a conservative estimate, the state's contribution about \$520 million if you include Mac Point's debt. Do you agree? That is all cost that would be carried by the Tasmanian people. Will you be honest about that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we invest in enabling infrastructure every year, every day of the week, Ms O'Connor, and this is an example of it. The fact is that we'll be having a capital

investment of \$375 million into the stadium. There will be other opportunities for private investment across the precinct no doubt and in the stadium.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, the Macquarie Point Development Corporation according to its last annual report has net cash at bank of about \$6.6 million. Do you think that will be enough to pay for the removal and relocation of the goods shed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I refer to the answer of Ms Beach around the goods shed. Answered it very openly and honestly to this point in time. The fact is we are in the planning stage, Ms O'Connor, okay? In the planning stage. Planning documents have been submitted to the Tasmanian Planning Commission as part of the project of state significance process, and we'll keep working our way through that.

CHAIR - One last question, honourable Member.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which is available for scrutiny as well.

CHAIR - And then I need to move down the table.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. I'm just confirming that you say this is an opportunity for scrutiny and you're being really transparent about it. We haven't established through you what the actual costs will be of this stadium to the people of Tasmania. There's all sorts of extra associated costs that the private sector is clearly not going to fund. What is your plan B if you can't get private sector companies that are foolish enough to invest in loss-making infrastructure? What's your plan B? Who'll cover the cost overruns, who's going to pay for this? The people of Tasmania, aren't they?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. We're working through the private investment options now. We covered this yesterday in scrutiny in terms of PPPs and other private investment options. I have a great deal of faith that there will be a great deal of investor interest, like there has been in other stadium projects across the country. I think of Optus Oval, for example, Ms O'Connor. So we will have these discussions, you and I, until -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, I don't want to be part of any sort of discussions over enabling a stadium.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I was referring to the scrutiny over the course of the next number of years.

Ms O'CONNOR - There'll be a different set of numbers at the table next year, I reckon.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Do you reckon?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, I reckon more of the costs will be adding up and becoming obvious, and you won't be able to say Tasmanians are only contributing \$375 million.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I beg to differ at this point in time. You have your view, I have mine.

CHAIR - Thank you. And I have mine. The honourable member for Launceston.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm going to give you a break, premier, from stadium questions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - I do thank you or your office for the list of government boards. So I'm going to ask you about the government boards.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right, okay. Sure.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have to say, the Honourable Will Hodgman when he was premier used to have the answer ready for me because I generally asked it each year.

CHAIR - The honourable member's well known for her interest in this area.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, I have an interest in this area.

CHAIR - You do.

Ms ARMITAGE - And I'm not looking at gender. So I'm not gender-based with the board numbers. I'm more interested in the regional distribution of boards. I noticed that GBEs, we've got 13 interstate members, two from the northwest, four from the north, 14 from the south. State owned companies, 14 interstate, three northwest, eight north, 18 from the south. Even if we look at the Department of Justice just randomly, it actually looks all right until you see what the south is, interstate 27, northwest 16, north 30 and then south 185.

So my question, could you advise, just looking at a couple for Hydro Tas and Public Finance Corporation, why there are no board members from the north or the northwest of Tasmania? You've got two and three interstate members for these boards respectively. So what efforts do we make with regard to or for these organisations such as this to endeavour to recruit board members from regional Tasmania as apart from the south and interstate? I have heard that sometimes from people that are on boards, it does make it very difficult. If its majority might be southern based, for people from the north at times that board meetings are organised, it's not always easy for them. But obviously there's not a real regional representation on many of the boards.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Accepting there's very capable people right across Tasmania in every region, of course.

Ms ARMITAGE - Absolutely.

CHAIR - The premier of our state is northwest based.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is true.

Ms ARMITAGE - And the northwest fairs very badly in board representation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and we always -

PUBLIC

Ms ARMITAGE - I guess, before you answer, I'd just say, how can you expect particularly the GBEs to truly represent the interests of all Tasmanians when there's absolutely no board representation from north and northwest?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So we try and make sure we've got the right balance of skills, experience, cultural diversity, gender. And when a position becomes vacant on a board, the agency who administers the board will run an expression of interest process. An expression of interest will be shared with individuals who are registered on the Department of Treasury and Finance maintained database for those interested in being appointed to a government board as well as the Tasmanian Women's Register. The agency who administers the board will then undertake a merit assessment to determine who they should recommend for appointment to the appointing authority, who is usually the relevant portfolio minister or the governor.

Many board positions have specific skills or experience requirements that are specified in the legislation which establishes the board. The agency will make a recommendation to the minister who should be appointed, and the minister will sign the instrument of appointment. The governor is the appointing authority. The recommendation of who should be appointed will go before the executive council for the governor's consideration. All board appointments must be noted by cabinet before the identified can be appointed. Once the relevant appointing authority's approval has been obtained and cabinet has been briefed the candidate will be formally offered the position and provided with an instrument of appointment in that sense. So, it is a skills-based board. I take your point on the regional makeup and representation, and

Ms ARMITAGE - Do you think people don't apply from the north and northwest because they simply don't get the positions? You know, if you keep applying in - I could mention another entity that's got a GBE that's fairly close that tends to, you know, work interstate, and people just in the end didn't think they were actually going to get there. I wonder if because the north and north-west people, when they apply, they just get tired of applying, do you think? And I know you put a lot of effort into gender onboards. Personally, I've always been more merit-based than gender.

Ms O'CONNOR - They're not mutually exclusive, though.

Ms WEBB - It's still merit-based.

Ms ARMITAGE - They may. No, no, no. I'd prefer not to have comments from the other members while I'm asking the premier. But, you know, my perspective is merit as opposed to gender. But you do put a lot of effort into that and I'm just concerned - I just wonder about your comments about the fact that on many of these boards - and, you know, if I was to actually look at a total, yes, we do have good people, as you say, in the north and the north west. Yourself comes from north west.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can - look, I can't be specific around who's applied and who's not applied in terms of the number of people.

Ms ARMITAGE - I appreciate that, but this has been ongoing since I've been asking these questions, I would say, for 10 years, and it hasn't changed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. Okay.

CHAIR - Homework for somebody.

Ms ARMITAGE - It really has not changed. I could go back to my - the original questions many years ago, and every couple of years I ask the questions again to see if maybe we might have some more statewide representation, and it simply doesn't change. And, as I said, you know, okay, gender may - but as far as I am concerned I am more merit-based and I am more regional-based. Just think that, okay, people in the north, there's some qualified people there and the same in the north-west.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely. I don't disagree with the motivation behind your question.

Ms ARMITAGE - So I would appreciate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Kathrine, would you like to add anything to that?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier. Ms Armitage, if I may just comment from some experience in being on panels, for example, to select whether it's not a GBE board member but other, you know, significant senior committee for government.

Ms ARMITAGE - There's lots here. Boards, yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - And having also worked with, for example, a large north-west component of health staff and filling committees and advisory panels, for the Northwest Regional or the Mersey Community Hospital, it will - it's not that you often have a full fill and spill, for example, for boards. Often, you know, a single appointment will come up. You may be trying to, you know, fill a gap, for example, on risk or in relation to, you know, CFO credentials or financial advisory or if it's into a particular specialist skill in terms of energy markets or the rest. And I note that obviously it's Hydro or Aurora, for example, that are sitting in that north-west.

Ms ARMITAGE - I know. I appreciate that. Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So in terms of that perspective it will then - it's not so much just from the region, and we always look for a geographic representation of communities in Tasmania, but it will often come down to a single position and whether in that geographic representation they're filling that particular skillset at that point in time. It's often better, for example - and I mean, for example, the WorkCover board where you do, actually, have quite a spill and fill and you're looking for a large number where you can then balance, you know, diversity and geographic diversity and the skill mix to try and achieve that across Tasmania. But that's just a comment from experience in doing that.

Ms ARMITAGE - So with these board positions - as the final question, because I won't go on about it. I'll know more about it later. You know, I do wonder what message it sends. But the cost: for example, GBEs of 13 interstate. So, would the board meetings be by Webex or do they actually - do the board members actually come down now personally and appear in person? So, we're looking at cost of accommodation, we're looking flights, we're looking meal allowances. So, you know, is it online, which obviously would keep the costs lower?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I'd imagine it's mixed, depending on the individual circumstances at the time. I know a number who would come down face-to-face.

Ms ARMITAGE - Because they used to come down all the time.

CHAIR - Technology.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm just wondering since COVID whether it has changed or not, because I know that was, you know, some of the costings I've had in the past for interstate board members was quite high.

Mr ROCKLIFF - My guesstimate would be that there's more online activity. I haven't seen direct evidence of that, but I know that I meet with other ministers and other premiers online quite often for various reasons. I think COVID has changed the dynamics of meetings and the like, which would reduce the cost, I'm sure. But, look, I can - there's a few boards, but they're - we have many interstate people.

Ms ARMITAGE - We do.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And I think your point is well -

Ms ARMITAGE - I've got the numbers here.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, well-founded in terms of, you know, balancing that up as board members become available or board positions become available.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, I will continue to ask the questions. Thank you, premier.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Quick areas. Premier, why hasn't the Tasmanian government provided an annual Close the Gap report since 2022? Will we be seeing another one at some point soon?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We're finalising that now, and my expectation is that it will be in the not-too-distant future. Before the end of the year.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Yes. Through the premier. The team have been working very diligently on an implementation plan to try and change up the approach in terms of Closing the Gap. One of the key recommendations has also been that Closing the Gap deliverables are included in each of our intergovernmental agreements with the Commonwealth. So, from a health perspective I'm very aware that in drafting of the schedules for the new national health reform agreement that we are working on Closing the Gap outcomes and deliverables to be included so that states and territories and our own state health systems working together with the Commonwealth are having to report in relation to progress against closing the gap in health outcomes and similarly in other IGAs. We have also inserted Closing the Gap monitoring and reporting in each of the head of agency performance agreements. We are shortly close to finalising the Closing the Gap implementation plan and annual reporting in relation to that.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - That's good to hear. Premier, what role are you taking in terms of leadership to progress the promised pathway to treaty in this state, noting it seems to have stalled?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm engaging with Aboriginal communities and organisations. I'm meeting with TRACA on 1 November.

Ms WEBB - On pathway to treaty matters? Is this the consultation that you are doing?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That will no doubt be part of the agenda. I haven't seen an agenda yet for that. I am participating in the wukalina Walk this week, of which there will be, as I understand it, members of the TAC that I'll be engaging with over the course of the Thursday and Thursday night and Friday. So I'm looking forward to that. I'm continuing to liaise with our Minister for Aboriginal Affairs as well, of course. The Budget provides \$100,000 to support the continued work of the Aboriginal Advisory Group on a Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty, as an example. I wouldn't say that it's stalled, albeit my focus, to your first part of the question, is very much on Closing the Gap and there is some work to do. While we have had some improvements, you know, incarceration rates are still way too high. Life expectancy, educational attainment and other matters. So that should and would be my focus, notwithstanding the truth-telling part of that is -

Ms WEBB - They're two separate processes, aren't they?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, two separate processes, but important.

Ms WEBB - Both important, agreed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And some time - and I think both relevant to each other.

Ms WEBB - Well, yes, but we can improve both at the same time and progress pathway, can't we?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, we can.

Ms WEBB - There's no timeline that you're looking at on that in terms of significant milestones?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not at [inaudible] people together on a Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty. But also ensuring the Tasmanian community have an understanding of why it is really important to acknowledge our dark history.

Ms WEBB - What actions are being taken on that front?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of -

Ms WEBB - The community.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well -

Ms WEBB - And improving understanding in the community.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Advisory Group on truth-telling and treaty have been extended for a further 12 months so they can continue their work and I am advised the Aboriginal Advisory Group on truth-telling and treaty will deliver its final report to government in the middle of next year.

Ms WEBB - Right. You didn't have something you wanted to add there in terms of my question to you about engaging with the broader community and improving understanding and engagement with this necessary process.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, certainly -

Ms WEBB - You raised it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I did raise it.

Ms WEBB - So I'm just wondering what actions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I remember during my time as education minister, the establishment of the orb within the Department of Education at the time, and now DECYP of course, and how different it is in terms of engaging young people in Tasmania's history and first nations history now through interactive education such as that compared to when I was at primary school in 1977 when, I think, Tiagarra opened up at Devonport, and I don't recall exactly at the time, but it was pointed out to me when I told the facility a couple of years ago some of the language used in terms of vanished race and those types of matters. I, as a young person, was not failed of the truth when it comes to our history, and thankfully, young people now have a better understanding.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask a quick question on the lobbyist code of conduct which we know is going to come into effect in 1 January next year, that of course shifted from DPAC's responsibility, the Integrity Commission in 2022, and they've developed this new code of conduct and framework. Will you be requiring government ministers and senior staff to undertake training in order to comply with both the spirit and the intent of the new code when it comes into effect on 1 January?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I will consider that opportunity. It probably would be a very good idea in terms of ministers getting fully informed on those matters.

Ms WEBB - It certainly introduces a range of more stringent requirements. So presumably, some information or training will be required. On that, too, the Integrity Commission has been quite upfront. They've said, and I quote this from them, 'Reform will also need to extend to controls. That is, providing the commission with a process to monitor compliance with the new system and implementing a clearly defined system of sanctions for noncompliance.' On that front, it doesn't appear that the Integrity Commission has been provided with additional funding, for example, to effect oversight of the code of conduct which comes into effect on 1 January. Is it your understanding that they will require additional funding to do that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have consistently increased the funding to the Integrity Commission. In fact, since 2018, there's been increased funding -

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - We established yesterday that they are not funded to do the work that they have got to do. This is a new piece of work that they will be responsible for.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. Well, I will be interested to engage with the Integrity Commission on this. There is no doubt, though, that the increased funding for the Integrity Commission in the 24-25 financial year is increasing from 3.705 million to 3.726 million.

Ms WEBB - By that much? Goodness.

Ms O'CONNOR - Very small, minus the efficiency dividend.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which, since 2018, has been quite a substantial increase, as I understand it, since -

Ms O'CONNOR - They're the lowest funded Integrity Commission in the country.

Mr ROCKLIFF - - since that time. Now, I will stand to be corrected on this, but I thought it was some \$3.4 million more since 2018, but maybe -

Ms WEBB - I think we've had them come out fairly clearly to articulate that their funding doesn't meet the need that's there to do their statutory functions, so -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I also say, though, Ms Webb, to your question, in addition to the increase in annual funding under its key deliverables, our government is providing an additional \$800,000 over four years to support the commission, implement its oversight in a compliance program, to actively monitor and oversee notifications and investigations conducted by public authority.

Ms WEBB - To do with the commission of inquiry. That's additional funding related to the commission of inquiry. So that's okay, we were just talking about Lobbyist Code, and I was putting it to you that there may be a need for additional funding for the Integrity Commission. I heard you mention that you would engage with the commission on that, and that's good to hear. Thank you.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you. Ms O'Connor.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, I've got a couple of questions to ask you about the state coastal policy validation bill, but I just wanted to follow up on something you said earlier up regarding the pulp mill and that it was a very heavily scrutinised project, and you were involved in its scrutiny. Do you see some parallels between John Gay's plan for the Tamar Valley with a pulp mill and the stadium? It's a bad deal facilitated by a massive public subsidy, unpopular. Do you see those parallels?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I couldn't think of two more different projects. There is a lot of light between those two projects. Most of the focus of your good self and your colleagues at that time was environmental aspects of the pulp mill, including stock and indeed effluent and emissions. There was a great deal of scrutiny particularly in those particular areas. I draw no parallel between the two.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you did.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I draw no parallel between the two except to say that this is a project that is the most heavily scrutinised project that I can remember, including the pulp mill.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, did you, as the minister responsible for the State Policies and Projects Act have any meetings with the proposed pilitika/Robbins Island Wind Farm developer ASEAN about their planned wharf to Robbins Island across the dunes in contravention of the state coastal policy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I recall visiting Robbins Island maybe earlier this year from memory, maybe late last year.

Ms O'CONNOR - Did you see all those beautiful birds?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have been to Robbins Island before. There has been quite some time between those visits. In fact, probably two decades. And, you know, we discussed a range of matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - So just to confirm, you went to Robbins Island and met the proponent there at Robbins Island. Is that what you're saying?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. And in those conversations, did you make a commitment that government would introduce special retrospectively validating provisions in order to enable ASEAN's wharf onto Macquarie Island?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't recall making any commitments. I just listened to get a better appreciation of the project.

Ms O'CONNOR - So who made the decision that there needed to be a state coastal policy validation build? Was that you as the minister responsible?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That would have been cabinet.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, who took it to cabinet? You're the minister responsible.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We don't talk about cabinet matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, but you're the minister responsible. You can say you took it to cabinet. You're not talking about anything that happened in cabinet. I wouldn't ask you that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Minister Duigan.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Can I just check, minister, the bill had your name on it, yet you didn't take it through the House of Assembly?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Correct.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Your government pretended it was urgent and was prepared to hold up the passage of the Budget to have it debated. The council had different ideas. Where is the evidence? I refer specifically to any legal advice that you have that indicates this validation bill, this special deal for a private developer was necessary?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Take me through that again. Sorry.

Ms O'CONNOR - Where is the evidence, given that you didn't apparently take it to cabinet, you didn't take it through the house.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'm just getting some clarification on that. I know there had been some engagement with the minister on this, but -

Ms O'CONNOR - I mean, we've been briefed by the department on the sort of background to the bill, so I don't think any committee members here need to hear more of that. Well, we've been briefed. We don't need that sort of thing. But there's been no evidence base provided for the build. My final question here is can you confirm that representatives of Philippines-based company ACEN, have been guests of yours or other ministers at Liberal Party fundraisers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't talk about Liberal Party fundraisers, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, they have, haven't they? You've had ACEN at your special meet the premier \$4,000 a-ticket sort of functions like you did with the fish farming industry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's all a matter for the party, Ms O'Connor. The party organisation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Don't you use government offices to have these functions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Government offices?

Ms O'CONNOR - Don't you go up there on the eleventh floor and have these functions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think you're -

Ms O'CONNOR - Publicly-funded building for example. You say it's party business but it's not. It's not just party business.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is party business.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well you've got corporations there to lobby you and other ministers and our information is that ACEN has attended those functions where they get your ear and other minister's ears and then suddenly they get a validation bill.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Every Tasmanian has my ear.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, not at \$4,000 a-head.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Every Tasmanian has my ear as I go around the countryside.

Ms O'CONNOR - Sure.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Not a dissimilar topic in a way.

CHAIR - The premier's ear?

Ms WEBB - Well in some ways. I'm going to ask about, premier, the Integrity Commission's discussion paper no. 2 released in April 2022, which was called Grant Commitments in Election Campaigns. That report made some very unequivocal findings such as the need to clearly differentiate between commitments made before an election and grants provided after an election, clear rules around commitments made by governments. Especially those during election periods. And that pork-barrelling is a form of potential corruption that can undermine trust in government and the democratic process itself. That was a quote from the Integrity Commission.

So it made three recommendations. What I'm asking you about, premier, very squarely, are those three recommendations because they were about the introduction of mandatory grant rules to apply in these situations. The question is have you requested your department to review the Integrity Commission's report of April 2022, and with the intent of formulating and implementation of options for the recommendations it contains? The second question to build on that, just to flag was, will you now undertake to investigate how to best implement those important transparency and accountability measures as a matter of priority with the aim of having the mandated measures in place prior to the next election?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My best knowledge on this of course is that it's up to members of parliament to take their policies to the election and be accountable for those policies as we certainly were.

Ms WEBB - So I'm not asking about your behaviour, premier. I'm not asking about reflections on that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Behaviour? My behaviour is -

Ms WEBB - I'm asking about the Integrity Commission report. We have an Integrity Commission to advise us how best to be ethical in good governance. They provided a clear report. It makes recommendations for particular mandatory rules. They are largely in reference to Commonwealth rules that already exist. So, it's not by any means radical and unusual to have such rules. Have you had your department review that report and provide an implementation plan for those recommendations? If not, will you commit to doing that now so that that can be looked at before the next election?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'll seek advice around these particular matters. Election commitments firstly aren't grants in terms of -

Ms WEBB - Again, I haven't spoken about your election commitments. I'm talking about the Integrity Commission's paper.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - They're very separate processes and we have a transparent process when it comes to elections. We ensure that our -

Ms WEBB - They're neither good nor transparent according to the Integrity Commission.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They're election commitments.

Ms WEBB - So what I'm asking about, the Integrity Commission, our integrity entity, our experts on ethical good governance in the public interest have provided clear guidelines and suggested rules. Have you asked your department to put a plan together or advice to you on how to implement those rules? Have you done that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well not in recent times. I can't recall.

Ms WEBB - At all since the 2022 report.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We comply with the law. MPs are entitled to ensure that they represent their communities. I've stood in 2002, 2006, 2010, made commitments to my communities then didn't win the election then those commitments in terms of my involvement in them – there may well be other members that made similar commitments that was implemented at the time. Different political parties et cetera. But I see nothing wrong -

Ms WEBB - Do you reject the Integrity Commission's advice about appropriate rules?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We do have appropriate processes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Not according to the integrity commissioner.

Ms WEBB - Do you reject the Integrity Commission's advice about appropriate rules?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well I'm confident we've got the appropriate process in place; transparent -

Ms WEBB - So you reject the Integrity Commission's advice about those appropriate rules?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I believe as elected representatives we have every right as MPs to speak with our communities, to reflect their concerns. Whether that be a new basketball court, new nets and tennis court -

Ms WEBB - Just to be clear, you're rejecting the advice of the Integrity Commission?

Mr ROCKLIFF - surf lifesavers and matters -

Ms WEBB - Unless you say otherwise, I can only take it that you are rejecting the advice of the Integrity Commission.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms Morgan-Wicks, would you like to talk about these matters in terms of Integrity Commission and reference?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - I'm always mindful of the time and it's not an opportunity to have a talkfest. It's just a simple question and answer exchange here.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and I'm talking about the political process which Tasmanians have the right in democracy to vote for MPs.

Ms WEBB - I'm talking about the ethical process that the Integrity Commission has provided clear advice on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well there's nothing more ethical than democracy.

Ms WEBB - There's lot of things that need to be put in place to ensure that democracy is healthy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is healthy.

Ms WEBB - And undertaken ethically. That's what we have an Integrity Commission to advise us on, premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - They've provided advice. I've asked you; do you reject that advice?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms Webb.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier, I'm advised that the department has reviewed the Integrity Commission report as we do with each report that is released by the Integrity Commission. In relation to grants management by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, we have reviewed and to ensure that our own management and guidelines are up to date and aligning with the recommendations. So that's just a brief comment in relation to DPAC's management of grants.

Ms WEBB - Which is a small slither of what that report is about. It doesn't touch into the election commitment space, I don't believe. I can move on, Chair, but clearly the premier does reject the advice of the Integrity Commission.

CHAIR - Thank you. I had a quick question before we leave this area. Just in regard to the literacy program there was \$6.5 million over four years and you have a literacy advisory panel. I don't need a long answer. Just is that on track to deliver its desired expectations around providing a great literacy base for students right across Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, thank you very much, Chair. Firstly, can I also put on record that I've had no Liberal fundraiser on level 11.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh okay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. Yes. I can't ever recall that.

Ms O'CONNOR - But can you recall having ACEN at one of those fundraisers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well that's a matter for the party but I just want to make clear, and it was me that took the coastal policy to cabinet.

Ms O'CONNOR - You remember now? That's good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, well I've checked on what matters go through. That's okay, isn't it?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. It's fine.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well onto literacy, however. So, improving literacy in Tasmania is essential to improving social and economic outcomes including health and productivity as you'd well appreciate, and to overcoming intergenerational and regional disadvantage. Of course, our goal is to give every Tasmanian child the best possible opportunities in life which is why we have set an aspirational goal of 100 per cent literacy in Tasmania. Now, to achieve this we are implementing the 23 priority recommendations in the Lifting Literacy final report. This report was developed by an expert panel appointed by the government. A plan to implement the 23 priority recommendations has been published and implementation commenced in late 2023.

In the 2023-24 budget we provided \$6.5 million over four years to implement this important work. Earlier this year the government committed to invest an additional \$3 million to extend structured literacy to all children in Years 3 to 6 in government primary schools by 2026 as part of our strong plan for education. Now, to monitor progress and the outcomes of this work, we have established an independent Lifting Literacy Outcomes Monitoring Group. This group has met several times since its establishment in December last year.

CHAIR - Is that separate to the advisory panel? Is that a separate body to the advisory panel?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, can I clarify that for you? The group is chaired by Dr Michele Bruniges AM, and Dr Bruniges was awarded the Medal of Order of Australia for her contributions to reform in the education sector at state and national levels, and the National Gold Award from the Australian Council for Educational Leaders in 2015. The group reports to me twice annually on the implementation of the lifting literacy reforms, and both reports provided to date are available, as I am advised, on the Department of Premier and Cabinet. They are different groups, incidentally, to your questions.

CHAIR - They are different groups.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and members as well. Now -

CHAIR - Yes, that's fine. I was just interested in whether we had some sort of measure of achievement, but I will go to the website, thank you. I will not take up any more of the Committee's time. Moving now to 2.1, which is management of executive government processes. Mr Edmunds.

Output Group 2 (b)

Government Processes and Services (b)

2.1 Management of Executive Government Processes (b)

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you, Chair. Premier, page 276 of the papers, table 9.4, there is a drop-off in the right to information requests responded to within statutory timeframes. I appreciate that we do have an actual figure for 2023-24 there. I know that was touched on earlier, but is there - have you been given a reason, or why are those reporting timeframes getting worse?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe we touched on it.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, you did.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry. Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier, and obviously we do closely monitor the timeliness of our responses to RTI. But I am advised that, due to, you know, several competing priorities within 2023-24, which included responding to the commission of inquiry final report, that that did have some impact on the offices that were involved. Certainly, we are closely monitoring that and they work very hard to return them within time.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. Obviously, the target coming out of this year is 100, but what realistically - what number do we expect that 77 to come back to? With the impacts that you have just talked about, are they likely to be a few years, or are we expecting to be up around - bearing in mind the target of 100, are we expecting to be up around that 90 figure again going forward?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that would be our target. We would always have that target.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. I guess what I am saying is are those reasons - and they are reasons, they are not excuses, that's fine. Are those reasons likely to continue for years to come?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Good question.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier, certainly it will depend always on the nature of the applications, how voluminous the materials are. Because each RTI officer, you know, at times will receive an application that requires them to go through thousands of pages of documents to determine compliance with the Act and with the ombudsman's guidance. But they will make every endeavour always to respond within the statutory timelines.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, of course. I understand that, but obviously that is a challenge for them in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. What I am saying is those factors that you have raised, are they likely to remain an issue for the next couple of years?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier, we have seen a significant increase in the number of RTI applications over that three-year time period, which might also suggest - which has had an impact in terms of the decrease to 77 per cent answered on time.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - But we do certainly monitor and assist the team, and we are able to authorise other people to be delegates under the RTI Act if we are concerned about terms of load or volume. But certainly, the commission of inquiry and access to information has seen an increase in the number of RTI applications that have been received.

Mr EDMUNDS - No worries. And just down two more-line items, the draft responses to routine ministerial correspondence actioned within 10 days of receipt. I notice that we have got a drop-off there of a couple of years, and then a target to get to 90. Are the challenges faced in that area the same as they are around RTI, or are there different factors involved in that drop-off in the figure?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier and noting that they did achieve a small increase from 2022-23, but certainly my focus as a new secretary for Premier and Cabinet is to make sure that we do have the structure and organisational processes to ensure timely responses to any correspondence that the office of the secretary receives. However, I do note that they had significant pressure and challenges presented by responses to the commission of inquiry, which the Department of Premier and Cabinet took a significant role in leading the responses.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. So that correspondence, that captures things from, say, peak bodies, constituents, other members of parliament? That is all captured under that umbrella?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - I will just check. My understanding was that is being clarified is - that it's the whole in terms of the numbers and volumes of correspondence. There is a very, very large amount of correspondence that actually flows through the office. We have set processes for registration of correspondence, and it is then distributed throughout the department according to specialist subject area for advice and response back through.

Mr EDMUNDS - No worries.

CHAIR - Thank you. I am happy to take this on notice, the number of consultants and the value of those consultants if that is available, and happy to have it tabled sometime. I just wanted to get the question in before we run out of time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Well, during the period of April 2023 to June 2024, the Department of Premier and Cabinet undertook 91 procurements with 95 individual contracts awarded at \$50,000 or more. All procurement activity undertaken by DPAC requires the local policy to be applied. The total value of these contracts, including options to extend, was \$104.77 million.

