

Tuesday 3 March 2020

SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

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

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

Resignation - Mr Will Hodgman MP

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I advise that I have received the following correspondence from Her Excellency the Governor, dated 20 January 2020.

The Honourable Sue Hickey MP
Speaker
House of Assembly
Parliament House
Hobart 7000

Dear Madam Speaker

I have today received a letter from Mr Will Hodgman MP tendering his resignation as a Member for Franklin in the House of Assembly.

I have instructed the Electoral Commission to proceed in accordance with the provisions of Part 9 of the Electoral Act 2004.

Yours sincerely

C A Warner
Governor

Division of Franklin - Election of Nicholas Adam Street

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I advise the House of the following further communication I have received from Her Excellency, again, addressed to the Honourable Speaker.

5 February 2020

Dear Madam Speaker

I send herewith the Certificate of the Electoral Commissioner stating that a recount has been held under the provisions of Part 9 of the Electoral Act 2004 to fill the vacancy in the Division of Franklin caused by the resignation of Mr Will Hodgman.

Following the recount of the resigned member's ballot papers Mr Nicholas Street has been elected to the vacancy. The election takes effect from 5 February 2020.

Yours sincerely

C A Warner
Governor

MEMBER AFFIRMED

Nicholas Adam Street - Member for Franklin

Mr Nicholas Adam Street, Member for the Division of Franklin, made the necessary affirmation and subscribed to codes of ethical conduct and race ethics.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you and welcome to parliament, Mr Street.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Ministerial Arrangements

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Speaker, as a consequence of the resignation of the Premier, Will Hodgman MP, I was honoured to accept the leadership of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and was appointed as Tasmania's 46th Premier by Her Excellency the Governor, on 20 January 2020. I subsequently made the following appointments of ministers of the Crown: myself as Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Tourism.

Mr Jeremy Rockliff MP as Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Disability Services and Community Development, Minister for Trade and Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries.

Mr Michael Ferguson MP as Minister for Finance, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for State Growth, Minister for Science and Technology and Leader of the House.

Ms Elise Archer MP as Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Building and Construction, Minister for Arts and Minister for Heritage.

Mr Guy Barnett MP as Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Minister for Energy, Minister for Resources and Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Ms Sarah Courtney MP as Minister for Health, Minister for Strategic Growth, Minister for Women and Minister for Small Business, Hospitality and Events.

Mr Roger Jaensch MP as Minister for Housing, Minister for Environment and Parks, Minister for Human Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Planning.

Mr Mark Shelton MP as Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management and Minister for Local Government.

I also announce the appointment of Jane Howlett MLC, as Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Racing.

I am pleased to inform the House that the Honourable Leonie Hiscutt MLC will continue as the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

Mrs Joan Rylah MP will continue as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier. John Tucker MP will continue as Government Whip.

I am honoured by the confidence shown in me by the members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party to serve as their Leader. I assure all members of the House and the people of Tasmania that my ministry and our whole team will ensure the continuity, the strength and the unity required to keep delivering our long-term plan.

With regard to Ms Howlett being a member of the other place, as has been the recent practice, it is our intention later today, to seek the agreement of the House to seek leave of the other place to allow the minister, Ms Howlett, to attend question time here each sitting. As the other place is not sitting this week and is unable to consider this request, I will handle any questions relating to Ms Howlett's Racing and Sport and Recreation portfolios.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Minister for Resources - Mr Guy Barnett

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I advise that Mr Barnett will be absent from the House today to attend the funeral of Tasmanian miner Cameron Goss in Queenstown. In the minister's absence, I will take questions relating to his portfolios.

Mr Barnett is attending the funeral on behalf of the Government. I join him in paying our respects to Mr Cameron Goss and sending our condolences to his wife, Christine, and his children as well as his broader family.

I also note that on behalf of their respective parliamentary teams, Dr Broad and Dr Woodruff are attending the funeral to pay their respects.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Death of Cameron Goss

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I am sure all Tasmanians will join this parliament today in acknowledging the tragic loss of Mr Goss whilst undertaking his work as an underground miner. It is inherently dangerous work and I make a point of recognising the incredible efforts put in during the initial search and eventual recovery of Mr Goss from the mine. This was not an easy recovery operation. The mine management and owners, Police Search and Rescue, mines inspectorate and all of the people who worked and assisted in this recovery, should be given all of our thanks.

The mining industry more broadly should be included in those thanks. Mines and their people from all over Australia, stood ready to assist with whatever they had that may have been of use, as well as the teams of skilled manufacturers in north-west Tasmania who dropped everything to manufacture specialist equipment required to make the recovery effort a success.

I note that even during this extremely difficult time for the family, they were supportive of the mine continuing its work, knowing that this was a tragic accident, an unlikely event and that they know Mr Goss would have wanted that to occur for the benefit of their local community.

Mining is the backbone of the west coast. It has been a critical element of its economy for over 150 years. We will all continue to stand with the industry and the community, making it a key pillar of the west coast for another 100 years. Whilst accidents like this test the fabric of communities like the west coast, we all stand with them at times like these because we are Tasmanians. Vale, Cameron Goss, your sacrifice will not be forgotten.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I will make a few remarks about Cameron on behalf of the Parliamentary Labor Party.

Cameron John Goss was aged just 44 when he died tragically in a mining accident on Tasmania's west coast. Cameron's sudden death was a shock to all of us but I can only imagine what that day must have been like for his family. Cameron had worked at Henty for about two years and was a much-loved member of that community. When there is a death in the mining industry, it is a tragedy that echoes across the sector.

Cameron's death has been most keenly felt by his family but his death has been felt far more widely than that. At the moment news broke of this tragedy, there was a collective pause right across the state. We all held our breath as we heard the news. For many of us, we recalled previous mine collapses where there have been stories of both survival and, sadly, death.

Initially, there was hope that Cameron might be still alive but as time passed it became clear that hope was fading. I cannot imagine how it must feel to lose a child. I know from witnessing it in my own family that it is a gut-wrenching kind of grief that appears insurmountable. To Cameron's mum and dad, his wife Christine, to his children and to his family, his family at Henty Gold Mine and the wider west coast, we are so sorry for your loss. On behalf of the Labor movement, we convey our sincerest condolences.

Today the shadow minister for resources and labour, the member for Braddon, Shane Broad, is representing the Labor Party at Cameron's funeral, alongside the Minister for Resources, Guy Barnett. From the Labor Party President, Senator Anne Urquhart, myself and all the Parliamentary Labor Party members to rank and file branch members, the Labor Party offers our support to the west coast, and to the Government, to help with your recovery however we can.

The Australian Workers Union has been on-site at Henty offering support to Cameron's workers and colleagues, and providing support to the family since the day of the tragedy. The Labor Party has a strong affinity with the west coast and tragedies like this affect us all deeply. Arguably, the Labor Party's greatest state leader was Eric Reece who grew up in the mines of the west coast. He never forgot where he came from. He demanded the west coast and the resources industries get

their fair share. When a tragedy of the loss of life through a workplace accident occurs, it acts as a stark reminder that we can never take safety for granted.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Henty Gold Mine on their honest and open communication throughout the tragedy and recovery effort operation. They did everything they could to keep people informed and worked closely with emergency services in the aftermath. The death of Cameron Goss was a terrible and heartbreaking tragedy. We pay our deepest respects to him on this day of his funeral and celebrate the life of a man who was son, husband, father and a friend.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens I echo all the sentiments put on the table by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, and extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family of Cameron Goss, to the people of Queenstown and also the Henty Mine community. We are represented at the funeral today by Dr Rosalie Woodruff, who will be there with Mr Barnett and Dr Broad.

Madam Speaker, on the morning of 23 January Cameron Goss got up and went to work. He left behind his wife, Christine, and his children, Alysha and Kaleb. Like every family who says goodbye to someone going off to work for the day, they all would have expected to see him come home that night but he did not.

I thought the best way to pay tribute to the life of Cameron Goss was from the words of his own family, who put a notice in the *Advocate* after his body was found -

GOSS Cameron John 2.6.1975 - 23.1.2020 Dearly loved husband of Christine, and father of Alysha and Kaleb. Somewhere in my dreams tonight, I'll see you standing there, You look at me with a smile, Life isn't always fair. From your loving Wife. Every time I think of you my heart still fills with pride, Though I'll always miss you Dad, I know you're by my side. 'Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, Love leaves a memory no one can steal' Love you always, Alysha and Kaleb. Loved eldest son of Wayne ...

Who is deceased -

... and Raeleen. Big brother of Tammeke, Marcus and Sarah. Uncle to Jaymee and Lee, Ashley, Jordyn, Savanah and Marli. In the blink of an eye, we never got to say goodbye, my son, my brother, my uncle. You're out of sight, but not out of our hearts. - Mum, Tammeke, Ashlee, Jaymee, Lee and Marli. You'll be forever in our memories. Forever in our hearts. Thank you for being a wonderful brother and uncle to our girls. Love you lots. - Marcus, Sarah, Jordyn and Savanah. To the man that showed me so much in life on what to do and what not to do. The girls and I will miss you heaps. Love you "Old Boy" Love Cody, Tory, Milly and Little Lotty.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens, I again, express my deepest condolences and empathy to the family of Cameron Goss.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome to parliament the wonderful grade 9 students from St James Catholic College.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Infrastructure Projects - Delays in Completion

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.16 a.m.]

Your appalling mismanagement of major infrastructure projects has been exposed for all to see. You went to ground last week when it was revealed that your Government had failed to meet key milestones on two of the Government's biggest infrastructure projects in the state's history - the new Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, and the new *Spirits of Tasmania*.

The Royal Hobart Hospital was supposed to be open and taking patients right now. You cannot even say when you will take possession of the building let alone when patients will be in beds on the ward. The first of the new *Spirits* was supposed to be operational in just 12 months but now will not be delivered until at least late 2022 putting a handbrake on export and tourism growth.

Where were you when the bad news on both of these projects had to be delivered? Will you take responsibility for your Government's embarrassing inability to deliver critical infrastructure projects, or are you just another good-news Premier who will run away when the going gets tough?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, if after three months that is the best the Leader of the Opposition can come up with -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

The prophets of doom on the other side will continue with their incessant negativity in terms of what is a very good story for the state.

There was a total of \$3.6 billion worth of infrastructure in last year's Budget, a record spend holding up our economy against national headwinds, building roads and bridges, ensuring that we kept hundreds and thousands of Tasmanians in work.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. It sounds like rabble.

Mr GUTWEIN - It is implied, in the Leader of the Opposition's question, that she would like us to take on the hospital when it is not ready. That is the height of irresponsibility. Let me provide a short history lesson for the parliament on the hospital. For 10 years, the Labor Party spoke about building a hospital - 10 years and they failed to lay one brick.

We are in the final stages of taking delivery of K Block. The single largest investment in health infrastructure in this state took a Liberal majority Government to get it up and out of the ground.

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - It reflects the mess the former health minister who has just chimed in, created; oversaw failure after failure, including spending \$10 million -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am going to be a little indulgent because I know there is a lot of pent-up emotion, having waited two months for this sort of attack. However, I ask you to be a bit more dignified, please. We have a shiny new Premier here and I would like to hear what he has to say.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding the hospital, we will take practical completion when it is fit and ready for practical completion to be taken. We will then move to operational commissioning and introduce the 44 beds that we have already funded in the budget.

I will come back to the point that I made. It is implicit in the Leader of the Opposition's question that she wants us to act irresponsibly with a major infrastructure project to take practical completion before it is ready, and we will not. We will sensibly and responsibly work through this process to ensure that when we take on the hospital it has met all the necessary requirements and we can then move to operational commissioning.

In terms of the TT-Line, it surprises me that that side of the House would raise that question. We know that the contracted company, FSG, was having financial difficulties - outside of this Government's control - but we had contracts in place which protected the state. Not one dollar has been spent or provided to FSG. Immediately when it became clear to us that TT-Line and FSG had agreed to mutually exit the contract, an MOU was able to be put in place with a new shipbuilder that will deliver these ships in 2022 and 2023. That is well before the use-by date of the current *Spirits*, which continue to bring record numbers into Tasmania.

This Government will get on with the job of delivering infrastructure. I heard the former failed minister for economic development. It was a statement of fact that within the last year we put in 200 per cent more infrastructure into this state than he did in his last year. When we came to government that side of the House had a \$1.4 billion infrastructure program. Last year we announced a \$3.6 billion program, more than a 100 per cent increase on what they were doing over four years. We will get on with the job on this side of the House. We know that infrastructure will drive jobs and attract further investment into the economy. This side of the House will simply get on with it. We will not whinge and carp like they do.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Practical Completion of Infrastructure Project

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.23 a.m.]

You have managed to turn the Royal Hobart Hospital from an exciting opportunity into a complete disaster. The project has been plagued by mould, asbestos, dust falling on patients, and now unresolved lead contamination in the water supply. Your failure to answer questions about this project suggests that you are either completely hands-off or deliberately hiding information from the public. It is a simple question. When will the hospital be finished and when will patients first be treated? In an interview earlier this week your minister could not even guarantee that it would be this month. Can you?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Again, it is implicit in that question that the Leader of the Opposition would like us to do the irresponsible thing and take back that hospital when it is not ready. We will not do that. I make the point again that we have a hospital that is going through the final stages of practical completion. Last week the Health minister made it perfectly clear that there were issues with the air conditioning that had come to our notice simply because air conditioning is one of the last things that can be turned on because all the kit needs to be in place.

Regarding water testing, we have been absolutely clear on that. The builder is continuing to flush the plumbing and water quality testing is ongoing.

The answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question is that we will take back the hospital when it is fit for purpose and meets practical completion. They are working on that at the moment and we will move to operational commissioning as soon as that is practically possible.

Climate Change - Position of Minister

Ms O'CONNOR to MINISTER for CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.25 a.m.]

My question is to the Premier and the first Liberal minister for Climate Change. As the new minister, will you be guided by the science? According the peer-reviewed 2013 Tasmanian forest carbon study, this island's forests are expected to sequester around 3 million to 4 million tonnes of carbon every year for the next 30 years. That includes the 356 000 hectares of healthy old forests set aside for protection in 2013. What you have called a wood bank, the science tells us is a vast carbon bank of global significance. This is the science. Do you accept it? If you want to be taken seriously on climate, do you acknowledge that business as usual in our forests is not an option? Will you make a clear, unequivocal statement now that your Government will not only not log the TFA reserved forests but you will commit to ensuring these forests are permanently protected for their natural, cultural and carbon values?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. It is very clear that the member for Clark wants to use what is a global problem and a global challenge as a reason to shut down our forestry industry.

Ms O'Connor - You could get up and say the short answer is no, I won't listen to the science.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is implicit in that question. Let me provide you with an explanation.

Ms O'Connor - You haven't even tried to be a statesman for 30 seconds.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - Let me explain, for the member who is quite happy to remain blind to this, that we have a very good story here in Tasmania on climate change, an extraordinary story. We were the first jurisdiction to have zero net emissions in 2016. That is something you should be proud of. Right now, we are at 95 per cent below 1990 levels.