CHAIR - \$104.77 million?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. This includes \$99.49 million for goods and services, and \$5.28 million for consultancies. Of the 95 contracts awarded during that period, 70 contracts were awarded to Tasmanian businesses totalling \$96 thousand. Sorry -

CHAIR - \$96 million?

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$96.72 million, which is 92 per cent of the total expenditure, and 25 contracts were awarded to non-Tasmanian businesses, totalling \$8.5 million, accounting for the remaining 8 per cent of total expenditure. Do I have anything further?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Yes. Through the premier, just to note in relation to total value of contracts at \$104.77 million, which if you compare to 2022-23 was \$12 million, if I may explain the large increase, it is significantly larger due to one procurement activity totalling \$85 million for Networking Tasmania data and internet services.

CHAIR - Networking Tasmania?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Networking Tasmania data and internet. So that is a very large procurement activity, just in case, Ms Rattray, you were comparing back to 2022-23 and wondered about that increase.

CHAIR - Okay. I appreciate that explanation. I will try and digest that number. Ms Webb?

Output Group 2 (b)

Government Processes and Services (b)

2.2 Principal and Subordinate Legislation (b)

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair. Premier, as for matters related to the code of conduct for ministers, I noted the most recent version from April 2024, which I have here, it has a very materialistic approach to the concept of public resources. A few lines on p6 describe public resources in the sense of pecuniary or personnel in the category of public servants, and it specifies it should not be used for personal advantage or benefit. So that is clear in and of itself. It is relatively quiet on the misuse of taxpayer funded resources for perceived partisan political benefits, I note, and I am interested to explore potential misuse of taxpayer-funded resources for party political purposes and how that is or is not regulated by this code of conduct.

So, for example, the potential of taxpayer-funded government resources like the Tasmanian government logo, the insignia, letterhead as opposed to a party logo or party branding, and resources such as taxpayer funded DPAC email systems utilised by the government media office, for example. So that's the preamble to get to where I'm going with this. Would it be considered appropriate, for example, for a media release containing the government logo to be issued from a taxpayer funded government media office, so using both staff and infrastructure paid for from public funds urging Tasmanians to vote for a party-endorsed candidate under this code of conduct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sure which example you're referring to, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Well, maybe I just pose that and move to the next one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Government resources are used for government matters.

Ms WEBB - Used for government purposes, exactly. Not partisan purposes. I'm also interested in would you consider appropriate, for example, under your code of conduct, for a media release on a party-political letterhead urging voters to vote for a party-endorsed

PUBLIC

candidate to be distributed via taxpayer funded government media units, for example. Is that appropriate?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Depending on the circumstances [inaudible] an example of that, if you're referring to a media release that I may well have done in support of a particular candidate, I think that's -

Ms WEBB - That's allowable under your code of conduct? For you to issue a media release through government media offices.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If I have issued one - I believe I have issued -

Ms WEBB - Pardon? Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms WEBB - That's appropriate and allowable under your code of conduct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Well, in an election campaign, of course, they are -

Ms WEBB - Or outside of election campaigns even.

Mr ROCKLIFF - On Liberal letterhead. All the 35- or 38-day campaign, whatever it was that we just went through is on Liberal party letterhead, if my memory serves me correctly.

Ms WEBB - Sure. But sometimes you might issue media releases outside of election campaigns urging - for example, because Legislative Council elections happen outside of House of Assembly election campaign times. There are examples that we could look at of government issued on government resourced emails and with government letterhead on it endorsing and encouraging voting for a party-political candidate. Would that comply with this code of conduct and with what you think is appropriate?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you'd have to give me an example of that and -

Ms WEBB - I can send it through to you. Certainly, it's from the Rosevears election in 2020.

Mr ROCKLIFF - 2020?

Ms WEBB - Premier Gutwein at the time did that. So that's one example I could provide through to you. But from your point of view, is it appropriate for that to occur?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, if a premier of the day wants to endorse a candidate, I'm sure the leader of the opposition would like to -

Ms WEBB - Using government funded resources?

Unknown - [inaudible] interest.

Ms O'CONNOR - Interloper. Accidental.

PUBLIC

Unknown - We had a guest join us at the table from a different committee.

Ms O'CONNOR - From downstairs, no less.

Unknown - So I just missed that comment.

Ms WEBB - So I'll just interrupt this. Perhaps we can come back to this. May I ask you one further example?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can ask me whatever you like, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Are you aware of an electioneering email from this election campaign period, 22 March it was dated for this year, issued during the state election sent by a Liberal endorsed and former government MP candidate to the work email addresses of public servants working at Port Arthur Historic Society Management Authority and potentially to other agencies? I may not be aware of other agencies. I've got a copy of the email here. I have redacted the name of the person who sent it and the person who received it, but you can see clearly that their email addresses are government email addresses. May I table that and provide it to the premier, Chair?

I recognise the candidate in question was a former minister at the time but is currently a minister. However, surely the misuse of publicly funded resources such as party-political electioneering emails sent from a parliament email address to public sector taxpayer funded agency addresses still constitutes an unacceptable breach of this code of conduct and the public interest principles that sit behind this code of conduct, even if not explicitly in this code of conduct. Can you confirm that that email would be a breach of the ministerial code of conduct if the candidate had been a minister seeking re-election?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, hypothetical, Ms Webb, in terms of the question. Wasn't a minister at the time as you correctly, I believe, have stated. So I haven't read the email. Happy to take it on notice. I'm sure there was no malice behind the motivation. We could always -

Ms WEBB - So it's an email sent from a government email address to another government email address with a letterhead of Jane Howlett as a candidate for the Liberal party encouraging people to vote for her. So what action will you take on this matter to investigate the appropriateness of that email and take any follow-up action that might be required?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's the first I've been made aware of it today from my knowledge. Happy to take it on notice and examine the contents of the email. It's all about continuous improvement.

CHAIR - Thank you, premier.

Ms WEBB - I did want to ask, just seeking a final commitment from the premier, if that's not covered by the code of conduct that's available there for ministers, isn't it reasonable to assume that we require another code of conduct that covers that sort of behaviour and ensures that it's clear that it's not appropriate to use government funded resources to promote candidates in a party-political way during election campaigns?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll have to familiarise myself with the email. And as I say, continuous improvement. We make changes to the code of conduct from time to time -

Ms O'CONNOR - To suit yourselves.

Ms WEBB - So the misuse of public resources is pretty serious.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What was that, Cassy?

Ms WEBB - Other than bringing it to your attention today -

Ms O'CONNOR - Make changes that suit yourselves.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's not true.

Ms WEBB - Other than bringing it to your attention today and asking you about the action you will take in response to this specific example, what's the appropriate avenue for complaint and having this matter addressed more broadly?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have a members handbook as well. So there are a number of areas where members can avail themselves of the processes and what's appropriate and those types of matters. So I take your point. We'll consider the matters you raised. As I say, we all try and do our best. No one's here to deliberately do things wrong. If you point something out that can be improved, then more than happy to take that and improve it.

Ms WEBB - Well, it's very generous of you to characterise it that way, and it may well have been some form of ignorant mistake at best, but also it doesn't look good. There's a reason we don't misuse public resources for party political purposes. The last question I had which you didn't get to with your answer is what's the appropriate avenue for having that addressed? If that's something that's occurred during an election period, does that become the responsibility to address by the head of the state service, for example, as a person overseeing the caretaker period? Is it something that needs to be addressed by the Integrity Commission? Do we have an avenue to adequately address a complaint about that sort of matter?

Mr ROCKLIFF - If there's any complaints, I'm happy to address them, converse with the secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well, see if we can improve processes, knowledge, understanding of candidates, of course.

Ms WEBB - What's the formal avenue for addressing these matters?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not -

Ms WEBB - To have them addressed. What's the formal accountable avenue for addressing these matters?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll need to seek advice on what the formal avenue would be, Ms Webb, but thank you for raising the issues.

CHAIR - Thank you.

2.2 Principal and Subordinate Legislation (b)

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor has a question and we need to move this along fairly quickly or there's going to be a lot of very disappointed areas of this particular scrutiny that are not going to get any time in the sun. Thank you. Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to ask the premier what his government's plans are for the Tasmanian Community Fund. As you'd know, premier, that fund was set aside following the sale of the Trust Bank to benefit in perpetuity the people of Tasmania. Your federal colleague Senator Duniam lodged a complaint with the auditor-general about one grant that had been awarded by the Tas Community Fund. Your government's reaction has been to threaten the future and independence of the Tasmanian Community Fund. I remind you that in the first budget when you were deputy premier, your government was going to try to take the Tas Community Fund funds and put them under the control of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and we stopped you from doing that. Could you please tell -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Democracy in action.

Ms O'CONNOR - Could you please tell the committee how you will make sure the independence of the Tasmanian Community Fund is protected and that its funds are not subject to any minister's interference.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Tasmanian Community Fund provides grants to community organisations to support positive social change, of course, and to meet community needs when it comes to those matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - With a very change focus in this day and age.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, yes. That's governed by the Tasmanian Community Fund Act 2005. The TCF board has sole discretion on how grants are distributed from the TCF to community projects and how the TCF is managed. The TCF board has announced a new funding strategy for 2024 to 2030 which is focused on removing barriers to learning for children and young people between the ages of eight and 19, and I commend that. The funding strategy also prioritises building the capacity of committee to create and lead their own solutions to complex local issues. Now -

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, can I just interrupt you there for a minute? Many, many committee members know that about the Tasmanian community fund.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some might not.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. But I'll just draw you back to what the Chair said before about the need for short questions and answers, and I'd be happy to move on from this when we get some clarity from you about what your Government's plans are for the Tas community fund.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. I'm not going to speak on behalf of the Auditor-General whose report -

Ms O'CONNOR - I didn't ask you to.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But the report was done and the use of public funds for such purposes did not meet community expectations. And, you know, the Government did not endorse nor approve the use of these funds. As I say, the TCF governed by the Tas Community Fund Act, and the board has the sole discretion.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you going to change that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Now, the review does not suggest the TCF board has operated outside the provisions of its Act, the Government knows that the Tasmanian community expects a high degree of diligence, transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.

Ms O'CONNOR - Which the Tas Community Fund board has delivered over many years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Tas Community -

Ms O'CONNOR - Could you get back to the question, though?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The Government has requested advice on possible amendments to the TCF Act, and they support the continued independence of the TCF board while also bringing it into line with the Government's obligations of other statutory boards with similar decision-making responsibilities for public funds. We expect these amendments to be before the parliament by the end of the year is the advice that I have, and no doubt you will be very interested in those as well.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, certainly we'll be very interested. But what, well, certainly the Greens would like to hear is a commitment from you that the Tasmanian Community Fund's funds will continue to be managed independently and that no minister will have any level of control about how those funds are allocated.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't anticipate that eventuality.

Ms O'CONNOR - You don't anticipate that the legislative amendments which you flagged would give the minister more decision-making authority over the Tasmanian Community Fund grants that have been approved by the board?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you've rephrased the second part of your question to your first phrasing of the question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Same gist.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I support the, well -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, it's about ministerial interference in their decisions.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. No one wants to interfere. The TCF has its role to play. A report was done by the auditor-general as to the learnings from the report.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's one grant.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Learnings from the report. You know my view on the particular matter concerning the Voice itself. But can I say that we'll be taking advice on these matters. It is important in terms of the independence, and, you know, I'm not going to get into any hypothetical conversations.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's not a hypothetical. It's a really key point.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I support the independence.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you agree that no minister should have any control, decision-making authority over the independence of the Tasmanian Community Fund board decisions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - 'Control' is a very strong word and I don't anticipate this eventuality in that.

Ms O'CONNOR - A final say, for example.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You know, we'll work - we just have to work through the Act, and we're not going to put any, you know, clear 'yeses' or 'nos' on the table. I just want to make sure that the Act is appropriate for the times; that learnings are taken from the matter. I respect those past and present board members of the TCF. I've engaged with them as Minister for Community Development and Community Services a number of times. But the changes to the Act which we've committed to will be before the parliament, as I'm advised, by the end of this year.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There'll be a full and open consultation and you'll be able to have your say.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm mindful of the experience in 2014.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, so am I. I remember it well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. And I'm mindful of the Tasmanian people's ownership, if I can call it that, of the TCF.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right. So just a final question on this line of questioning. Thank you, Chair. Do you agree as a matter of principle that no minister, including yourself, should be able to get their hands on in any way the Tasmanian Community Fund's reserved funds?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Can I say the proposed amendments, which aligns with what I've been saying, of course, are about accountability and transparency. Given it -

Ms O'CONNOR - That doesn't answer the question.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Given it involves public funds, I am not removing - not removing - the independence of the TCF decision-making.

Ms O'CONNOR - Will the minister have any final say other than what happens - because I was the minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was the minister, too.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right, and what a privilege.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It was.

Ms O'CONNOR - And so the list of approved grants come up and the minister is just to sign under it to say, 'Great work, team'. There is no authority for the minister to interfere in the disbursement of those funds.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I don't anticipate -

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you agree as a principle that should stay in place?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I do. I do.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. There you go.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Took a while to get there.

Ms WEBB - So easy in the end, wasn't it? So easy.

CHAIR - Took a while to get to it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It did, but there was quite an involved, you know, preamble to the question.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Okay.

Ms O'CONNOR - I thought it was pretty succinct, actually.

2.3 Corporate Support to Ministerial and Parliamentary office and the Office of the Governor (b)

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Mr Edmunds. Thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - I'll just be as quick as I can on this.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Has any expenditure been incurred for any legal advice for any government ministers since the term of government beginning after the 2021 election?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, Mr Edmunds. 2021?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. And are you able to say how much, who for and what for?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am. Not who for, but I can give you some information, if you like.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And that's the public officers may be subject to legal claims, actions, despite the fact that they are acting in good faith within the scope of their duties or in the course of their employment. Public officers are eligible for an indemnity and/or legal assistance in respect of civil proceedings arising out of their acts or omissions done in good faith in the course of their public office. The ability to provide legal assistance and indemnity to public officers is essential to the protection of the crown's interest, the fair treatment of its employees and the effective management of the state service. Indeed, the department's expenditure on legal fees totalled \$206,177 in 2023-24. So I'm not -

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The 21 answer, well, I haven't got for you. Well, I might have. Hold on. This is an increase of \$74,000 on the previous financial year. The increase in legal fees is primarily due to workplace investigations undertaken as a result of any actions of the commission of inquiry. The department's expenditure in relation to legal advice and fees does, you know, fluctuate year on year and is based on demand for services. And I have - and also that information, do we have that, Kathrine, for Mr Edmunds? So there was a right to information request from the leader of the opposition, Mr Edmunds, which detailed the legal fees related to ministers or members of government.

Mr EDMUNDS - And that's - this answer is up-to-date with that RTI?

Mr ROCKLIFF - This starts on 21/01/2021.

Mr EDMUNDS - Great.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And finishes on 1 August this year.

PUBLIC

Mr EDMUNDS - Fantastic. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. All right. So I've put on record the DPAC legal fees matters. But when it comes to ministerial and parliamentary support, for clarification, you know, ministers may be subject to legal claims and actions despite the fact that they are acting in good faith within the scope of their duties. Ministers may be eligible for an indemnity and/or legal assistance in respect of civil proceedings arising out of their acts or omissions done in good faith in the course of their office.

Now, the purchase of legal advice and fees is driven by demand and need for these services each year. A department's expenditure on legal fees for ministers totalled \$256 123 in 2023-24. The expenditure in relation to legal advice and fees fluctuates year on year and is based on demand for services and decisions relating to the approval of legal indemnity for a minister is a matter for cabinet. Yes, and that is - yes. I have the extract from the RTI. Did you want that?

Mr EDMUNDS - No. If you want to table it, that's fine with me if you're happy with that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - I will keep going quickly. This is a bit of a change of pace, but does your media team operate a drone?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - And is it just one drone or do you have a few?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will check.

Mr EDMUNDS - I just want to know if they were purchased with taxpayer money and how many there were.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure.

Mr EDMUNDS - At what total cost.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can take that on notice and provide that for you.

CHAIR - Okay, thank you. In light of the time and my intention to negotiate with you, Premier, just around the rest of today's agenda, I will move that we suspend and have a break until 11.15. It is my hope that we will be able to come back to this particular area, because we are still somewhat short of some of the questions that we have, and hence I am going to try and negotiate an extra half an hour. So, we shall suspend, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure. Thank you, Chair.

The Committee suspended from 11.01 a.m. to 11.15am.

CHAIR - If everyone would like to resume their seats or whatever you were doing prior, we will recommence and get through to the lunch break. Thank you, premier. I'll move -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I have an update for you, and it's in reference to the matter that Ms Webb raised concerning the email. I'm advised that there was an email sent out on 22 March this year at 9.03 p.m. The email was inadvertently sent from a staffer's email using a parliamentary address instead of a campaign email. This error was realised at the time and I'm advised an apology was made by the staffer once that was realised. That's the information and advice that I have.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Just to clarify, sent from a government address to another government email address. So there's sort of two elements to that, isn't there? Was it unsolicited to government email addresses?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll have to follow up that, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - I think that would be an element to look into also.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure.

Ms WEBB - Because while the first might be inadvertent, the second, who received it, was it sent in some blanket way to government email addresses, would also be inappropriate in a separate way.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Edmunds has a question that he'd like to ask, one question and then I'm moving straight on to 3.2 around Service Tas.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. This may be the wrong output, so I'm happy to defer it down the list, but I didn't want to not ask it now and then have it be referred back to now. So I refer to some correspondence from yourself, premier, to members of the Legislative Council on 20 September, so last Friday, regarding additional allowances for electorate offices.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - I just wanted to point you to some correspondence we got from the clerk yesterday that was saying, 'I understand you all received this letter. There's quite a lot of detail to work through regarding the allocation of the funds and/or resources. The council are not in a position to commence any recruitment or allocation of funds for a number of reasons including, among other things, there has been no allocation in the LC budget nor any discussion with me regarding this commitment and how it will be managed.' So they're obviously going to work through it and have a conversation with you, but I just wondered what does this mean from a budgetary perspective where this announcement's sort of been after the Budget and what conversations will you have going forward?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have engaged with the presiding officers. I've engaged with members of parliament, and crossbench indeed, including concerning that additional resources, mindful of the need to not only provide additional resources so MPs of all colours can do their job, but also the sort of occupational health and safety matters in terms of staff covering and all those sorts of things. We'll work through the mechanics of this ensuring that the funding can be available as soon as possible, but I'm happy to engage with the presiding officers and the clerks to ensure that that happens.

Mr EDMUNDS - Cheers.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - I have questions on the same topic. I was going to do it in a different line item.

CHAIR - Okay.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, I wasn't sure which line item it was, sorry.

CHAIR - Now we're here, we might as well do it here. So thank you, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. So just to backtrack a little bit from that, I'm aware that the routine disclosure of ministerial and government electorate office staffing and salary document is published on the DPAC website, last dated 31 March 2024 and released in April, and that details FTE equivalents and salary scales. Are you able to table now - I think you did it in the other place, but could you table here for us the update on ministerial and government staffing and salary details along with assembly non-government parties and independent crossbench MP staffing resources? I'll just let you table that if you have it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I have ministerial and electorate office staff and salary details. That's the 30 June 2024, however.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Is that the same one you tabled yesterday? Yes. Great. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't believe we tabled it though, did we?

Ms WEBB - I thought that in reviewing the - that's fine. If you've got that, we'll take it. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think we might have taken it on notice, my apologies. There you go.

Ms WEBB - I see. That's where I must have misconstrued.

CHAIR - It's been put together overnight. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - So during the hearing yesterday with the assembly, you did state you were, and I quote this, 'seeking to formalise those arrangements so all members can be clear on their entitlements', which is, I would say, very welcome from all members.

Ms O'CONNOR - Hear, hear.

Ms WEBB - But I think you would agree, would you not, premier, that it's important that all MPs are respected and treated equitably in that process?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely.

Ms WEBB - Great. Because you also said yesterday, and I'll quote this to you, 'That is about greater engagement and also occupational health and safety' - as you've just mentioned - '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've indicated it's very much up to the discretion of each member how this is allocated on a dollar basis to their staff.' So that's interesting to hear that detail. Then we have the 0.5 FTE for the assembly members. So can you just clarify the total staffing then, say, for an independent or crossbench assembly MP? Is that now equivalent to 2.5 FTEs?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is that yes, that's the case. I stand to be corrected and happy to get the information for you if that's not 100 per cent accurate. But within that two and a half allocation can be allocated differently across that resource is my understanding, to best suit the MPs to do their job.

Ms WEBB - Is it a consistent two and a half at a particular pay scale so that it's the same, so the two and a half to member A is the same as the two and a half to member B in terms of total actual funding?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is that it's the same dollar amount, but the MPs have the discretion is probably the right word to allocate that as they like.

Ms WEBB - Could you provide us with details on the pay scale of that two and a half and how that breaks down then in terms of pay scales for the different recognised elements of that full allocation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is up to the individual MPS, but whatever information I can I'll provide.

Ms WEBB - I'm just interested in what you've modelled it on. Have you modelled it to be two and a half of the same pay scale or have you modelled it to be one of a particular pay scale and another one of another, et cetera. So I'm interested to understand that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All right.

Ms WEBB - So we've established that the assembly opposition party's independents and crossbench have the capacity to employ 2.5 FTEs or certainly the independents and crossbench, I think I said before, 2.5 -

Ms O'CONNOR - 1.5 for crossbench, I think, or for the Greens.

Ms WEBB - No, it's 2.5 for the independent crossbench members, we've just established a moment ago.

Ms O'CONNOR - No.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Ms WEBB - It's not. Sorry, I thought we just said that a minute ago. I asked you can you confirm that independents and crossbench assembly MPs have the equivalent of 2.5 FTEs.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's the same dollars.

Ms WEBB - The equivalent of -

Mr ROCKLIFF - My advice is -

Ms WEBB - My understanding is, for example -

Mr ROCKLIFF - - one and a half FTE at executive officer scale and one on advisers scale. Electorate officers, I should say. Electorate officers.

Ms WEBB - 1.5 at electorate officer scale and one at advisor officer scale.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's my advice.

Ms WEBB - So 2.5 in total in terms of peoples equivalent but at those different levels.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's my advice.

Ms WEBB - Which they can bundle up and spend as they choose in terms of staffing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's my advice, yes, Meg. To the best of my knowledge. But I'm happy to clarify that.

Ms WEBB - So even with the letter that the member for Pembroke mentioned that we all received at the end of the day last Friday from you indicating your intention to provide an extra 0.5 FTE in electorate officer staffing to us as upper house members, that brings us to 1.5 FTEs equivalent to the 1.5 element of the lower house staffing, leaving us without any staffing for the advisor role that you just described as being made available to independents in the lower house, the one FTE at that level. Are you aware, premier, that that continues then to make us, even with that additional 0.5, the most poorly staffed upper house in the nation across the jurisdictions that have upper houses? Every other state has at least two if not 2.5 staffing available for upper house members. Were you aware of that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wasn't consciously aware of that, no. Given you've pointed it out though, I will take that at face value around that.

Ms WEBB - Given that, then, and thank you for acknowledging that. The principle of parliamentary comity between the two chambers would point to the need to be equitable about how we are staffed to do the job that we do, given that there's nothing lesser about, for example, an independent member of an upper house doing their job compared to an independent member of the lower house. They're doing the same role.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Everyone elected, got responsibility of the constituents.

Ms WEBB - Indeed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And of course, the house of review has a particular responsibility as well.

Ms WEBB - So, premier, on that basis, is it something that you will commit to to ensure that there is actual full equity between the two chambers when it comes to staffing us to do the roles that we undertake, noting that the offer that was made last Friday by your email doesn't bring us to equity yet.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This would be a matter for - you know, what I am interested in, if Leg Co wants to bring forward to me some advice as to a more equitable arrangement or to bring equity into the system, commonality between houses, then I would welcome that opportunity to assess that. There would be a budget process, no doubt, but I do take your point, Ms Webb. They should be given the resources to be able to represent their constituents as effectively as possible, noting, of course, budgetary matters and the like. But the parliament needs to function appropriately in terms of the people that service us as a bicameral system of government or parliament, I should say, and I am open to some suggestions from Leg Co.

Ms WEBB - That you for that statement. I appreciate it. The last thing I wanted to touch on on that in terms of the offer that was made in the email from you last Friday for the additional .5 FTE is that budgeted for in this Budget?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No.

Ms WEBB - Not that's an offer you've made outside of the formal budgetary cycle.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's correct so we can -

Ms WEBB - So perhaps when we continue the conversation about it, we can also continue to think about that, not necessarily as constrained by the formal budgetary cycle. It would bring to fruition an agreement that had been come to down the track, potentially.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Potentially that's right. I mean, I want to be able to ensure that MPs are able to do their jobs, which is the base job, of course, of representing their local constituencies to the best of their ability and I will give that due consideration, present the case, and understand your arguments for advocacy for equity.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate that. Thank you, premier. I do appreciate that.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Move now to 3.2.

Output Group 3

Electronic Services for Government Agencies and the Community (b)

3.2 Management and Ongoing Development of Service Tasmania (b)

CHAIR - Ms Armitage.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Chair. I noticed that over quite a long period that many of Service Tasmania's services have been digitised and moved online, you know, like car registrations, payment of fees, submitting applications are almost entirely online. First of all, does that affect staff numbers? Have we actually had a loss of staff because of the digitalisation in our Service Tasmania offices?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not to my knowledge and thank you for the question because it allows me to just put on record that the Service Tasmania team, as I will refer to them, are very front facing. They do provide a very good service to the Tasmanian community and are not subject to any efficiencies.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay. So how do you ensure, with these things being almost entirely online, that people with lower digital literacy or access have the ability to access Service Tasmania's online services? I know in my own office, I think it was to do with the flood monies. You know, people coming in that didn't have access to computers, particularly elderly people. I'm just wondering what do we do in Service Tas to help these people that really cannot access things online or they really don't understand it. Sorry, can they still go into Service Tas, meet with a real person, and discuss it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We've got 27 locations of Service Tas across Tasmania. Now, I've got some good information on myServiceTas, the digital portal, which has been, you know, of course, very helpful. But, you know, when it comes to myServiceTas totals, you know, registration renewals, signups to my Service Tas is 42,716, 11,557 car registration renewals, licence renewals 4,025, short term permits 399. Total payments went through the system, \$3,789,755.14. This is up to 22 September this year, would you believe. And linked accounts, 31,055. On your question, however.

Ms ARMITAGE - For people that are not necessarily computer literate or lower digital literacy, how do they manage all this? Is there someone they can go in and see or -?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So there's the over-the-counter Service Tasmania 27 service centres. So yes, to the question. Over the phone to the government contact centre, and of course, online through the Service Tasmania website and through myServiceTas, yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, okay.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - And through the premier, so we obviously always recognise the state of digital literacy throughout the community in Tasmania, which is why it is so important that we maintain the 27 service centres in Service Tas, and to use the recent severe weather event as an example. That is why we stood up TEIS, so our Tasmanian Emergency Information Service, so that people could ring up and talk online and be guided through applications. We also made your libraries Tasmania available, with staff to help people through online, and also in the emergency evacuation centres we had staff assisting people. But certainly, in terms of that online take-up, myServiceTas is about adding an additional channel to provide, you know, flexibility and accessibility 24/7 and at times when Service Tasmania

centres are obviously not open, and for people that are more and more becoming used to that digital ease of access.

We do encourage people to sign up to myServiceTas and we've only recently launched it, but certainly, we're getting extremely positive feedback about that experience, but we'll obviously also maintain our physical locations because people do come through with some, you know, quite complex situations, or may not be aware of the particular type of a form or support or grant that might best, you know, meet their services. For example, I've taken my own 95-year-old dad into Service Tas and had such a wonderful service whilst he, you know, gave up his driver's licence and was also received and was advised about getting an identification card, so -

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. I agree totally with the premier that the staff at Service Tas are absolutely amazing. So, with the library, and I notice that lots of other - quite a few libraries that are agents. I know with Launceston Library, for example, that we have volunteers from the community legal centre, I think, go in every so often to provide advice. When it's not an agency, do Service Tas go into these other libraries to provide advice? I appreciate somewhere like Launceston, you know, the service desk isn't that far away, but sometimes, it's a stand and wait. Do we provide volunteers from Service Tas to go over to the other libraries that aren't necessarily agents for Service Tas a bit along the lines of what the community legal centre does, just to provide advice, just assisting people?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier, I would just need to check on Launceston. They obviously had a very close working relationship, being in buildings very close together for many years until the move to CH Smith building.

Ms ARMITAGE - And they're still not far away.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - But I reflect on recently visiting Service Tas, for example, at Georgetown. I think I've got Georgetown as the, yes, example where their counter is right next to the library there, and staff share common spaces behind and are assisting each other in terms of applications. You know, because you're right, very complex applications that the staff are managing and advising on. Certainly, if there's any support requests or assistance Service Tas is very happy to assist Libraries Tasmania with that.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. Given the ever-growing reliance on IT to manage Service Tasmanian systems, and we know there's so much detail on, you know whatever it be that you're actually renewing on Service Tas, and personal information, what are the cybersecurity arrangements to safely handle and store the information with Service Tas?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Good question.

CHAIR - Premier, they're all good questions here. That's what we do.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair. They are. I'll perhaps I'll invite Noelene Kelly to the table. Thank you very much. In terms of cybersecurity Service Tasmania and its partners are highly alert to managing cybersecurity risks associated with myServiceTas and ensuring Tasmanians can have trust in the system handling their information. The myServiceTas

solution is built on contemporary Microsoft technologies, designed to Microsoft security best practices and validated by an independent cybersecurity partner.

The architecture minimises storage of sensitive data by connecting to agency systems in real time and is further secured by multifactor citizen authentication. The 2022-23 state budget in fact included \$2.6 million over four years to significantly uplift Service Tasmania's underlying information technology capability and helps ensure the system is safe, secure and well-supported. Welcome to Noelene Kelly, who is here as the Acting Deputy Secretary Premier's Implementation and Delivery.

CHAIR - You've got a microphone as well just in case you've got to answer a question.

Ms ARMITAGE - So, premier, have there been any cybersecurity breaches, risks or near-misses in the past few years to do with Service Tas and if there have what personal data might've been compromised? So, have we had any comprises with Service Tas that we're aware of in the past few years to do with data breaches?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So adding to my answer but through Noelene. Sorry.

Ms KELLY - No cybersecurity breaches and it's important to note that we don't actually hold a lot of personal sensitive data in myServiceTas so we connect to the relevant agency system like the –

Ms ARMITAGE - So it's held in the other agencies, and you simply connect and then cut that connection.

Ms KELLY - That's exactly right. As with any system in terms of setting up a digital account if someone chooses to set up a digital account in a different name or multiple names; that's something that we're definitely aware of and that we have that multifactorial identification in place to protect the logons and the accounts.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you, premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

Ms KELLY - Thank you.

CHAIR - Moving on.

Output Group4 (b)

State Service Management (b)

4.1 State Service, Employment and Management (b)

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, then I'm going to Mr Edmunds after that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, premier. Does Crown law come under state service employment?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - We did Crown law yesterday.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I understand that, but I need to - but Crown law advises all ministers and agencies. As a broad principal if an agency or a minister needs advice they go to Crown law.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The entirety of Department of Premier and Cabinet. Incidentally, Chair, I've got the Service Tasmania service centre opening hours and a map.

CHAIR - What, a map of how to get there?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Could well be – and the myServiceTas digital account. Highlights et cetera. They're here for information for members to avail themselves.

CHAIR - Thank you. More paper for us to pass onto our constituents.

Ms O'CONNOR - So premier, I'm following up on a document that has just been tabled to the committee which is relating to legal fees for ministers or members of government. We've got here for example legal fees of \$68,000 on 17 June this year. Would that be private counsel or legal advice, or would that be a pay for service from Crown law?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll seek some advice on that, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - There's another payment here of \$67,200 for legal advice to a minister or member of the government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, I'll refer to the secretary.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier. That refers to private legal fees but there is involvement in relation to Crown law in relation to the matter, and I can't comment, obviously, in relation to individual dollar amounts on dates.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you. Premier, can you confirm then that the state covers the cost for example of a member of the government who might be subject to an enquiry by the Integrity Commissioner?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. As members are aware the Integrity Commission operates independently of the political environment. The Integrity Commission Act 2009. I nor any of my ministers of course will be ignoring the public statements of course by the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission, Greg Melick.

Ms O'CONNOR - I think you've been handed the wrong brief, with respect, premier. That wasn't the question. The question was were these legal fees which there's some connection as we've understood to Crown law, but they're also paid to private lawyers outside of government. Can you confirm that the government is paying the cost of legal representation for members of parliament who are within government who come before the Integrity Commission?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, so I didn't start off by speaking of these matters and these are matters for the Integrity Commission.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, they're not. We're talking about legal bills that are being paid by the taxpayers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not commenting on Integrity Commission matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm not asking you to comment on an Integrity Commission matter. As a matter of principle, is the government funding private legal counsel for members of the government who are subject to an investigation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll refer you to the commissioner's statement when he said, 'That means not airing allegations until a proper assessment and an investigation has been conducted'.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm not asking about this.

Mr ROCKLIFF - 'Nor should others speculate whether the commission is undertaking an investigation into a particular person or entity'.

CHAIR - That's not what's happening.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, look premier, I think it not only is a matter of public interest, but it should be something you're transparent about.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am transparent which is why I've given you the -

Ms O'CONNOR - No. If taxpayers are funding private legal counsel for backbench MPs that's a matter of public interest. Can you confirm that within this list here are payments for private counsel for government MPs? Because it does say members of government. Not ministers. Ministers and members of government. And someone's being paid – you know someone's lawyers got \$68,000. Someone else's lawyer \$67,200. Are these being paid? Are these backbench legal fees that are being paid?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well you're asking me to confirm the existence of Integrity Commission matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm not.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not doing that. I'm taking the advice of Mr Melick.

Ms O'CONNOR - As a matter of principle does government fund private legal counsel for government backbenchers should they be a subject of – whether it's a police investigation or an Integrity Commission investigation?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not commenting on Integrity Commission matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm not asking you to.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you are, with respect.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm asking you to confirm whether or not you're putting public funds into private legal fees for your backbenchers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are, with respect, so I'm not commenting on Integrity Commission matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, well just moving along.

Ms WEBB - Can I clarify that for you, because I think you can.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Sure.

Ms WEBB - Yesterday we had the Integrity Commission here before us. The Integrity Commission spoke about an investigation that has been lengthy that involves a member of parliament for example, and we're not in any way speculating on who that might be. They mentioned it at the table.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms WEBB - And the fact that there are various things that have meant that takes a long time. One of those was legal challenges to them undertaking an investigation because of flaws in the act which your government hasn't fixed. But that's another matter to discuss. So, they have mentioned that here in Estimates. They have mentioned the fact that legal challenges are something that protracts investigations, this question, we can make it theoretical. Theoretically, would the government, through public funds, pay for the legal support and legal representation of a government MP involved in an Integrity Commission investigation, being involved, being investigated by the Integrity Commission?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I -

Ms WEBB - Would that be publicly funded?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I've already stated today that ministers may be subject to legal claims, actions, despite the fact that they are acting in good faith within the scope of their duties. Ministers may be eligible for an indemnity and/or legal assistance in respect of civil proceedings -

Ms O'CONNOR - What about backbenchers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Arising out of their acts or omissions done in good faith in the course of their office.

Ms O'CONNOR - Backbenchers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The ability to provide legal assistance and indemnity to ministers is essential to the protection of the Crown's interests, the fair treatment of its employees and the effective management of the state service.

Ms WEBB - So that's fine. We are clarifying - yes.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - The purchase of legal advice and fees is driven by demand and need for these services each year. I'm not going to talk about -

Ms WEBB - I'm not disputing the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but I'm not going to go into any hypotheticals either.

Ms WEBB - No, no. But I'm not disputing that, but that could include -

Ms O'CONNOR - You're not being honest.

Ms WEBB - That could include -

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's not true, Cassy.

Ms WEBB - - Integrity Commission investigations then. That could include representation and legal support during Integrity Commission investigations.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll refer you to the statement that I've just made.

Ms O'CONNOR - What about backbenchers though, which you didn't answer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well -

Ms O'CONNOR - They're government MPs that your list includes, members of government, so presumably government, that is the taxpayers of Tasmania, are covering the private legal costs of your backbenchers for whatever reason.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I -

Ms WEBB - It's something you should be able to rule out, premier, if it's not true.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well -

Ms WEBB - Quite frankly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'd just put on record in terms of the circumstances, thank you very much -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you didn't answer the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - - I've spoken about public officers as well this morning -

Ms O'CONNOR - You haven't talked about your backbench.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With respect to these matters. I'm not going to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Be honest.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Speak of Integrity Commission matters -

Ms WEBB - Nobody's asking you to.

Mr ROCKLIFF - - As spoken about by Mr Melick.

Ms O'CONNOR - I mean, it's only public money, isn't it, really?

Ms WEBB - The acting CEO -

Ms O'CONNOR - It's a really straightforward transparency question. Your list says legal fees related to ministers or members of government. So presumably some of these hefty legal fees paid to private counsel have been paid to help your backbenchers. Would you confirm that? It's in the list.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not going to -

Ms O'CONNOR - You're not going to confirm the heading of your list?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've tabled the list. The list was accessed through the right to information and I've put on record the circumstances.

Ms WEBB - Can the committee request a breakdown of this list in two columns, one relating to ministers, one relating to members of government that aren't ministers?

Ms O'CONNOR - Good question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll have to seek advice on that.

Ms WEBB - Can we please seek that document from you please, premier?

CHAIR - Thank you. The premier will take that and -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I'll have to seek advice on those matters, given the legal circumstances.

CHAIR - Thank you. Appreciate that. Mr Edmunds, thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - Staying on output 4.1, premier, your government initiated an independent state service review to, quote, 'transform current structures, services and practices to deliver a more efficient and effective public service', which was released in September 2021 and included 77 recommendations. I believe your government supported all the recommendations. So I've got three questions on this. How many of the review recommendations have been implemented to date? Would you like me to ask all three or just go one at a time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, you can ask all three if you'd like.

Mr EDMUNDS - So how many of the review recommendations have been implemented to date? What recommendations have been rejected or will not be implemented? What recommendations are funded over the forward Estimates?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So the Tasmanian government supports or supports in principle the recommendation to the independent review of the state service, the Watt review. The Watt review made recommendations in relation to reform to the state service employment framework including amendments to the State Service Act - or the Industrial Relations Act 1984. A key focus of the Watt review was in relation to the review of employment directions. Funding was provided to SSMO through the 2022-23 state budget and forward Estimates to support recommended changes to employment directions in the State Service Act 2000 - the State Service Act and regulations. The review of employment directions commenced.

Following the commission of inquiry into the Tasmanian government's response to child sexual abuse in institutional settings, the government committed to further supporting the state service review reforms and it has strongly considered the recommendations arising from the commission of inquiry including the reforms to the State Service Act 2000. This included: ED4 related to the suspension of employees; ED5 related to the code of conduct investigations; ED6 related to whether an employee can efficiently perform their duties; and ED26 relating to managing performance. The commission of inquiry particularly focused on reforms relating to the state service code of conduct and ED5 and the guidance that supports the management of ED5.

Now, a number of reforms have been implemented through the release of the first stage of the revised ED5 and what changed guidance. This includes matters such as an investigation under ED5 that relates to reportable conduct. It may be combined with or constitute an investigation under the Children and Youth Safe Organisations Act. The protection and safety of children is to be a primary consideration when managing allegations, of course, and determinations of breaches of the code involving children.

The standard for code of conduct matters is on the balance of probabilities. Sorry, the standard for code of conduct matters is on the balance of probabilities and does not require the same standard of proof as required in criminal matters. All processes should be undertaken with a trauma informed approach. All matters of concern relevant to an employee's conduct with a child or young person pertaining to child sexual abuse related conduct be treated as potential serious misconduct.

Now, on the matters of recommendations, to date, a total of 15 recommendations have been completed, including: a new scanning framework to inform strategic priorities for disaster risk reduction and resilience in Tasmania, that's recommendation 1; updating performance agreements for all heads of agency, recommendations 7 and 8; establishing the secretaries board and renewed cross-agency collaborative governance, that's recommendation 11; establishing a digital services governance framework including the chief information officer as a member, that's recommendations 24 and 25; and the state service management office to work with human resource directors or equivalents from all agencies to develop communities of professional practice across the Tasmanian state service, that's recommendation 47; amendment of employment direction 5, that's recommendations 55 and 56; setting up a new unit with shared capability for serious code of conduct investigations, that's recommendation 58; adopting a life events framework as the basis for the integration of services across agencies, that's recommendation 64; transforming service delivery in Tasmania including the launch of

PUBLIC

the myServiceTas digital portal, that's recommendation 65; enhancing service delivery partnerships with the Commonwealth local government and where appropriate the private sector, that's recommendation 66; and formally capture the lessons learnt from establishing and expanding call centre capabilities in response to COVID-19, that's recommendation 67; and establishing a committee of heads of agency that oversees the implementation of recommendations, that's recommendation 75.

In addition to recommendation 34, a further 20 recommendations are currently underway or prioritised for implementation, Mr Edmunds, and I've asked my department to provide cabinet with a revised position regarding the Tasmanian state service review recommendations, recognising that priority is being given to recommendations aligned, as I'm sure you would appreciate, with the commission of inquiry.

CHAIR - Thank you. I think there's a follow-up question from Ms O'Connor in regard to this.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. In regard to ED5s, premier, how many employment directive 5s relating to the commission of inquiry have been resolved, how many remain outstanding? And then I'll have a follow-up to that information.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure. Now, I believe we've tabled - yes, we have tabled -

CHAIR - Tabled it yesterday and today.

Ms O'CONNOR - I've probably -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Routine disclosure.

Ms O'CONNOR - I've definitely missed that.

Ms WEBB - It's in that pack that was sent round to us all.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I think I mentioned it today.

Ms O'CONNOR - The numbers though, relating to it?

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms WEBB - It takes a lot of time to track through it though, so perhaps the straightforward answer could be provided to that question.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier. Apologies, Ms O'Connor, was that the number of ED5 processes -

Ms O'CONNOR - Relating to the commission of inquiry which have been resolved.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Resolved. Through the premier, and apologies, because this is a very complex area.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - If I deal first with alleged perpetrators, which is mentioned on page 5 of the routine disclosure document.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So in terms of final action taken to date we have terminated due to breach determined four employees identified.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Sanction of termination recommended but employee resigned prior to finalisation: one employee. Breach determined and sanction other than termination applied and employee returned to duty: one employee. And we have resigned or contract expired prior to ED5 process completing and the employee advised that the ED5 process will commence if an individual seeks re-employment in the TSS: four employees.

Ms O'CONNOR - Four. Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - We have four employees subject to active ED5 processes underway.

Ms O'CONNOR - Related to the CoI?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - All of these are related to the CoI.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. Yes. Okay. Four.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - And these relate to the 22 alleged perpetrators disclosure table.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - And we have no further action based on assessment or ED5 determination, two employees. If we then go to -

Ms WEBB - Can I just confirm that that's unchanged from the last update in August, that particular table in the routine disclosure material? So that table is the same figures from August. I'm looking at the two documents in front of me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's the one we tabled in the committee, all the information.

Ms WEBB - Or the one that just I took off your website this morning, which I presume is the same.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's unchanged. My advice is it's unchanged.

Ms WEBB - So that's an unchanged table from August.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - And does that have the unresolved matters relating to the commission of inquiry in it?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - I'm not sure in terms of what the unresolved matters are. But we also have a table that relate to alleged non-perpetrators.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So I can take you through those ED5.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that the same table as has been tabled?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Yes. Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Because I'm fine to go back and check the documents. Thank you. I thought there might be an update.

Ms WEBB - That one does have changes, though, compared to August.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. Okay. Well, I think maybe the committee should hear it.

Ms WEBB - If you could just point to the changes. You could just point to the changes, potentially.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Yes. It's just the question referred to ED5 matters, and there's several categories about - unrelating to ED5, which is why I was sorry going through those.

Ms WEBB - Separate. My apologies. My apologies.

Ms O'CONNOR - Don't be sorry.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So in relation to the alleged non-perpetrators we have sanction of termination recommended but employee resigned: one employee. Breach determined and sanction other than termination applied and employee resigned: one employee. Resigned or contract expired prior to the ED5 process completing, and again the employee advised the ED5 process will recommence or will commence if the individual seeks re-employment: one employee. Active ED5 process underway: four employees. And no further action based on assessment or ED5 determination: nineteen employees.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Do I take it from that table - and, sorry, can I ask just a follow-up question on that table, Chair?

CHAIR - I think you've already commenced.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. That table on page 7, so the difference that appears to be there from the August iteration looks to be in the final part of the table, which is 'No further action based on assessment or ED5 determination.' There's an increase there in the 'Youth justice and child safety' column from nine to 11, and in the total employees, then, of course, tracking across that column, two. So those two, were they additionally identified between or were they - where have they moved from in - to then be brought into that column of 'No further action based on the assessment or ED5 determination'? Do you know what I mean? Like, I'm trying to figure out is that two more people, then, were in this table last time or have they just moved? I can't see that they've moved from another column into that column necessarily.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So through the premier. There're no new individuals -

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - in the table of 42.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So the 42 remains constant and we're recording as the outcomes of those 42. I would just need to seek advice as to which column they've moved from or row.

Ms WEBB - It's more that they've moved from being unresolved yet or undetermined yet into a determined column. Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Correct.

Ms WEBB - That's probably more the -

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So as the conduct of an ED5 investigation or an assessment - so it may be an assessment to determine whether an ED5 investigation is required - and why these are taking time is in particular where they're - the subject is not identified or there's insufficient information to determine that and we're having to go through records to see if we can match up a description of a person or their title as it occurred at an historical point in time. We will then have to complete the assessment if there's no further information which to identify a particular subject. But I can't comment that that's those particular two.

Ms WEBB - I understand.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - But those are the issues that we're dealing with and trying to finalise.

Ms WEBB - Can I - thank you. I have a question also about page 9 and the table that's there. Again, it's the table about 'Action taken, final outcomes'. Because when I compare it to the August disclosure document, which is again - was also page 9, the same table, there's a

category that's been removed that's no longer in the table. So, in August there was a line that was labelled 'Breach determined and remained suspended awaiting finalisation of sanction' that had one person indicated in it and the table here doesn't have that option any longer as part of the table. I wondered presumably it could've been left there with a zero next to it if it was still a relevant category, or is it no longer a relevant category?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier. So that would be due to the sanction actually being determined for that particular matter, but I note your point that we could leave it as a line with zero as a particular category, so I think -

Ms WEBB - That would make it easier to be able to track through and keep things consistent.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Yes. It's a very small - it probably indicated in August that you're in a very narrow point of time where you're awaiting sanction to be determined. It can be a couple of days; it might be a week. But I note the member's point and, you know, we can include that as a category through the premier -

Ms WEBB - Yes, and then -

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - - to make sure that we have consistency between the tables that we're publishing. So, my apologies if there's confusion.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I appreciate that. Again, there's a - in the total outcomes there in that table there's an increase of two from the August to September iteration. So, is it fair to say that that's the same two as the earlier tables we talked about where I noted there were two that had clearly been resolved in some fashion since the last iteration? And is it fair to say that in the past month between the August and then September disclosures, two matters have been resolved one way or another?

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Through the premier, I would not assume that it is the same two.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So this is a very different table as it relates to -

Ms WEBB - Yes. It might just be a coincidence that they're both two.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - The previous - yes, there's - and I've often been - we come up with the same number with various iterations according to the type of conduct. But this is a table about state servants that have been suspended from duty as a result of child sexual abuse which covers the field, whereas the previous table related to CoI or commission of inquiry.

Ms WEBB - We were looking at a non-perpetrator. Yes. That's right.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - So I wouldn't say that it is the same two.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

PUBLIC

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - I wouldn't also conclude that the only difference between August and September is necessarily two outcomes, noting that these matters are moving on a daily basis and may change. But we - obviously this is 17 September, and I think we appeared in scrutiny in the second half of August, so it's a really short time period between.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - But we thought we'd bring as up-to-date information as we could for the community.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate that. I absolutely acknowledge the amount of detail that's being provided as being really positive and really appreciate that and the intention behind that.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Because it is difficult to compare in a cumulative way, is it possible - I don't mean to add to your burden with this, but -

CHAIR - I think you are.

Ms WEBB - Is it possible to have an element added that is a 'What's happened in the last' - like, some sort of update so we can see what actual outcomes have actually occurred in the last month, month-to-month? Because otherwise it's so easy to get mixed up in it when you're trying to figure that out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So you'd like that full context of the data.

Ms WEBB - Yes, the context.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For the data, yes.

Ms WEBB - Like, so, you know, this many -

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - What's changed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What's changed, yes.

Ms WEBB - What's changed, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms WEBB - These many things were resolved, this many - whatever.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for, firstly, the comments around the matters and the data and transparency of it.

Ms WEBB - Yes, it's excellent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Which has been built on, clearly. But we could look at that positively.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - I appreciate it, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To provide that context and what has changed, as we are out of date in the tables of that information.

CHAIR - Thank you. The final question in this area, Ms O'Connor. And at 12.15 we will be moving out of this area, so I still have Ms Armitage.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, is it government policy to pay the private legal fees of backbenchers should it be related to their work in some way or another?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it would depend on the circumstances.

Ms O'CONNOR - So that is a yes depending on the circumstances.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I have gone through a list of these matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - Only relating to ministers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have gone through these matters, Ms O'Connor. I will seek some advice around clarity on policy for you.

Ms O'CONNOR - But I think you understand the policy, because you said it would be something that would be looked at depending on the circumstances. Which sounds like the policy is depending on the circumstances, the government will pay for private legal counsel for backbenchers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not going to answer questions in the hypothetical.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it is a matter of policy I'm asking you about. I am not asking you a hypothetical, I am asking you about the policy in relation to paying private legal fees for backbenchers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Well, I believe I have put all of these matters on record.

Ms O'CONNOR - So it is government policy, on a case by case basis, to fund private legal counsel for government backbenchers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I will seek advice on the exact policy criteria.

CHAIR - And come back to the Committee.

Ms O'CONNOR - Today?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, when I get the information. Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, could I please put that on notice, then, to make sure we get an answer?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. So, we have skipped over a couple of areas, because we have touched on them, and we are now at Ministerial and Parliamentary Support, at 1.1. Ms Armitage, a couple of questions and then we go to Brand Tasmania.

DIVISION 6 (b)
(Ministerial and Parliamentary support)

Output Group 1 (b)
Support for Members of Parliament (b)

Support for Ministers and certain Parliamentary Office Holders (b)

Ms ARMITAGE - I think we have covered quite a bit of that in previous ones. Just one area I would ask, Premier, how many cars do we actually have? How many ministerial cars? I mean, I see how many ministerial drivers we have got, I am just wondering actually how many cars.

Mr ROCKLIFF - How many cars?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will seek some advice on that for you, Ms Armitage.

CHAIR - I notice it includes a KIA in the fleet.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes

[Recording malfunction 12:09:01-12:09:11]

Transport service, comprised of 18 vehicles.

Ms ARMITAGE - 18?

Mr ROCKLIFF - 18. 13 permanent drivers. The service also contracts casual employees to undertake requirements as needed at a casual rate.

Ms ARMITAGE - So is each government minister allocated a certain part of the budget for using ministerial driving services, or can they just access a driver as needed? How does it actually work? I appreciate like yourself and the President would have a regular driver, but as for other ministers, do they access a pool? Do they have their own driver or does it come out of a budget? So how does it work for the other ministers, accessing the carpool.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Some are pooled, some have more regular engagement with a particular driver, most likely due to the geographical location that they are in and others have a pool arrangement.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, thanks.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - On this same line item, can I just ask very briefly - thank you for the document that you tabled with us earlier, the ministerial and electoral office staff and salary details which is dated 30 June. Can you provide something like that that is a post-budget version that indicates the newer allocations that you have committed to since that time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The next one is actually due on 30 September, so we can probably provide that for you.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. If you could provide to the -

CHAIR - So will you provide that to the Committee, or will you provide that to members individually?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have established committees B and A, don't you? Is this what you do?

CHAIR - Well, once we conclude our work we are no longer a committee.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Look, I can do that, but it is published online as I understand it as part of a routine disclosure.

Ms WEBB - Will it reflect the changes that have been recently agreed to in the budget and around the budget time?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Look, I will take advice on that. Possibly not. But should we make the changes and it comes through in terms of expenditure, then that will probably be reflected in, say, the next quarter. But -

Ms WEBB - So can you provide us then with the document that indicates the staffing allocations inclusive of the commitments you have made related to this budget in and around this budget.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All right. I might do that specifically to the Committee.

CHAIR - Thank you, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The routine disclosure will keep going as normal.

Ms WEBB - No, I am not asking you to change that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If that is okay with you.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Ms WEBB - No, absolutely. That's fine.

CHAIR - We're very much appreciative. Thank you very much. As always, we have run out of time and we will now move to Brand Tasmania. So, whoever we need to change at

the table, please do so, and those that are leaving the table we obviously thank you for your contribution.

The Committee suspended from 12.12 pm to 12.15pm.

DIVISION 12
(Brand Tasmania)

CHAIR - We shall resume and launch straight into Brand Tasmania. Premier, do you have anything to share with committee or is it straight into questions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do have a brief overview.

CHAIR - Brief, brief.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And I welcome Todd Babiak to the table, CEO of Brand Tasmania. And to my left is Ned Whitehouse, my chief of staff. Brand Tasmania unifies efforts across tourism, trade, talent attraction, investment attraction, and student attraction. This creates consistency and power. It saves money, and brings value to everything Tasmanian, all based in local, national, and international research. They work inside out with the government and business and community partners. Brand Tasmania operates as a client service organisation working across government, business, and the community increasingly. They are a strategic and creative laboratory launching and scaling solutions with partners, and I want to commend Todd and his team for the work that they do. I can speak of the Be Tasmania campaign.

I can speak of the award-winning way to bring pride, confidence, and love for reading to 6,000 households a year, the little Tasmanian book that tells the Tasmanian story, a voucher for a library card and a onesie for a Tasmanian made mat [inaudible] and fridge magnets that help Tasmanian babies hit milestones in the first 100 days. I have more to speak of when it comes to Brand Tasmania and the work of Todd Babiak, but in the interests of time, I will leave it there.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, has Brand Tasmania provided you with any advice on threats to the brand and the state of the brand? You'll recall the original debate we had over the legislation that established Brand Tasmania. We understood that would be part of the entity's role.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Brand Tasmania sentiment and measurement work is focused on tracking perceptions of Tasmania and audience intentions in line with our ambitions in trade, tourism, and audience intentions. It is in line with our ambitions in trade, tourism, workforce attraction, and population growth, investment, and attraction, and student attraction, as I have mentioned. Across 2022-23, Brand Tasmania undertook qualitative sentiment research with young Tasmanians aged between 18 and 25, as well as additional quantity of sentiment tracking and the quality of research in 2023-24. All the research is available on Brand Tasmania's website, and Brand Tasmania local and national research makes very clear that the fundamentals of the Tasmania's brand have not changed significantly in five years. There are new challenges and opportunities to use our unique strengths to address those challenges.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - The question was have you been provided with any advice from Brand Tasmania since its establishment on any threats to the brand and the state of the brand? I understand you just detailed a survey there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, which is on the website.

Ms O'CONNOR - And advice on threats to the brand. Advice, for example, on your government's decision to put native forest logging and burning into renewables, climate, and future industries Tasmania. Native forest logging and burning it's renewable. It's not climate positive, and it's not a future industry. Did you, for example, receive advice from Brand Tasmania on whether or not that move fit the brand?

Mr ROCKLIFF - To the best of my knowledge, no.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you think it does fit the brand to put native forest logging and burning into your renewables and climate agency?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, our forest industry is renewable.

Ms O'CONNOR - Native forest logging and burning is not renewable, premier. You are an intelligent man. You know that. But you know that. You know when you log and burn a forest, it takes more than a century for that carbon to be recaptured. You know that that burning is climate negative and damaging to future generations. You can't say it's a future industry. Other states and jurisdictions are moving away from native forest logging.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So I have answered your question directly to the best of my knowledge. Todd, do you have any -

Ms O'CONNOR - Perhaps the CEO does have thoughts on putting native forest logging into our renewables agency.

Mr ROCKLIFF - CEO has a very critical role across a range of areas. The sentiment survey -

Ms O'CONNOR - And yet, this happened.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The sentiment survey is of great interest to all stakeholders, particularly those that want to leverage Tasmania's strong brand. Todd, would you add comments to reasoning behind the question add value to Ms O'Connor's reasoning behind the question.