Ms O'Connor - It's the forests that have made us a net carbon sink.

Mr GUTWEIN - In terms of our state, the member is right. Around half of our state is locked up and that provides a carbon sink and a net offset, but we also have in Tasmania some of the world's best renewable energy assets. What the member wants - and I am certain of this in my mind - is to use climate change as a reason to shut down industry and cost jobs. That is what the member for Clark wants to do.

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Speaker, point of order, under standing order 45. I ask you to draw the alleged Minister for Climate Change's attention to the question. The question was about the 356 000 hectares of forest. He is trying to avoid dealing with that question, because he does not want to confess what a Luddite he is.

Madam SPEAKER - As you know, we have a long-standing practice here that ministers are permitted to answer questions as they see fit. I ask the Premier to continue his answer.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the member well knows, the Government has no plans in place for those future potential production forests. The member also knows that legislation needs to come back to this House before any decision would be made in terms of those forests. I put clearly on the record that one of the best ways we can store carbon is to have well-managed forests. It is a statement of fact. In Tasmania, for every tree we cut down, we plant more -

Ms O'Connor - Do you know it takes a logged forest a century to recover the carbon? It takes 100 years. Do you think our children have 100 years?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. I am very respectful that this is your passion but I do ask you to be respectful of the Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, well-managed forests provide an ongoing carbon sink. The very dispatch box that I am standing at today is timber that has been taken from a forest and will store carbon forever.

I come back to my point on climate change. I wish you could be a little more positive about the very good story we have here in Tasmania in terms of climate change - the first jurisdiction in this country to reach zero emissions; at the moment 95 per cent below 1990 levels. No other jurisdiction in this country will ever get close to us. We have a government that is going to work hard on improving our carbon footprint as well because we intend to drive further investment into renewable energy to ensure that we can become the renewable energy powerhouse of this country, a beacon to the world of what is possible. I ask that the member for Clark be a little more positive about what is a very good story here in Tasmania about climate change.

Trade Opportunities for Tasmania

Ms OGILVIE to MINISTER for TRADE, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.31 a.m.]

Over the past months we have seen the significant impact of the coronavirus, COVID-19, and the impact it has had on global markets. Health is obviously the prime concern for all of us but economic impacts matter too. It is prudent to consider whether our international trade exposure could be more diversified to reduce risk to import and export trade. I note today that the *Mercury* estimates approximately a \$128 million hit to our seafood industry. The post-Brexit world presents opportunities for Tasmania and both the United Kingdom and Europe and a post-Brexit free trade agreement between Britain and Australia is currently being negotiated. All other Australian states have taken steps to open trade offices in London. What steps have you taken to ensure we are able to secure this opportunity for Tasmania?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. Growing trade is fundamental as a driver for long economic growth for all regions within Tasmania. Our Government has developed the first whole-of-government trade strategy which was launched in 2019 and provides the framework that will enable us to respond quickly to industry trends, changing market conditions and emerging local and global issues and opportunities.

We have a plan for the Tasmanian Trade Strategy to increase exports to \$15 billion by 2050. The Tasmanian Trade Strategy sets a path for Tasmania's international and domestic trade engagement to deliver greater prosperity for Tasmanians, our businesses and our communities. The Tasmanian Trade Strategy recognises the fast-paced nature of the global trading environment and offers key priority to the need to be proactive and nimble in our response to challenges and opportunities.

Tasmanians benefit greatly from all aspects of trade, whether it be international exports of goods and services, visitation or international education.

The outbreak of coronavirus in China and now further afield is of great concern and we extend our sympathy and our best wishes to all who have been impacted. However, it is also a new source of uncertainty in the global economy. While it is still too early to tell the magnitude of the impact is going to be, we know that it is and will cause further disruptions to trade.

China is a large part of the global economy and closely integrated with other economies, including Australia. The international impact will depend on the success and timeliness of the

various efforts to control the virus and, like everyone around the world, we are watching developments carefully and are already putting in strategies in place to assist Tasmanian businesses. I am aware the department has been closely engaged with many peak industry bodies to understand current and future ramifications on trade.

I am aware that Business Tasmania has been contacted by approximately 16 Tasmanian businesses that have been impacted by the current situation to some degree. Business Tasmania remains in contact with those businesses to continue to monitor the situation to assist where possible. Amongst some of the planned activities organised by the department to assist exporters during this time include a seafood showcase in Singapore in March; a meeting with the Indonesian Marine Affairs and Fisheries minister, who I met with just last week, and his delegation which discussed, amongst several things, opportunities for the seafood sector in Indonesia; a study tour of the seafood industry aimed at market intelligence and diversification as well as activities planned for the United States mission later this month. I have also been in contact with my federal counterpart, Senator Birmingham, the Minister for Trade, and discussions are ongoing about potential assistance and initiatives.

The member also asked about the United Kingdom. On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom formally ceased to be a member of the state of the European Union. We have progressed -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. No more chatting unless it goes through the Chair.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is very important to Tasmania. We are an exporting state and rely on it and we take it very seriously.

We have progressed objectives in our trade strategy to support focused engagement with the EU and the UK for Tasmanian businesses. In November last year the then Premier led a trade delegation to the UK and the EU focusing on advanced manufacturing, defence and the Antarctic. In January I hosted the EU Ambassador to Australia and accompanying senior EU delegation comprising of seven EU country ambassadors to King Island to showcase our provenance and the quality of our produce. You could not have asked for a better couple of days on that beautiful island. It was magnificent. We also look forward to continuing to work with the Australian Government to unlock new trade opportunities for Tasmanian businesses through the free trade agreements with the EU and, of course, the UK.

I thank the member for her question.

Government's Long-Term Plan

Mrs RYLAH to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.37 a.m.]

Can you please outline the importance of a strong, stable, majority Liberal Government with a long-term plan for Tasmania and is the Premier aware of any other approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mrs Rylah for that question and for her interest in this matter.

Mr O'Byrne - Careful. You have the dream team behind you. Who did you vote for?

Mr GUTWEIN - The question is, who is going to vote for you? I know who voted for me. That is the open question for the member who opened his mouth and walked right into the trap. Who is going to vote for him? We know that Mr O'Byrne is flexing his muscles. Out quick as a flash when Ms White was starting to equivocate. Quick as a flash. Oh, sorry.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Yes, everyone should be sorry. The behaviour is most unparliamentary and I expect a little bit more decorum.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, Mr O'Byrne, quick as a flash, was out to correct Ms White when she started to equivocate on the NBL. I wonder if he spoke to his Leader to say, I am going to put out a release straightening you up? Anyway that is a matter for them.

Regarding the question I have been asked -

Madam SPEAKER - Order. They look like props. Please remove them.

Mr GUTWEIN - it is very important to have a plan and a long-term plan. We were elected in 2014 with a long-term plan to grow the economy, to attract investment, to create jobs, to put record amounts into health, education and looking after the most vulnerable, and to invest in infrastructure.

On that side of the House, and the member interjects, we are still waiting for the plan he announced in the *Mercury* last year that he was going to get on and deliver.

On this side of the House we have a plan that is providing record economic growth, providing record jobs creation and providing opportunity. I have said there is always more to be done and I have indicated that we want to do more on health. We have already put \$600 million into Health across the forward Estimates and reformed their leadership. We are investing \$50 million into renewable hydrogen energy, an opportunity that this state needs to grasp. We are getting on with building new schools at Brighton and Legana. We have taken the first steps to ensure that Tasmanians can take their rightful place on the national stage with the NBL side. We hoped to get support from the other side of the House for that.

In 2020 our economy is in the best shape it has been in for 30 years, with more than 21 000 jobs created and more than 256 000 Tasmanians now employed in this state.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr GUTWEIN - Again we get interjections from the other side of the House. More than 21 000 jobs have been created on this side of the House. How many on that side? There were 10 000 lost at the peak.

We have a strong economy and it is growing across all sectors. We will work hard to ensure that our long-term plan continues.

I was asked, 'Where is the Opposition and are there any alternative plans?'. As they are the Opposition in this place, it is quite right that I point to them and ask where is their plan? Will we see an alternative budget this year? It is incumbent upon the shadow treasurer, if he is going to argue for funding and policy, if and when he actually gets a plan, to explain how he is going to pay for it. That is the question for Labor. Money does not come out of thin air. That is something the prophets of doom on that side of the House have never quite been able to grasp.

This side of the House will get on with our long-term plan. I will have more to say about it this afternoon, with some exciting announcements, to ensure that we create for Tasmanians a better Tasmania, a Tasmania of opportunity as we move forward that will ensure that regardless of where you live, what your background is or what your circumstances are, you will have an opportunity to grasp the very strong opportunities that are currently available in our economy.

Royal Hobart Hospital - Practical Completion and Penalties

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.43 a.m.]

The new Royal Hobart Hospital was supposed to be finished in December 2018. Under the redevelopment contract there is a provision for fines 30 days after the date of practical completion at \$17 000 per day, and after 60 days daily damages of \$35 000 per day apply. According to the letter of the contract, it is estimated that the managing contractor would be liable to pay more than \$14 million in penalties to date. Did the Government agree to change the practical completion date and, if so, why? Has the state Government imposed penalties, or are you happy to see Tasmanians short-changed as a result of your infrastructure incompetence?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I again make the point that it is implicit in her question that she wants us to take on and receive a hospital when it has not been practically completed.

I will deal with the substance of the question first. Regarding the ongoing commercial negotiations, we will ensure that Tasmania's legal position is protected. We have contracts in place, so of course we will, but what we will not do is take back a hospital when it has not been practically completed. It is frustrating and disappointing and the Minister for Health has expressed that, but it is important on an infrastructure build this big that we only take it back when we can be certain it has reached practical completion. Then we will move to the operational commissioning phase.

It has been frustrating and disappointing, but we will not do what the Opposition want us to do and take back -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. The question to the Premier was whether the Government agreed to change the practical completion date and if so, why, because that affects what penalties are imposed and the exposure for the Tasmanian taxpayer.

Madam SPEAKER - As you know, that is not a point of order, but I ask the Premier to be relevant.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I have already answered that question. This matter is subject to ongoing commercial negotiations and we will ensure that Tasmania's legal position is protected. I have said that quite clearly, but again -

Ms O'Byrne - This is not a commercial negotiation. This is an existing contract between the state.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, this demonstrates their lack of experience with large projects. They had 10 years in the lead-up to 2014 to try to build one and they could not get one brick laid.

The Government will continue to sensibly and responsibly manage this project. We will ensure that our legal position is protected and we will not take back the hospital until it has achieved practical completion. Once that has been achieved we will move to operational commissioning. I caution the Opposition in their incessant calls for this to be rushed through. We need to ensure that when we take back the hospital it has been practically completed and, importantly, that we can move on and achieve operational commissioning at the appropriate time.

Bridgewater Bridge - Construction Delays

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.48 a.m.]

Your failure to deliver major infrastructure projects has made your Government a laughing stock. Last week it was revealed that you are paying a consultant close to \$600 000 to tell you how to reduce the costs of the new Bridgewater bridge. The *Mercury* has likened the appointment to an episode of *Utopia*, but even they could not write a script this farcical. Just like the delays in the opening of the Royal Hobart Hospital, the delay and the delivery of the new *Spirit of Tasmania* ferries, it is obvious to everyone that the new bridge will not be complete with cars driving over it by 2024.

Mrs Rylah - We are doing a really good job.

Ms WHITE - I do not think I will take advice from you.

Premier, have you learned from past mistakes and will you now admit that there will be no cars driving over the new Bridgewater bridge by 2024, as your failed Infrastructure minister has asserted?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question, albeit once again a continuation of her incessant negativity. Contrary to the false claims of Labor, the status of the Bridgewater bridge remains unchanged. It is a national priority initiative. It is the largest funding commitment for infrastructure in Tasmania's history which reflects the bridge's strategic importance for the state. The Government has taken on board the feedback from Infrastructure Australia to ensure that the final design is fit for purpose and can be built within the funding allocation. If we were not undertaking this work those opposite would be arguing that we were blowing out the cost of the Bridgewater bridge.

There is a funding envelope and we have taken on the matters that have been raised by Infrastructure Australia and we are working through them. Pitt & Sherry Building Surveying has been engaged to undertake the necessary geotechnical investigations to support the scoping and development of the Bridgewater bridge project. These investigations include the analysis of the ground conditions for the approaches of the new bridge location and the sediments in the river. This will help determine the final design for the bridge foundations, which I would have thought was fairly sensible. Burbury Consulting has been engaged to assist the department in working with the Australian Government to address the matters raised by Infrastructure Australia, which is exactly what we should be doing. This is a significant project.

Members interjecting.

Once again we have the chipping in and the chirping from the other side. I make the point that when they were provided with over \$100 million, nearly 20 years ago now, they pork-barrelled it at the 2006 election. Then they complained when we take the appropriate steps to inform ourselves to address the issues that have been raised by Infrastructure Australia and to do the necessary geotechnical work. It beggars belief. I come back to the point that that side of the House is demonstrating its lack of experience in large projects -

Ms O'Byrne - And your lack of transparency. You have not built anything.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. This is my final warning on this matter, please. Someone will be ejected if we do not calm down.

Mr GUTWEIN - The point I was going to make, and it is one that needs to be repeated often, is that in terms of the largest health infrastructure project in this state, the Royal Hobart Hospital, for 10 years they wasted money and looked at alternative sites. When we came to government in 2014 they had managed to not lay one single brick. They should hang their heads in shame for that.

Infrastructure and Transport - Long-Term Plan

Mr STREET to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.52 a.m.]

Can you please outline how this Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is strengthening our long-term plan for Tasmania in the areas of infrastructure and transport? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I believe that the whole House welcomes Mr Street, the member for Franklin, to the House of Assembly. I congratulate him on his election. I know he will make a fantastic contribution to the House.

To the member, thank you for the question. This state is the nation's economic powerhouse and it behoves all of us here to keep it that way. Without a shadow of a doubt, it is clear that our long-term plan is working. Tasmania is topping the charts in economic growth, job creation and business confidence.

Much credit has to go to the Premier, Peter Gutwein, for this. I congratulate my friend and colleague on his election as premier. This united team intends to keep it that way and so we should. We have a lot to celebrate. We will continue to support the strongest economy in the country and to create even more jobs. As the Premier has already said, 21 000 more jobs have been created since this side of the House was elected to government in 2014. Our budget, which the Labor Party criticised for our infrastructure investment, is supporting the creation of a further 10 000 jobs. I am very proud to be part of that strong, united, stable government that has the runs on the board. We have the drive and the discipline to keep delivering for Tasmanians.

I have had the pleasure of accompanying the Premier to many events, including one that the members opposite -

Madam SPEAKER - Order, that is a prop. Please remove it.

Mr FERGUSON - where the Premier and I attended an important infrastructure update at the Perth Link Roads, which is nearly one year ahead of schedule, which the Labor Party has notably ignored in all their questions so far.

In addition to that, from our first regional Cabinet meeting for the year in Launceston, the George Town Chamber of Commerce, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, gathering in Hobart and businesses such as the Turner Stillhouse Distillery and McDermott's Coaches at Legana, we recognise the importance of hearing, firsthand, valuable feedback from the community. Listening enables us to ensure that our plans are on track.

In 2014, Tasmanians very clearly voted for a strong, stable, majority government. They wanted, and they got, a disciplined, unified and responsible government. Our record \$3.6 billion infrastructure investment spend is building what our growing state needs, with exciting intergenerational projects on the go. This Government is delivering the Bridgewater bridge -

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - It is true. Those opposite, who laugh, had money for the bridge, and they spent it.

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne. That is your last warning.

Mr FERGUSON - Of course, Mr O'Byrne is the guilty party. He helped spend that money. We are getting that bridge back on track.

It is funded. We have the expertise to take the first steps. That initial work is now underway. That is a \$576 million Bridgewater bridge which is in our Budget. It is not in an alternative budget; because there is no alternative budget. Geotechnical specialists are starting work onsite, to inform the design. Pretty important. This is the largest infrastructure commitment in Tasmania's history, and we are making it a reality.

We are ahead of schedule on the Midland Highway Action Plan. At the halfway mark, we have completed 62 per cent of the work. As I mentioned, the Perth Link Roads, which members opposite would have been travelling on, is nearly one year ahead of schedule. The Hobart Airport

Interchange, which was talked about for yonks, we are delivering. The South East Transport solution, an improved Bruny Island ferry service and landside infrastructure, traffic congestion-busting measures, the Launceston and Tamar Valley Traffic Vision, are just some of the projects; the list is truly impressive.

This investment is the largest in history. As a proportion of total spend, the Government's infrastructure spend has grown from about 7 per cent of the budget under Labor, to nearly 12 per cent of the 2018-19 financial year -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, standing order 48. The minister has been on his feet congratulating himself for close to five minutes. I draw your attention to the amount of time being spent on self-congratulation, that is paid for by the taxpayer.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you very much. That is not a point of order. Please resume, minister. You have 36 seconds.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is difficult for members opposite. They have challenged the Government to spend less on infrastructure. At a public RACT forum, the Leader of the Opposition said we should spend less on infrastructure. That is a terrible thing to say -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister is misleading the House and misrepresenting statements that I made. I ask him to withdraw.

Madam SPEAKER - The Leader of the Opposition has taken offence. I urge the minister to withdraw the comments.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I will withdraw the offence but, at the gathering, the member did make that comment and it has been reported accurately.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr FERGUSON - I withdraw, Madam Speaker, and I am sorry that the member feels offended.

Our businesses are the most confident in the nation. We will not be cutting our infrastructure spend. It is employing Tasmanians and it is part of our plan.

WorkSafe Tasmania - Prohibition Notice on Bob Brown Foundation

Ms O'CONNOR to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.58 a.m.]

Did the Attorney-General or Mr Barnett give you the heads up about the prohibition notice that WorkSafe Tasmania tried, unlawfully as it turns out, to slap on the Bob Brown Foundation? Did you give them your blessing as it would appear to any rational observer of Tasmanian politics? When did you first become aware of this unlawful prohibition notice?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for that question -

Ms O'Connor - You can call me the Leader of the Greens any time you like; I call you the Liberal minister for Climate Change.

Mr GUTWEIN - I thank the member for Clark for that question.

I have made this circumstance perfectly clear. First, there was no referral by this Government to WorkSafe -

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, there was.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - There was no referral by WorkSafe -

Ms O'Connor - The Integrity Commission hopefully will resolve that.

Mr GUTWEIN - There was no referral to WorkSafe by this Government -

Ms O'Connor - The media release is still up on your website.

Mr GUTWEIN - The Integrity Commission has called out before the behaviour of other members of parliament in terms of attempting to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance, standing order 45. You chuckle like children. This is a question that was pointed and straightforward. When did the Premier first become aware of the prohibition notice?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I have allowed it for *Hansard*.

Ms O'Connor - Juvenile chortling.

Madam SPEAKER - Please do not make it worse, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - I want to make it clear that the Government did not refer -

Ms O'CONNOR - That is not the question. Point of order, Madam Speaker, neither the parliament or you should tolerate this. The question was, when did the Premier become aware of the prohibition notice?

Madam SPEAKER - I heard you. It is still not a point of order. I ask the Premier to remain relevant.

Mr GUTWEIN - After Workplace Standards had decided to issue the prohibition notice -

Ms O'Connor - Did you first read about it in the media? Is that what you are saying?

Mr GUTWEIN - In terms of this issue, the Government -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - I hope this is not a frivolous point of order.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is definitely not a frivolous point of order. The question was written so that the Premier could not weasel his way around an answer. When did he first become aware of the prohibition notice?

Madam SPEAKER - I accept it is a specific question but, as you know, I do not have the power to put the words into the Premier's mouth. I have to ask the Premier to continue his answer.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I have answered that question. This Government did not make a referral. I became aware of this after Workplace Standards had made its decision. I cannot be clearer than that. I make the point that whilst they have decided not to proceed with that order, it seems perfectly reasonable that they did take those steps. When you have employees of an organisation -

Ms O'Connor - You could not even defend yourself in court. You caved within a week.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - locking themselves on the gear in unsafe circumstances then there is a duty of care and WorkSafe Tasmania exercised that. I have made it perfectly clear the Government did not make that referral. WorkSafe Tasmania acted of its own volition. That is something Mr Cocker has made clear, as I understand it, in a number of media statements. Again, I am certain the member for Clark will do her best to go on with this.

I want to point out something that was said by the Chief Commissioner and CEO of the Integrity Commission back in their 2017-18 annual report:

Less positively, we saw... occasions when the making of a complaint to us -

being the Integrity Commission -

became the subject of political comment. Indeed, there were occasions on which a public commitment was made to refer a matter to us but nothing eventuated.

It is of great concern that public statements have been made by Members of Parliament about possible or actual complaints to the Integrity Commission.

I say to the member for Clark, stop attempting to weaponise the Integrity Commission. WorkSafe Tasmania acted of its own volition without referral from this Government.

Infrastructure Projects - Delays

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.04 a.m.]

Almost daily the list of your infrastructure failures grows longer. In addition to the Royal Hobart Hospital, the new *Spirits* and the Bridgewater bridge, you have also failed to make a start on the new Hobart Airport roundabout and you missed your deadline for the opening of the new children's ward at the Launceston General Hospital. On the weekend you announced a delay in the construction of the new Brighton High School. The replacement of the Midway Point roundabout, the replacement of the Sorell Causeway, the duplication of the Sorell Causeway, the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet, an underground bus mall and a bridge over the Tamar River are all pipedreams.

The infrastructure portfolio has received Michael Ferguson's trademark 'kiss of death'. He is failing to deliver outcomes in infrastructure, just like he did in health. Do you regret not demoting the failed former health minister and your leadership rival Michael Ferguson, when you had the chance?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I reject her assertions regarding infrastructure.

The infrastructure spending by this Government was 230 per cent higher in 2018-19 than it was just six years earlier in the last full year of the Labor-Greens government. The 10-year \$500 million Midland Highway Action Plan is tracking ahead of schedule with 62 per cent either completed or under construction and the first tranche of the \$120 million freight rail rehabilitation program was completed on time and on budget. In terms of infrastructure, we are getting on with the job.

The member asked some questions about the member for Bass, the minister, Michael Ferguson. I make the point to this House that for five-and-a-half years he was the Health minister and increased funding every single year. He should be commended for his efforts. He reversed Labor's cuts. He began the first stage of the reform process of health in this state and that should not be forgotten. He did a tremendous job. I was very pleased to promote him to Finance minister because he is a very capable -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. We are all going to take a deep breath, remember why we are here, and we are all going to be nice to each other. I can stand here all day if you are going keep up this behaviour, but I would rather not. Premier, would you like to regain the podium and continue your answer.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, Mr Ferguson is a hardworking and diligent minister and one of the hardest working people I have ever worked with. He will apply himself to his infrastructure responsibilities and other portfolio responsibilities with distinction. I am certain of that.

Madam Speaker, I will come back to the infrastructure: we are doing 230 per cent more than they did in their last year of government. That speaks volumes. I will remind them of the point I

have made on a number of occasions today regarding the Royal Hobart Hospital and K Block. For 10 years, they could not lay one single brick.

Education - Long-Term Plan

Mr TUCKER to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.08 a.m.]

Can you provide an overview of how the Tasmanian Liberal Government is strengthening our long-term plan for Tasmania and supporting greater opportunities for more Tasmanians in the area of education? Is the minister aware of any alternative plans?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his very good question. It is fantastic to be part of what continues to be a strong, capable and united team, capably led by our new premier, Mr Gutwein.

Our Government has a strong plan for education, focused on individual students' improvement. We want every student to be engaged and for them to reach their full potential. From this year, changes to the Education Act will see the minimum leaving age raised from 17 years to 18 years. For most young people, this will mean undertaking year 12 or a Vocational Education Certificate qualification before being able to leave compulsory education and training. This change to the leaving age reinforces that year 12 or certificate III is the minimum educational standard that young people will need to achieve to have the best possible foundation for further learning, for life and work.

Keeping more students engaged in education was also the catalyst for our very successful plan to extend high schools to year 12, which has seen TCE attainment improve by 10 per cent since we came to government. This program has been embraced by local communities, with 47 schools having extended and eight more next year, delivering on our election commitment.

Packages of learning are an exciting new approach to keep individual students engaged with learning in years 9 and 10 and allow them to explore new pathways to vocational education and employment. These are developed in partnership with industry groups and are aligned to growth industries. A pilot was run last year with five schools, and I am pleased to see this approach being expanded to more schools this year.

Equity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do in education in Tasmania and our new needs-based funding model for disability reflects this. This year for the first time students are receiving support based on their individual learning needs rather than their disability. We have increased funding by \$34 million, which will see up to 2000 additional students receive support.

Our Government recognises that by investing in early learning we are investing in improved educational and life outcomes for children and families across Tasmania. Through our nation-leading initiative, Working Together, we are also removing barriers for children to participate in early learning. Building on the highly successful 2019 pilot program, placements this year have been expanded to 120 in targeted areas across Tasmania and up to 400 hours of free preschool is

being provided for eligible children who would not otherwise have the opportunity to engage in the year before they start kindergarten.

To ensure our students have access to modern state-of-the-art schools and learning spaces, we are continuing the biggest investment by a state government in school infrastructure in over 20 years. This includes new schools in the growth areas of Brighton and Legana and redevelopments at Devonport and Sorell.

I was asked if I was aware of any alternative plans and, as usual, I have to say no. Only this side of the House has a long-term plan for education and we will continue to deliver it. We are getting on with the job of delivering our long-term plan for education and supporting greater opportunity for more Tasmanians across our state.

Infrastructure Projects and Net Debt

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.13 a.m.]

You have attempted to justify the state's dive into more than \$1 billion of debt by claiming you are spending record amounts on infrastructure. With so many projects plagued by delays or yet to get off the ground, this is blatantly untrue. The truth is that every year you have been in government you have failed to spend almost a quarter of what you have budgeted for infrastructure, which is putting a handbrake on job creation. When will you finally admit that you are plunging the state into unsustainable debt as a result of your own incompetence and, despite your rhetoric, the state has no major infrastructure projects to show for it?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question and her interest in this matter. I make the point that no matter what the prophets of doom on that side of the House want to bring forward into this place, we will get on with the job of building the infrastructure that Tasmania needs for its growing population and, importantly, for its growing economy.

It needs to be pointed out that in terms of our net debt, we moved to a modest net debt profile over the forward Estimates that will underpin investment into hospitals, schools, bridges and roads and probably the best example of long-term infrastructure development into dams that will, in 100 years' time, still be providing water for crops and stock. It is an intergenerational example of infrastructure investment.

A modest level of net debt at the end of the forward Estimates will underpin a \$3.6 billion investment into infrastructure. I make the point, because the Labor Party are very loose with the truth around this, that we are not in net debt now. We hold net cash and investments right now.

As to where we are heading with our infrastructure program, we have a growing population. We know that Tasmanians need more services. We know that they need us to build the Tasmanian infrastructure required for the twenty-first century and that is why we are getting on with the job. We are building roads and we are building bridges. We will deliver on a \$3.6 billion infrastructure program over the four years that will ensure Tasmanians get the roads they need, the schools they

need and the hospitals they need. We will invest in infrastructure and we will invest in renewable energy as well.

We will build the Tasmania that we require. We will ensure that Tasmanians receive better roads, better schools and better hospitals, because that is what this side of the House does. We get on and build things, unlike that side of the House where for 10 years they thought about it, spent money on it, but could not lay one single brick. That is the very clear contrast between this side and that side of the House. We get on and do things.

Protection of Victims of Crime - Long-Term Plan

Mrs PETRUSMA to MINISTER for JUSTICE, Ms ARCHER

[11.17 a.m.]

Can you please provide an overview on how the Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is strengthening our long-term plan for Tasmania by protecting victims of crime?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as this House knows, community safety is a core priority of the Tasmanian majority Liberal Government. We will always stand up for the safety of our community, for our victims and for our most vulnerable. Our strong, united, stable majority Liberal Government will continue to work hard under the Premier, Mr Gutwein's leadership to deliver our commitments to the Tasmanian people.

Members will note that the new Premier has been quick to hit the streets of my Clark electorate, joining me on a building site, for the opening of the Hedberg precinct and the naming of the Vanessa Goodwin sitting room and the Vanessa Goodwin roof garden, in honour of our dear late friend and colleague, the Honourable Dr Vanessa Goodwin.

Today I am introducing a number of pieces of legislation aimed at protecting victims and ensuring offenders are dealt with in a manner consistent with community expectations, including legislation to address one-punch or coward's punch incidents, sending a strong message that these cowardly acts of violence will not be tolerated. These incidents have been the focus of national attention as a result of a number of highly publicised incidents, campaigns in relation to alcohol-fuelled violence and also the introduction of reforms to reduce violence, including new offences across Australia. These senseless and sometimes fatal attacks are often unprovoked and indiscriminate but can leave lasting and devastating effects on the victim, their families and, of course, the community.

While there are a number of existing offences in Tasmanian legislation that can capture one-punch incidents such as assaults and grievous bodily harm, I consider reforms necessary to close a loophole that currently exists for offenders to avoid convictions for manslaughter if they successfully argue that the death was an accident.

I will also be tabling legislation to amend section 194K of Tasmania's Evidence Act 2001 to provide victims and survivors of sexual assault the right to speak out publicly. It takes immense courage for survivors of sexual crimes to speak about their experience and our Government recognises some members of the community have expressed concerns that section 194K may not

currently strike the right balance. The act currently prohibits the identification of victims in sexual offence proceedings without a court order, including when the person is an adult at the time of publication and consents to being identified.