Mr BABIAK - The research, for example, is not only available to the premier, which we have distilled down to some advice, but to anyone. You can join us as a partner and find the latest quantitative and qualitative research, the way that people feel about us. But specifically on forestry, one example is the premier advised that I could go and participate in a very active way with the forest economics congress that Mona launched, and I have been involved with that, listening carefully, facilitating, listening to people talk about what is the future of Tasmanian timber and forests, and that is not so much my opinion, or even the opinion of the Tasmanian brand, the future of the Tasmanian brand. More how can you bring industry

environmentalists, Tasmanian Aboriginal people together to build a future industry that could create value for Tasmanian communities into the future.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for your answer, Mr Babiak. I'm not sure it answered the question, but it was a quite political question, so it was possibly unfair to ask you. I note, and I am very proud to see, that in Brand Tasmania's strategic plan for 2019-24, recognition is given to civil society in Tasmania, talking about how Tasmania has built a global environmental movement from a small protest community. Do you acknowledge, premier, the importance of civil society and people who stand up to protect our forests and stand up for climate action? In fact, that is part of the culture and of our brand.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it's a very good question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think it's also reflected in the very powerful piece that Brand Tasmania did around renewable energy in Tasmania, and the hydro industrialisation. Are you aware of that?

Ms O'CONNOR - I've seen the visuals, the ad.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, which highlights through generations, the hydro industrialisation, but it also reflects in that piece some of the conflict around that as well, with the -

Ms O'CONNOR - Which saved the Franklin, premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With the no dams -

Ms O'CONNOR - Which you would be thankful for, in hindsight, I hope. I think.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms O'Connor, I'm really trying to be -

Ms O'CONNOR - Protests saved the Franklin.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm trying to be, you know, fair here and acknowledging all sides.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know. Go on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What it does had headlines. I think they were Mercury headlines of no dams and protests, which is part of the story.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And that's what Brand Tasmania does. It very much tells the story of what it is to be Tasmanian, which can include the migrants that came to Tasmania and build hydro dams and those that also fought against some of that hydro industrialisation as well, which is part of the story, which is unique to Tasmania. So in that context, you know -

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I just -

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - I would also say that the broader environmental movement has brought awareness to Tasmania's uniqueness in terms of our environment and other matters that we do very well when it comes to matters of the environment.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. My last question, and I necessarily must follow up on that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Todd can correct me at any time if he feels I am going off track.

Ms O'CONNOR - I must follow up on that rubbery statement about how well we're doing on the environment. Premier, you know you have received a copy of the state of the environment report that we are failing on more than half of the metrics, and the environment in Tasmania on key areas are particularly related to native forest logging is in decline. That damages our brand. Doesn't it? Something like the state of the environment report which people can download and read and see the neglect and the undervaluing of this beautiful place's environment. That damages our brand.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, the fact that we're a sovereign state with our land mass that has 50 per cent in reserve adds value to our brand to the positive, too.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, it does, but you've got to have some consistency and authenticity in your brand.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. That's authentic.

Ms O'CONNOR - And so we go back to civil society.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Those reserves are authentic and -

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I just say we go back to civil society? You supported legislation that imposes draconian gaol terms on these very people who for decades have fought to protect Tasmania's environment and strengthen our brand. Do you see all the contradictions here? You put native forest logging into your renewables sector. You talk about the importance of civil society and you've got legislation that locks people up for protecting the place. You talk about the importance of our environment and our good record. We don't have a good record. Do you agree a lot more needs to be done to uphold the strength of our brand?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We certainly - our brand does need to be authentic, and the authenticity of what it means to be a Tasmanian is very important when it comes to brand awareness and the matters I've spoken about before. I said yesterday, I believe, in questions from Dr Woodruff around the need for continuous improvement when it comes to natural resource management -

Ms O'CONNOR - When are you going to start doing that, continuous improvement?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are doing it. We are doing it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Thank you, member.

CHAIR - Thank you. Question, the honourable member for Launceston.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Chair. Just looking at the Brand Tasmania website I notice that you can sign up to be a Tasmanian partner. I just wonder how well that went and how many people did sign up to be a Tasmanian partner; you know, accessed the tools to contribute and share the Tas brand. Would you have a number over the last - say, the last financial year? Or, you know, how well does that do?

Mr BABIAK - It's doing quite well. We have over 2,800 Tasmanian partners.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr BABIAK - And when you become a partner, as you say, you can use all the assets we have -

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Mr BABIAK - Whether that's research, photos, stories. The hints we have around how you build certain aspects of the Tasmanian economy, words you can use in your job ads, things like that as well. We have a series of workshops. So if you need to use the Tasmanian brand or even advice to build your own brand we help you with that with a nominal fee, which really just encourages people to come, to show up, if they sign up. That's going very well. Then aside from that we have the Tasmanian mark program, and over 150 businesses are using that mark, which has not only provenance - it's definitely from here - but also it's a storytelling platform. Another reason for them to be partners and to get value out of creating something special from Tasmania.

Ms ARMITAGE - So to sign up, so what actual qualifications or do they have to have an ABN or what do they have - how do they qualify to be able to sign up?

Mr BABIAK - We just take their data, really. Any of you can sign up with your email and a password.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay.

Mr BABIAK - And then you just tell us who you are, what you'd like help with.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr BABIAK - Then we track that and make sure that if there are any gaps as we're reaching out to people we add those into our workshops and the work we do, the client service side of our work.

Ms ARMITAGE - So small mum and dad business could actually sign up as well. They don't necessarily need to be a big registered business to be able to get assistance to do it.

Mr BABIAK - I would say most of the people who identify as Tasmanian partners who come to our events, who come to our workshops, who take part and use the Tasmanian mark - the vast majority of them are small businesses.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

PUBLIC

Mr BABIAK - We do, of course, work with the larger Tasmanian businesses, but it's in a different way. They have teams. Their interest is more 'How can we include Tasmanianness in our pitch to the world,' whether it's Blundstone or Procreate.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr BABIAK - It's more how do we get workers, coders, to come to Tasmania from Denmark, for example, to work on the great software we're making?

Ms ARMITAGE - And just for you, premier - this is my last question - you mentioned a small nominal fee, and I don't want to know exactly what it is. But just for anyone that might be listening thinking, 'Oh, gosh, I could sign up,' is it in the range of \$100, 200, 300? You know, it's just to give people an idea of what the small fee just to cover would be.

Mr BABIAK - It's free to sign up as a partner.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, but -

Mr BABIAK - Everything we do is ultimately free.

Ms ARMITAGE - So what was the fee for, then?

Mr BABIAK - The fee is if we're running a workshop.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay.

Mr BABIAK - We used to run them for free but people would sign up and we'd know -

CHAIR - Not turn up.

Ms ARMITAGE - Not turn up.

Mr BABIAK - Yes, they'd not turn up.

Ms WEBB - No skin in the game.

Mr BABIAK - So just to add value, I suppose.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr BABIAK - Just it's psychology, more than anything. Then we use that to cover catering and maybe room costs.

Ms ARMITAGE - So they can sign up and just use all the -

Mr BABIAK - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Brand Tasmania charges between, as I'm advised, \$20 and \$50 for the workshops, and in 2023-24 it earned some \$11,074 from ticket sales to its workshops which, of course, helps offset the costs of those workshops as well. And, indeed, if we look at some of the data, at 30 June 24, there were 2860 partners, indeed, up from 2331 same time last year.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So it's quite a few, yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. Follow-up question, Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Mostly my follow-up questions were covered just then, actually. But in terms of the amount that the premier has just referred to as from ticket sales to those events - and that's a very modest investment people make, which is great to hear. So in looking at the revenue table in the budget papers, that \$11,000 or thereabouts, that would be under the sales of goods and services, in that line of revenue in the table, I'm confirming. So what makes up the rest, then, noting that in 2023-24 it was 28,000 and expected budget of this year - about 29,000 expected. So what other sales of goods and services beyond the workshops and brand assistance?

CHAIR - It might be those Tasmanian T-shirts.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a website.

Mr BABIAK - Through you, premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr BABIAK - Yes. When you were just holding the Marino shirt, the e-store and what we sell, that goes back into us purchasing and creating more things for Tasmanians; that we can have, for example, Island Seamstress create more Tasmanian things. So we just use that money to do more activity in the e-store. And some of that is partners who are, let's say, going on a trade mission.

Ms WEBB - Sure.

Mr BABIAK - They want to wear the Tasmanian shirts. They want to feel like they're part of that team, and so -

Ms WEBB - Our colleague -

Mr BABIAK - Yes, colleagues.

Ms WEBB - Our colleague Mr Gaffney, I think, has gone over to Ireland to speak at an international conference and has, I think, taken a shirt to wear as part of what he's done.

Mr BABIAK - That's it.

Ms WEBB - So those are the only elements of that sales of goods and services, is the fees for the workshops and professional support and then also sales through the store?

Mr BABIAK - That's correct.

Ms WEBB - Those two elements. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. There are no further questions. We very much appreciate your time. Thank you for your patience and apologies for not being on a schedule, but we do our best. So thank you. We shall suspend for a couple of minutes while we invite Tourism Tasmania to the table.

The Committee suspended from 12.32 pm to 12.34pm.

CHAIR - Thank you. Premier, welcome back in your capacity as minister for Tourism and Hospitality, and I feel sure that you've got a bit of an overview that you'd like to share with the committee around these two aspects of your responsibility.

Minister for Tourism and Hospitality (b)

Output Group 1 (b)

Tourism (b)

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much, Chair, and to my right is Vanessa Pinto, who is the acting chief executive officer of Tourism Tasmania and Craig Limkin who is the secretary of the Department of State Growth. I'm pleased to be here today to answer your questions relating to our government's ongoing investment into the visitation economy.

Our tourism and hospital industry is an economic powerhouse, and I'm thrilled of course to be minister. The industry injects some three and a half billion dollars in visitor spending into the Tasmanian economy every year and nearly 43,000 Tasmanian jobs are filled thanks to the industry which equates to more than 13 per cent of total 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. Just in the last week we have released the expression of interest for the redevelopment of Dismal Swamp, announced the return of direct flights from Hobart to New Zealand, released plans for the new Boags visitor centre; and in a huge vote of confidence in the north of the state an announcement that a new five-star hotel will be built in Launceston.

To top it off, Devonport was named Australia's top tourist town, and the Tasman Hotel named in the world's top 50 hotels. I'm very proud of these achievements and excited about the great work that's being undertaken by industry partners, of course the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Hospitality Association and indeed our four regional tourism organisations to grow our visitor economy and support our local business and

PUBLIC

operators. I want to thank members of the Premier's Visitor Economy Advisory Council for their ongoing engagement and input the initiatives that support this vitally important industry.

Through PVEAC we've established a taskforce made up of the TICT, and the THA, state growth and Tourism Tasmania to identify key actions that will immediately support our visitor economy over the coming year. I'm also immensely proud of course of the new unique offerings experiences and products being developed and offered by our tourism and hospitality businesses across the state and I look forward to continuing to work with industry to grow our visitor economy and capitalise on our competitive advantages. Thank you very much, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you, and I'll invite Ms Armitage to commence the line of questioning. Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Chair. You mentioned the Boags visitor centre, so I think I'll start with that. I didn't have it on my list. I was forgetting it came under tourism. Now I note previously - Boags Visitor Centre a million dollars in the past to do with, you know, keeping Boags going. I tell you I am a great supporter of Boags in our city and its employees and keeping that great iconic brewery in Launceston. So I'll put that out there to start off with.

So initially they got 500 000. Have they had the second 500 000 yet, for a start? Because I have had various discussions with them and at one stage they had received their first instalment. They hadn't received the second. But the argument that I have with them, and I will ask you about this, premier, is that when I talked to them about what they were offering, they were offering at the end of the tours, pizza and beer. People could actually buy food and drink.

Now, while I accept it's really important the criticism that comes from other local businesses is the fact that they are in competition with other local businesses with money that's been provided with the government. So I have had this discussion with management from Sydney of Boags that I thought that was really inappropriate, but they were going to continue it. So I'm just wondering first of all have they had the second 500, and do you consider that it is appropriate for them to be providing food and drink to patrons who will then not go onto other restaurants because they've actually had their tour and they're eating and drinking, you know, pizza – they don't need to go and have another meal at other facilities in Launceston – when that's with state money? I'm sure you've had that criticism yourself and I get it regularly from a variety of different restaurants and owners. So if you could just comment and then I'll go a little further into their new development.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sure. Thanks for the question, Ms Armitage, and to your question around the \$1 million to assist Lion to expand and enhance the James Boags Brewery tours and business centre at Launceston, the funding has been delivered through \$500,000 in 2022-23 and \$500,000 in 2023-24.

Ms ARMITAGE - And they've received it? They've received their second \$500?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's my advice. Yes. On Friday last week new plans for the \$1.8 million redevelopment of the tour and visitor centre were unveiled and it's, you know, good partnership with industry and government. We recognise how important the Boags Brewery visitor centre is not only as a local cultural icon of course, but as a tourism attraction, and an important part of the Launceston economy of course. As a result of this investment the parent

PUBLIC

company, Lion, has committed to retain all visitor centre workers for the foreseeable future and complete the visitor centre upgrade in 2025. To your question around pizzas and beer, I think one would expect a beer after a brewery -

Ms ARMITAGE - A beer. But I'm just talking about – and I realise they're serving food with alcohol. But it does compromise, you know, the other -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well that wouldn't be the intent of course, I'm sure.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, no. But you understand the criticism.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But it's just another part of the experience. There are many many fantastic establishments across Launceston that have unique offerings -

Ms ARMITAGE - There are.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That would provide that competition of course. So, I don't -

Ms ARMITAGE - With respect, premier, they provide competition, but many are not happy that they are competing against public money that's gone to provide the other one, and I just think I should make the point on behalf of the people that have come to me. I do support Boags. You know, I don't oppose Boags at all. I think they're -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think Cascade also has a visitor centre and I was at their 200-year opening as Mr Edmunds was as well, if I recall. Which is cause for great celebration and their visitor centre is also outstanding. So look, I take your point.

Ms ARMITAGE - It was the point passed to me. It's not the – you know it's the criticism that I received.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I take the points of people that have spoken to you regarding this particular matter. While this is a matter for Boags, I'm, you know, I'm minister for hospitality and tourism and I would, you know -

Ms ARMITAGE - Well it is, but it's – are there conditions when we do give money away? I appreciate as you say it's a matter for Boags, but are there conditions attached? So the 1.8 million – has the government given any further money apart from the first million dollars? Is that 1.8 million – new plans for the \$1.8 million redevelopment – is there any more money that's going to Boags apart from the two lots of \$500,000 they've received.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No. The \$1 million is the amount.

Ms ARMITAGE - That's their money, the extra \$800,000?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I'm advised yes.

Mr LIMKIN - Yes. Through you, premier. The government's commitment is a million dollars. The Department State Growth is entering into a grant deed with Boags or Lion to execute and deliver that. They have to deliver on the outcomes of the grant deed so if there is additional funds required, they are to seek them. I do not know whether they're from their

PUBLIC

parent company, but it is their responsibility. The government contribution is capped at a million dollars.

Ms ARMITAGE - Do we know how many tours they actually – I'm not sure whether you have the figures? Did they provide you with figures perhaps for the first financial year after the first \$500,000, what was it, 2022-23. Do you actually have figures given to you about how many tours took place or how many people went through?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We could probably obtain those figures.

Ms ARMITAGE - Only if you've got it. But if you haven't got it, I'm sure I can obtain it myself, probably while looking online.

Mr LIMKIN - So through you, premier, what I can advise is the visitor function centre hosts up to 17,000 visitors a year, and Boags estimates current visitor numbers are between 7,000 and 8,000 per year. The Department of State Growth will get reporting through the grant deed as it is implemented. These numbers are the numbers that were provided in 2023, but we will get that information once the work is complete and it is back open.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you. I do have other questions, but the other members have got questions.

CHAIR - Thank you. Supplementary, Ms Webb?

Ms WEBB - Just a supplementary on that: can you provide us with the details of what is required under the grant deed in terms of reporting back? I presume that is the way you are assessing, premier, value for money in the corporate welfare provided. It would be good to know the details of what needs to be reported back.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay, thank you. We can seek to find that information for you, Ms Webb, if you like. Further to that -

Mr LIMKIN - Through you, premier, we will just have to check the clauses in the contract, Ms Webb. I don't know them off the top of my head; there are certain commercial and confidence matters, but we will take on through the premier, if he is comfortable being able to provide the committee what we can under the contractual arrangements.

Ms WEBB - Well, you could provide those to the committee and identify areas that need to remain confidential, for example, so if we were to publish it we would make sure those bits were redacted. But there is no reason the committee couldn't see those things, surely? This is public money that has been given to a private business. It is corporate welfare. We should be able to see, as though scrutinising public spending, what has been required back in terms of reporting on impact.

CHAIR - Yes. Also I would like to request a copy of all grants that are provided for tourism-related businesses in the previous year as well. Thank you.

Mr LIMKIN - Sure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we can work through some of those matters as well.

CHAIR - I think there is usually a list available.

Ms WEBB - Particularly those provided outside of grant funding rounds, for example, that are just gifts given. Particularly those ones.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't necessarily agree with the 'corporate welfare' at all.

Ms O'CONNOR - You partially agree then?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I don't agree. I reject it in fact, Ms O'Connor. Thanks for allowing me to clarify that. Because there were 15 jobs in the visitor centre.

Ms WEBB - We could spend that money in so many places and generate 15 jobs, premier. The point is was a merit-based process undertaken that was open and equitable for all businesses to apply to in order to secure that money that you gave to Boag's? If that wasn't the case, then it was a gift to a private corporation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To ensure the continuation of the much-loved visitor centre and the jobs. I spoke to an employee at a basketball function in and around that time, who came up to me, and was very distressed about the announcement of the visitor centre and the loss of her job, and potential of, and that put a real human face on it for me. Apart from, of course, the benefit of the visitor centre for itself and what it means to the local Tasmanian economy.

Ms WEBB - Well, I think we will have lots of people then scrambling to throw themselves in your way and make you aware of circumstances where they need support.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This was an employee.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of the company, a human face of the concerns that she had at the time.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Edmunds?

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. A different topic. With regard to the Spirits, I have just had it put to me, and I just wanted to follow up, whether the acting CEO could confirm that they or the organisation only found out that the Spirits wouldn't be in service this summer through media reporting or whether that was communicated from the government?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I have the acting CEO here, so thank you very much for that. I have got communications with industry and, you know, as we drive this important project we are keeping industry updated with regular bulletins and important information. Last week there was a release of a bulletin to tourism and hospitality operators through the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania with an update on the project in August. I convened a tourism roundtable to provide information on the Spirits and enabling infrastructure, and of course I will meet them again on 1 November to provide a more detailed update on progress. And of course -

CHAIR - I think that is the second event you have got on 1 November.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm meeting with TRACA and the tourism -

CHAIR - Busy day.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They are all busy days.

CHAIR - I know.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But they are all different in that sense, but all good days. I regularly meet with industry through the Premier's Visitor Economy Advisory Council. We are going to meet more regularly as time progresses leading up to the arrival of the Spirits. I met with PVEAC in early September, where, among other things of course, provided an update on the Spirits. Again, we will meet in early November, but I do very strongly believe that strong stakeholder - effective stakeholder engagement is of course a very important focus area for Tourism Tasmania.

Mr EDMUNDS - I totally agree with you. But my specific question, though, was could the acting CEO confirm they, or the organisation, only found out that the Spirits would not be in service this summer through media reporting? And I believe in our standing orders we can ask direct questions.

CHAIR - Through the minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. So to support and coordinate communication with industry around preparing for the new Spirits, a working group has been established with representatives from Tourism Tasmania, Department of State Growth, Parks and Wildlife and TICT, all important information. And the agency will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure tourism industry operators have access to information, data and insights they need to plan and make decisions in their businesses.

I am also advised that the CEO of Tourism Tasmania, or acting CEO, has just finished a statewide industry update roadshow, visiting all regions across the state to keep them informed of the government's progress on projects and to hear their suggestions and advice and recommendations.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. I completely embrace what you have said.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - Stakeholder engagement is really important, which comes to the crux of the question, was in terms of the stakeholder engagement, is a really important body like Tourism Tasmania finding out that the jewel in the crown of our tourism industry has been delayed through, you know, listening to the radio or picking up a newspaper, or are they hearing it directly from the government? Which is the question I would like to ask.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay. Thank you very much, Luke. Ms Pinto.

PUBLIC

Ms PINTO - Through you, premier. Just confirming what the premier was advising. We do have regular discussions and meetings. At the time that the discussions around the Spirits were happening we would have had various engagements around our offices. I cannot myself personally recall a specific discussion at that time, partly due to the fact that I actually wasn't - I was actually out of the state at the time. So just at that exact time, no I cannot.

Mr EDMUNDS - Okay. So, no heads-up or anything like that?

Ms PINTO - What I can say -

CHAIR - So was there somebody in the office that was aware of that?

Mr EDMUNDS - Or a text message or something? I'm quite good at those.

Ms PINTO - So through you, premier, we have regular engagement across our offices, particularly at a communication level. So we have - meetings have occurred at an officer level and these matters, such as these important matters, would be a part of those discussions.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks, Madam Chair. Premier, your government cannot properly fund the Integrity Commission. It has not funded the national preventative mechanism to the extent that it is even able to perform its statutory functions. Yet in this budget you can find \$4 million for Cadbury's and a chocolate fountain. What do you think that says about your priorities? If you cannot fund your integrity bodies properly but you can give Cadbury's \$4 million? Then there is the rest, of course, because potentially there is another \$8 million ahead. So, \$12 million to a private multinational corporation for a chocolate function nobody asked for and Tasmania cannot afford.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you know, we focus on a lot of areas when it comes to investment, growing the visitor economy. We have had this discussion this morning around your characterisation of priorities around investment in enabling infrastructure when it comes to the Macquarie Point precinct. I would argue that we invest in health services, housing, cost of living support -

Ms O'CONNOR - Not in our integrity and oversight bodies.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I've also had the discussion on integrity matters and the increasing funding as well.

Ms O'CONNOR - Very small, and they're still subject to an efficiency dividend. In fact, the Ombudsman, who has the role of being the National Preventative Mechanism to prevent inhumane treatment or torture in places where people have been deprived of their liberty, has said he is unable to perform his statutory functions on the amount of money that government has provided him. Yet, you can find \$4 million in this Budget and are planning another \$8 million to give to Cadburys. What do you think that says about your priorities?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - In my view, it's about investing in services and investing in integrity matters, as you call it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Underinvesting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's about investing in enabling infrastructure. The chocolate experience at Cadbury will be a major tourism and economic driver. It's estimated the project will return some \$120 million to the economy each year and represents 3000 construction jobs and 200 ongoing jobs once complete. It'll also see the construction of two new ferries in Hobart, a new ferry terminal with public access at Claremont waterfront parklands. Like MONA, for example, the chocolate experience will be a unique visitor attraction drawing tourists and locals alike to Hobart's northern suburbs and will include an immersion into chocolate making, the world's tallest glass and a half chocolate fountain, build your own bar experience, arboretum -

Ms O'CONNOR - I'd have thought you'd rather prevent the inhumane treatment of people in places where their liberty has been taken away.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, but can I -

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I ask, Premier, whose idea was it to fund a chocolate fountain?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's not a fountain.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, a chocolate experience that includes a fountain and all that other palaver you talked about.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So under our 2030 Strong Plan -

Ms O'CONNOR - Whose idea was it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - for Tasmania's future, we will contribute \$4 million to get the project shovel ready.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's not the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to come to the question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Whose idea? Where did it come from?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's a policy that we work through like you work through your policies as the Greens.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, ours are evidence based and public good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, you know -

Ms O'CONNOR - Anyway, I'm happy to move along.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not -

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Maybe it was a basketball game, someone ran into him.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, can I just -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, come on now. Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. That's inappropriate.

Ms WEBB - I apologise for that comment.

CHAIR - Inappropriate.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - It was unnecessary, that one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's all right. Can we just be respectful, you know?

CHAIR - It's getting close to the lunch break.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm happy to have all the questions. I've had a barrage of questions all day, taking it on the chin. I'm happy to take it.

Ms O'CONNOR - You almost look like you enjoy it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We can have a conversation about that at some point, Ms O'Connor. But of course we'll contribute \$4 million to get the project shovel ready and commence initial siteworks including public walkways, cycleways and headworks. Subject to the achievement of agreed milestones and due diligence, up to a further \$8 million will be made available to realise the \$100 million vision. It is a great experience. We can enhance that experience with other community infrastructure for people to be able to visit the experience.

Ms O'CONNOR - Cadburys could pay for it, for example. They've got multi-billion dollar profits globally. This money has been hooked out of the Tasmanian Budget where we've got, was it, \$5.4 billion net debt, over \$8 billion by the end of the forward Estimates. Why can't Cadburys pay for this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is investment and a partnership with industry, and we're investing -

Ms O'CONNOR - A partnership.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, well -

Ms O'CONNOR - They saw you coming.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms O'Connor -

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, can I just ask a quick question about the Bruny Island four-wheel drives, and then I'll let you go on this one for a while.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Is this the ambulance?

Ms O'CONNOR - No, this is about recreational vehicles accessing Bruny. We've been contacted by a number of local residents who are worried about over-tourism on the island and the dangers that RVs create on gravel roads and overcrowding in camping areas. I'm happy to put these on notice. Can you clarify whether the government promotes the use of recreational vehicles on Bruny, particularly in offroad areas? Any consultation with the local community? Any plans to regulate it, put some controls on RVs on Bruny?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that. I'm happy to take it on notice. I'm not sure whether Southern Destination Tas has any involvement in this promotion at all. I'm not saying they are by any stretch of the imagination and Alex does a great job. But we'll have to take it on notice. Is there a concern?

Ms O'CONNOR - There is a concern from locals who are worried and have noticed a significant uptick in the use of RVs on the island and would like to see government allocate funding and resources to regulating recreational vehicles and finding a solution that works for tourists and residents of Bruny Island.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. Well, solutions are important.

CHAIR - Thank you. So that one's a lunch break, perhaps some research. Ms Webb, and then I'm coming back to Ms Armitage, and then we'll probably break for lunch.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Chair, there might be a parks area that Ms O'Connor's referring to. I'm not going to not take it on notice, but -

Ms O'CONNOR - It's the whole island.

Mr ROCKLIFF - it could be a parks matter.

Mr LIMKIN - The advice I have, Premier, is it's probably a parks matter. But we're seeking to confirm at the moment.

CHAIR - You might just check that over the lunch break.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Do you scrutinise the Parks minister?

CHAIR - No. He's under the pump as we speak.

Ms WEBB - I just have a couple of questions around the off-season 2024 campaign, if I may. It's really in relation to some things that were raised with me. Certainly, I support the concept and enjoy the creativity that's gone into that local and national marketing campaign. The questions relate to how prepared some local businesses on the ground may have been around. I note that the website states that on the ground there are, and the quote is, 'more than 400 businesses across Tasmania with over 500 wintery experiences and events known as off-season offers for visitors and locals to enjoy'. So all well and good.

There's a very comprehensive program leaflet that relates to it. I've had some feedback that when travellers did go to a regional event that was highlighted through the campaign or went to a metropolitan event but then wanted to explore the region, doing what the scheme wanted the to do obviously, is get people out and engaging during the off-season, they found other tourism infrastructure wasn't up to meeting their needs. For example, there might have been a lack of accommodation or a lack of places to eat because those other businesses in the area or the region were having downtime during the off-season. I'm getting to the question, sorry, Chair.

CHAIR - I hope so.

Ms WEBB - So although we're directing people to these events or these regions through the campaign in a successful way, the question is about how we reliably provided them things like accommodation, places to stay, places to fuel and all that sort of thing. What went on behind the scenes to assessing local capability to service winter visitors on the move when we direct them out to these places during the off-season?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Are you talking about the winter person - sorry, this year's campaign with Tourism Tasmania?

Ms WEBB - I'm talking about the off-season campaign and I'm looking at a brochure -

CHAIR - The one where they encouraged people to jump in the cold water.

Ms WEBB - There's a brochure here and it's lists like a calendar of all these events to suggest things that people can go and do.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We'll take the question at face value, and it's a good question. I appreciate it.

Ms WEBB - It is just a -

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of it's good feedback if you've got that feedback. We appreciate that.

Ms WEBB - As I said, fully support the campaign. I thought it was really quirky and good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So you're saying there's a disconnect between the campaign itself and what's actually happening on the ground?