Legislation has been drafted to include provisions that will allow publication to occur more readily if that is what victims want. It remains vitally important, however, that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that if a victim wishes to speak publicly about their experience, such action does not unduly impact other victims who wish to remain anonymous or who are unable to provide consent. Therefore, there are appropriate protections in our bill for victims who do not wish to be identified.

The legislation will also include an offence for breaches of the publication prohibition. The Evidence Act is a complex area of law and any reform must strike the right balance. That is why we have consulted widely with the broader and legal community over time, first on reform issues and then on the draft bill to inform the final form of this legislation. What is now being proposed is the most balanced approach to reform and is more consistent with exemption provisions in most other state jurisdictions.

Finally, renaming of sexual crimes will also be tabled in a separate bill to modernise the language used by the Criminal Code in a number of sexual crimes, especially those involving young people, to better reflect the true nature of those crimes. For example, the language used in the crime of maintaining a sexual relationship with a young person in no way reflects the gravity of that crime and is an additional cruelty for the victim. Amongst other reforms, this bill will rename this crime as persistent sexual abuse of a child or young person - whichever is determined to be appropriate - to better reflect the predatory and exploitative nature of the offending. This bill follows a thorough review of Tasmania's sexual crimes and extensive analysis and consultation, as I committed to doing.

Changes to the Criminal Code must never be done on an ad hoc basis by the parliament. Any changes to the Criminal Code Act 1924 must always be considered thoroughly and carefully with a full understanding of its effect on the entire criminal law in this state. Our Government has initiated a suite of reforms since 2014 with the direct aim of protecting victims and survivors of crime, particularly our most vulnerable. That remains my very strong focus as the Attorney-General. This strong, united, stable, majority Liberal Government will continue to work hard. We are delivering on our long-term plan to keep Tasmanians safe. Our plan not only responds to the challenges we face today but also to safeguard and strengthen Tasmania in the future.

Infrastructure Tasmania - Recruitment to CEO Position

Ms WHITE to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[11.22 a.m.]

Across the state there are examples of infrastructure projects that are hopelessly delayed, including the Bridgewater bridge, the Tamar River bridge, the underground bus mall, the duplicated Sorell causeway, and the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet. Some of these may never be built.

Against this embarrassing backdrop, last month the head of Infrastructure Tasmania, Allan Garcia, quietly resigned from his \$320 000 a year job. Former Infrastructure Minister, Rene Hidding, once described Mr Garcia's role as the best money he had ever spent. Was your failure to

make any public comment following Mr Garcia's resignation an acknowledgment of the waste of money Infrastructure Tasmania has been since its inception? Will Mr Garcia's position be replaced?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this Government highly respects and appreciates the work of Allan Garcia and Infrastructure Tasmania. That record of achievement has to be acknowledged -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - It should not be ridiculed or mocked in the way it has just been. I am aware that the Labor Opposition wants to abolish Infrastructure Tasmania, just as they said they would do with the Office of the Coordinator-General before they backflipped on that. It is highly regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition who, when she is rather desperate and her own leadership position is under threat, resorts to these personal kinds of approaches in her questions.

I appreciate Mr Garcia's contribution. I thank him for his work. He is retired. He should be acknowledged and thanked by all members of this House for the great work he has done in helping the Government in ensuring that the Government is well-advised and assisting the Government, for example, in the work we have been leading with the infrastructure pipeline, the Bridgewater bridge and the Tamar River Action Plan. He has been an exceptional public servant and we appreciate it.

Since his retirement and resignation, the Deputy Secretary of the Department of State Growth, Gary Swain, is acting in the role. He is doing an excellent job in the role while we recruit to the position.

Today the Labor Party has shown what an ignorant farce it has become. In the first instance they are ignoring government infrastructure investments that are building our economy and employing hardworking Tasmanian people. As you sit there mocking and ridiculing, men and women in the Tasmanian community at this moment are building that infrastructure and they are putting food on their families' tables. They are part of the 21 000 strong people who have jobs under this Government. They were previously cast aside by the Labor Opposition when in government with the Greens.

In the question, the Leader of the Opposition brings up projects that the Labor Opposition does not even support. They cannot be taken seriously. The Government is investing \$3.6 billion in infrastructure. They do not support the redevelopment of the Royal Hobart Hospital. They told us we should go to the Cenotaph -

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - They are wounded again -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister has done it again. He has misled the House and misrepresented the Labor Party. I ask him to withdraw. It is not true that we do not support the redevelopment of the hospital. He should not mislead the House.

Mr FERGUSON - You cannot make me withdraw things that you do not like. It is your history.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. The good advice is that it is a debating point and not necessarily a point of offence. I ask the minister to resume his answer.

Mr FERGUSON - The Bridgewater bridge is an important project for our state. The Royal Hobart Hospital is a vital project for our state. The Premier has thoroughly answered those questions and far from the Opposition being helpful, they are being unhelpful.

It is this Government that has built that infrastructure; it was the previous government which failed to land even a single brick in that redevelopment. Other projects are on track. This should be supported. I note that the member who is not with us today, Dr Broad, the shadow minister for infrastructure, is asking questions about the ship loader replacement at Burnie, which the Labor Party does not support. Indeed, they are undermining that vital \$40 million project.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I draw your attention to the misleading of the House again by the minister for Infrastructure. I know he has had a tough time this summer but he should not take it out on parliament by misleading the House.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Please resume, minister. You have just gone over four minutes.

Mr FERGUSON - When under pressure, the Leader of the Opposition resorts to these kinds of tactics. The Government has a plan; it has a significant investment in infrastructure. Why are we doing it? We are doing it so we can continue the strong economic momentum that this state is enjoying. The Labor Party has criticised our Budget many times, but where is the alternative? It is time, David -

Time expired.

TABLED PAPER

Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Petrusma presented the report of the Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee 2019.

DOG CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 43)

Bill agreed to by the Legislative Council without amendment.

**JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENTS (CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY) BILL 2020
(No. 3)**

EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL 2020 (No. 4)

**CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT (SEXUAL ABUSE TERMINOLOGY) BILL 2020
(No. 5)**

First Reading

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

MOTION

Attendance of Legislative Council Minister at Question Time

[11.36 a.m.]

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

That whereas Standing Order 50 of the House of Assembly provides as follows:-

"When Members of the Legislative Council are commissioned as Ministers of the Crown:-

- (1) The House may seek the attendance of Members of the Legislative Council who are Ministers of the Crown by separate message requesting that leave be given to those Ministers to attend the Assembly so as to respond specifically to Questions without Notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.
- (2) The Standing Orders and practices of the House of Assembly have application, with qualification in relation to the requirement for any punishment for offences which constitute a contempt of the Assembly, committed by a Member of the Legislative Council, be not enforced until concurred with by the Legislative Council.
- (3) The Speaker shall have sufficient authority over a Member of the Legislative Council participating in Question Time so as to retain control of proceedings and maintain the decorum of the House.
- (4) A Member of the Legislative Council attending in the Assembly be not eligible to vote, be counted for the purpose of a quorum, attempt to make any motion or act in a way to initiate any business whatsoever.
- (5) A Member of the Legislative Council attending the Assembly be not subject to Questions beyond the time of 10.50 a.m. on any sitting day on which sittings of the Legislative Council are to commence.

The House of Assembly accordingly, requests that the Legislative Council give leave for any Member of the Legislative Council who is a Minister of the Crown to attend the Assembly so as to respond specifically to Questions without Notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly."

The motion is quite long but the substantial part is that the House of Assembly requests that the Legislative Council gives leave for any member of the Legislative Council who is a minister of the Crown to attend the Assembly so as to respond specifically to questions without notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

If we agree, as I ask the House to agree, we would provide a message to the Legislative Council asking them to agree to that leave being provided so that Ms Howlett, our newly sworn Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Racing, would be able to attend question time in the way that has been the form of our House now for some years. I commend the motion.

[11.37 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I accept that Mr Ferguson has circulated this motion and based on my reading of it we have no issue with it. I have not been able, given the time, to compare it to previous motions moved to allow upper House members to answer questions but on the basis of its consistence with previous custom and practice we would support the motion.

[11.37 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, because this practice has been in place in the House of Assembly before, obviously we will not be opposing the motion. However, it raises the spectre of the elephant in this room, which is restoration of the numbers. We are now having to draw again, because of the shallowness of the talent pool in this whole place, on the upper House to fill the ministry and the Cabinet.

Anyone who pays attention to Tasmanian politics and who happened to read the report of the restoration inquiry and hear from leaders from across the political spectrum - Robin Gray, Michael Polley, Peg Putt, respected academics such Peter Boyce OA and Richard Herr - know that all have said it is highly undesirable for a healthy functioning democracy and a good Westminster parliament for the executive, that is the ministers, to so heavily outweigh the backbench. As the new Premier was reading out the members of Cabinet this morning, I did not count a single minister, bar Ms Howlett, who had less than four portfolios. Indeed, I think the Attorney-General has six portfolios which, given that she is the only minister in the south of the state, it is a very heavy burden to bear.

I know there has been a tacit agreement between the Liberal and Labor parties that they will not be supporting restoration of the House of Assembly. I understand that, but we will bring the bill on for debate. I also know it comes from a lack of courage. That is fundamentally what we are dealing with here because the evidence that came before the restoration committee was overwhelming that this parliament is dysfunctional because of its size. We are not having proper accountability and transparency in this place because we have a diminished backbench and a diminished parliament.

We heard evidence that Tasmania's representative democracy, that is this parliament's capacity to represent the members who put us here, is severely diminished as a result of the decision to cut the numbers.

Here we are allowing a member of the upper House into this place because it is apparent that neither the Premier nor the Leader of the Opposition are prepared to work constructively, as the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has requested that we do, in order to restore Tasmania's parliament and restore democracy.

For people who run the cheap line that we already have enough politicians, which we have heard from members from both the Liberal and Labor parties in this debate, I remind members who probably will not bother to read the restoration report because they have already made up their minds, that when responsible government was established in Tasmania in 1856 there were 65 000 people in Tasmania and yet we had 30 members in the House of Assembly. Here we are in 2020 with a population of 530 000 and only 25 members. Tasmanians are now more poorly governed and represented than they have been at any time since responsible government was established in Tasmania in 1856.

If your heart was in democracy and its foundations and if as an elected member you came to treasure or value the Westminster system above your own cynical political self-interest you would back restoration of the numbers in this place.

From right across the political spectrum, from industry to the community sector, the arguments were made. They will stand but there is a lack of courage in this place and blatant self-interest from a government that does not want to have to restore the numbers for some reason I am not sure of and Labor, who thinks that its margin of loss at the next election will be wider if the numbers are restored. That is where democracy is at in Tasmania. It is a damning indictment on this Premier and his predecessor that they were not prepared to put Tasmania's democracy first over their own cynical political self-interest.

We will tolerate Ms Howlett being in here during question time but every day that she is in here will be a reminder to this House that one day this parliament will have to have the courage to restore the numbers. Maybe my colleagues in here in this term are not brave enough to do it. However, the point will come when it is unstoppable because the dysfunction that is caused by the diminished parliament becomes so manifest and impacts so negatively on the lives of Tasmanians that Tasmanians themselves will be calling for better representation and restoration of the numbers.

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Deputy Speaker, this has nothing to do with the numbers of the House. It has nothing at all to do with that.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, it has. If you had a bigger talent pool you would not be looking out of the -

Mr FERGUSON - It has nothing to do with that.

Ms O'Connor - Oh, it has to do with Ms Howlett's vote for Mr Gutwein in the ballot.

Mr FERGUSON - What it has to do with -

Ms O'Connor - Oh, I see; thanks for your clarity.

Mr FERGUSON - This is actually serious. The Government wants to ensure that all ministers are available for question time so the mutterings and the false claims can just be set aside.

Ms O'Connor - What sort of false claim? Ms Howlett was given a ministry because she voted for Mr Gutwein.

Mr FERGUSON - They can just be set aside. They are nothing to do with numbers of the House and for the benefit of each of the two previous speakers, our Standing Orders were amended in the last parliament specifically to provide for what we are doing here.

It is a simple matter and it was non-controversial. It was agreed and it was led through the Standing Orders Committee under the former speaker, Ms Archer. It is a simple fact.

To Mr O'Byrne's point, he is asking if it is consistent. It is. At least it is consistent in that we hardwired this in the Standing Orders in the last parliament so that it would no longer be a concern or a sessional order. In the last parliament this very provision was used for -

Ms O'Connor - The last parliament also had 25 members so the talent pool is shallow.

Mr FERGUSON - In the last parliament these were the Standing Orders that were used to allow the late Vanessa Goodwin as minister and attorney-general to attend the House of Assembly and it is a good model that works. The only thing it relies upon is for the Legislative Council to provide that member of their Legislative Council, Ms Howlett, with leave to be able to attend this House because of the system of the Houses and the fact that it will be our House rules that will govern the conduct of Ms Howlett whilst she is here.

People should not be doing this. This is not right. You should not be doing that. It is a simple fact. It is a straightforward motion. It should not be controversial. If you do wish to ask questions of those ministries this is how you get to do that.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Leave to Table a Paper - Motion, by leave, Withdrawn

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I have circulated a copy but I seek the leave of the House to table our referral to the Integrity Commission on the matter of the WorkSafe Tasmania Prohibition Notice on the Bob Brown Foundation.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I will keep my remarks brief. In principle the Government does not have a big difficulty with documents being tabled in this House. On this occasion we do potentially have that difficulty. It is not as if it is secret. It is not as if it is secret that the member for Clark has made a complaint to the Integrity Commission because she has already told the world she has done that and I do not have the knowledge as to whether this particular document has been released publicly. I do not know. If the member has already circulated it, it begs the question why she feels she needs to bring it before the House for it to attach privilege to it?

On behalf of the Government, we are not prepared at this moment to accept this should be tabled as a parliamentary paper. I want to take advice on this from the Clerk and also potentially

from the recipient of this letter, Mr Gregory Melick SC, the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission. It seems appropriate to me that before the Government agrees that Ms O'Connor, who has already released this document publicly, should also have it brought before the House, I want to take that advice. I invite other members who might be being asked to form a view on this to be prepared to await that advice as well. They might like to seek their own advice from those individuals and take their own view.

It is most unfortunate and improper for members of parliament to be using the Integrity Commission as a political weapon. It is not the first time it has happened -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, I take grave offence to that accusation. We are not using the Integrity Commission as a political weapon. We are using it for what it was established for and that is to uphold the highest ethical standards in the parliament and amongst representatives of this parliament. We rarely make referrals to the Integrity Commission.

Madam SPEAKER - I hear you. I ask the minister to withdraw it.

Ms O'Connor - No, that is not the way it works.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr FERGUSON - I am not sure what I would be withdrawing, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - She has taken offence that you have made an accusation, so could you just apologise?

Mr FERGUSON - I am sorry for the words that I chose to use.

Ms O'Connor - We are utilising the Integrity Commission -

Madam SPEAKER - You have an apology, Ms O'Connor. Please proceed.

Mr FERGUSON - I am doing my best to accommodate that as well as making an important point. This cannot be lost on members and if it offends you then have a look in the mirror.

Ms O'Connor - Do not deflect from the utter base corruption of process at the heart of this.

Mr FERGUSON - If you care to listen. As stated by the Chief Commissioner and the CEO of the Integrity Commission itself, in the 2017-18 annual report they had this to say -

Ms O'Connor - That is irrelevant to this referral.

Mr FERGUSON - I know you do not want to hear it but it is important. They said:

Less positively we saw some occasions when the making of a complaint to us became the subject of political comment.

Indeed, there were occasions on which a public commitment was made to refer a matter to us but nothing eventuated.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - If you would just listen to these people -

It is of great concern that public statements have been made by Members of Parliament about possible or actual complaints to the Integrity Commission.

On that basis, the Government feels that some care is needed here. Given that it has been publicly released, I suggest that it is prudent to allow the House to take that advice before agreeing to this particular document being tabled in this instance.

Apparently you are telling me that it has already been released publicly. It does beg the question why you would now seek to have privilege attached to this document.

Ms O'Connor - Because it should be on the table. It should be a formal record.

Madam SPEAKER - Through the Speaker, please.

[11.51 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, it is ironic that the Government is seeking to quote the Integrity Commission on a plea to the community for not weaponising that commission when they were in fact a part of the campaign to weaponise the commission. I can vouch for it because I was a victim of it. A matter related to me was referred to Tasmania Police and to the Integrity Commission, which went nowhere. It was in the context of when I renominated for the Labor Party preselection for selection for Franklin. The Liberal Party, and the member who has just resumed his seat, were a part of that in this House.

The hypocrisy on that side is galling, in coming here and running a defence on something that smells. Your conduct in this behaviour and this matter in relation to the actions of WorkSafe Tasmania absolutely smells. To quote the Integrity Commission's report to say, 'Please, do not weaponise; we have done it, but please don't anyone else weaponise it'. It is gross hypocrisy. Whilst we accept the position of the Integrity Commission, those without sin on that side of the House should cast the first stone, dare I say?

In relation to the tabling of this document: as a matter of course, we would like things to be placed on the public record. We think transparency is important and that this House deals with these matters appropriately, and that there is no question or no debate about documentation being put in the public domain, or even on the public record.

Given the comments made by Mr Ferguson that he would like to seek advice either, I am assuming, from the Integrity Commission or from the Clerk, or others, if he is doing that on the basis that he wants to ensure that the matter is dealt with appropriately, we take that at face value. The last thing we want to do is to take some action, or be involved in some step that would cause harm to a proper and rightful investigation into this serious matter.

On that basis, our view would be to allow you appropriate time - and we believe 24 hours is an appropriate amount of time - to seek advice and to ensure that the action that we take does not put into jeopardy a fair and appropriate investigation into this matter.

If the advice is strong and we accept the advice that it would injure the process the Integrity Commission would undertake, then we will not agree with it being tabled. If there is no such advice, if the advice does not cause an issue with the tabling of this document, then we would foreshadow that we would support it in a motion.

Let us be very clear about what issue is at stake here. There are two parties that want to have a war. They want to put families' jobs and forestry markets on the line. They want to create division in our community. There are two parties that want to do that - the Liberal Party and the Greens. For both of their base political reasons, and their motivations, they want to have another forestry war. The minister, Mr Barnett, is salivating at the prospect of a fight with the Greens about forestry. We have the Greens looking for, wanting a crusade, and trying to recreate the forestry wars.

Only one party in this House took the steps, did the hard yards, to try to resolve the forestry issue for the sake of the regional communities in Tasmania, for the sake of the thousands of jobs that rely on a sustainable forestry industry with sustainable markets. Only two parties want to create a war: the Liberal Party and the Greens. The Labor Party's only interest is in resolving the battle and securing the markets for the forestry industry, the thousands of jobs that rely -

Madam SPEAKER - I caution you not to get into debate.

Mr O'BYRNE - On the basis of the contribution by the member who has resumed his seat, that he would seek advice as to the appropriateness of the tabling of this document, we think that an appropriate amount of time should be allowed to seek that advice. We ask the Leader of Government Business to inform us of his investigations in this matter. If there is no advice which causes issue with this tabling, the document should be tabled. Perhaps tomorrow is the most appropriate time. On the basis of that, we support the Government in the extension of time allowed to further investigate this matter.

[11.56 a.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I note that I have only now been handed a copy of this letter. I have not seen it before. It runs to some seven pages. It appears to be a complaint directed to the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission, Mr Melick.

I find myself in a strange position of being in agreement with the Labor Party, which is always an unusual and fun place to be. There is a potential issue with due process. To enable the fundamental principle of our legal system to unfold appropriately and properly, that advice should be taken as to what effect the tabling of a complaint, before a complaint has actually been considered by the Integrity Commission in this House, would have on that process.

I too lend my support to the view that advice should be taken from the appropriate legal sources. Given that it appears as the letter has been made publicly available - at least I hear that in this House although I have not seen it - that the horse has bolted, so to speak, as far as the question of prejudice goes. That is my view that I have had to form on the fly in this House.

I also would like us to be very careful and to take the legal advice to make sure that whatever the next steps taken in this place are careful, appropriate and fair.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. Ms O'Connor, I have to advise you that you can withdraw the motion and resubmit it tomorrow.

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not know what the forum is for doing it, but having declared an intent to seek leave to have it tabled, now we have 24 hours for advice, I would rather leave it open. But I will be guided by the advice you are given.

Madam SPEAKER - It is advisable that you withdraw the motion and re-present it tomorrow.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, I will do that. I look forward to seeing the advice that the Leader of Government Business obtains.

Madam Speaker, I withdraw my motion.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I want to speak very briefly, on indulgence, to add to the record.

The Government will be taking advice from the Clerk and potentially the recipient of the letter, the Chief Commissioner. I advise other members to do likewise and form their own views. I do not want to carry the responsibility of providing guidance to the other parties. I simply wish that each member of this House to be informed. A period of 24 hours is reasonable but I cannot commit other people to providing advice in that time. The House can resolve its own way forward tomorrow or another day. The Government will be seeking advice immediately.

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, on indulgence, are we able to seek advice from the Chair of the Integrity Commission?

Mr Ferguson - If we can help, we will help you.

Ms O'Byrne - If we get a letter about not necessarily being able to get information -

Mr Ferguson - I appreciate that.

Ms O'Connor - It cannot be that complicated. Ask them if it is appropriate that it is tabled.

Mr Ferguson - I am simply saying that each member should be informed as to what this means. I will do my best to share if I am able to do so.

Ms O'Byrne - We are not allowed to speak. Your Premier has written to us saying that we cannot be guaranteed information from statutory officers anymore.

Mr Ferguson - I cannot compel somebody else to provide advice.

Ms O'Byrne - No, this is to do with your Premier's ruling and the letter we received from the Premier's office.

Madam SPEAKER - Okay, hopefully there will be goodwill on this issue on both issues.

Motion withdrawn.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Family Violence

[12.01 p.m.]

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

That the House take note of the following matter: family violence.

I will make it very clear that the reason I brought this matter on today is to desperately, urgently and with great passion and intent, call on the Government to appropriately fund the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service.

I appreciate that the Premier is new to his role of Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence so I will outline the role that they play. The Family Violence Counselling and Support Service is quite different from other service providers in this space. It operates quite differently from other service providers, so when we have had commentary before about the range of providers it does not pick up the specific work they do.

They are a service that is not provided by any other of the non-government bodies or any other providers in the area. They provide a fast, appropriate and timely response to incidents so when an incident occurs they are the ones who have to step in. They are first responders. Every time they start work each day they go to the police reports and are able to respond to them. Other service providers do not have access to that information. They are the only ones who do what they do and they do so because they are highly specialist staff. They then respond. They also do cold calls. That is part of their work and their expertise. They advise, support and wrap services around those people so that they are able to take the necessary steps to keep themselves safe and, importantly, keep their families safe. As we have seen in the recent weeks, that is a significant issue.

It is important to understand that the Safe at Home program Labor established that has been absolutely endorsed by the incoming government is evidence based for the need for highly qualified staff and that is compromised if the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service does not have the capacity to respond by refusing to acknowledge the ever -increasing demand upon their service.

It is a significant service because of the way it fits in our entire government response to family violence, and we urge desperately that this new Premier do what the former premier failed to do and fund them properly.

I do not think it would be possible to make this contribution without referring to the very tragic events at Camp Hill. The violent killing of Hannah Clarke and her three children, Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey, is a terrible reminder to us all that family violence and violence against women is a national emergency that this country continues to face. It is a national emergency because it was not just Hannah and her children. It is a national emergency because she is one of nine women who has died so far this year. It is a national emergency because at least 61 women died last year. That is more than one a week. We regularly hear that a woman a week dies but is more than one a week and it is unacceptable. What is really devastating is the fatigue that people are feeling because they hear these stories again and again and yet we do not see an end.

Our emergency response, our first response, is crucial in ensuring that we can provide safety. If we say to women, 'You must leave and we will help you leave', then we need to have the services in place, and we know that this particular service - and I will go to some of the data in a moment - is not meeting the demand because of the underfunding. We know that our other service providers in the non-government sector are not able to meet demand. We know there is a waiting list. All of us have spoken to women in our constituencies who are trying to get into shelters and are told they have to wait. There is not a member of parliament who would not have had those calls and it is unacceptable and frightening.

Look at the comparison in the responses. I will not reflect on the bill tabled today but we saw in New South Wales the response to the one-punch legislation after a particularly horrific incident. We saw how quickly a government could respond and act when there were some needles found in strawberries. We had a national crisis. We had new laws. We had a taskforce team -

Ms O'Connor - What about those gender-neutral toilets? They rushed into work on a Sunday afternoon to resolve that crisis.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, how very quickly we can resolve some things. I know that the joke has been made a few times but if as many people died from shark attack as die from violence in their home by people they should trust, we would have drained the oceans. It is completely unacceptable.

Our Watch, an organisation this Government has partnered with, is doing some phenomenally important work in the way we change society and the way we change culture. It has said that in order to prevent violence against women, we need a shared, consistent and mutually reinforcing approach where all levels of government contribute with business and community to create a safer Australia built on respect and equality.

They talk a lot about women being careful and aware but they also identify, as we all know, that most of these murders take place in the home. We often hear about women needing to be situationally aware and needing to protect themselves. Most of these murders take place in the home and they are often the final brutal act after a long history of violence. We know that in many of these cases women have reached out to service providers who are not always funded well enough to be able to meet that demand.

It is the tip of the iceberg for the thousands of people who are living with violence. One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. One in five Australian women experience sexual violence. It is a national emergency that needs our urgent attention. There is a compelling need for long-term, secure and ongoing funding across the entire violence against women sector and, Our Watch states, particularly our response and early intervention work. If we tell women to leave and we do not support them we are culpable in what happens to them.

I raised in this House a case of a woman who fled a violent relationship and was not able to find secure housing. I raised it directly with the minister and I raised it in this House. My greatest fear was that she would be forced to go back. She did go back, was assaulted, and he took the child - all those things we knew would happen if we did not provide her with the right support. She now has a house, but did she have to go back and get beaten in order to get it? It could have been worse because we know this violence escalates.

I want to touch quickly on the demand. We know that demand on this service has exponentially increased. In 2011-12 from the statewide adult program data, there were 4482 referrals which were met by 10.3 staff with an average case allocation of one per FTE. In 2017-18 there were 6126 referrals and of that 9.4 staff were dealing with 651. I urge the new minister again to please fund the additional \$1 million in the additional staff the service needs. Women demand it.

Time expired.

[12.07 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence) - Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her contribution. I acknowledge the very deep feelings people have in this House in ensuring we get better outcomes in this very important area. It was very clear from the member's contribution that this is a matter of resourcing she wants the Government to look at and in terms of the review of the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service that has been undertaken, those matters will be addressed through the budget process.

Ms O'Byrne - But not under an agenda of privatisation or outsourcing.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is something I have not considered at all. In fact, I think the member knows that in this House all members share the same desire to ensure that we can prevent family violence. This Government has invested \$50 million now over two action plans, and with the new action plan that was introduced as part of that total of \$50 million, an additional \$26 million when it was first introduced.

One of the reasons I took on this role was I know the previous premier had a very strong desire to see change in this area. It is not always women but in the main it is. I accept that and it is up to men like me who hold leadership positions to be very strong and firm in this position in ensuring we work with our communities and those institutions that we can to ensure we get better outcomes and, importantly, engender respect in family circumstances, in our workplaces, in our communities and that we all take those necessary steps that we can.

I noted the member raised the dreadful circumstances of Hannah Clarke. There would not have been a person in this country, I would hope, who would not have been saddened and horrified by what occurred to her and her children. That was something that all of us would have found hard to comprehend in the way that particularly callous, violent and disgraceful act was carried out. We have not been immune here in Tasmania in recent times. This Government will continue to take the necessary steps to ensure we can do what we can to ensure we do get the outcomes that we are looking for.

I know that the member who just spoke has a deep, strong and passionate view about what needs to be done in this space. As Premier, when looking at portfolio allocation I felt strongly and, importantly, that it was the absolute right thing to do that the leader of the Government should always hold the Prevention of Family Violence portfolio. That in itself sends a message of intent but importantly, we will do what we can. We will do more in this space.

Regarding the funding that has been requested, it will be considered through the budget process, as we look at all priority areas of government. I understand where the member is coming from. I understand that we do need to do more in this space. I want to make the point that as a government we have done more in this space but it still remains a terrible problem and we have to continue to do more.

[12.12 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, yesterday in Franklin Square women and men came from all over Tasmania to rally for International Women's Day. We heard from Her Excellency, the Governor, we heard from Jess Munday from Unions Tasmania, but we also heard from a woman called Nat who told her story of domestic and family violence. Hers was a story of a person who had been in a coercive, controlling relationship, who dictated what she should wear, who wanted to know where she was every moment of the day, who resented her relationships with family and friends, and who did not like it when she expressed a desire to go out to work. Of course, going out to work begins your journey to financial independence, which is a huge challenge for many women in abusive relationships. It reinforced with everyone, who stood in utter silence listening to Nat yesterday, that domestic and family violence comes in many forms.

The form of violence that Hannah Clarke and her beautiful children experienced before her ex-husband murdered them was a form of coercive, controlling family violence where this murderer, who was prepared to kill a woman he professed to love and his three children, sought to control what she wore. She was not allowed to wear shorts at the gym that they co-owned, controlled who she was able to see, would sulk for days on end if he felt that his power was being challenged in any way.