Ms WEBB - I wondered what had gone on to ensure that we were supportive enough of the collateral accommodation offers and food offers and things around so when we sent people out to an event that there were services there for them to - and then not have them be disappointed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's really good feedback and a good question. Vanessa, Ms Pinto, can you please provide an answer to Ms Webb?

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Do we have any way we track or map, for example, all the tourism related businesses that are open during winter and could provide that information to visitors so that they definitely know, okay, we're going to head to that region and I definitely know that these places are going to be open.

CHAIR - That I can get something to eat.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Ms PINTO - Thank you, Premier. A very good question because it is really important as we promote and advertise what an experience can be like coming down to Tasmania as to make sure that people visiting our state have the latest information and can also manage their holiday around our state. I'll talk you through some of the things that we do now and the fact that we're actually leaning further into that.

The first thing I'll say is Tourism Tasmania works really closely with the regional tourism organisations. The Premier made note of Alex and the team down here in the south, and in the leadup to a season - and I can talk in a moment about what we did during this pre-season industry catch-up. We'll work really closely with those regional tourism organisations who then equally support the local operators to encourage them to come forward and look at opportunities they have to deliver offers for that season, but also importantly, how they could work together. For example, through the Tamar Valley, there's a lovely relationship that occurs amongst the operators there where someone may go from venue to another to another, and they look at how they can work together to deliver a complete experience.

The other thing that we do as a part of designing those campaigns, and we did that leading up to winter 2024, and we're about to do it leading into winter 2025, is Tourism Tasmania working with the RTOs, provide support to the operators themselves to help design an offer that they want to provide, and we encourage them very strongly. You talk about information to make sure that the register that they have with the Australian tourism data warehouse - so it's a central register nationally where you can register your operation, your hours when you're open, what you've got offered, et cetera, so that that translates then automatically through to our website. We work with the operators themselves in the lead-up. This year, we have already started working with operators ready for winter 2025. We help them with what the offer would look like. We help them with designing what their website would look like, and then that all translates through into the campaign.

Your feedback is valuable. It's just that constant thing of working in regions to make sure that someone's travel itinerary actually works as you're describing, that you can go from one place to another to another to garner those experiences.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate the answer. Thank you.

CHAIR - Just a supplementary. I know that in the town that I spent a lot of time in that there's no manual fuel pump anymore. Do you work with all levels of business? Because, unless you've got a swipe card for a particular fuel outlet, there isn't any weekend fuel anymore. How do you engage with all those? If you're travelling in a car, get to Scottsdale, and there's no more fuel until you get to St Helens. You're in trouble.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, Ms Rattray. Yes, Vanessa.

Ms PINTO - Through you, Premier. We work primarily with the tourism operators. However, as a part of the visitor economy strategy which is - it's actually a unique strategy across Australia. We have in Tasmania an industry and government and community strategy that's been built together. As a part of that, one of the key elements which is we've got a visitor economy that's all about positive impact. We want to ensure that this delivers a positive impact not just to Tasmanians but to visitors themselves, and part of that body of work, we are looking at how in regional areas do we ensure it's not just about the tourism offering, but it's the support infrastructure and the support services. We're also looking at that more broadly, but at a tactical level, if you know what I mean. We primarily deal with tourism operators.

CHAIR - It doesn't give me a lot of confidence you can find fuel in some places, but anyway, now you are aware of it. Perhaps somebody might take some time to look at it. The member for Launceston with a question around a program or -

Ms ARMITAGE - Look, it's a bit further on the Come Down For Air campaign that was quite prolific. If you would be able to advise, how much did it cost to administer over the past financial year? And how was the success of it assessed?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Come Down For Air campaign is a good initiative, and it's there to lead and activate the state's tourism brand, as in Tourism Tasmania, of course, and a strong demand. Our brand is crucial for creating that future demand, et cetera. I want to get to the point of this. Tourism Tasmania's brand strategy is based on positioning Tasmania as different and compelling in ways that are distinctive and capture attention in busy and cluttered advertising environment, and of course, we appreciate a relatively small budget for Tourism Tasmania.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm not criticising it. I just wonder what it cost.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, no. But it's important with respect to the relatively small budget compared to other states which is why, as I think acknowledged by Ms Webb, that it needs to be quite outstanding in that sense. The Come Down For Air domestic campaign driving awareness and consideration of Tasmania as a holiday destination, our total investment was \$5.532 million. That included the Come Down For Air strategy and execution of national paid media campaign in market from October 23 to March 24, PR paid the media and production costs for the Tasmanian AI Brand Act, the -

Ms ARMITAGE - Were they Tasmanian firms that worked on the campaign? The media and -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll come to that in a moment. And so good investment in that sense. The return on investment, of course, is also very important. Perhaps we could touch on that, please.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, please.

Ms PINTO - Through you, Premier. Yes, the campaign cost just over \$5.5 million. You asked earlier about how we track the performance of campaigns. There are a number of ways if we were to step back and look at what Tourism Tasmania's role is, our role is to promote the brand of Tasmania itself and drive future demand for Tasmania as a holiday destination, not

just for people living in Australia but for people overseas. That's a really key element of what we're seeking to achieve.

One of the things that we do measure, we do a lot of research, and one area that we seek to measure is how our brand, as Tasmania the brand itself as a holiday destination is recognised and acknowledged out there. We have paid research with Kantar that assessed how Tasmania performs against all our other competitor states, and acknowledging that we have a far smaller tourism budget than we do some of our sister states.

What I can let the committee know is that we are, as a state, performing exceptionally well. There is research that Kantar undertakes that asks Australians, and it's quantifiable research, who are in the market of holidaying what is the most recent brand that you've been aware of and noticed, and Queensland is number one. Understandably, they've got a very large budget comparative to Tasmania.

Ms ARMITAGE - And a warmer climate.

Ms PINTO - And a warmer climate. Tasmania is number two to Queensland. When we look at how distinctive and unique the brand is, Tasmania is number one. When it comes to our performance for how our brand is cutting through, what I can advise in terms of a return on investment, it's a very sound return on investment as we are getting that brand through. The second component that Tourism Tasmania seeks to do is to convert that interest or that desire into people booking holidays. Part of what we do is monitor the amount of engagement on our website. What I can say is that we have seen a really significant increase in traffic, up by about 311 per cent in this period with a higher engagement time on the website and a lot more then pushed through to operators. I hope that gives you a good -

Ms ARMITAGE - It does. The final part of my question with the \$5.5 million, did it go to Tasmanian businesses to put the ad together? Were there Tasmanian production companies, Tasmanian marketing companies, that designed the ad as opposed to mainland companies? We do have some very good ones.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, Ms Armitage. Ms Pinto.

Ms PINTO - Through you, Premier. The creative advertising agency that Tourism Tasmania currently has a contract with is not a Tasmanian company. That agency was engaged through a government procurement process complying with the requisite obligations. What I can say, though, is that in that marketing and advertising campaign there is a lot of elements to it, including content, video and the localised production, and that a lot of that work we do - wherever we can we work with local Tasmanian operations.

Ms ARMITAGE - There might be questions I'll ask at another time about 'buy Tasmanian'.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, one more question here and then we'll go to visitor economy support and then hopefully we might get a lunch break.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Very briefly - and thank you, Chair - minister, I'm sure you would agree that Tasmania's tourism brand is much more of a niche nature-based tourism brand than a mass-scale tourism. We're talking here about the fact that it's a small island which has

an appeal for those things that we talked about before, distinctive and unique. Do you agree that there's a risk of overuse of the place sort of being loved to death if we're not careful about visitor numbers? I think about, you know, do you remember that story from a few years ago - in fact, I just checked; it's on the blogs - the rats at Lake Rhona in the Denison Ranges. Do you agree that we need to very carefully manage our tourism sector to make sure we're not damaging those very things that Tasmania - people come to Tasmania for?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's a couple of aspects to that. First of all, yes, we do need to manage it. We also need to ensure that Tasmanians embrace the tourism industry as well. If we don't manage the infrastructure in certain parts of Tasmania and people are frustrated by the amount of people coming to Tasmania, then that might engender not the welcoming that many Tasmanians are well-known for.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's a few aspects to that we need to be very mindful of, as well as, as you say, not loving the place to death in that sense.

CHAIR - Hard not to.

Ms O'CONNOR - We love it madly, but we wouldn't want to love it to death.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's where some key investments such as the Cradle Mountain Master Plan are very important, of course. We would probably differ on the Cradle Mountain cableway.

Ms O'CONNOR - We do differ on that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is an example of ensuring that low-impact tourism can be catered for; that large numbers can be catered for in terms of that low-impact tourism opportunity. We won't be discouraging people coming to Tasmania. We just need to ensure that our 2030 visitor strategy - that we have the right amenities. Parks play a key role there and other infrastructure to support an influx of tourists that continue to be welcomed by the local community as well.

CHAIR - Tread lightly approach.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I like your question. Do you have anything further to add to that, Vanessa, please?

Ms PINTO - Thank you.

CHAIR - Brief as possible, thank you.

Ms PINTO - Absolutely. Through you, Premier, as a part of the visitor economy strategy, one of the key elements we are looking at is in the very point you were referring to: sustainable visitor capacity. There's lots of different terms for it, but ostensibly that's what we're talking about. We have already - so thanks to the government providing us funding last year in the visitor economy strategy when it was first released Tourism Tasmania has already

invested some of that funding into understanding a little bit more around Tasmania and where those pressure points are.

Ms O'CONNOR - Like the Wineglass Bay track, for example.

Ms PINTO - Yes, exactly. It's been really quite a comprehensive assessment that we've done working in partnership with KPMG and then working across all our stakeholder groups.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that available, that document?

Ms PINTO - Good question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The strategy?

Ms PINTO - Yes. The strategy is, absolutely.

Ms O'CONNOR - But the work that KPMG have done.

Ms PINTO - The work that you're doing. I'd have to take, through you, Premier -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Yes.

Ms PINTO - I'd have to take that on notice to see if it could be made available to the committee. It's a really invaluable body of work and it looks at how we can work around the state and does note that, you know, there are areas of opportunity that we can invest in in how we manage and protect our environment as well as visitors coming in. Ostensibly it's at this point in time a lot of the evidence that's coming through is suggesting Tasmania doesn't have some of the same pressure points other destinations would have, but -

Ms O'CONNOR - At the moment.

Ms PINTO - At the moment, yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Are we moving to the next one?

CHAIR - We are.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Output group 5 Cultural and tourism development

5.5 Visitor economy support

CHAIR - We're moving into 5.5 Visitor economy support, and we've all heard you just touched on that.

Mr EDMUNDS - A few of the questions probably branched over both. If I may start I'll try to be as quick as possible. Expenditure: I think we talked about this last year, Premier. Expenditure on visitor economy support is projected to fall from \$32 million this year to just \$1.5 million by the end of the forward Estimates. Are you actually cutting 95 per cent of all tourism industry support over the next four years?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In the footnote -

Mr EDMUNDS - The footer explains that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're investing more, of course, in this Budget which reflects our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's future.

Mr EDMUNDS - Sorry, referring to page 333.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Page 333.

Mr EDMUNDS - Output group 5, 5.5.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Output group 5, 5.5. Moving across the forward Estimates. Yes. Thank you. So during the 2024 election campaign we committed up to \$39.9 million to support and develop Tasmania's tourism and hospitality industry. This consists of \$12 million over three years to implement the strategy plus \$27.9 million for the following specific. These are economy commitments which are aligned with the strategy in D. Vanessa, if you can update the committee in terms of forward - or Craig - profile.

Mr LIMKIN - Thank you, Premier. As the Premier said, the strategy goes to 2026 and so the funding in the forward Estimates really focus on that. Let me give you an example. The 2030 visitor economy strategy is \$4 million in 2024, 2025, 2026. The aviation fund profile, which is also a government commitment, which is \$5 million over the forward Estimates has a different profile of, you know, 1.5, 1.5, 1.5 and 500 K, which is based on what we believe at this stage is the likely spend on attracting new and international routes while also spending funding on destination marketing. As I indicated in the House yesterday that once we secure new routes, being it in Asia or other activities, Tourism Tas needs to go through and seek to generate demand out of those markets so that the supply that we've purchased and work through then moves through. There are no projects being cut, Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - No, I did know. That wasn't the question.

Mr LIMKIN - I just want to be clear. What they are is a -

Mr EDMUNDS - I was actually very clear in my question and said -

Mr LIMKIN - They are.

Mr EDMUNDS - 'Surely we're not reducing the number.'

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr LIMKIN - They are. They are.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And that's appropriate question, and footnote 10 does explain more broadly.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Bringing in, as I've said before, the 2024 election commitments.

Mr EDMUNDS - I guess perhaps to - because obviously we've got the time. We should expect that number to look different next budget as the sort of years move through?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Quite possible.

Mr LIMKIN - Through you, Premier. The 2030 strategy is a three-year strategy at the moment. Tourism Tas and the Department of State Growth will continue the work with the industry to update that and move that forward. That will be a decision for government, and those activities will be a decision for government at a future budget period of time.

Mr EDMUNDS - No worries. I've got another question about the targets set for visitor numbers to national parks.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Mr EDMUNDS - Some of those numbers were missed significantly. Cradle Mountain, I believe, was by 20,000, Freycinet by 57, Lake Saint Clair by 11 - these are thousands - and Mole Creek Caves by 12,000.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Could you point me to the page?

Mr EDMUNDS - It's on -

CHAIR - I can't believe they've missed going to Mole Creek Caves.

Mr EDMUNDS - Isn't that on page 33 as well? I was looking at this last night. Where is that? I've lost it. I was looking at this on the computer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It may well have been - may well have been parks where those figures were.

Mr LIMKIN - That's not us.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, sure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But good question.

Mr EDMUNDS - But with regards to that, you have said it's not a cut to visitor economy support. But I imagine that any drop-off in funding will make it harder to meet those targets into the future. But I think you probably covered that with the last question. I've just got another quick one. I'm probably as hungry as you are. The business events funding - and I

appreciate that that's mentioned in the footnote from page 333 - has increased. But considering the bang for your buck that you get out of that investment, do you think there's possibly scope to even take that further?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a very important part of our visitor economy, and appreciate the work that Business Events Tas does - if that's the right name for it. I think it is. So we can most likely expand on that, engage with Business Events Tas in terms of what they would require. And dare I mention the war, but the stadium infrastructure as well and the ability for more convention space -

Mr EDMUNDS - Things on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, sort of thing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, will also be of benefit as well in terms of business events and the like because, if my memory serves me correctly, I have been speaking to people that - you know, we limit ourselves to the size of the possibilities around business events coming to Tasmania, which is a very important part of our tourism. I think your question is more is there scope for engaging with the business events economy to see if we can increase targeted support or whatever it might be. I'm always willing to engage on those matters. To Luke's previous question on H204, table 7.6, there's performance information which does cover off on visitor numbers, Cradle Mountain, Freycinet, Gordon River, Lake St Clair, Mole Creek caves, Mount Field and Narawntapu in the Parks section.

CHAIR - There's still often tourists to the state though, regardless of whether they go to any of those places or hit the road and just drive around.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As a matter of interest, Mr Edmunds, your question was in relation to - I took the question as falling numbers, but what I think you're saying is the -

Mr EDMUNDS - But on targets from the last - this is where I've lost it, on the targets from the last year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Targets increasing, which means we're going to have to keep that investment up.

Mr EDMUNDS - Compared to last year's budget document.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To correlate with interest and investment I think was your point, which is a good one.

Mr EDMUNDS - No worries. I'm done.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you.

CHAIR - All right. Thank you all, and apologies for travelling a little bit into our lunch break, but I thought it was useful rather than ask these good people to come back after lunch. We shall suspend for the lunch break, which will be, we'll say, 2.30, and that'll be with your hat on as the minister for Trade and Major Investment, premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Please enjoy your lunch.

The Committee suspended from 1.28 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

CHAIR - Welcome back to the table, Premier, with your responsibility for the Office of the Coordinator-General, Industry and Business Development, Infrastructure Tasmania. Before I hand over to you for perhaps an outline that you're going to provide, I'd like to welcome to our committee, our committee member the honourable Mike Gaffney member for Mersey, who has joined us this afternoon after being away yesterday and this morning. So, welcome Mike. We'll await your overview, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Thanks very much, Chair. Welcome Mike, and welcome John Perry from the Office of the Coordinator-General. Welcome to Angela Conway who is Deputy Secretary of Business Services for the Department of State Growth. It's great to see you again, Ange. To my left is Ned Whitehouse, who is my chief of staff.

Trade and investment. I will keep this a little bit short because we only have half an hour, don't we, for this?

Ms O'CONNOR - Office of the Coordinator-General, half an hour. A bit longer for Industry and Business Development.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All right then.

CHAIR - My members are all over their output groups.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is within it. It's only half an hour. Let's go.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're in charge. Trade continues to be one of the state's continuing success stories. It's still being finalised, but I'm pleased to advise the committee that this year we expect the value of Tasmanian exports to exceed \$6 billion and it overtakes the \$5.8 billion result from last year which is fantastic. Well done to all our exporters and those that support them.

Despite the slowing of major economies in recent months, our annual goods export values have recorded a year-on-year increase coming in at more than \$4.4 billion. Our service exports have almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels which is pleasing, which is racking up \$1.1 billion in sales and across the year it is estimated that more than \$150 million in sales has been secured with the assistance of the Trade Action Plan initiatives, which is great.

I'm pleased to announce that today we opened the \$1 million Advanced Manufacturing and Accelerating Growth Program, which is an important part of our commitment to the advanced manufacturing industry and that has really been revolutionised in the last decade due to the innovators amongst that cohort of industry players and the program was designed to support our advanced manufacturing businesses to become more competitive, more resilient and able to scale up to better compete in global markets. A lot of this change arose, as members might recall that in April 2015 there was the centralisation of Caterpillar to Rayong in Thailand, which left Burnie devastated with the loss of many direct jobs, 280 from memory, and of course the associated industries.

PUBLIC

So there's been great effort in not only shining a light on our advanced manufacturers in the state across a range of areas, but also supporting with grants such as this. Grants will be provided up to \$100,000. They're now available and information is on the website. Looking at major investment the Office of the Coordinator-General continues spearheading investment attraction and since this program inception has brought in billions of new investment into Tasmania.

CHAIR - Did you say billions?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Billions.

CHAIR - Billions. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Billions. In fact, yes, so \$4.4 billion is the estimated figure around this. I might've mentioned \$5.5 billion yesterday, but it's \$4.4 billion. I'm sure we'll get to \$5.5 billion in some way.

CHAIR - Did we lose \$1.1 billion overnight, did we?

Ms O'CONNOR - We've all done it, Chair. We have.

CHAIR - Lost a billion overnight?

Ms O'CONNOR - Sure.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thought I'd just mention that, just to fill in the picture. Look, \$4.4 billion, I'm advised, is an impressive number. Of course, we're currently working on a pipeline of almost \$16 billion of potential projects. These projects come in across a huge range of the economy including mining, agribusiness, tourism, food production and processing energy in the digital economy. Housing and advanced manufacturing, as well. The OCG is a regular participant on our international trade and investment missions as well, which is great.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's probably a pretty good overview to start with. We've only got 25 minutes left.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Okay.

Ms O'CONNOR - Unless there's fresh and compelling information.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's all compelling, of course. But I'm happy to take questions.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms O'Connor. You can see she's very keen to launch into this area.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right. I look forward to a catch-up with the Coordinator-General each year. Premier, I'd like to ask some questions about the Cradle Mountain cableway project. When Gustav Weindorfer made that now famous statement about the Cradle Valley, he said, 'This must be a park for all people for all time'. Your government has no funds to build

the cableway. Can you confirm that the Office of the Coordinator-General is seeking a private investor to help with the funding for that cableway? What would be the implications for public access should that infrastructure be privately owned?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that. Before I throw to John, who hopefully won't have to correct too much of what I have to say, we've still got \$30 million in terms of investment for the cableway. Of course we're continuing to invest in the master plan itself more broadly. We're seeking a contribution of \$30 million from the federal government still. The previous business case highlighted, I think, an investment that was needed of \$190 million for the cableway, and that business case is being updated as we speak. Acknowledging of course that the master plan will broadly - the cableway which I spoke of yesterday and may be a bit today - which was in response to your question about the place being loved to death - and that's where it's at, at this present time.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Can you just confirm, sorry, just to drill into those numbers a bit more because there's obviously a concern amongst people who love Cradle Mountain that access to it will be privatised.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can't imagine that, but anyway.

Ms O'CONNOR - I mean maybe you'll shut the road so that people will have to use the cableway, for example. In terms of the private investment in that project, how much private money is being sought to realise it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. We want to ensure there is access to all people. Part of the cableway's benefit is accessible tourism and making sure it's accessible to all abilities.

Ms O'CONNOR - What about all budgets?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's a factor too. Mr Perry, would you like to -

Ms O'CONNOR - The private investment quantum of the necessary funds that you need.

Mr PERRY - Through you, Premier. The latest costing that we undertook, which was last year, was for a total cost of \$190 million. As the Premier said, we're reviewing those costings because they were prepared, we think, conservatively; but it was in January-ish of last year with detailed QS, et cetera, but it's possible that's increased in that time. We are not looking for private sector investment into the cableway.

We have been engaged with the federal government around co-investing into the cableway, and as the Premier identified there was \$30 million committed from the federal government which they withdrew when they changed the terms and conditions of the funding arrangements, and the cableway could no longer qualify because of the timeframe for delivery. We are in discussions with them around funding for the entire \$190 million, or that may change according to our work. We are not seeking private sector investment in relation to the cableway. We are working with private investors in relation to other components of the master plan.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mr Perry. There's been no update that we can find to the Office of the Coordinator-General's web portal for expressions of interest process projects. I'm wondering if we can get an update on these projects:

The Freycinet eco-resort: the proponents listed sold the business and left the area but it's still up on the website.

The Overland Track experience: one letter says the proponent will do some market research at some point. This is after a full decade where it's been sitting up on the website or part of the plan.

South Coast Tracks walk: one letter exists suggesting a reserve activity assessment is being prepared and the proponent is in real financial trouble, and we know the RAA process is a shambles.

the Maria Island experience: we have a letter that exists blaming the government for failure to finalise the Maria Island management plan; and

the Project Point Adventure. There's no trace of this online anywhere, but the Office of the Coordinator-General portal says it's operational.

It looks like land banking to us, but an update would be good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. It's not technically in the major investments portfolio; it more aligns with minister Abetz's portfolio responsibilities.

Ms O'CONNOR - And minister Duigan, but it comes under the responsibilities of the Coordinator-General and it's attached to the Tourism portfolio.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not avoiding the question -

Ms O'CONNOR - No.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm just pointing out the various areas of responsibility. Happy to throw to John.

CHAIR - Hopefully you had a quick pen to take note of all those projects.

Mr PERRY - I think our website has got on it the most recent time that it was updated, which was 29 July, as I understand it, and that provides the best indication in relation to where projects - the status of the projects that are listed there. I didn't take a note of all the projects that you wanted.

CHAIR - If the member would like to read them slowly.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm very happy to have this tabled because we've only got half an hour. I mean, whatever the Premier thinks is reasonable. Freycinet eco-resort, Overland Track experience, South Coast Tracks walk, Maria Island experience and Project Point Adventure.

CHAIR - Take them on notice?

Ms O'CONNOR - Take them on notice?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's a fair bit of information there to delve into. We'll take those on notice. Thanks, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Premier.

CHAIR - Can I have some indication of staff numbers for the office?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Office of Coordinator-General? I can go through some of that. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR - Does that include the industry and business development arm as well, or is it separate, or if I can have them both, that's fine.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand it's separate. Office of the Coordinator-General, physical staffing for 2023-24, 17. As a result of 1 July 2024, we are recruiting two.

CHAIR - So that'll be a total of 19.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We have planned total of 20. We have also an additional part-time resource that's working internationally.

CHAIR - Internationally?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. That is employed largely by the Austrade. That's one.

CHAIR - Okay. Are they based around the state, or is it based in Launceston?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's around nine in Launceston and seven in Hobart. We're recruiting another person in Launceston with a planned total of 10 in Launceston.

CHAIR - Thank you. Is that an increase on last year? Is that -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't believe so, but it's possible.

CHAIR - Well, the two who would be employed will be an increase on last year. That was 17 plus the one that's internationally employed.

Mr PERRY - Through you, Premier. We have a new position that we advertised some time ago that we have been working through recruitment, and so that is a new position in our office. The other one is a replacement for an existing position.

CHAIR - Thank you. The new position is for something new that the office is undertaking?

Mr PERRY - It's executive director of special projects, so it covers a range of different projects, and also chief operating officer. So two roles within the one position.

CHAIR - Okay. How does that fit with the role of the office, the actual Coordinator-General? How does that fit? They'll be answerable to the Coordinator-General?

Mr PERRY - Yes. Yes.

CHAIR - And the band that goes with that position?

Mr PERRY - So Senior Executive Service 2.

CHAIR - L, J, K, M, any idea?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of the different -

Ms O'CONNOR - That's the salary.

CHAIR - That's the salary. That's the last one you gave us.

Mr ROCKLIFF - SES 2.

CHAIR - They're all on a -

Ms ARMITAGE - I'll estimate L.

CHAIR - Okay. I'll go for K.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think they're different to the MP's ranges.

Mr EDMUNDS - They're different, yes.

CHAIR - Okay. So it's a Band 2?

Mr PERRY - It's the State Service band, so it's Senior Executive, SES 2. I don't think it relates to the -

CHAIR - We'll hunt them down. Thank you. Other questions for this particular area, thank you. If not, I've definitely got another one.

I'm interested in the areas where there's been an increased opportunity for the Office of the Coordinator-General to have a positive impact. Is it mining? Is it homes? You said 'homes', you said 'mining'. There's quite a list of areas that you gave us, Premier. I'm interested in what are the key industries. The standout one. Who's performing well with the support of the Office of the Coordinator-General?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's sort of investment attraction, which is the key focus of the Office for the Coordinator-General. One of those is the SunCable project, which is earmarked for northern Tasmania in and around George Town. That's to produce our own - well, not our own - but produce electrical cable, would you call that, for connections such as the second cable for Marinus, which will be the Cethana link, for example. That's a very big project that the Coordinator-General has been working on in terms of investment attraction.

We've had some successes of preferred sites for that. There is still work to do. We fought off 30 different places around the world including three sites in Australia in that, as I understand

it. We need to continue to seal that opportunity, if I can put it that way. That would be an example of it.

CHAIR - Okay. Obviously there's approximately \$12 million uplift in the Budget for this year from last year. It's gone from almost \$18 million up to \$30 million. Is that correct? My note tells me that this is the variation that reflects the funding profile for the northern cities major development Launceston.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that question, Chair. Perhaps I will refer to Mr Perry on that one.

Mr PERRY - Yes, that's correct. The northern transformation project, which we're responsible for that is part of the Launceston City deal, is predominantly the move from the university and the building of its new campus at Inveresk. There are funding payments that are due through our grant deed that we have with the university upon meeting certain milestones. That reflects the timing and expectation of those payments.

CHAIR - Okay. It's a lot of dollars, isn't it? The member for Hobart has a further question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. I'll just go back to the EOIs. The web portal for EOIs still has on it the floating hotel at Recherche Bay. So the website says it's an accepted concept. It appeared about 10 years ago, I think. Maybe nine. There's been no words, no update, no nothing, and the OCG website has a condition on proponent's applications. Within six months of the Minister for Parks and Environment accepting the recommendation of the EOI assessment panel that the concept progresses, et cetera, proponents must demonstrate a significant progress towards seeking project approvals in order to continue with the process within six months of being accepted nine years ago. Premier, through you to the Coordinator-General, can we assume the Recherche Bay project has been withdrawn or discontinued? Or again, is it another exercise in land banking or water banking, as the case may be?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. I appreciate that. The advice that I have was that an expression of interest panel sought evidence of progress on 8 March this year. The panel was advised that an international luxury tourism business is currently working on this project and has introduced two investors from South-East Asia who are currently undertaking their due diligence. The panel was advised that their level of investor interest was sufficient for the OCG to wish to continue to pursue, and the panel sought advice on whether there had been any other interests for the site, and the potential risk of perceived or actual land banking. The panel was advised that there had been no other expression of interest relating to the site, so there was no issue with potential exclusion, and -

Ms O'CONNOR - Except that they sat on it for nine years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand that the proposal remains within the process of the review in 12 months. Is there anything further -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, it's in breach of your own conditions. I'm just noting that. Last question, what other aspects of the Cradle master plan are being privatised? We just heard from Mr Perry earlier that private funds are not being sought for the cable way itself, but that

PUBLIC

there are private funds being sought for other aspects of the master plan. What are those other aspects?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. Mr Perry.