On 4 December last year, Hannah Clarke finally made a run for it. She went to her mum and dad's place, Suzanne and Lloyd Clarke, in Camp Hill, not far from where I grew up in Brisbane. She thought they were safe there, maybe. A domestic violence order was taken out on the murderer. Within quick succession, on three separate occasions that sequentially followed each other, he breached that order. When it became clear he was losing any control over the situation he kidnapped their daughter and took her interstate. It was at that point, from the reports that I have heard, that Hannah Clarke understood just how dangerous that man was.

There is a move on now to have laws at a national level, reforms so that those other forms of coercive violence, control of domestic violence, are captured within the legislation. Within our Family Violence Act 2004, we here in Tasmania have taken it close to that level of having a recognition that the violence women and children experience comes in many forms, not all of it physical.

It is my understanding that the Premier, as yet, has not made time to sit down with the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service. If I am incorrect in that statement, I am happy to stand corrected. That would be an important meeting for you to have, as the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, to sit down with the government agency that deals at the front line with people, women and children, who have been traumatised and their lives smashed up and they are trying to put them back together. The Family Violence Counselling and Support Service provides an essential service and it is disappointing that nearly two months into your premiership, you have not sat down with them.

I will make one more observation before I sit down. Violence comes in many forms. I heard what the Premier said before about how important it is that we condemn this violence. I urge the Premier to recognise that responsibility also applies to other acts of violence within our community.

It may have escaped your attention, Premier, that one of the peaceful protesters, at least, who was in that car in the Tarkine - that was around about 10 days ago - was Dr Lisa Searle, a well qualified GP, who is also defending the Tarkine. Not a word out of you Premier, or any one of your ministers, condemning that violence. If we are going to have a society that challenges and

condemns violence against women and children, you cannot have compartments of people you are prepared to speak up for. When those protesters were so violently attacked on public land in the Tarkine that they were in fear of their lives, as the Premier it was your responsibility to condemn that violence. But no, we did not hear a word from you. That is as good as dog whistling to those thugs, who are prepared to hurt peaceful protesters in our forests. That silence tacitly condoned that violence towards peaceful protesters on public land and you should be ashamed.

This is an issue on which the public, the people of Tasmania, want there to be as little politics as possible. I acknowledge your work, Madam Deputy Speaker, as the former minister for women who worked really hard to get tripartisanship on the issue of family violence prevention.

We need to have a very clear commitment from this new Premier, not only in words, not just in saying the right things in this place, but to sitting down with the specialists in the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, listening to women and children who have escaped and survived, and condemning violence wherever it happens in our community.

Time expired.

[12.19 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I also acknowledge the tragedies of Hannah Clarke and her children to devastating family violence and the recent tragedies here in Tasmania. Eliminating family and sexual violence remains a top priority for our Government. I ask all people to respect others. We all do. Violence is not the answer, as everyone in this House would agree.

I acknowledge the work of the previous Premier, Will Hodgman MP, for elevating this issue to where it is today, an outstanding legacy of his leadership. I also thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your work. I thank the Premier, Mr Gutwein, for continuing this important issue and bringing his focus, interest and drive to see better outcomes to this issue.

This debate goes to the heart of us delivering on a key element of our strong long-term plan, long-term secure funding in the protection of those vulnerable and in the prevention of family violence.

I turn to action plan 2. This Government is investing an additional \$26 million over three years for 40 actions to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence in Tasmania. Safe Homes, Families, Communities outlines a vision for our state where all Tasmanians are safe, equal and respected, and our homes, families and communities are free from all forms of family and sexual violence. It is the next stage of our Government's long-term commitment to preventing and responding to family violence and our new responses to sexual violence.

Actions under the plan address three priority areas: primary prevention and early intervention, response and recovery, and service system enhancement. The new and ongoing actions and recommendations were identified through a comprehensive system review undertaken during 2018-19. Good progress has been made to implement new actions since the launch of the plan on 1 July 2019.

Some of the key areas of activity have included increased investment in primary prevention, including establishment of a national partnership which will see a new Our Watch primary prevention officer here in Tasmania. Recruitment of the primary prevention officer is underway.

Seventeen mobile phone data extraction devices have been issued to police districts for use by Tasmania Police, in response to technology-facilitated abuse. We are working with the eSafety Commissioner to deliver education and training in response to technology-facilitated abuse. Three workshops will be held in early March 2020 in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart, following delivery of the first three workshops in July 2019.

A new family and sexual violence website is under construction to provide clear, targeted information to Tasmanians seeking support. A public consultation paper was also released to begin the process of delivering a new counselling service for children and young people who exhibit harmful sexual behaviour. My Government will continue to work with key stakeholders and the community to implement Safe Homes, Families, Communities.

Implementation of actions is progressing in accordance with the critical milestones. We will continue to take a flexible and responsible approach by monitoring implementation of each action and undertaking ongoing evaluation to inform future delivery. Safe Homes, Families, Communities is a living document and will be refined and updated over time, so actions continue to be based on current evidence and best practice.

Unfortunately, family violence is a major cause of homelessness in Australia. Domestic and family violence is the main reason women and children leave their homes in Australia. In fact, 42 per cent of clients accessing specialist homelessness services have experienced family violence. Nationally, over 50 per cent of women who permanently left a previous violent partner report that they, not their partner, moved out of the home they shared.

We know that women who are forced to leave their homes due to family violence can have trouble securing long-term accommodation, and that women leaving a violent relationship may experience housing stress, even if they stay in their own home. We also know that many victim survivors return to violent partners due to housing insecurity. That is why we are investing in crisis accommodation through the Affordable Housing Action Plan. This includes expanding Magnolia House in Launceston to increase support for women to move out of crisis and into stable accommodation, providing short-term accommodation for young people in the north, new homeless accommodation for men with and without accompanying children and homeless youth accommodation in the north-west.

We are also delivering the Rapid Rehousing program for people experiencing family violence and as at 30 January 2019 there was a portfolio of 53 family violence rapid rehousing properties in the program. We have also expanded the capacity of the Hobart Women's Shelter and are progressing an additional 10 prefabricated units on this site, with planning approval recently granted by the Hobart City Council.

We are also delivering the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program which is funded by the Australian Government.

Time expired.

[12.26 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Madam Deputy Speaker, without a doubt family violence is the single biggest community safety law and order issue in Tasmania. Family violence is a high priority of community safety for every community I have worked with. Every single community has raised it.

It is the main cause of homelessness for women and sadly, when they present at services there is often nowhere to accommodate these women and their children.

Older women are particularly at risk. Women over 50 leaving family violence situations often have nowhere to go and cannot even afford the most basic of accommodation. The shelters are overflowing when urgent accommodation is needed. There are not many options. Hotels and motels do not want to accept clients from service providers, so women inevitably go back, unsupported and unprotected just to have a roof over their head and a bed for the children to sleep in, because they are at risk when they are homeless and even a violent home can often seem safer.

Children are massively impacted by family violence. They are traumatised and it often leaves long-term scars. In just one long weekend in November 2019, 120 children witnessed family violence, and it is unlikely they will get the support they need to recover because of the lack of funding to services and the lack of capacity of the service to meet the need.

Children who are referred to a community service organisation through the Strong Families, Safe Kids advice line often do not have adequately assessed referrals. This means that strength-based assessments, while they are all well and good, have failed to identify the risks to children from family violence and therefore their needs are not being met in that area.

Family violence is more than arguments. It is coercion, it is abuse, it is exclusion, it is isolation, but it is also strong physical violence, and we often talk about that without really thinking about what that means and what the ongoing costs are to us as a society. For the individual there are often long-term injuries. As well as psychological injuries such as PTSD, there are long-term injuries from serious assaults and some of these can be ongoing for years.

The best hope women have of getting out and recovering is to have support at their most volatile time and that is when they are leaving, because we know that the time people leave is the most dangerous time for them and their children.

If the Government will not adequately fund the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, what becomes of these women and children? No other service can respond in crisis. While there are other community service organisations that provide secondary support, the primary and crisis support can only be provided by the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service.

What is needed is well-funded, well-designed and resourced programs that have consistent funding over the long term. That is why the Government needs to resource the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service to support women to leave violent situations to fund emergency housing so that there is somewhere for women to go and to ensure orders are enforced. This is a collaborate issue. Many orders are not enforced in a timely manner so if someone has a family violence order they do not necessarily get an immediate response from the police. That process is much smoother and quicker if they are a client of the family violence support service.

It is intriguing that the Premier can find \$600 000 for a consultant to save money on a bridge but cannot find the \$1 million urgently needed to keep women and children safe - \$1 million would make all the difference to the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service. Since the development of this service in 2005 and its original staffing formula there has been no increase in staffing to address the rising rates of reported family violence incidents within the community. Effectively, there are many more clients and not many more staff. There are fewer staff than there

was a few years ago. Where is the compassion in that? Where is the compassion with this matter of urgency?

We are at crisis point. It is only a matter of time without the right support until we hear of more deaths in Tasmania. We are in the grip of a national emergency. Tasmania does not have the capacity to meet the demand for family violence services. This needs an urgent response. While it is all well and good to have plans for the future - and yes, they are necessary - something needs to be done right now.

I have here a note from the northern family violence -

[The Family Violence and Counselling Service] North is unable to offer the medium to long term counselling component that has in the past been a key component of the service. This devalues the support that FVCSS are able to offer to clients and devalues the skills that workers have honed over many years.

The current staffing level reduces the scope of service delivery and support offered to victims in regional and remote locations.

Engender Equality refer to FVCSS for support in relation to current presenting family violence matters.

Other organisations also refer to this -

The lack of recognition of the impact of low staffing levels on service delivery and worker wellbeing is evident to all staff.

The total lack of recognition of the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service in the Tasmanian Government's Safe Homes Families Communities Action Plan 2019-2022 highlights the total lack of regard for the service despite the Adult Program ...

Time expired.

[12.33 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I noted with comfort and interest the Premier's response to an interjection from the member for Bass that he ruled out privatisation or outsourcing of the family violence support service. I seek to confirm that commitment on the record and, further, to seek an assurance from the Premier that the review would be conducted in consultation with existing frontline staff. The reason it was comforting to hear that privatisation or outsourcing has been ruled out by the Premier is because of the current demand on the service and the inability of the short-staffed nature of the service to meet current or future demand.

We heard about many of the cases that have been experienced in recent years and months, and I want to explain some of the statistics that we have heard. They are of course the only dedicated family violence support service. They are staffed to take over 1800 referrals a year. In a 12-month period they had 6484 referrals. Each of the family violence first responders, in effect, had a case load of 600 each which is a phenomenal workload.

Over the northern long weekend in November 2019 there were 67 reported family violence incidents. A total of 120 of those were witnessed by children, three involved pregnant women, five involved strangulation and there was a sexual assault. One woman was knocked unconscious. There were forced entries, including physical assault, theft and damage, property damage, including a car set on fire, and numerous uses of technology to threaten a victim or survivor.

That is a phenomenal workload that this small office is required to undertake each year. For that reason, I seek to clarify that commitment from the Premier that there are no plans to privatise or outsource that service.

Matter noted.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Honourable members, I acknowledge the presence of Mayor Kerry Vincent. Welcome to Chamber.

From the great electorate of Franklin, I welcome another class of grade 9 students from St James Catholic College. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

COVID-19 Outbreak

[12.36 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Deputy Speaker, this year has begun by reinforcing to Australia and Tasmania that global issues have local impacts. From climate change to coronavirus, or COVID-19 as it is called, we are experiencing how inter-connected we all are. As of yesterday, we have our first confirmed case of coronavirus in Tasmania. There are now more than 3000 people who have died around the world as a result of coronavirus. We are all aware that, sadly, now there has been an Australian death. Our hearts go out to this Australian family and to our global neighbours and all the families who have lost their loved ones.

The coronavirus outbreak has challenged us internationally and nationally in health, education, travel and trade. In times of challenge, as we have seen in drought, in fire and in flood, Australians and Tasmanians, come together. We support each other. We act early and we act together.

I will update the House on the steps we have taken and the next steps we will take.

From 1 February I established an interdepartmental committee comprising all heads of agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to the coronavirus across all areas of the Tasmanian Government. We have now set up the State Emergency Management Committee, SEMC, to lead the coordination of the coronavirus response in Tasmania in line with the Commonwealth Government's escalation of its emergency response plan for COVID-19.

I advise that the Cabinet sitting as the Ministerial Committee for Emergency Management, the MCEM, received a full briefing yesterday on the situation from the State Incident Controller and the Director of Public Health, Dr Mark Veitch, the Secretary of the Department of Health, the lead agency for our response, Kathrine Morgan-Wicks, the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tony Lawler, and the State Emergency Management Committee Chair, Police Commissioner, Darren Hine. In addition to the initial coronavirus briefings offered by the Department of Health to all parliamentarians in early February, I have asked that another briefing is offered to all parliamentarians this week.

With the activation of the SEMC and the MCEM, we are ensuring that a whole-of-government approach for our Tasmanian community is delivered. We have been proactive and we are prepared for the impact of the coronavirus in Tasmania. There have been 33 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia, including the one in Tasmania, as well as 10 further cases that were infected on the *Diamond Princess*. Of these cases, 15 are reported to have recovered with the remaining cases reportedly in stable conditions. The Australian Government assisted 170 people on the *Diamond Princess* to depart Japan on 20 February 2020. I am advised that the four Tasmanians on the *Diamond Princess* all tested negative prior to departure and are quarantined at the Howard Springs Accommodation Village.

In Tasmania, 49 tests have been completed on 47 individuals. The Director of Public Health yesterday confirmed our first positive case of coronavirus in Tasmania. I am advised this is a 40-year-old man who arrived in Tasmania on Saturday from Iran, having left that country before the travel ban was instigated. He was experiencing mild symptoms and contacted the Public Health hotline and testing was arranged, with confirmation from those tests received yesterday. The man had been in self-quarantine but has now been transferred to the Launceston General Hospital where he will be clinically managed and supported as appropriate.

The flight into Launceston has been identified and Public Health Services are in the process of contacting all passengers on the flight as part of the response to the positive case. Any other close contacts are being identified and being asked to remain in self-quarantine for 14 days.

It is critically important to stress that despite the confirmation of a positive case in the state, Tasmanians remain at low risk of coronavirus. Australia is not immune to the impact of coronavirus but there is no country better prepared for a health challenge like this. Our health officials are meeting daily and working with their interstate and national counterparts to monitor this preparation to be able to respond flexibly to whatever challenges this virus brings us.

The Tasmanian Department of Health has a well-established incident management team, or IMT, led by the public health services with membership across the Department of Health, including the Tasmanian Health Service, Primary Health Tasmania and other health agencies. In particular, I acknowledge the Director of Public Health, Dr Mark Veitch, and his team for their work. It is important to note that all Tasmanians can be confident in our state's health authorities taking the threat of coronavirus extremely seriously and we are very well positioned and prepared to respond to the challenge.

Our health system responds to infectious disease outbreaks regularly, including each year when Tasmania experiences the winter influenza season. The Department of Health produces a winter plan which ensures Tasmania is best prepared for winter illnesses. This plan is designed to ensure our health agencies continue to have the necessary coordination and capacity to deliver health care

in the event of a high demand influenza season and focuses on minimising infection risks and ensuring we maximise system capacity to care for those at higher risk.

To tackle influenza each year we have strongly supported vaccination programs and the results from this approach speak for themselves. In both 2018 and 2019 Tasmania had the highest overall influenza vaccination rates of any state, estimated at 30 per cent of the population, with amongst the highest coverage for people over 65 years of age. The vaccine for the 2020 southern hemisphere influenza season is expected to be available in April 2020, which is considered the appropriate month to being those vaccinations. We will again be encouraging Tasmanians to get vaccinated and ensure we maximise coverage against influenza in our community and maximise the capacity of our health system for those who need it most.

During an influenza outbreak our public health officials and staff across our health system, including private hospitals, primary care settings and ambulance, work closely together to ensure a well-coordinated response. For coronavirus we are again well prepared and these dedicated staff and care providers are working in accordance with our protocols to meet this challenge.

Significant work has been undertaken by the department and the THS to prepare the health system to manage the outbreak and ensure we continue to be well prepared. We are working to identify locations, staffing and resourcing for dedicated respiratory clinics to provide capacity to assess patients and collect samples in locations that allow us to minimise the risk of infection within the community. We are also examining our public hospital capacity and how we can best and most safely accommodate those patients requiring acute care and are working closely with private hospitals to explore options for additional capacity if it is needed. The Government will also be working closely with community sector organisations and their staff, who every day are in contact with a broad cross-section of Tasmanians.

The impacts of coronavirus are felt across a number of agencies, which is why my department has been coordinating a whole-of-government response. Health, education, tourism and trade agencies have been working together to minimise and manage the impacts of coronavirus on Tasmania. This includes our decision to stand up the State Emergency Management Committee, the SEMC, from 2 March to ensure Tasmania continues to be well prepared and we continue to keep our communities safe.

Last year, China and Hong Kong accounted for 37.5 per cent of Tasmania's total exports and over 30 per cent of the state's agriculture and seafood exports. We know that this industry and the people that work in it have been particularly impacted. We have put measures in place to help by enabling fishing quotas to be rolled over into next year, allowing fees and levies to be paid by instalment or deferred, and allowing direct sales. We have established a phone line for all impacted Tasmanian businesses - 1800 440 026. The Prime Minister and the Treasurer are working on assistance measures to give some relief to business affected by COVID-19 and we will work together with our Commonwealth colleagues to ensure Tasmanian businesses are supported.

The health and safety of Tasmanian students and staff is paramount. Around 30 per cent of Tasmania's international students are from China. Both the University of Tasmania and TasTAFE have been in contact with students and many who have been unable to return to Tasmania to study have been set up with online courses and financial assistance.

The Department of Education is working closely with the public health service to support our schools and students. All overseas travel for government school trips, unless it is to the USA,

Canada or New Zealand, has been banned until 30 June. School trips planned for after 30 June for all destinations except China and South Korea can continue to be progressed, but further postponement and/or cancellation may be necessary, depending on advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Government's Department of Health. I am advised the Catholic education system has applied the same overseas school trip ban as the government and the independent sector is currently considering a similar ban.

No student enrolled in a Tasmanian government school is from Hubei Province or Wuhan City. I am advised there are 31 students who were due to return to or begin school this year who have been unable to leave China due to the Australian travel ban.

Challenges such as coronavirus can create concern in the community. In times like this it is important to ensure information is available to address these community concerns, especially amongst our youngest Tasmanians. Information has been provided to schools for students and parents, including advice about overseas travel for staff and students. Resources have been developed to assist teachers in responding to any concerns students may have in relation to the virus and to encourage good hygiene practice to prevent the spread of any flu-like illness.

Travel restrictions and border controls have impacted tourism across Australia. Chinese visitors make up only 3 per cent of total visitors to Tasmania, meaning that we will experience less of a market shock than the rest of Australia as a result of the ongoing travel restrictions.

Tasmania is looking to offset any decrease in international demand by increasing domestic demand. Tourism Tasmania has reviewed its program and diverted around \$2 million of existing funding to encourage people to holiday here this year. We have already seen a greater number of cruise ships due to coronavirus and are likely to see more. Importantly, Tasmanians can be assured that none of the additional calls added to the cruise schedule in Tasmania are international arrivals with Tasmania as the first point of call. The cruise line industry conducts strict pre-boarding screening and boarding restrictions.

In respect to cruise ships visiting Tasmania, very strict protocols have been introduced by the Australian Government for all ships arriving and operating in Australian waters and are being applied by TasPorts working with public health.

The Australian Department of Health has issued all cruise line companies with specific advice on how to manage any passengers who display symptoms of the virus or require treatment. Locally, the Tasmanian Department of Health has been in contact with TasPorts to provide advice on the management of arriving passengers and crew, with a particular focus on any who are unwell and whose circumstances may prompt consideration of coronavirus.

It is important to emphasise that despite the first positive case of coronavirus in Tasmania, the Government is well prepared, our health services are well resourced and we are taking all necessary steps to protect and support Tasmanians. As well as being careful, we must also be compassionate. Let us remember to be kind and considerate to our neighbours and our visitors. We are thinking of our friends in China and other impacted countries. We look forward to welcoming students and visitors back to Tasmania and to visiting China ourselves when the Commonwealth Government lifts its travel restrictions.

Tasmanians should be assured that we will continue to promptly identify cases of coronavirus infection and help prevent transmission within the community. We encourage Tasmanians to go

about their daily lives with confidence, knowing our health system is fully prepared to respond to this challenge.

MOTION

Note Statement - COVID-19 Outbreak

[12.48 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the ministerial statement be noted.

I thank the Premier for the update on COVID-19. It is a matter that has attracted the attention of nearly all Tasmanians. I echo the sentiments expressed by the ANU Vice-Chancellor, who said the virus does not discriminate and neither should we.

The coronavirus, or COVID-19, has now spread to every continent. The first death has been recorded in Australia and the first case has been recorded in Tasmania. This is a rapidly evolving situation and we have seen this week that Tasmania is not immune. Tasmanians should not be alarmed. As the Director of Public Health and the minister outlined yesterday, the risk to Tasmanians from coronavirus remains low. Tasmanians should also rest assured that the staff at the Department of Health will be doing all they can to contain the spread of the virus.

I take this opportunity to thank all the staff in our hospitals, GP clinics and other health facilities. I also thank the department staff who are working incredibly hard planning and preparing as we speak.

This is not a time for complacency. Tasmanians should seek medical advice if they have reason to believe they have become infected and should always follow the advice of medical professionals. While the virus is unlikely to be fatal for many people without underlying medical conditions, young people and those who are generally healthy can help prevent the virus from spreading. Preventing or slowing the spread makes it much easier for our health system to manage any increase in patients.

It is imperative in circumstances such as these, that the Government provides Tasmanians with up-to-date information and makes sure that Tasmanians know where to turn to for advice and reassures the public that it has a plan to manage any increase in the number of Tasmanian cases. It is understandable that there is a level of anxiety in the community. People need to be reassured and they need to know where to go for up-to-date information.

There are genuine questions in the community about the capacity of our hospitals and the wider health system to cope with an escalation of this situation, particularly as we head into another 'flu season. Our hospitals are already struggling with the ability to manage business as usual and the demands they are facing every single day. Tasmanians deserve to know what contingency plans the Government has in place to deliver effective health care at this time. For example, if dedicated clinics are to be established Tasmanians need to know where they will be, how they will be able to access them, who should be showing up at these clinics and what sort of medical treatment will be provided.

We should also prepare ourselves for the introduction of measures that seem unusual but make good sense under the circumstances. I understand that the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee will meet today to decide whether additional protection measures, such as bans on mass gatherings, should be introduced in Australia. How this situation will play out is not known. What we do know is that even though Tasmania has been relatively unaffected in terms of health, there has already been a damaging impact on some of our industries. Some of Tasmania's key industries are hurting as a result of the coronavirus. It has been estimated the Australian seafood industry will face a 12 per cent loss in revenue and, if realised, this would represent a hit of approximately \$130 million to the Tasmanian seafood industry.

International students studying in Tasmania come from all around the world, with 30 per cent of students from China. Tourism is already hurting, particularly for businesses whose clients are mostly from China. While visitor numbers from China might only number 40 000 or about 3 per cent of our annual visitation to Tasmania, they are high yielding visitors and their absence will be felt. More generally, growth forecast for China has been downgraded to 2 per cent since the outbreak of the virus.

Whilst the Government's first priority is rightly public health, it must also keep an eye on the potential economic consequences of coronavirus and if industries need support, that support should be provided.

I look forward to the Premier continuing to keep the people of Tasmania informed regarding coronavirus and the steps this Government is going to take to keep people safe.

[12.53 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I thank the Premier for updating the House and the people of Tasmania on this Government's response to the coronavirus which, as we know, is now a global pandemic. It is on every continent.

Since the first reports of the coronavirus came out of Wuhan and Hubei province in China, it has been quite difficult to have a full understanding of what this viral pneumonia disease is, what its mortality rates are, and its impact on people's lives. For anyone who is interested in the life of Chinese people, which I very much am, some of the images that have been coming out of China, particularly of Hubei province, are deeply confronting. The response to the initial outbreak was for the government of China to basically close off Hubei province. Wuhan on the Yangtze River is the capital. Hubei is a province that has about 55 million people living inside it. For anyone in this House who wants to have some understanding of the impact of that on the people in Hubei province, I highly recommend watching *Four Corners* from this past Monday night. It provided a really moving and deep insight into the impact of this virus on the lives of everyday people in China: the abject fear that people are experiencing, the lack of information, and the lack of certainty over the data that was being provided by government. All of this has become part of daily life for people, not now just in Hubei province, but all across China.

As we know, this virus has spread globally, and at its current rate of spread, and infection, it is a virus that replicates about every six to seven days. It doubles in the number of infections about every six to seven days. We are talking here about a highly infectious virus, and that makes the messages that are being promulgated by our health experts, in the Premier's statement, all the more important; the basic hygiene of disease prevention generally.

At times like this it is very important that we do not collapse into hysteria and we do not buy all the hype, that we do be rational and seek to have the best available information. The information that is coming out of health authorities in Australia about how to avoid infection is really important.

I also thank deeply the frontline staff who are working in our health services and in our hospitals. Some of the most amazing stories of courage that came out of Hubei were from the first responders in Wuhan's primary major hospital; the speed of the response, the fact that doctors and nurses were working at the front line in Wuhan because there was a shortage of medical professionals, a shortage of diagnostic kits and a shortage of space to treat people. Many of those medical professionals were working around the clock without breaks.

Of course, it is people in the medical profession at the front line of combating this pandemic who are in many ways the most at risk. I am enormously thankful for the dedication and the courage of our frontline staff here and wherever medical professionals are working in the world.

I also acknowledge the impacts of the travel ban on our trade exposed industries. It has been a really hard four to six weeks for many of our exporters. I reiterate the statement I made previously about the importance of Tasmanians supporting our exporters and our primary producers and also our tourism sector however they can.

There is no question that there has been an impact on the tourism sector here, although I do not know that it is as significant as it has been in some mainland markets.

On behalf of the Tasmanian Greens, my very best wishes to the gentleman who is in the Launceston General Hospital recovering from the virus. As members in this place, I commit us to working constructively on our response to this issue and being responsible members of parliament when we are talking about this now global pandemic.

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, I want all Tasmanians to feel confident that the state's health authorities are taking the threat of coronavirus very seriously and that we are being proactive. We are prepared for the impact of coronavirus in Tasmania.

As of yesterday, we have our first confirmed case here. In a demonstration of our systems working, the man contacted authorities in a timely way, and the public health authority responded swiftly. I thank the patient for acting responsibly with regards to his own care. The virus was detected in the man arriving in Launceston from Iran. He contacted the Public Health hotline after feeling unwell. He has been transferred from where he was in self-quarantine to the Launceston General Hospital where he will be appropriately clinically managed and supported.

Public health is now following up anyone who was in close contact, including people who travelled with him on his flight from Melbourne to Launceston on Saturday.

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

MOTION

Note Statement - COVID-19 Outbreak

Resumed from above.

[2.30 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, despite the confirmation of a coronavirus case within Tasmania, I am advised by the Director of Public Health that Tasmanians remain at a low risk of coronavirus. However, I am cognisant of the evolving nature of this threat. Australia and Tasmania are not immune to the impact of coronavirus but there is no country better prepared for a health challenge like this. Our health experts are meeting daily and working with their interstate and national counterparts to monitor this preparation to be able to flexibly respond to whatever challenges this virus brings us. We know that the spread of coronavirus from China to other countries, as was the spread within jurisdictions, shows the challenges in containing this outbreak. Efforts to stop further cases of coronavirus getting here are very much a Tasmanian priority. We have been working closely with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to ensure a coordinated response.

I met with my interstate counterparts and the Australian Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy, at the corona health council in Melbourne last week to discuss the national response to the outbreak and to provide updates on prevention and preparedness, including strict management of international arrival points, quarantine for returning travellers and effective information provided to people entering the country. To that end the Tasmanian Government has stood up the State Emergency Management Committee to ensure Tasmania continues to be well prepared and continues to keep our community safe.

I thank the state's public health officials and clinical experts who have been working around the clock, since the beginning of January, to help maintain our precautionary approach, as well as keeping the public informed through regular updates.

We know our health system responds to infectious disease outbreaks regularly, including each year when Tasmania experiences the winter influenza season. As the Premier outlined in his statement, we are preparing for the 2020 winter plan so that our health agencies continue to have the necessary coordination and capacity to deliver health care in the event of a high demand influenza season, focusing on minimising infection risks, and ensuring we maximise system capacity to care for those at highest risk.

Our record in responding to outbreaks speaks for itself. In 2009, Tasmania, like the rest of the country and much of the world, responded to the impacts of the H1N1 influenza pandemic. At the time, our emergency response systems rose to meet the challenge, establishing processes to meet the needs of the community and, as much as possible, limit the impacts of on state's acute public hospital system.

These experiences from a decade ago resulted in system-wide planning and established protocols that allow us to effectively respond to any emerging threats by infectious outbreaks, including the coronavirus, through the establishment of operation of community-based clinics that could best assist us in responding. Similar to those used in 2009, these clinics provide capacity to assess patients and collect samples in locations that allow us to help manage patient flow away from

our emergency departments and hospitals, which helps to minimise the risk of infection within the community.

Alongside these measures, the Tasmanian Government is also examining our hospital capacity and how we can best and most safely accommodate patients who require acute care. This includes using negative pressure rooms at hospitals around the state and also identifying areas of our hospitals that have appropriate air handling in place so that patients can be cared for safely while minimising the risk of exposure and infection to staff and other patients. Indeed, this planning has involved the private hospitals, aged care, as well as primary health, so we have a collaborative response across Tasmania.