Mr PERRY - Yes. One of the aspects of the master plan is in relation to staff accommodation. Another aspect of the master plan is in relation to private sector investment at the gateway. Another aspect of the master plan is in relation to walking trails and paths.

Ms O'CONNOR - Walking trails to be paid for by the private sector.

Mr PERRY - No. I was talking about - sorry, through you again, Premier. I was talking about the other aspects of the master plan.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. What aspects do you expect to be delivered privately?

Mr PERRY - So the first two, we are hoping for. The staff accommodation one is more challenging to achieve. However, we are working on that as well, and the main one is the one that has always been in the public domain, which is a commercial outside of the park in relation to the gateway and visitor centre.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you. Nice to see you here. You've mentioned it before about the engagement with UTAS. Do you do any work with them in the south of the state, and not just around the move but just generally? If you work with them in Launceston, do you engage with them about some of their projects in Hobart?

Mr PERRY - Yes. We work with UTAS on a range of different matters. We haven't been working with them in relation to their southern move, but we have been involved with them in relation to specific projects, particularly with private sector, when there are applied research, all that sort of thing.

Mr EDMUNDS - This is a bit of an oddball question as well, but we've had Homes Tas and the Housing minister in here before, and a lot of the stuff they talk about is regulatory red tape, et cetera, getting in the way of trying to build more houses. Do they ever tap into the expertise that you have under your umbrella around those sorts of challenges?

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you mean the red tape reduction?

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, but more broadly.

Mr PERRY - So we have -

Mr EDMUNDS - In terms of they talk about the challenges they face. I'm wondering if there's a resource available to them. Do they engage with it as well, or do you engage with them?

Mr PERRY - To my knowledge, we haven't engaged with the university in relation -

Mr EDMUNDS - No, no. Sorry. Homes Tas now, sorry.

Mr PERRY - We have regular meetings with Homes Tas in relation to different possibilities. I know that there have been broader reforms that have been proposed and developed in order to address different issues. While we've been engaged with them, I think there has been other pathways for resolving some of those issues.

Mr EDMUNDS - No worries, thank you. The Kangaroo Bay development - what's the role of the Coordinator-General with that, at this stage? So, a reference to the Coordinator-General in the most recent bit of correspondence. I wonder if you could run us through that, please.

Mr PERRY - Yes. We have been involved with that project and the proposed proponent for some time. We have continued to engage with them throughout the - I think it's almost 10 years period. Our most recent role, as well as providing various advice and meeting with their different parties, is specifically in relation to the lodgement of the second MPP application that has been put through. So, we have been involved with them in relation to that.

Mr EDMUNDS - So you did the data.

Mr PERRY - We did some data analysis for them that related to work that we had access to.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. That's it for that area. We will move now to the Industry and Business Developments. I'm not sure if anyone changes at the table for that one, but that's where we are, which is 1.2.

1.2 Industry and Business Development

CHAIR - Nobody changes at the table. I am interested in the number of trade missions that have been undertaken in this area, and also the quantum of funds that is used to undertake those trade missions. There was some commentary in last year's Estimates process about a first-class flight.

Mr EDMUNDS - Minister Ogilvie's trip to Thailand.

CHAIR - Yes. Somewhere nice, it doesn't matter where it was. It's obviously a trade mission. I'm interested in how many of those missions have been undertaken and the expenses that sat adjacent to those.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's a number of trade missions, of course, planned going -

CHAIR - Often members of the community go, too, representing various industries.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, yes, industries. That's right.

Mr EDMUNDS - A couple of cricketers once. At least one, yes.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - To Sri Lanka, as I understand it. That was a few years ago with premier Hodgman. We'll be embarking on a trade mission to the United States in a matter of days - 6 October, if my memory serves me correctly. In early November, a trade mission is planned for China. I've got opportunities to open doors, engage in market showcase capabilities, and connect with international buyers, distributors, and the like.

To ensure a proactive approach in a competitive environment, we've developed a trade and investment mission plan encompassing key emerging and established markets that align the Tasmanian trade strategy 2019-2025. The first iteration of the Tasmanian trade and investment mission plan 2024 was published in July 2022 and covered a two-year period of 2022-23 and 2023-24, supported by \$1.765 million from the 2022 state Budget. To date, the 2024 mission plan has yielded a return of more than \$26 million in commercial trade outcomes and facilitated over \$3.5 million investment and 95 FTE, and progressed Tasmanian projects involving approximately \$2.45 billion of potential investment and 520 jobs.

Under the first 100 days under our plan for Tasmania's future, we have delivered and released the next three-year trade and investment mission plan, 2024-27, demonstrating our commitment to international engagement, investment, growing trade, and market diversification as well.

During the 2023-24 period, the following mission plan market activity took place: United Kingdom, trade and investment mission; and the United States of America, trade and investment mission.

We're also embarking on, or have embarked on, a program that invites people to Tasmania called Savour Tasmania. That happened a couple of months ago. It was very successful. It enabled people that produce our fine products and other wares to remain in Tasmania and engage with people coming into Tasmania to establish those relationships, and of course allowing potential investors, importers if you like, to experience not only the Tasmanian people but also our wonderful environment as well.

CHAIR - The one that's next week is to the United States.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

CHAIR - Then the early November is to?

Mr ROCKLIFF - China.

CHAIR - China. Thank you. I'm interested in the ones that have been in the past 12 months. That's what I was looking for. But thank you for that update.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The United States of America trade investment - or it's essentially an aftercare mission because we went there last year- is from 7 to 12 October. The Hong Kong and mainland China trade investment mission is from 4 to 8 November.

CHAIR - Will that have a number of people of various industries along on the journey? Those two?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Incidentally, I haven't been on a trade mission in the last 12 months.

CHAIR - I'm sure that others have.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, indeed. I can probably get -

CHAIR - I'm happy for you to provide that if it's easier.

Ms ARMITAGE - Ask him where in the United States.

CHAIR - Yes, United States is a big place, absolutely.

Ms ARMITAGE - Premier, are you able to tell us where in the United States you're going?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Washington State. It's an aftercare mission, as we call it, and -

Ms ARMITAGE - So you're not heading down to Napa for the wine area?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not that I'm aware.

Ms ARMITAGE - That was a -

CHAIR - Okay. We have at the table -

Ms ARMITAGE - Sorry, Chair. I was only going to say that was a very good connection with the Launceston council and obviously with our wine industry. I wasn't sure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and our city of astronomy as well. I understand that Cam Shield is - what's your -

Mr SHIELD - Senior director of trade.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Senior director of trade. Thanks, Cam. Would you like to -

CHAIR - Tell us where anyone's been in the past 12 months, trade missions.

Mr SHIELD - In the past 12 months. Premier, through you. We've had two trade missions in the past 12 months, firstly to the United Kingdom and secondly to the United States of America. As the Premier mentioned, we're about to embark on another trip back to the US primarily focused on the Washington State region and also Texas. That is a comprehensive program that is following up and developed with industry. We also have, as the Premier mentioned, our Hong Kong and mainland China, which involves delegations across tourism, food and beverage and also international education and investment stream. I'm happy to -

CHAIR - Can I have some details of the expenses of those two previous trade missions, thank you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm sure we can take that on notice if you'd like to, Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you. We'll certainly put it into the system.

Mr GAFFNEY - Chair, I have a question. I'm interested, Premier, just a quick one, how do you assess how productive the feedback and whether it was a good trade mission? In doing that, when do you say, 'Well, we've been there twice. We haven't had a lot of success from it, and so we're not going to go there again or we're going to go somewhere else'? Do you know what I mean? I want to know how you choose your places, how you assess that so as a group where do you choose to go next and why. That sort of thinking.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and I can access that information for you and in broad terms, Chair, answer the question around costs, if you'd like. We'll be able to -

Ms CONWAY - I'm sorry, I'm not sure if you can hear me. I just have a very high level figure for last year, \$400,000 was spent on the trade missions. I know this year we've budgeted for \$600,000 expenditure in line with the strategy.

CHAIR - So \$400,000 for the two trade missions that were undertaken last year.

Ms CONWAY - I haven't got a breakdown, but that's the global amount that was spent.

CHAIR - Thank you. We'll ask for the breakdown.

Mr ROCKLIFF - To Mr Gaffney's point, there are a number of ways that we can assess the value of that investment. There would be dollars invested, and there are contributions, as I understand, from individual businesses as well on these trade missions, so there's skin in the game from potential exporters as well.

In July 2022, the trade mission to New Zealand was successful in terms of the number of contracts that were agreed to and the return on investment as well, from memory. The trade return on investment, from my information, is a return on investment of \$14.70 per \$1 invested. Return on investment is \$26.92 per \$1 invested. That is the information that I have. We probably have figures for various trade missions, and I've mentioned New Zealand.

There's also a very deliberate strategy as well to diversify our markets. A few years ago, you might recall some commentary around over-reliance on the Chinese market, for example, which was up to around 42 per cent or probably 44 per cent. I stand to be corrected, but over 40 per cent. COVID hit and disrupted that market, and we're still feeling some of the effects of that, particularly when it comes to rock lobster. We've had a deliberate strategy to put people in markets such as the United States with a trade advocate. Japan - there's a trade advocate there as well. Singapore - but we expect our Singaporean trade advocate to be re-established in April next year. John mentioned before an Austrade person in China.

Trade advocates have been supported in the last three to four years, if my memory serves me correctly, and that market diversification has had some success. For example, now, despite the fact that we're in and around that \$6 billion in export value, the market for China is now 30 per cent of total exports. As I said, there's no-one in Singapore at the present time, but we expect to have -

CHAIR - There was a question by interjection by the member for Hobart. Your question was?

Ms O'CONNOR - Chair, I was just checking because the Premier and I have had this conversation over years about the over-reliance on China, which makes us vulnerable to spiteful geopolitics. Can you confirm that the Singapore-based trade position will be working within that growing Malaysian market of ours, which is an increasingly important market for Tasmania?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Cam, would you like to talk us through that?

Mr SHIELD - Through you, Premier. That is very much the focus in going into that Singapore market. Singapore is a hub for that region, and as we open up a request for tender and go through that process and make our assessments, a critical part of that criteria will be their network and their access into those surrounding markets such as Malaysia, as you mentioned.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I ask a follow-up one off the back of your questioning, Chair?

CHAIR - You may.

Ms O'CONNOR - What about our export-import arrangements with Taiwan? I know we've never sent a trade delegation to Taiwan because we don't want to offend the CCP, but you do recognise, Premier, that Taiwan is also an important trading partner for Tasmania and there's a lot of cultural connections that we share as an island people. What is our trade relationship with Taiwan, is any effort put into it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that. It is, like many markets, an important market. I can talk about that and expand on that as I find that information for you. The mission reports, Chair, from 2023, and I spoke of, as did Cam, the UK and the USA are published on the State Growth website, and they also have an expenditure breakdown as well of interest.

CHAIR - If we ever get some additional staff somebody might be able to look that up for me.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We did go through this this morning.

Ms WEBB - We did. It would be good to start our job properly.

CHAIR - We did. That's fine. I don't have time to look up every website. We will move on, because it's not about me.

Ms WEBB - We do it of a night when we're home. If we're home.

Ms O'CONNOR - Taiwan.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Taiwan is a key economic partner, as I have said, and you have also said, Ms O'Connor, it is our seventh-largest goods export destination. There is some \$285 million worth of goods being sent to the country in the year ending June 2024. The main export items are processed metals and metal products, \$227 million; fruit and veggies,

PUBLIC

\$10.7 million; animal and vegetable-based non-food products, \$3.72 million; wood and paper products, \$2.7 million; seafood products, \$1.8 million, et cetera.

Ms O'CONNOR - What do we import from Taiwan?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is our eighth-largest import source: \$37.55 million worth of goods imported from the country in the same period that I mentioned before. Key items: mineral oils and fuels, and rubber products.

Ms O'CONNOR - Probably from Malaysia. Thank you, Premier.

Ms ARMITAGE - Premier, I am interested in international students and full-fee paying students that we have coming into the state to the university. I know this is a scenario we asked in previous years. I note in pre-COVID, our 2020, we had 16,000 international students and we appreciate they are very important, because they are our only full-fee paying students. I am wondering how the figures have gone. I noticed 2022, I think there was 12,500 climbing up, but has it dropped off, or has it continued to rise? I mean 2021 was 5649, so it had gone up since COVID. I am wondering how it is faring now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much for that. Minister Ellis has responsibility for this area.

Ms ARMITAGE - Okay, we have asked in this area in the past.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When it comes to international students?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, this is where we have always asked. It's in our books from last time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, skills.

CHAIR - Thursday?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thursday you've got Mr Ellis.

Mr EDMUNDS - They are regarded as Skills and Workforce Growth?

Ms ARMITAGE - It was in Industry last time.

Ms WEBB - It might be the right spot about skilled migrant workforce; is this the right spot to ask about that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - State Growth.

Ms WEBB - Yes, hopefully. I can ask it and then you can direct me elsewhere if necessary. In relation to the item detailed in this output group's performance information reporting regarding supporting access to skilled migrant workforce, there are workers who are on a skilled nominated visa or a skilled work regional visa. There are 1200 in the 2023-24 financial year. Is this for this line item?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is minister Ellis again.

Ms WEBB - That's fine, I will save that for minister Ellis.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I do have some information for you.

Ms WEBB - The main thing I was going to ask was about their breakdown by industry and region, really, and whether we had any information about that. Perhaps I can ask minister Ellis on Thursday when we have him.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Perhaps one of our team can also alert minister Ellis to that question and then we might be able to provide that information for you. There is -

CHAIR - We definitely did ask it in this area last year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right.

CHAIR - It was in this area last year.

Ms ARMITAGE - It's in our *Hansard* from last year.

CHAIR - Anyway, we're not going to argue about it. We're going to move on.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of new international student enrolments in the first four months of 2024, has surpassed the first four months of both 2023 and 2019 by 4.4 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively. That is a very high level figure there for you. I am sure Mr Ellis will drill down a bit further for you there.

CHAIR - Thank you. We will now move to Infrastructure. There are some very excited people on this side of the table.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Are there?

CHAIR - We will suspend for a few minutes while we change our team at the table.

The committee suspended from 3.16 pm to 3.21 p.m.

Minister for Infrastructure

Output Group 2

Infrastructure and Transport Services

2.1 Infrastructure Tasmania

CHAIR - A fairly new portfolio for you, Premier. We understand that you've just taken over the reins but expect that you will have a good understanding of this area. A brief overview, if you might, and introduce the people at the table for Hansard.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Chair. To my right, it is Denise McIntyre for State Growth. To my left is Cynthia Heydon from the Department of State Growth. And Ned

PUBLIC

Whitehouse, my chief of staff. I will keep the opening statement brief, Chair, as I have done all day.

CHAIR - You've done a very good job with that, I might add.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much, Chair. We are continuing our strong infrastructure investment in this budget with \$5.1 billion committed. Of course, we make no apologies for investing in intergenerational infrastructure. That means a stronger economy and it means more jobs. Jobs mean that families can put food on the table. In the Budget across the forward Estimates, we will invest \$1.9 billion on safer and better roads and transformation of transport infrastructure, such as the Bridgewater Bridge and the South-East Traffic Solution. We will invest \$649 million on hospital and health facilities, doubling the size of the ED and LGH, new inpatient buildings and beds at the North-West Regional Hospital, new oncology services at the Mersey, and new diagnostic breast cancer clinic in the south, and new mental health beds and much more. All projects that will help us meet the increasing demand and deliver better outcomes for Tasmania.

We will invest \$359 million on schools and education and skills infrastructure, including new schools, new classrooms and facilities, childcare, child and family learning centres, school maintenance, teacher housing, and much more.

Then there is \$287.3 million on law and order, like the Burnie Court complex and the mobile duress alarm system replacement that keeps our correctional services frontline staff safe. \$346.4 million on tourism and recreation and culture. \$283 million on technology to support more efficient service delivery and include our \$1.5 billion spent on housing. We're investing over \$3.4 billion on our essential services. We're delivering intergenerational infrastructure that allows us to deliver better essential services and meet demand into the future. There is also \$1.2 billion in infrastructure to be invested by our government businesses, investment into our rail, energy, water ports, and irrigation.

The accepted formula to estimate the jobs generated by infrastructure projects is to attribute half of the capital cost as employment costs, and for every million dollars invested, about 5.5 jobs are generated. By taking that formula and applying it to this Budget it means our infrastructure investment will create some 14 000 jobs. Firstly, the loss of that spending would have seen also jobs lost as well. So we're getting on with the job.

I'm very pleased to have the Infrastructure portfolio back. I like it, and I like the opportunity to build Tasmania. With that very short opening statement, I invite questions.

CHAIR - Thank you. I invite Mr Edmunds to commence the line of questioning.

Mr EDMUNDS - Premier, there was a short inquiry process into TasPorts held by the other committee in the Legislative Council. I wondered, and I know you have been minister for a short time, what your headline takeaways were from that report.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's a good question. Notwithstanding the short time I've had in the portfolio, I've taken great interest in our GBEs and also some of the work undertaken by the committee that you speak of. I reflected on this yesterday a bit in wanting to ensure that there is a Team Tasmania approach from our government business enterprises and state-owned companies, wanting to ensure there is a customer focus, wanting to ensure that there is good

stakeholder management, and wanting to ensure also that our GBEs work together to form the bigger picture when it comes to enabling Tasmania to grow and to thrive. To not have a siloed approach, but rather an approach where our state-owned companies and GBEs work together to deliver the infrastructure required and the services required to support a growing economy. Part of that is to be able to listen to key stakeholders, reflect on the feedback, and always continuously improve the engagement with business and industry and key stakeholders as well.

Mr EDMUNDS - A number of the recommendations talked very similar findings about - and perhaps as minister - wanting a more proactive approach from shareholder ministers. What changes do you see yourself making going forward around some of those recommendations from the report?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We started this prior to the report that focused on, well, TasPorts in terms of the commentary. I became increasingly aware over the course of the last couple of years, the need to ensure that we have focused government business enterprises, state-owned companies. That's why we have and are updating the ministerial charters, and our expectations as ministers, and indeed, of government on what we expect from our government business enterprises and state-owned companies as well.

That's been a key focus of mine as premier over the course of the last six to seven months, and will continue to be, but also with my ear to the ground with reports that you speak of, gaining the feedback from key stakeholders, and my discussions that I have with the GBEs that I'm directly responsible for, namely TasPorts and TasRail, for example. I expect our other ministers that have direct engagement with their GBEs would also have similar expectations that I do.

Mr EDMUNDS - When ministerial responsibilities overlap sometimes and we end up with one shareholder minister wearing two hats overrunning one GBE, do you think there's scope to draft in another member of the Cabinet? Say the deputy premier, if they weren't - or the minister for finance or something like that, just to ensure there was that little bit of extra oversight for a ministerial perspective.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to take advice on that in terms of whether that was possible. That probably is -

Mr EDMUNDS - Let's maybe remove TasPorts. Say if you had an energy minister who was also treasurer, do you think having a different -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, there probably is scope, depending on the act, and my understanding is it's not always legislated as such. So quite possibly.

Mr EDMUNDS - What role do, say, other departments and other bodies such as the Coordinator-General, do you see them having going forward with some of the learnings out of the report and the approach you just spoke about?

Mr ROCKLIFF - In a previous scrutiny when it comes to the Coordinator-General, I mentioned the SunCable project, for example. Some of that investment attraction initiative is for, say, TasNetworks, TasPorts, and TasRail, all had some actions associated with that investment attraction opportunity. I would see that a very close working relationship with ministers, with government, with stakeholders to try to present a solid approach that, if it came

to fruition, would probably frustrate and prevent people being attracted to invest in Tasmania. So, a coordinated open communication approach. What are the challenges? How can we overcome them and those types of things. There is an interface between TasRail and TasPorts, for example, when it comes to the ship loader in Burnie, and the need for the two entities to work together to see if that project comes to fruition. That's an example.

Mr EDMUNDS - With that Team Tasmania comment you made before, how can you approach it when you have the siloed approach that has developed in some GBEs, where they are probably more focused, very much internally, on their own balance sheet and their own operations. Do you see that role as pretty much as shareholder ministers' responsibility, to get them to view things through a little bit more -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Looking at the horizon.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, looking at the horizon is in the best interests of Tasmania, and how can you, going forward with the issues raised specifically about TasPorts, how do you see the best way to solve that directly?

Mr ROCKLIFF - A sensible question. As Minister for Infrastructure I expect the board and management of, for example, TasPorts to consider the wider economic and social benefits to Tasmania as well as its own commercial operations, which is important. In terms of TasPorts again, important role in facilitating trade in our state's island ports, for example, in terms of the committee's findings about the ageing of TasPorts' major ports across the state.

This is certainly acknowledged and they remain legacy assets that were inherited by the company when it was formed from regional port authorities that had traditionally, some could argue, under-invested in capital infrastructure due to their underutilisation.

CHAIR - That was 15 years or more ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It was some time ago, wasn't it, Chair? Yes.

CHAIR - I was here, but it was a long time ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So this underscores the importance of TasPorts establishing strong long-term commercial arrangements with customers to underpin, of course, the capital investments that are required now and into the future all across its ports. I am using TasPorts as an example here.

Mr EDMUNDS - Sure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - They point to some success in some of their infrastructure and development as well, the QuayLink responsibility that they had in Devonport. As I understand it, on time, on budget, which is impressive. I walked the site just a few weeks ago with the CEO of TasPorts, Anthony Donald. There are a lot of great things the GBEs are doing as well as matters that concern people and that has been reflected in some of the committee's findings.

Mr EDMUNDS - You talk about the re-drafting of the charters. How much would some of the findings from the inquiry feed into that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that'd be reflected. As great as the committee's findings were and the work of the committee, some of that was reflected in the feedback that I get as well. So -

Mr EDMUNDS - I assume you would get a lot. The other thing we probably haven't talked enough about is their interactions with customers. I assume that is where a lot of the feedback you get from, as well as from customers of the businesses.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I get varied stakeholder feedback. As I say, some good as well. So, it's not all doom and gloom. We haven't finalised TasPorts yet, so for example, Mr Edmunds, we will look for the charter to reflect the matters that you raised, and that the committee raised as well.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Just on that, I was interested to hear you talk about this 'Team Tasmania' approach. It seemed like a well-rehearsed sort of model. Is it something that is an approach or a guideline that you are going to be thinking of applying just to GBE spaces or more broadly? Because those elements that I heard you describe: customer focus, good stakeholder management, not a siloed approach, to work together, to deliver services, listen to feedback and improve through engagement so we can thrive, sounded exactly like the approach taken by the Public Trustee, for example, in recent years as it has improved its functioning post-Bugg Review.

Is this the sort of model that we think actually represents good functioning? If so, why would we be tearing down an organisation, a public entity, that is doing that exact approach? I know we are in a different line item now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are in a different line item.

CHAIR - It was an example being used.

Ms WEBB - I was wondering about the model, and whether we are applying that model of 'Team Tasmania' more broadly other than to the GBEs.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have had a good discussion on that, thank you, Ms Webb, and I have outlined my thoughts on that matter not just pertaining to GBEs and state-owned companies.

Ms WEBB - They are a DD, of course, the Public Trustee, currently.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. But also, departments as well, and my expectations of departments across government would be similar in terms of strong stakeholder engagement, ministerial charters and statements of expectations, as the Chair outlined. The expectations in the service delivery requirements, as you would appreciate, of the shareholding ministers, and providing that transparency, but also accountability to government as well.

Mr EDMUNDS - Those words are exactly what I was reading in recommendation 2.

Ms WEBB - It still might get privatised in the end, though.

CHAIR - Minister, do you see any challenges particularly with TasPorts, seeing that nobody at the top of TasPorts - the personnel hasn't changed. It is certainly a different situation with the TT-Line, but TasPorts, still steady as she goes. Do you see any challenges with meeting a Team Tasmania approach?

Mr ROCKLIFF - All things being equal, not necessarily. We have to outline very clear expectations to the GBEs and expect that they act responsibly, and to the act, of course, but also deliver as well. So, all things being equal, no. It is just, if you like, a refocus and a reset of our ministerial expectations and -

Ms O'CONNOR - You could offer them remediation, TasPorts and TT-Line. Put them in a room together, make them work it out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that suggestion.

Mr EDMUNDS - The previous minister tried that, didn't he?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank you for that suggestion, which I appreciate, but there are opportunities across government. I am not focusing on any particular area or GBE for board renewal as well.

CHAIR - That's a bit of a warning. Board renewal, right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I said, I wasn't focusing on any particular area.

CHAIR - No, no, you didn't.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But just saying that, you know, fresh eyes. There has been fresh eyes in the Leg Co in recent times, of course.

CHAIR - There are still a few experienced eyes here as well. It is not even Thursday and we are being a bit flippant on this side. We will leave it at that. The member for Hobart, the newest - no, not the newest member anymore?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. Upstairs there's three of us who are equally new.

CHAIR - Yes. We have a suite of newbies.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to get a little bit local with you, Premier, and ask some questions about the ferry terminal improvements on Green Island. We would like to understand what is happening with the ferry terminal upgrades since the project began, as we understand it, and we have been contacted by members of the local community. The new ramps have been under construction since before the start of the pandemic, and according to several community groups on Bruny are still not operational. We are looking at a project which has taken the best part of five years. Minister, what is the issue or issues causing the delay to the ferry terminal upgrade, and when do you expect it to be resolved.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I love Bruny Island, but I haven't been there for some time.

CHAIR - Like most of us, hardly ever get a weekend off.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. The Bruny Island ferry terminal upgrade project has seen the construction of a second ferry ramp at both Kettering and Roberts Point terminals. The works aim to improve travel time, reliability to and from Bruny Island, reduce ferry queues and congestion on Ferry Road and the Channel Highway and support faster crossing of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. The mechanical work package which commenced in June 2021, which I believe you've alluded to, encountered contract delays. It reached practical completion in May 2024 with the commissioning of the new ramp infrastructure.

Delays for the mechanical works package was attributable to increased lead time and delivery of specialised hoist equipment from overseas. Additional design was required to facilitate the complex relationship between the ramp and vessels under varying tidal conditions. During installation of the new water gantries issues were encountered with the integration of the vessels and the new ramp and marine infrastructure due to differing berthing procedures. I hope this is making some sense to you.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Investigations determined there needed to be minor adjustments to allow for berthing the vessel at the new ramp using similar procedures to the current practice with the existing ramps. The contractor, operator and the designer have worked together to find a suitable outcome to this issue with rectification requiring the fabrication and installation of a spacer which will be completed by the end of October. The Department of State Growth and SeaLink are working to provide a safer and more efficient automated vehicle access gate which has delayed the full operation of the new ramp infrastructure until October 2024, and SeaLink continues testing and training with the new ramp infrastructure. Is that a correct update from your one?

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, minister. First of all, that had some echoes of the TT-Line and being able to park in and turn around in the Mersey. Was there some sort of preplanning that could've been done a bit better that might've limited these delays, or why didn't we get it right the first instance in having the infrastructure there to get the ferries on and off?

Mr ROCKLIFF - During the initial testing of the ramp-to-vessel interaction it became apparent that the operator of the vessels' engaged thrust would assist in holding the vessels in place, plus both vessels are different widths, as I understand it. Removal of the starboard fender allowed the vessel to come closer to the ramp than what the modelling suggested. If we go through the timeline, as I probably already have, the civil works package completed in late May 2021, the marine works package completed in December 2021 and the mechanical work package completed in May 2024.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. So can I -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Denise, do you have any further updates on this that we could provide the committee in terms of the -

Ms O'CONNOR - And also the budget. As we understand, the original cost for the project was \$7.5 million. It sounds like there's been some cost overruns potentially. What's

PUBLIC

the total budget? Are you able to tell people who enjoy Bruny, particularly people who live there, when exactly the terminal will be operational? Is it the end of October?

CHAIR - Two very sharp questions with sharp answers.

Ms McINTYRE - I'm happy to take that one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms McIntyre.

Ms McINTYRE - It was a complex design process. The whole design of the landside infrastructure was separate to the marine infrastructure, so there was some complexity in getting the two to meet. There were some concerns about the ramp infrastructure in terms of the high tide and the low tide differentiation and the different types of vehicles. There was a lot of work undertaken to ensure that the design was appropriate for the types of vessels that it was being designed for, effectively. There were some delays in bringing equipment through. The winches had to be built elsewhere and then they had to be imported to Tasmania, and there were some delays in shipping and bringing those parts into play. Then there was also some delay in commissioning. The cost of the project did blow out, effectively, from when it was originally costed -

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm sure. I'm sure.

Ms McINTYRE - and also the timeframe.

Ms O'CONNOR - To the cost, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. So the past actual -

Ms O'CONNOR - So money spent to date?

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$14.3 million.

CHAIR - Double.

Ms O'CONNOR - So almost double the original budget.

Ms McINTYRE - That's correct.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But what I add to the budget of 2024-25 it's \$1 million. So if we add \$14.3 -

Ms McINTYRE - That's \$15.3.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and one, it's 15.3 at the time - the end of the financial year 2025.

Ms O'CONNOR - I don't think from listening to you that this is not anyone's - it's not a question of fault. But that's a doubling of the proposed budget for ferry terminal infrastructure. How is it possible to get the numbers so wrong?

PUBLIC

Ms McINTYRE - It wasn't a case of getting the numbers wrong. It's a case of a cost estimate is undertaken under certain circumstances, and I believe the cost estimate was originally before COVID, so there was a lot of change and a lot of cost escalation in terms of material supply, labour, et cetera. The project took a lot longer to deliver than anticipated. There was a lot more design work required and redesign required to deliver the project. So, it wasn't that it was a wrong estimate; it was that the circumstances changed.

Ms O'CONNOR - An estimate made five years ago, for example, and -

Ms McINTYRE - Correct.

Ms O'CONNOR - So can we just absolutely finally confirm: will people be able to use that new infrastructure at the end of October?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm advised yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Thanks.

CHAIR - Thank you. My question is about our road infrastructure. Is that where this fits? Obviously the line item possibly isn't anywhere near what we have for road infrastructure. That's on page 355, budget paper 1 - no, 2.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Two, two.

CHAIR - Two, volume 1. I know, minister, that you were filling potholes a couple of Sundays ago. If I had time I'd stop and fill them too, because there's a myriad of them. I'm interested in how you see the current road infrastructure maintenance being undertaken, given that some of the road infrastructure is barely down and it's already cracking and potholing? I know we can't probably fill every pothole and I know there's a contract in place and then the contractors come back and do their patch-up job. But, enough is enough. We're not getting value for money; my view, and the view of many others. Is that of concern? Can you see a way to address this?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I can see a way forward.

CHAIR - Good.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We attempted to fill every single pothole, might I say, and I put on some figures yesterday in terms of the number of potholes identified, the number that have been filled in since the pothole blitz, et cetera. I spoke about the funding for road maintenance: that's increased from around \$112 million to \$117 million in this Budget. I've asked, to your question, and it is region-dependent in terms of the severity of potholes, I'd have to say. I have feedback about the Bass Highway around Parramatta Creek, which is where I was engaged in some pothole -

CHAIR - Filling.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Briefing.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - And Wynyard as well that's come up in other areas, and I understand it's very frustrating for Tasmania. You know, pavement preservation is a key focus of mine as minister. I've asked the department for a briefing on specifications and I've also instigated or in the process of having a round table with industry on this so I can get a better understanding of some of their -

CHAIR - Of why it's actually happening.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well some of their views as well. Our office reached out to Andrew Winch, the head of the Civil Contractors Federation the other day. That was because in that three quarters of an hour or so that I spent with some grader contractors, I learnt a lot from their point of view in terms of their suggestions. I take them at face value. You'd have probably seen my Facebook and some of the commentary around people's views and - former DMR, Department of Main Roads employees that have opinions on things. I run into people that, you know, tell me the gravel's not right in certain areas and there's too much sand in it and the water washes it all away.

CHAIR - And that we're sealing too quickly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and there's various seals. Double seals and asphalt.

Ms O'CONNOR - Long aggregate. Aggregate is important.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, it is, you know and getting the right base on the roads as well is important. Doing it once and doing it properly comes up a fair bit and I would certainly, you know, that's where my head's at. But, you know, gather those opinions and see how we can improve firstly the efforts we put into when we first build roads and then to ensure that we have very good contractual arrangements and specifications around pavement preservation as well. I'm no expert. I've got to listen to not only the good people around me in the department but also the people that do the work, have done the work.

Ms O'Connor mentioned vehicles. There are a lot more vehicles on the road than there were in the DMR days. There are B-doubles now carrying heavy loads and the like. There's a lot in this, but I reflect the community's frustration particularly closer to where I reside in Paramatta Creek and there's, you know, people, and Mr Gaffney would be well aware of that.

CHAIR - Even the stretch just north of the Stoner turn-off when I came down last week there's a big stretch that's been completely removed and obviously going to be replaced. That's only just been recently done. It's not just a pothole. It can be quite a large stretch, so somebody's got something wrong at the beginning, and obviously you're going to take that on board. The level of frustration is really rife in the community because we see the dollars and we just don't see the quality in the work. So, it's more of a statement than a question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I hear it and I was informed the other day that water is the enemy of roads, and it is in terms of the destructive force that it can be. But, it rains a lot. Not just in the last few weeks. So, I've got to get to the bottom of this and cleverer people than -

Mr GAFFNEY - Chair, can I have a follow-up please?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - You may, given that you probably travel on that Parramatta Creek Road regularly, the member for Mersey.

Mr GAFFNEY - I suppose it's the Bass Highway corridor I'm concerned about but other parts as well. It has been alluded to by ex-minister's as you'd know, Premier, about the road standards and have those standards been altered? If they were, when they were? When you had your briefing, and you said you were going to have a briefing, or you were going to meet to discuss all of this. How do you get that information out into the community?

I know eight years ago we signed off on some road standards which were more perhaps from the mainland. They haven't worked, or how do you work out - if we completed it once on the old standards it may have lasted longer. That sort of thing. The community would be able to understand if when you have your meeting if that information was then put back into the community.

Say for example, 'Well, look we didn't do the right thing five years ago when we changed the standards', or 'We went somewhere else'. Like the community are not silly. They want to know why this is happening. If it is, you know, torrential rain or it is a certain batch or it is one company you worked through that didn't do the right thing. That sort of stuff. So, I suppose how do you feed that back out, so it's not conjectures and supposition by, you know, people who've been there 20 years ago and say, 'Well, we did it'. You know, so I just want to know how do you get that information - the correct stuff - out into the community?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question and you're referring to former infrastructure ministers and Ian Brady's one of those of course. I'll come to your question in a moment. It is a complex issue. Roads are built to particular specifications and -

CHAIR - Is it Austroads standard? Is that it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. And they're also warranty periods as well, and issues have to be fixed with no additional cost. That's what I'm advised. So, there is some conjecture around it being fixed at extra cost -

CHAIR - The state picking up the tab.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But there are some contractual arrangements and a warranty period as well which is some of the information that we do need to present to the public. Now, most states and territories have liability provisions in place to deal with damage claims from potholes or other hazards on their roads as well, which is another matter that people often talk to me about. I'm interested to go back to the specifications as well and get a great understanding of decisions that were made. I do understand that when the specs were changed there was not a consultation at the time, Denise, was there?

Ms McINTYRE - I'm happy to talk to it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms McIntyre, thank you.

Ms McINTYRE - Through you, Premier. In terms of the specifications, there's a number of people out there, and we hear comments too about, you know, it was much better when DMR was in charge, and you know there were different specifications et cetera. What we've done is

PUBLIC

we still use Australian standards and we've gone with Victorian specifications because we're a very small jurisdiction and we don't have the resources to continually update specifications.

We're using Victorian specifications because they have the resources to be able to update. Now, we update and share with our construction industry and get feedback from our construction industry and from other technical experts when we do update our specifications. They're completely contemporary. There's nothing wrong with the specifications. The Premier as the new minister for infrastructure will want to satisfy himself that that is the case and so he will seek further information and further briefing from the department and also experts and from industry.

Constructing roads is very complex. There are a lot of factors. We have a lot more heavy vehicles on the road as the premier said and sometimes the sealing of roads, the final stage of roadworks is done perhaps a bit late in the season and so water or dampness in the underlying pavement can be a factor in some, sort of initial faults in the surface which are then – they're classed as defects that the contractor is responsible for repairing. It's not unusual to see, you know, some initial roughness in the initial seal and then the contractor will come back and finish. Sometimes the project hasn't been completed. It may not have its actual final seal, and we need to be better at providing that information to the community if that is the case.

CHAIR - Is that what's happened north of Stoner? The turn-off into Stoner, where they've taken a big chunk of the road out?

Ms McINTYRE - Can we take that on notice and provide some information.

CHAIR - You probably noticed it when you came down.

Mr GAFFNEY - My last question to that is for example, a lady called - she'd recently bought an electric car. Night - bang! Tyre gone. They couldn't get a tyre for that vehicle anywhere and it's \$550 for a tyre. A lady from Deloraine said, 'That's really expensive for what she had and it was the middle of the road. Hit the pothole. There goes the tyre.' Has there been any consideration given to a way that people could contact the department and say, 'I was driving safely, within speed limit', whatever, 'bang, pothole, \$550 worth of damage to a car'?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There are provisions for contacting the department and also around compensation as well.

Mr EDMUNDS - Really?

Ms McINTYRE - There is a process for if you have an incident occur as a result of hitting something on the road, then you can apply for a claim. You can make a claim to the department. It is on the department's website.

Mr GAFFNEY - Would you mind sending that information through to - I didn't know that, and if I had known that, I would have let my constituent know.

Ms McINTYRE - We will go through an assessment process, and we all have a duty to drive responsibly as well, and drive to conditions as well. Contractors are required to make repairs when they identify an issue within certain timeframes. A claim for an impact on a tyre will not always be fulfilled. But there is a process and the ability to make a claim.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So advice on information -

CHAIR - I had no idea that that existed.

Ms WEBB - That's the sound of a can of worms being opened right here at the table.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, there you go. It is available on the transport website. www.transport.tas.gov.au/claims for damage.

Ms O'CONNOR - Does that include a wallaby on the road?

Mr EDMUNDS - Only if it's sitting in the pothole.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't make light of it, but that is available.

CHAIR - No, and neither we should.

Mr GAFFNEY - For example, how many claims is that? You have had five or 500? Is there any idea of how many claims they've had.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, that's a good question.

Mr GAFFNEY - You could put it on notice. If somebody could find it, I would be interested to know how many people have claimed it.

CHAIR - While somebody is finding it, I suggest that we suspend and have a 11-minute break and be back at 4.15 p.m. for the rest of this session. Thank you. We will suspend, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Chair.

The committee suspended from 4.04 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.

CHAIR - We will resume our broadcast. Thank you very much. Minister, this is Infrastructure Tasmania. I will just open it up for questions. Somebody was going to find out some information about how many applications there had been for those who have had to undertake repairs due to poor and damaged infrastructure.

CHAIR - Due to poor infrastructure, poor quality infrastructure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So January 2024, 14 claims. February 2024, 18. March, 26. April, 14. May, nine. June, 12. July, 25. August, nine. September, which has been the month of discussion, there has been 60.

CHAIR - Sixty!

Ms ARMITAGE - They've had the road and the wind and the rain has destroyed it.

Ms WEBB - Applications or granted?

CHAIR - Are those successful applications?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The number of claims received by the department so far. I note that most will go to the relevant contractor directly.

CHAIR - Would you like to move that microphone over? Thank you.

Ms HEYDON - Through you, Premier. That is the number that's received by the department. If you look at the website, there is actually a process where you can go through to the contractor. Most of the submissions or requests will go through to contractors. We are looking to pull that information and provide that, if we can, in session, as well as a number of successful submissions once we've gone through the reviews. It does give you an idea, though, that there was a significant step up in requests in September due to the weather event.

CHAIR - Thank you. We don't have any idea how many were successful, even those early ones.

Ms HEYDON - We're looking to get that information. It can depend, because we go through insurers, of the length of time that that might take. So, it will be a point in time. Some might be a little bit faster than others depending on the evidence provided, but we're looking to pull that information for you.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Chair. The Premier's just getting something first, is he?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - The Bridgewater Bridge. I look at it quite regularly. I see how it's proceeding. I note that Mr Ferguson did say last year that it was hoped to be open to traffic by the end of 2024, with the overall project completed the following calendar year. How is it actually looking? How is it progressing? When is it likely to be open to traffic? I wouldn't have thought the end of 2024.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Middle of next year.

Ms ARMITAGE - It looks a little way away.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's the latest information I have. The construction site is in Bridgewater and Granton. Of course, a lot of activity, as you have pointed out.

Ms ARMITAGE - It's a bit of a gap at the moment. I don't know if you were driving on it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. All 46 of the piles that make up the foundations of the new bridge are in place. Is that right? Right. Extend between 30 to 90 metres below the river. Work to build the 42 piers that will support the 1.2-kilometre bridge. Deck is due to be finished at the end of October this year. Now, the project's purpose precast yards was producing an average of 22 concrete bridge segments each week, with more than three quarters of the 1092

segments having been produced. The project is on track to be delivered on time, I am advised, and within budget, with all lanes of the new bridge to be opened to traffic several months ahead of the scheduled completion date in mid-2025.

Ms ARMITAGE - Did you say that it's on budget or over budget?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm advised it's on time and within budget.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms O'Connor, and then I'll go down to Mr Gaffney.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, I want to talk to you about electric vehicle charging stations which are as, I'm sure you'd agree, critical infrastructure. Tasmania was going okay for a while in terms of making sure there was a good spread of EV charging stations on the major routes, but I've spoken to electric vehicle owners and users who say because there is, for example, two charges in Oatlands, you're having people who are racked up sometimes for hours at a time, waiting to be able to access the EV charging station. Have you received any advice on the EV charging stations' adequacy, given that more and more people are buying electric vehicles and more people are coming to Tasmania in electric vehicles, and at the moment, our charging infrastructure is not keeping up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for that. I have had feedback about the need for more investment in electric vehicle charging stations, and I would imagine that there would be a bit of a hold-up there. Say, at Oatlands, with two. I think there's one charging station for Bicheno, if my memory serves me correctly. I was there 12 months ago.

Ms O'CONNOR - So if you have an older model EV, it takes a bit longer to charge. People can have to plug their car in for, say, an hour, and then other EV drivers come in and are sitting there and sitting there. And so a trip, for example, from the north-west to the south could take seven hours because you're in a queue to get your car charged.

CHAIR - There is one at Scottsdale and one at Bridport if that helps. They could come via the north-east.

Ms O'CONNOR - The very beautiful north-east.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Firstly, transport emissions make up 21 per cent of Tasmania's emissions. That's excluding emissions from the land use and land use change and the forestry sector. But the \$1.2 million e-transport package was released last November, November 2023, and provided rebates for the purchase of e-mobility devices, such as e-bikes, cargo e-bikes, e-scooters, e-skateboards, rebates to help fund the cost of purchasing an electric vehicle, and interest-free loans for home chargers as well.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's all commendable, but what about travellers?

CHAIR - What about the charging stations?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - The transport emissions reduction and resilience plan was released in September last year - sorry, this September. It's been released. Over \$1.4 million is available to support increased public electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Ms O'CONNOR - Who would be driving that, minister? Pardon the pun.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I thought I was going to mention that, but education resources for business, the tourism industry and the community grant, grants to assist small business to transition vehicles, and schools transition planning or the industry. So, without working - sorry, Mr Duigan is responsible for driving that.

Ms O'CONNOR - It doesn't come under infrastructure, electric vehicle charging infrastructure. It comes under energy, even though it enables transport.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe that ReCFIT is managing the rollout.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'll follow that up with minister Duigan. Can I just follow up with you on the stadium's northern access road, and whether that comes under your infrastructure area of responsibility?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Did someone ask minister Abetz the -

Ms O'CONNOR - We haven't had the pleasure of minister Abetz' company at the table, and you're here.

Ms McINTYRE - The northern access road: there is money for planning work for the northern access road that's associated with the Macquarie Point stadium and area redevelopment. That's in the budget this financial year. There is some discussion about where it will actually be delivered from.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Ms McIntyre.

Ms WEBB - Sorry, can you repeat that? There's some discussion -

CHAIR - Yes, you're very soft, Denise.

Ms McINTYRE - Sorry. There is some internal discussion about who will be responsible for managing the planning work for the northern access road.

Ms O'CONNOR - So just to follow up on Ms McIntyre's question. Is it a project that may fall under, for example, the Department of Sport and Recreation? Would they become suddenly road project deliverers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, that's not why.

Ms O'CONNOR - Could you provide some clarity on what that statement of Ms McIntyre's means?

PUBLIC

Ms McINTYRE - So internal within the Department of State Growth. So, as I said, an internal discussion about whether it sits in ITAS, for example, or whether it sits in the planning area of Infrastructure.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Just to confirm, at the moment there is no budget for the construction of that northern access road to the stadium. I am asking you, Premier -

Ms McINTYRE - There is money for planning but there's no actual construction.

Ms WEBB - So that's the \$3 million? The \$1 million this year, the \$2 million next year?

Ms McINTYRE - Yes, that's correct.

Ms WEBB - Scoping and development.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is it still, Premier, your intention that that project would be shopped around to private investors?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, 'shopped around'?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, put forward to private investors as something that they might fund, and subsequent to that, of course, is if any private investor is going to fund it they will need to make a return on their investment. Are they going to put a toll on the northern access road, or is there going to be some deal from the state to facilitate this build?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think you referred to this this morning. I know it has been a long day.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. I didn't get an answer, so I have come back for more.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know it has been a long day around all of that. We will be seeking advice on all that. Of course, these transport arrangements would be required for upgrading infrastructure, as I understand it, irrespective of the development on Macquarie Point. We will work that through in the planning process, as per your question. Of course, primarily used for access to the port, as I understand it. But also -

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you want TasPorts to borrow to pay for it, do you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's port infrastructure.

Ms O'CONNOR - Interesting. Thank you.

Mr GAFFNEY - Just a quick one. I will pass the questions over, because it is something that you might be able to come back with some answers. It is to finalise the Leith project issue that happened. At this time last year when we asked minister Ferguson they were still using, I think, at this stage, temporary lighting. The questions would be (a) what is the whole-of-project expenditure for the completed project - I have a copy here - total costs for permanent overhead lighting, columns and towers including procurement materials, works and installations as well as TasNetworks works and conditioning.

PUBLIC

Then we would like to know the total costs for the hire of temporary lighting tower projects hired whilst permanent overhead lighting was installed to complete the project, and total amounts for any other costs incurred and paid, not including the whole of project expenditure. I have attached the relevant material that we have received over the last couple of years to it, so it would make it easier for your staff to find the answers. So that is one that could perhaps -

CHAIR - The committee is here to help, minister. You can by all means take that one on notice.

Mr GAFFNEY - The table with the rate identified costs is quite intricate, so it possibly one that needs - unless you have those?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. I will try to provide some information for you now, if that is okay. So, the Leith junction total cost. The total cost of the work was \$5.47 million. That included \$186,000 or a bit more for the temporary lighting. The roadworks were completed in August last year, and the project overall completed in May 2024 when permanent lighting was installed and commissioned. So, \$5,446,792.04 the total cost of the work, Mr Gaffney, I am advised.

All of the project expenditure for the completed project, so that is question (a), and the costs of the permanent overhead lighting, et cetera. And the total cost for hire of temporary lighting towers that was hired whilst permanent open lighting was installed, I believe I have answered in the \$186,044.02. The total amounts of any other costs incurred not included in the whole of the project expenditure, that's the item (d), I will still take that on notice.

Mr GAFFNEY - Thank you. The last total breakdown we got done was \$4,060,000.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Correct.

Mr GAFFNEY - So there is \$1.3 million extra. It would be handy to see where that has gone.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Where it has gone? Where it has been invested.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay, so thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - I might have the wrong minister here, but I will take your advice. With regard to the SUBCO fibre optic cable, would that be best taken up with minister Ogilvie or with yourself?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Best with minister Ogilvie. Science and Tech.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, no dramas. Great, I just wanted to check. I would rather ask you today than her tomorrow and be referred back and wait 12 months. Thank you. One that I wanted to ask about is in my electorate, but it comes up outside of just that.

CHAIR - Nothing more for Clarence City Council or I am going to get up and leave.

Mr EDMUNDS - It's my first one for the week. The Mornington roundabout: when will we see movement on that front?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We didn't touch on this yesterday, if my memory serves me correctly. Thanks for the question. My advice is that a planning study for the Mornington roundabout and surrounding areas has been finalised and is expected to be released late this year. The Australian government has committed \$80 million towards the construction of upgrades to the Mornington roundabout and surrounding road network. This includes an additional \$50 million as part of the 2024-25 Australian government budget. This will be added to the Tasmanian government commitment of \$20 million, bringing the total project funding to \$100 million.

The \$100 million funding commitment will allow for the delivery of a range of improvements to this area, to improve the operation of the road network in and around the Mornington area and the proposed delivery package includes full signalisation of the Mornington roundabout intersection, that's traffic lights, including enabling works to realign Mornington Road and relocate the Tasman Highway offramp further to the west. This means something in your - construction of a new interchange, on and offramps, at Gordons Hill Road Rosny, also known as Rosny ramps project.

In coming months, the Department of State Growth will provide an overview of the proposed improvements in and around the Mornington roundabout utilising this funding in the community and key stakeholders. I hope I have answered -

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. Can I just clarify, the on-off ramps on Gordons Hill Road, are they part of this envelope?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe so, because it says 'the proposed delivery package includes', and I mentioned the signalisation.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And then the on and offramps, is that right?

Mr EDMUNDS - Well, that's good.

Ms ARMITAGE - Premier, I almost forgot to ask you about this one: the bridge across the Tamar River between Riverside and Newnham. I noticed, what was it, a significant 2030 strong plan, roads and bridges package. \$80 million towards the construction of a new bridge across the Tamar River between Riverside and University Way at Newnham. I have asked periodically over the years, are you able to tell me where it is at? Is there any planning, what is the latest planning?

CHAIR - I think it is a traffic assessment, isn't it?

Ms ARMITAGE - I have had a variety of different things told over the term. I can't miss this opportunity to get an update.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - All right. So, we have committed \$80 million, that's our government, towards the construction of a second Tamar River crossing between the West Tamar Highway and the East Tamar Highway, which is north of University Way in Newnham.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes. Take all that traffic coming into Launceston from Riverside that goes to Newnham.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. So, my advice is that the government's engineering consultants have finalised their work, including an extra alignment option, and the business case was submitted to Infrastructure Australia in late February. This was a significant body of work that looked at the number of options for alignments, particularly on the West Tamar side. Importantly the business case will be used to seek funding from the Australian government since this is required for a project of this size. Of course, we were -

CHAIR - Do we know how much money we need from the feds as well? If we have got \$80 million, how much was likely? \$300 million or so? What is it likely to cost?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We wanted to have some action from the feds on this, but there is nothing in the budget.

Ms ARMITAGE - Hopefully the next election.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The funding for this project will be 20 per cent state [sic] government and 80 per cent our government, that is our expectation for this. And given the strength of the business case, I am advised that we remain optimistic that the project will be funded at some point in time. Now, the business case will be subjected to -

Ms ARMITAGE - It's a little bit frightening when you hear 'some point in time'. It's that old thing, how long is a piece of string? Governments change, go, come and it's always a reason not to continue.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We do have some figures on page 144 of the infrastructure investment area, which says the estimated total is \$680 million, \$544 million expected from the federal government and \$136 million from the Tasmanian government contribution.

Ms ARMITAGE - So do you think that's possible, that we will get that much from the federal government? That's an awful lot of money, isn't it, for a bridge.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Bridgewater bridge was \$686 million; this is a little less than that.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, but the Bridgewater bridge was crucial to bringing people into Hobart, whereas this one is an ancillary going across - it's more a shortcut.

CHAIR - I suggest you don't talk the Premier out of it.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, I'm not. I don't think that's possible. Would you also have the height? Do you have the height? One of the issues that has come to me, and it has been hoped with a lot of the yachting community, that the height would be sufficient for people to actually be able to bring their yachts up into the Tamar, closer up the Tamar for the slip, depending on the height of the new bridge if one goes ahead. I know that was an issue. Yacht clubs were

PUBLIC

saying were they going to be consulted as to how high, and I had asked questions in the past, and I wondered whether there are any firm figures yet.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's a good question and I am happy to provide that.

Ms ARMITAGE - You only have to look up at Erroll seaport. What a difference it would make if there were no yachts up in there, how bland it would look.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. So height and -

CHAIR - Yes. Tied up at Beauty Point.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Water vessels are all part of the consideration here, so I am happy to provide the information.

Ms ARMITAGE - The water vessels are okay, but you do need a fair height for some of those masts.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - If I could take that on notice, just a current up to date height. As I said, the last time I asked was several months ago.

CHAIR - Have you concluded that, or have you got something else?

Ms ARMITAGE - I think there's a bit of paper there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I will take that question on notice. Thank you for the question. Chair, you have mentioned the north of Stonor Road.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am advised that the Middleton Highway north of Stonor Road has recently failed due to the significant rain event creating a new spring under the road and damaging the pavement. State Growth is now working to repair, with the works expected to be completed by Friday 4 October.

CHAIR - Yes. State Growth or the contractor? Would it be the responsibility of the contractor?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It would be the contractor, yes.

CHAIR - So State Growth is overseeing the contractor undertaking the works, would that be correct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, that would be correct, Cynthia, is it?

Ms HEYDON - Yes that would be correct. It will go through with the contractor to understand if it is a defect or a latent condition, but the contractor is basically finishing and completing the works end of next week.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you very much.

I want to ask you, if I might, minister around slow vehicle turnouts and they are a really necessary feature of some of the roads that I have in the electorate of McIntyre. I know that the Sideling was supposed to have two slow vehicle turnouts, and they ended up being stopping bays. I am really interested to have some understanding of if that is a new way of dealing with a possible overtaking lane for slow vehicles, or was that just bad luck for the people who travelled the Sideling, and particularly those slow vehicles?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The section of the Tasman Highway known as the Sideling between Launceston and Scottsdale is well known for its challenging bends and spectacular -

CHAIR - Scenery?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Topography. The Dorset Council has long regarded the Sideling as a barrier to the economic prosperity of 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 the Patricks River Bridge -

CHAIR - St Patrick's River.

Mr ROCKLIFF - across the Sideling. And your question is on the -

CHAIR - There isn't any money in this Budget for the next stage of those works.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms McIntyre.

Ms McINTYRE - Thank you, Premier. To go back to your initial question about the slow vehicle turnouts, I think the intention was to have stopping bays, so pull over areas.

CHAIR - No. I was a member of the Public Works Committee and I was absolutely given the understanding that they would be slow vehicle turnouts. They have ended up being stopping bays because you cannot overtake. The slow vehicle has to stop.

Ms McINTYRE - Yes. In terms of the next stage, there is funding in the Budget, and the design is being developed for the next stage at the moment, and also options are being considered for the section between -

CHAIR - St Patrick's River and the top of the Sideling?

Ms McINTYRE - St Patrick's River and the top of the Sideling, yes.

CHAIR - How much is in the budget, if I might? Because that will depend -

Ms McINTYRE - There is a total budget of \$120 million.

Mr ROCKLIFF - \$120 million total. \$50 million is allocated to stage one, which is - you know all of this, but in terms of the roads, Minstone Road intersection to the Sideling

PUBLIC

lookout. And stage 2 is a Sideling lookout to St Patrick's Bridge via the Sideling or an alternative Corkerys Road option. That is \$70 million, so the total of \$120 million.

CHAIR - All right, okay. That will require federal funding as well, or is that all state government funding?

Ms McINTYRE - It is an 80/20 split. So it is a total of \$120 million that's -

CHAIR - Right, thank you. My other question - what is planned for slow vehicle turnouts from the Scottsdale - well, I know we have two between Scottsdale and Branhholm, which have just been finished. But from Branhholm to St Helens, is there any in the Budget or planning for slow vehicle turnouts? Particularly between Moorina and St Helens?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not aware of any, but I am happy to take that.

CHAIR - The former, former, former minister, that would go back to the Honourable Rene Hidding, and there was a commitment that those slow vehicle turnouts would continue, but there is nothing on the radar post the two that have been put in between Scottsdale and Branhholm. Is that correct?

Ms McINTYRE - That's correct.

CHAIR - That's correct? All right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have an update for Ms Armitage around the navigation height of the bridge. The current planning is based on approximately 24 metres from the high tide.

Ms ARMITAGE - High tide, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - And the Department of State Growth is preparing an engagement plan to talk -

Ms ARMITAGE - I don't think that that was what was requested, that particular some of the yacht clubs, the Tamar Yacht Club and others, to be engaged to -

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's it? Sorry.

Ms HEYDON - Through you, Premier. The height that we were using for planning has been based on the initial input from the yacht club and the ship lift company as part of the early concept design.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, that's great. Thank you.

CHAIR - All right, thank you.

Mr EDMUNDS - Just going back to the *Spirit*, there's a couple of questions. When will the second vessel be completed, and are you able to guarantee that both new ships will be able to operate at full capacity by January 2026?

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is an area of minister Abetz's responsibility, notwithstanding my interest in this project and intervention, in many respects, around Mr Moloney and Mr Peter Gammell. I am awaiting their information and report which I expect to see in the middle to late October, and I'll be awaiting their advice, Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Fair enough. Thanks.

Ms O'CONNOR - Chair.

CHAIR - Ms Webb.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

CHAIR - Yes, I'm coming back.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. I'm not sure if this is the right area to ask this in. Maybe we missed it. But when I look at the other initiatives listed at the beginning of this department's section, the one that's listed under 'Other Initiatives', Macquarie Point operating when it's \$5 million per year across the forward Estimates is - and it's - the explanation is it's for contributing operational funding to Macquarie Point Development Corporation. Is that in addition or on top of any other funding provided by the state Government or what's the purpose of that particular listing under 'Other initiatives'?

Mr ROCKLIFF - So it is under 'Sports and events'.

Ms WEBB - Is it? Sorry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I understand it. Or EPDC is.

Ms WEBB - I didn't see it allocated. So not infrastructure in your space.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not that I'm advised.

Ms WEBB - So although we have the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - We've got Ms Beach here to discuss if you'd like. Happy to bring Anne to the table again.

Ms WEBB - I'm interested to understand if that's an additional amount over and above what it's for.

CHAIR - It's \$20 million operating.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Anne, if you'd like to come to the -

CHAIR - It's under '2024 election commitments'.

Ms WEBB - It's under, yes, 'Other initiatives', yes.

CHAIR - Yes.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Anne. Anne Beach, the CEO of Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

CHAIR - Welcome back, Anne. You've swapped ends of the table this time.

Ms BEACH - Through you, Premier. It's an operational grant, so that is our operational funding for the corporation.

Ms WEBB - But it's not a new initiative, Premier, it's just a continuing funding of the corporation that occurs each budget.

Ms BEACH - Through the Premier, yes, it is. It's a continuation of the last grant that just expired.

Ms WEBB - Okay. So why would it be listed as an initiative, Premier, in the Budget if it's just ongoing funding that's provided to the MPDC?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Was there a plan assessing the -

Ms BEACH - Through the Premier, because the corporation was initially - when it was set up, didn't have any state funding, there was an operating grant that was set up for three years, and that three-year period has ended. This is set up and following on from that. Our last operating grant expired at the end of last financial year. So because it has now been renewed it's listed as a key initiative just for transparency.

Ms WEBB - Right. Is it a four-year grant?

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms BEACH - It is listed across -

CHAIR - Four, five, five and five.

Ms BEACH - the forward Estimates.

Ms WEBB - I can see four years detailed there, but I'm wondering is that the duration of the grant? Would there be another one negotiated after that?

Ms BEACH - I would anticipate that would be the case, yes.

Ms WEBB - Yes. Where do we find a breakdown? Do we have to wait for your annual report to find a breakdown of how that \$5 million is allocated within operational spending or are you able to provide something of that detail to us?

Ms BEACH - So that operational, we would go through an annual budgeting process that our board will sign off, and that will - we reflect that each year in our annual report.

PUBLIC

Ms WEBB - Do you know as even a ballpark idea how much of your operational funding is going to be going towards matters relating to the stadium development application and process?

Ms BEACH - Through you, Premier. There's project-specific funding. All of the funding related to the project would be specific to the project budget.

Ms WEBB - Okay. So none of those \$5 million amounts over each of these next four years is specifically going to the stadium project?

Ms BEACH - That's right.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair. Premier, I want to go back to a comment you made earlier about the northern access road being port infrastructure and just to get some clarity from you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, access to the port, I think I said.

Ms O'CONNOR - Access to the port?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. Thanks for that clarification. If in the likely event that the private sector won't pay for the northern access road, is the contingency plan to request or require TasPorts to fund that northern access road, given it would have multi-uses?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'd prefer to answer that question when we've done the planning and have more information.

Ms O'CONNOR - So you're not ruling it out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You know I've been around a long time, Cassy. I can see the media release about not ruling something out and all that.

Ms O'CONNOR - I think it's an important question, because it's a big infrastructure piece that supports the stadium. It's a big unknown expense associated with the stadium.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, of course. This matter would be - transport infrastructure and Macquarie Point would be developed. The precinct wasn't a stadium, it'd be something else that will require -

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, there was a vision for it. It had housing and a commercial precinct and a science precinct. It was beautiful. Anyway, back to the question about TasPorts funding the northern access road.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think I've answered that, really.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, the planning.

Ms O'CONNOR - I didn't hear that answer and I've been at the table all day.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Planning is - you know, be underway when it comes to these matters and decisions will be made around that time, I suspect. Is that all there is?

Ms O'CONNOR - So it may be necessary - did you have something you wanted to add, then, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I don't envisage asking TasPorts.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you envisage asking any other government entity or agency to find the funds for the northern access road?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We'll get the planning done and we'll make those decisions. I'm not going to make those decisions during a running commentary.

Ms O'CONNOR - No. But, to be fair, a lot of this decision-making or planning towards the decision would already have been happening. So as minister who's going to manage this project to within an inch of its life, as you said, you must have some idea of what pool of funds would be tapped in order to pay for that piece of transport infrastructure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'll seek advice on that. To your other point around your other - you know, thinking the designs were wonderful before, there's -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, it was a fully developed and consulted master plan.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Been many visions for - there's been -

Ms O'CONNOR - It was a master plan.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's been many visions for Mac Point.

Ms O'CONNOR - This is the one that was publicly funded.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're confident this is the best of the state, in our humble opinion. These matters - were these part of the city deal, the northern transport matters. So been on for some time.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, the northern transport corridor might be. But the access road is different, isn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm not sure.

Ms BEACH - Through you, Premier. It was identified in the Hobart City Deal to support Antarctic operations on the port.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay. That would make it a reasonable fit for TasPorts to borrow to fund the construction of that road.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not sure about that, no.

Ms O'CONNOR - You haven't thought about it much?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're on the stadium, the most scrutinised project in the last 20 years.

Ms O'CONNOR - Lots of questions, not as many answers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The answers are there in 4000 pages in terms of the planning submission. Pretty comprehensive to me.

Ms O'CONNOR - It's the costings that a lot of Tasmanians are asking about, or our constituents.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's right, and that's fair enough.

Ms O'CONNOR - When are we going to get some better -

Mr ROCKLIFF - But \$375 million worth of investment from the Tasmanian government, \$240 million from the federal government.

Ms O'CONNOR - And the rest of it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's your opinion.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, it's what the documents lodged with the planning commission make clear as well, including the financial impact statement.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. We're kind of diverting back to stadium territory.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is a key piece of infrastructure, and you know it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - I've just got one last question not on the stadium. We saw with the floods, Premier, the impact of extreme weather events on our infrastructure. You've talked about the power of water to cause damage. It's the most powerful of the five elements in terms of how it can shape the earth. I've had this conversation with your predecessor, Mr Hidding, over many years at the Estimates table and the other place. What kind of planning is your department doing for climate to make sure that we're ruggedising our infrastructure, we're not leaving rural and regional communities potentially in the lurch when a key road or piece of infrastructure fails? Is there any planning at all to have a look at our key infrastructure and to make sure to the best extent possible it'll be able to weather the weather that's coming?

CHAIR - For instance, the Cam River Bridge.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right.

CHAIR - That was significant, wasn't it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - And there will be more of that. There is a body of planning work to do, about making sure that we're -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I imagine and expect there would be planning and design that suits the conditions.

Ms O'CONNOR - Which are changing.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Cam River bridge is an example of that, and we had the flood during construction, if my memory serves me correctly, which caused some damage during construction and delays and all sorts of things. I am disagreeing with you because, from what I understand, there is going to be more floods, there is going to be -

Ms O'CONNOR - More fires, sea level rise, coastal inundation, and therefore, don't you think it is sensible for your agency, for Infrastructure Tasmania, to undertake an infrastructure audit to understand where the vulnerabilities are and where the investments need to be made?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It seems sensible to me. We had, I think, 100 or 200 floods in 2011, 2016, 2022 in the north.

CHAIR - The East Coast was hit very badly.

Ms O'CONNOR - Exactly.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So, I'm not dismissing any of what you're saying.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know you're not.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Ms McIntyre. The day is drawing on.

CHAIR - Some of us have been here, as you know, since 9 am.

Ms McINTYRE - Just on that, so we do a bit of both. We do emergency planning, so we have identified key assets in terms of their vulnerabilities and, you know, sort of what might need to happen in the case of a severe flood, and flooding is pretty much the biggest issue for the road and bridge network for example. We do endeavour to build back better whenever there is an area that is impacted, and that is obviously a national trend now and it has been accepted by the Commonwealth. And in terms of structures like the Cam River bridge we actually had identified that as being a vulnerable asset. Which is why we were in the process of building a new, higher, better, bigger, wider bridge that would be able to withstand a flood event at the time. Obviously we are taking that on board, and we are working to manage and make our network more resilient.

PUBLIC

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. I take on board what the Premier has said before about how valuable it might be to do an audit of risk to key infrastructure in relation to climate change, and I hope you will progress that, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take it on board. I will look at the resources required to do such an audit, which would be probably significant in this challenging resource time. I am not dismissing the value of an audit; I will have a look at it. I will put it on the agenda at our next regular meeting.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you.

CHAIR - A question if I might, minister. Just on those other initiatives that the member for Nelson referred to, there is also Infrastructure Tasmania operational budget, and then there is the Stadium Tasmania operational support. Would it be better off that they are somewhere else in the budget - and this is just looking at how it is presented - when it is operational budget? They look a bit odd sitting in election commitments. Is there some reason that they are stuck in the middle of election commitments.

Mr ROCKLIFF - While I look at that answer for you, can I address another matter that you have raised, Chair?

CHAIR - Yes, you might.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is to do with the slow vehicle turnouts.

CHAIR - Yes. You have an announcement after all?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You might be disappointed to learn that the DSG doesn't have any further slow vehicle turnouts planned other than the two recently completed. But DSG is doing a corridor strategy for the Tasman Highway from Sorell to Launceston and is happy to include 'assessing the need for slow vehicle turnouts for the section between Branxholm and St Helens'.

CHAIR - That's music to my ears.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks for asking the question.

CHAIR - And particularly for the people who drive that road.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you don't ask, you don't receive.

CHAIR - That's right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - So there you go.

CHAIR - While you were looking for that answer, I picked up, in this 'other initiatives' that - and I know that we don't normally go backwards - but 'trade and investment missions' has an allocation of \$800 000 for - and I am pretty sure that we were told that it was \$600 000. So, I might just ask if that can be clarified by the end of the day, just around trade and investment missions. I may well have got that wrong, but in the Budget it is \$800 000.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - All right. I want to clarify something, though, if that is okay, Chair. On page 306, table 10.1, 'Key deliverable statement'. They're other initiatives, so not election commitments. They are operational budgets, they're new money, but not election commitments.

CHAIR - Right. They're new money. So there is new money for Infrastructure Tasmania.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. Are you looking at the 1.9 there?

CHAIR - Yes. So that is new money on top of what they already receive in the budget somewhere?

Mr ROCKLIFF - That might have - was that an expiring commitment?

Ms McINTYRE - Infrastructure Tasmania has grown a little bit to undertake some broader tasks across government in terms of project and program assurance, and also a major projects area has been initiated. The operational budget needed to increase over the next couple of years, so the government has recognised the importance of Infrastructure Tasmania and the need to boost their operational budget so that they can deliver on what the government wants them to deliver on.

CHAIR - Right. Is that the same for Stadiums Tasmania? They have increased their remit? And because they have got an extra 1.9 as well, and then in the forward Estimates they go up to 2.9.

Ms McINTYRE - I believe that is their standard operating budget, and that is a new initiative.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But a good question for the Sports Minister, Mr Street.

CHAIR - Yes. Perhaps it needs to be put with the sport and recreation initiatives and rather than just 'other initiatives'. I am not putting the budget papers together, I know that.

Ms WEBB - Yes. They're essentially a list of announceables, things that they can announce as new even if they are attached to existing programs. I had a question that related to - because I was reading some cabinet analysis from Martin Goddard, who you will be familiar with, probably, in terms of policy analysis in various areas and economic analysis on some. He notes in relation to the infrastructure area that in every year but one that your present government has been in power, since 2014, the actual amount being spent on infrastructure is significantly less than that which has been promised in the budget that preceded it.

For example, in 2023-24, the shortfall was 25 per cent less than what was announced, for \$314 million less than what had been announced. He suggests that over the decade this amounts, in inflation-adjusted 2024 dollars, to a \$3.488 billion less spend than what had been promised in budgets. His assertion is that it is entirely reasonable for some projects to be delayed, but in that case the money would show up in subsequent years.

It is 'not plausible' that the pattern of consistent and severe underspending could be explained by ordinary delays. The more likely explanation is that it is a deliberate tactic to

persuade the media, voters and the parliament that the government's infrastructure program is much more ambitious than it actually is. That is his assertion: he is essentially accusing you of putting lifts in your infrastructure shoes, I think, to look bigger than you are in terms of what you are going to do infrastructure-wise.

If this data is correct, and you have actually budgeted but then significantly underspent each year on infrastructure, what can we expect this year in the budget that we are looking at now? What percentage less will we actually be spending and delivering in this financial year compared to what you have budgeted? Will it be 25 per cent like the previous?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I haven't seen Mr Goddard's analysis. I did take great interest in his analysis when I was Health minister, and shadow health minister for that matter.

CHAIR - He's pretty good.

Ms WEBB - He's got a striking little graph there, and the red box is being your underspend, what you budgeted but you actually spent less in infrastructure.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms WEBB - There was one little year where you didn't.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Just look at the axis of all those and see -

Ms WEBB - From 2014 all the way through your whole term of government.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of that. But we are doing pretty well in getting money out the door, I'd have to say. There's workforce and labour market challenges as well, particularly as a result of COVID. We're doing pretty well. We aim to budget a certain level, get as close as possible to that, and when I compare money going out the door to prior to our arrival in government, it's significantly more. We'd aim to achieve the budgeted amount, but there might be different -

Ms O'CONNOR - My city's infrastructure priorities.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, there might be different reasons why we don't quite achieve the budgeted amount.

Ms WEBB - He certainly suggests that there would be some reasons that could be put forward for not spending what you budgeted for, but he's suggesting that the magnitude of your underspend consistently across the time looks more like a pattern that's consistent with a deliberate tactic to make it look like you're promising more than you're actually going to be able to deliver. What's your response to that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I wouldn't agree with that. We don't have a deliberate tactic. We just want to get money out the door as best as we can.

Ms WEBB - So are you just not as good at doing it as you'd like to be?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, we've improved. We'd like to be better.

Ms WEBB - 25 per cent last year.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A lot of people have worked very hard to make sure they do get funding out the door, most certainly. Have you got any further matters to raise on that situation, Denise?

Ms McINTYRE - So the Budget is an annual budget, so it's for one particular year, but with big capital projects, for example, infrastructure projects, they are managed over multiple years, and so the cashflows may change. The Budget is a point in time and when projects are developed further, then there's a better knowledge of how well the expenditure is going to go and how accurate that expenditure is. When the Budget is set, there are a myriad of infrastructure projects that are at various stages of development. They may be at the early idea, the early concept or more thoroughly developed. I think that's a better reflection of the Budget numbers rather than an over-assessment of what can be delivered.

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - As we're going well for time, I ask the Premier one question about the Macquarie Point stadium, not that itself but can you advise the reason that your government won't consider the alternative stadium 2?

Ms O'CONNOR - 2.0.

Ms ARMITAGE - 2.0. I know it's called 2.0, it's called a variety of different things. People have asked me and I can't answer.

Ms O'CONNOR - You don't know what to say.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have a question on the notice paper so that I can actually tell people, but it hasn't been answered yet. I want to know what is the reason that it actually won't even be considered? I understand if you considered it and knocked it back or if it went off to the TPC in conjunction with the other one and then looked at the two together. A lot of people aren't against a stadium, they're just against a stadium in that particular spot. The time when we had the briefing from, I think it was Paul Lennon and group, they did show an old map that showed that their site is actually called Macquarie Point as well. I'm curious as to if there's a reason that it won't be considered.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I've got to be a little careful here because there's an unsolicited bid process going on now. I'll talk about how -

Ms ARMITAGE - You'll be cautious.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Cautious, and I'll talk about the Mac Point -

Ms ARMITAGE - It's a bit hard when TPC hasn't come back with an approval yet, but anyway.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. It doesn't align with the AFL agreement. So that's one reason. And -

Ms ARMITAGE - In which ways? Can you point to say which ways it doesn't align?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's not part of the agreement. The AFL agreement is for a stadium at Macquarie Point.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, they believe that was Macquarie Point as well, that was all, the old map that they showed.

Mr ROCKLIFF - But the AFL agreement is very clearly there. Also there are many reasons why. In terms of the Macquarie Point stadium where we're planning to do it, it's closer proximity to the CBD, Salamanca, as an example. I've outlined a range of reasons for this. I've written to Mr Coleman on these matters, but there is an unsolicited bid process going on now. Perhaps I will keep my further comments at a very Mac Point focused area rather than stadium 2.0, if that's okay with you.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, that's okay. Only one other question I would ask about the high performance centre. Is that in your area or the -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Street's portfolio, responsibility.

Ms O'CONNOR - You signed the deal though.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For the high performance centre, yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - Well, they're part of the AFL deal. It's just a simple question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms ARMITAGE - It was just that I note - and obviously part of it would go into Mr Street's - because I'm just curious that the JackJumpers having a high performance centre at Kingston and then the AFL needs a high performance centre, I'm curious why there can't be one high performance centre with basketball courts and an oval and share the rest of the facilities. It just seems strange to me that we need two high performance centres with a lot of overlap that, as I said, could actually have the basketball court. I can't see the reason that you couldn't have one, just add a basketball court to the one that's -

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's a little bit more than that in terms of what's required. There might be some opportunity for shared facilities, but they're two very different sports.

Ms ARMITAGE - A lot would be very similar though, gym-wise, pool-wise, physio. There would be a certain amount of overlap.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There'd be some overlap.

Ms ARMITAGE - I'm curious, that was all. I appreciate that the JackJumpers comes within minister Street's responsibilities. I thought while we had a bit of time I'd ask you the question.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - With regard to the high-performance centre which is currently earmarked for Rosny but we are still finalising those matters at the moment, minister Street will be able to provide some information for you on that.

I do have some clarification around trade and investment mission dollars, Chair. The Budget amount referred to of \$600,000 was for the 2024-25 financial year. The \$800,000 in the key deliverables statement starts in 2025-26 and has a second \$800,000 in 2026-27.

CHAIR - So that means that there were two missions last year for \$400,000, there's going to be three missions this year for \$600,000, that means there'll be four missions in future budgets because it's about \$200,000 a trade mission.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, and depending where we go. The current action plan has a forward -

CHAIR - That's good for the clarification. I have a supplementary from Mr Edmunds.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, it was from a few questions ago, and I appreciate the comments about the HPC. But with some of the commentary around that from minister Street, you said well, why don't you run both of them in conjunction because if there's an issue with Rosny, we've got Kingston up our sleeve. I'm interested in your thoughts on why the government doesn't do that with its potential stadiums. You have two of them out there in public domain -

Ms O'CONNOR - Did you just ask a stadium question?

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes. I can ask whatever questions I like, can't I? I think I'm being sledged from the left here now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What do you mean by that, Luke?

Mr EDMUNDS - In terms of the rationale for the high-performance centres makes sense to most people. You run two at once so if one falls over, you've got one up your sleeve and don't have to start from scratch. I'm just wondering why you don't take the same approach with the stadium and 2.0.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. Well, two very different areas, sites, complications. And again, it's not part of the AFL agreement.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, no. That answers my question.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms O'Connor and then I'm going to Ms Webb and then we will be getting close to wind-up.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Premier and minister. Have you seen the document City of Hobart Advocacy Priorities for 2024-25? It contains a clear vision for our beautiful city nipaluna Hobart, but it has five key priorities areas including: additional infrastructure on kunanyi Mount Wellington that is not a cable car; delivering transport choice for Hobart which includes a Battery Point walkway, which perhaps if your government wasn't frittering so much money on a stadium the people of Hobart would have; increased housing and urban development along the inner city, medium density; New Town Sports -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Along the corridor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Actually along Argyle Street, but it's not so specific to a street, but it's talking about inner city medium density.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I agree with that.

Ms O'CONNOR - And New Town Sports Precinct and Hobart Phoenix Basketball Association. What's your response to the City of Hobart's core infrastructure priorities? Because looking through it, I can't see that your government's infrastructure agenda, other than a stadium and its associated infrastructure, has much to offer the city that I'm elected to represent.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question. I'm not sure about the way you've described it because certainly our population policy encourages more medium density housing, for example, and one of the reasons why the northern rail corridor development's exciting is because of the opportunity on the corridor for densification.

Ms O'CONNOR - But we're still talking about. We've been talking about it for 30 years.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes. And -

Ms O'CONNOR - Battery Point walkway.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's the opportunity - yes. I'm not sure -

Ms O'CONNOR - Has any -

Mr ROCKLIFF - It totally doesn't align with some of our vision, and I've mentioned those, but I'm interested to look at that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Unfortunately, minister, I haven't printed out the last bit of it. But I'm sure the lord mayor has sent it to your office, certainly sent it to local members. But what about the Battery Point walkway, for example, to connect Sandy Bay to the city, another core piece of enabling active transport infrastructure that should be a priority for a city, shouldn't it?

CHAIR - Wasn't there some issue with access through that Battery Point suggested walkway?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, grumpy, rich people.

Ms WEBB - When we had a briefing on that document, there was a government member there who would have been very attuned to some of the projects in there, given his background in local government and his parliamentary portfolio - I think he's parliamentary secretary or something in the housing area, Mr Behrakis.

Ms O'CONNOR - Battery Point walkway.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I see. Right, yes.

Ms WEBB - When we all were invited for a briefing on that document by Hobart City Council - or City of Hobart, I should say.

Ms O'CONNOR - So do you think we have to wait until after we're through this stadium phase, and hopefully it's not built before as minister in your government, Premier, you'll consider helping to fund the Battery Point walkway?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know it comes up from time to time. There's no specific commitment from us to do that, unless I've missed something. But I'm a big fan of walkways.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are? Yes, that's right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, look at the northwest coast.

Ms O'CONNOR - Exactly. You've got them up there.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You can virtually walk from Latrobe right through. There's a few missing links there, but if I go past the - on the way to Ulverstone, of course. And I see a lot of people - Lillico's great.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, beautiful.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A lot of people walking, riding, walking their dogs -

Ms WEBB - We're expecting everyone to walk to the stadium, don't you know?

Ms O'CONNOR - Our city wants some of that too.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That's all right though, isn't it? That's good though, isn't it?

Ms WEBB - Sure, for those people who are -

Mr ROCKLIFF - Get rid of the cars.

Ms WEBB - For those people who are able to, for sure.

Ms O'CONNOR - Premier, you can't say that you've seen the City of Hobart's Advocacy Priorities statement, but what I'm hearing from you is that you will have a look at it?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. I would like you to pay some attention to the Battery Point walkway issue because it would catalyse the city, get more people off the roads, and it's healthier infrastructure than a stadium, we think.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will alert this issue to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Source a copy.

PUBLIC

Mr ROCKLIFF - To minister Abetz, who is the active transport minister responsible. I'll take a look and I'm sure Mr Abetz may well have had a look at that as well, but that's a question for Eric as well, and me. I'll do what you want me to do in terms of I'll look at it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, no, you won't, but thanks. Okay. I'll just file that one.

CHAIR - Thank you. Ms Webb.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. A quick question. I'm looking at the performance information for output group 2 on page 339 of the budget paper, and the question I have relates to the second criteria or second indicator there which is about the percentage of tier 1 major projects which have undergone an independent project assurance review coordinated by Infrastructure Tasmania. It is shown as being it's 100 per cent across the various years there as meeting that performance indicator, which is good in terms of performance indicators being met. I'm interested in that performance indicator and the visibility around the tier 1 major projects that are in the pipeline plan, for their infrastructure and also the assurance reviews that are being conducted on them. Are they internally within the department being done or is it something we outsource to consultants. Is there public visibility around this list of projects and the assurance reviews that are being done on them?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. Could I take that on notice or get -

Ms McINTYRE - I'm happy to provide a bit of background.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, provide some background.

Ms WEBB - Probably just some of those things could get answered here about who does those assurance reviews and things.

Ms McINTYRE - So one of the roles of Infrastructure Tasmania is to undertake project assurance for infrastructure projects across government. They have established basically a panel of experts who will undertake those reviews, and we have a gateway review model that is in place, an assurance model that is in place. The government has asked us to look at extending it across and making it mandatory across the infrastructure program going forward.

Ms WEBB - Beyond tier 1 major projects or still just focusing in at tier 1 major projects?

Ms McINTYRE - No. For complex projects and for projects that the Tasmanian government thinks is necessary to have an assurance assessment made of it to ensure that it can be delivered.

Ms WEBB - Is that somewhere then that's able to be visible in terms - or able to be reported on in a public way so people can see what's in the pipeline for those projects and which ones have received that assurance review?

Ms McINTYRE - We'd probably need to take that on advice because the assurance reviews are actually a confidential process because the aim of the exercise is to ensure that the project team and whoever is the responsible officer is assured of the ability of the project to be delivered. It's a process that needs to have that confidentiality so that it has fulsome responses and information provided to the process. But I mean, that's one of the - we've got a performance

PUBLIC

measure in the Budget to show that we are doing that work and that that is underway. We'll need to understand what level of detail we can share in regard to the project assurance process.

Ms WEBB - Is it a meaningful performance measure if it's just an expected and necessary part of a process? And obviously, you've got 100 per cent here from 2021-22, all the way through to this year which has a target continuing as 100 per cent. Is there any reason it's not ever 100 per cent?

Ms McINTYRE - There may be a number of projects tier 1 that haven't gone through the process at a particular point in time.

Ms WEBB - But that's just because they haven't got up to that bit in the process yet, right? So it's not really a performance measure then, is it, in that sense?

Ms McINTYRE - We'll need to have a look at that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, if it wasn't done, that'd be of concern, wouldn't it?

Ms WEBB - Sure, but we could pick any stage of a process then and make it the performance measure. If the project can't progress without that being done, then there's not really any meaningfulness in having a performance measure being done.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It could be put for the interests of transparency.

Ms WEBB - Interesting. Thank you.

CHAIR - Members of parliament are always able to receive some information that has some sensitivity around it and keep that information in the appropriate way. Don't ever be afraid to share with us because we are good at keeping confidence. Just ask the chair of the other committee.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks, Chair. I look forward to - Ms O'Connor presented me with a plan, the Hobart priority statement.

Ms O'CONNOR - Hobart priority statement. I'll make sure to send it to you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. Before that I will do whatever Ms O'Connor wants. It'll just be in reference to the actual -

Ms WEBB - When it comes to petty social media, let he who casts the first stone -

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was only being facetious, but that's in reference to the matter that I will take interest in.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, minister.

CHAIR - Premier, on behalf of Committee B, we very much acknowledge the work that goes into presenting and supporting you through the Budget Estimates process, and we certainly thank you for your time today and look forward to all other opportunities that we're going to have for the rest of the week, and there will be a number of emails that will come just

PUBLIC

in regard to those questions, and members, we will look at that after we conclude today. I thank everybody for their time today, and we will conclude this broadcast.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank you and the committee, and also put on record my thanks for all the departmental staff and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, State Growth, Tourism Tasmania, the Coordinator-General, Brand Tasmania. There's a lot of work that goes into preparing for Estimates. Not everything that is prepared has a question attached to it, but -

CHAIR - We can never do it justice. Yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Nonetheless, a lot of work goes into it. It's an important part of scrutiny, and I appreciate everyone's work and diligence, and I know a lot of work goes into preparing questions from the opposition and other supporting members of parliament as well, which is all part of the process. I did Estimates myself for 12 years in opposition and it's a lot of work for all involved around the table. Thank you very much.

CHAIR - Premier, you can see by my tagged up volume of the budget papers there that I haven't had enough time and others are exactly the same boat. We will conclude the broadcast.

The Committee adjourned at 5.30 pm.