It is important to heed the advice from our public health experts and remember that despite the confirmation of a case, Tasmania remains at low risk of coronavirus. However, we will continue to closely monitor the situation as it evolves. We will continue with our preparedness so that we have the capacity to deal with a range of scenarios that may emerge here. We will continue to keep Tasmanians updated.

It is was timely to restate the recommendations from public health regarding personal hygiene. I urge Tasmanians to keep up the good habits. Make sure you wash your hands regularly, make sure that you dispose of tissues and make sure that if you are feeling unwell you do not spread those germs to others.

[2.36 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, I thank the Premier for his ministerial statement, the Minister for Health, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Greens for their contributions.

As I referred to this morning, the outbreak of the coronavirus in China and now further afield is of great concern, and of course we extend our sympathy and best wishes to all who have been impacted. However, it is also a new source of uncertainty in the global economy. While it is still too early to tell what the magnitude of the impact will be, we know that it will cause further disruptions to trade.

China is a large part of the global economy and closely integrated with other economies, including Australia. The international impact will depend on the success and timeliness of the various efforts to control the virus, as I referred to this morning. Like everyone around the world, we are watching developments very carefully and putting in strategies to support our Tasmanian businesses and exporters.

The Department of State Growth has been closely engaged with many peak industry bodies to understand the current and future ramifications on trade. We will take action to support impacted industries. Planning has commenced for a Tasmanian seafood showcase in Singapore at the end of March. Businesses have been very supportive of this measure and expressed appreciation for the supportive measures to provide new market opportunities.

As the Premier referred to, we are also working alongside the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council and the wider seafood sector on further development of initiatives and actions through the Seafood Trade Action Plan, which will span both immediate and longer-term support for Tasmanian seafood producers.

The outbreak of the coronavirus has also had an impact on Tasmanian school students. I am been advised that 31 students who were due to return or begin school this term have been unable to leave China due to the Australian travel ban; 21 of those are from government schools. The Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment, along with the Department of Home Affairs and Border Force, are working to provide a pathway for eligible years 11 and 12 students to enter Australia to continue or begin their senior high school studies.

At a local level, the Tasmanian departments of Health and Education are working together to apply to the Australian Border Force Commissioner to provide exemptions for Tasmanian senior secondary students affected by the coronavirus travel ban. The Government Education and Training International, GETI, and school staff have meanwhile been working together to support international students currently restricted from returning from China to continue their study program, but the health and safety of staff and students is our top priority. The Department of Education is working closely with the Public Health Service to support our schools and students with information about the coronavirus. I can only reinforce the messages from our Minister for Health as she was concluding her contribution.

We are also taking a precautionary approach with overseas travel for school groups travelling prior to 30 June 2020 being postponed, except for travel to the USA, Canada and New Zealand, provided this travel does not go through Asia. School trips planned for or after 30 June 2020 for all destinations, except China and South Korea, can continue to be progressed. However, this may be subject to further postponement and/or cancellation depending on future advice.

Staff who are scheduled to travel overseas for work-related travel such as scholarships including the Hardie Fellowships or GETI marketing trips can still travel should they wish to, but they do so at their own risk.

I am advised that the Catholic sector is implementing the same travel advice as the Government, while independent schools are currently considering their response.

Statement noted.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

[2.41 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege to provide my first address to the Parliament as Tasmania's forty-sixth Premier, and I thank my colleagues for entrusting me with this honour. I also thank my predecessor, Will Hodgman, for his service to the Tasmanian people, and his wife Nicky, along with his children, for the sacrifices they have made as a family to enable Will to serve this state and its people so well for so long. All of us in this place do what we do with the support of others, and too often they are not recognised for what they do, and I extend my thanks to our respective partners and families.

Over the last six years we have demonstrated we are a disciplined, united and responsible government. We have built the foundations for and sustained strong economic and jobs growth for our state, and we have demonstrated commitment, focus and drive to deliver a better future for Tasmania. This will not change under my leadership.

This Government was elected in 2014 to deliver a strong economy and jobs, build Tasmania's infrastructure for the twenty-first century, keep Tasmanians safe, invest in health, education and Tasmanians in need, act on the cost of living and protect the Tasmanian way of life. We will continue to deliver on these priorities but there is more that needs to be done.

In health, we have immediately increased investment and made sweeping changes to governance, recognising that demand for services remains high and we must get better patient outcomes.

There is more to do in housing and climate change, as well as ensuring that more Tasmanians are able to grasp the opportunities our growing economy offers.

We must keep our state's economy strong so we can attract investment, create jobs and also generate the revenues we need to invest into health, education, housing and looking after our most vulnerable.

We must continue to strive to make our state a better place to live, work and raise a family, across all our regions, and we must support people so they can benefit from the opportunities created by a strong economy.

Tasmania in 2020 leads the rest of the country on most economic indicators. Around 21 100 jobs have been created since 2014, with 256 100 Tasmanians now in work, the highest on record. Employment levels are now higher in every Tasmanian region compared to when we came into Government, and in the past year we have had the highest employment growth rate in the country.

We have an economy growing at its strongest rate in 15 years, faster than the powerhouse economies of Victoria and New South Wales. This growth is the result of nation-leading business confidence, increasing population and a strong budget position. There is no doubt our strong economy is making a difference to the lives of a great many Tasmanians, but we know there is more to do.

Tasmanians want Government services to be more responsive, more accessible and more connected, and so they should be. That is why we are commencing a broad sweeping review of the public service, which will bring the Tasmanian public sector firmly into the twenty-first century and stand us in good stead for the next 30 years. Our aim is to create a public service that puts Tasmanians at the centre of everything it does, from the provision of services to the development of policy, to the expenditure of taxpayer funds. The well-credentialed and experienced Mr Ian Watt is leading the review, which will deliver a final report by the end of 2020. However, we understand that it is the private sector, which is made up of predominantly small businesses in this state, that takes the risks, drives investment, creates jobs and generates opportunities, and this Government has and always will, unashamedly back them.

We are continuing to remove red tape and over-regulation in order to attract private sector investment and create more jobs. The latest Tasmanian Red Tape Audit Report confirms 84 per cent of the 125 identified red tape issues have now been resolved, equating to over 100 red tape reforms made by this Government. These reforms have made doing business in Tasmania easier. However, there is more to be done.

A common complaint by Tasmanians, whether they be building a house, a hotel or a manufacturing plant, is the time it takes to gain the necessary development approvals required from

TasNetworks and TasWater. In a state with a growing population and growing demand for housing, this must be improved. Clearly we need to further simplify our approvals process so homes are approved and built quicker. That is why today I am announcing that after consulting with TasWater, TasNetworks and industry representative bodies, we will introduce later this year legislative timeframes for the permit process for energy and water and sewerage services.

We also understand that supply of land is critical to meeting demand for housing and in this year's Budget we will better resource our Land Titles Office so that titles can be released to the market more quickly. These actions will help to decrease the time it takes to get houses built, increase the supply of land and save many months on the time it takes to get Tasmanians into new housing.

There is more investment occurring in our state than ever before, whether it be windfarms, transmission networks, major linear infrastructure works or major manufacturing plants. That is why today we are releasing new draft major projects legislation. This Government's major projects legislation will provide an approvals pathway for projects that are of a scale, strategic significance or complexity beyond the normal capacities of local councils or for projects that cross municipal boundaries and involve multiple acts and regulators. Major projects will be able to be referred into the process by local government, the proponent or the Minister for Planning, and if they meet the criteria in the act they can use this approvals pathway. Once a project is declared a major project by the minister, all decisions will be made by a specially convened expert panel appointed by the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission.

The Government believes events tourism, especially relating to major sporting events supports the Tasmanian economy while also growing participation in healthy activities. This is why we are making strategic investments to secure national sporting teams. We want all children to participate in sport and for those who aspire to the highest level to have a pathway into national competition. This is why we are focused on ensuring that Tasmania is represented at the national level across our major sporting codes.

Being part of these national competitions will boost our economy, grow jobs and attract visitors, generating more revenue which can be invested into essential services like health, housing and education. This is why we are resolutely pursuing an AFL team for Tasmania, which modelling tells us will add \$110 million to the state's economy each year, generating around 360 new jobs. That is why we have reached an in-principle agreement with Glenorchy City Council and the LK Group to pave the way for Tasmania to have an NBL team for the first time in 25 years. This agreement will underpin significant development at Wilkinsons Point and see an economic injection of \$102 million into our state, lead to the creation of around 1200 jobs and be a complete game-changer for the northern suburbs of Hobart. It is also why I will be meeting with Football Tasmania shortly regarding their plans for an A League team for the state. Not only will these arrangements create jobs and the opportunity for more Tasmanians to participate in sport, they will put Tasmania on the national stage, exactly where we deserve to be.

One industry sector that is firmly fixed on both the national and international stage is Tasmania's tourism sector. This industry generates significant economic growth and is one of our great success stories. In the five years to September last year, total visitors increased by almost 25 per cent to over 1.3 million and last year visitor spend increased by 5 per cent to over \$2.5 billion. A critical part of our tourism strategy is to encourage and drive visitation to our regions and last year we saw two thirds of all visitors dispersing into our regional areas. A crucial plank in our 'visit the regions' strategy is our creative, unique and diverse events.

We want to continue to support great events in Tasmania and that is why I am announcing that the award-winning Unconformity Festival in Queenstown, which has gained a reputation both nationally and internationally, will receive an extra \$375 000 this year so that they can deliver an even a bigger and better arts festival on the west coast. We know that we make the best whisky in the world, and our success at world renowned events in London and San Francisco has been spectacular and acknowledges our place on the national and global stage. It is now time to establish ourselves in this company and today I am announcing that the Government will provide \$125 000 to deliver the inaugural International Whisky Awards in Tasmania in August 2020, with the event positioned alongside the world-renowned events held each year in London and San Francisco.

We also know our tourism industry has had a challenging start to the year, beginning with the impacts on our domestic visitation from the tragic bushfire events on the mainland and with the travel restrictions due to coronavirus. As a state we are well placed to respond to these challenges and I want to outline the steps being taken.

Tourism Tasmania has developed a recovery response plan that will position our state and its offerings in the hearts and minds of national and international travellers in the months ahead. This plan will see it redirect \$2 million of its existing budget, as well as an additional \$1 million, towards in-market promotional activity. This is in addition to the \$6.2 million already committed to promoting travel in the forthcoming winter months and the new brand campaign to encourage more visitation during winter and for Tasmanians to holiday at home. Tourism Tasmania is also working closely with Tourism Australia to leverage its own recovery package, Holiday Here this Year.

Another focus will be working with our transport partners, such as the airlines and TT-Line to offer a range of packages that showcase our state and ensure that access to Tasmania is not just affordable, but attractive.

Our visitor economy supports more jobs per capita - mostly in small businesses - than any other state or territory, and with two of our regions in the five most tourism dependent in the country, the Government will not be complacent at this critical time.

Another industry we are assisting to remain strong in the face of the coronavirus is the fishing industry. A month ago, we acted quickly to roll over quotas, provide assistance to enable direct sales to the public and extend fee payments for the rock lobster industry. If more has to be done to support these important industries we will do it.

Over the last 12 months as an exporter we have had to navigate Brexit, a US/China trade war and now coronavirus. It is why we have developed a Tasmanian trade strategy, the first in our history and developed in partnership with Tasmania's exporters and producers, with an ambitious target to reach \$15 billion worth of trade by 2050. Today I can announce that later this month, subject to travel arrangements, the Minister for Trade will be embarking on a two-week mission to the United States to support a range of opportunities in food, agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, space, defence, education, renewable energy and more. This market is our fifth-strongest trading partner and accounts for 16 per cent of our international visitors. With China and other Asian markets heavily impacted by the coronavirus, we want to assist our exporters to grow their share of markets and open up new opportunities.

Key to our continued economic growth are our advanced manufacturing and defence sectors, which continue to find global markets for their world-class products. Our Tasmanian Defence Strategy, supported by our highly regarded Defence Advocate, retired Rear Admiral Steve Gilmore,

has been integral to accessing global supply contracts and finding new opportunities for our defence supply companies. The recent signing of an MOU between Thales Australia and the Australian Maritime College to establish a state-of-the-art test facility for submarine and surface ship sonar systems is testament to the success of our Defence Strategy. This Government has also provided \$125 000 for the business case to establish a maritime defence innovation and design precinct in Launceston as part of the Launceston City Deal, which will provide more exciting opportunities for our defence supply industries and advance manufacturers.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately over the summer, we have witnessed more intense bushfires and extreme weather events and as the Minister for Climate Change, I am well aware that we face a more volatile and changing climate.

I would first like to thank our firefighters and volunteers for their bravery, commitment and selflessness. They put their lives on the line to keep us safe and no words can express our collective gratitude. Their work over the summer on the mainland and at home was outstanding and integral to the success of multiple firefighting operations. On behalf of us all, we thank you. Although Tasmania was not immune from fires this season, our fires were not of the scale or intensity of those on the mainland. The stories of lives lost, homes destroyed, communities devastated and wildlife killed was saddening and confronting, and my sincere condolences go out to the families, friends and communities of those who lost their lives. Many of the country towns were similar to those in Tasmania; small communities surrounded by bush.

It is clear that Tasmania is not immune from the same threats, so to keep Tasmanians safe we need to do more and we must be better prepared before next summer. We must do everything we can to protect life, property, infrastructure and our natural assets. Although we have a nation-leading and well-resourced fuel mitigation program, the traditional window available for fuel reduction is narrowing and the intensity of our bushfires is increasing.

Under existing laws, in a bushfire emergency the state controller can immediately take steps to put in place firebreaks and reduce fuel, but this is only when the threat has materialised. Due to the smaller windows available to reduce fuel loads, the current planning controls and regulations can limit landholders and our emergency services in taking preventative action. This must now change. We understand, after the devastation on the mainland, that it is too late to put in a fire break when the fire is coming over the hill or at your back door.

We risk putting people's lives and property at greater risk if we do not act now. To keep Tasmanians safe, I can today announce that the Government will introduce legislation in the coming months to make it easier to reduce fuel and mechanically clear vegetation for a fuel break once a bushfire hazard reduction plan has been issued. The legislation will introduce a new streamlined process to enable fuel loads to be reduced while balancing environment and community concerns. Most importantly, it will make it easier for landholders to reduce fuel loads by allowing approvals to be granted in a shorter time frame when a bushfire hazard management plan is in place. It will also make landholders, both public and private, responsible for undertaking fuel reduction activities under a bushfire hazard management plan in order to keep the broader community safe.

The Government will also ensure we have more resources available this year, especially during the autumn and spring, to reduce our fuel loads. We will create two new fuel reduction teams, with 12 extra staff, to reduce fuel loads across the state. We will provide additional resources to help landowners plan and undertake fuel reduction activities. We will provide more resources to the Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure we have winch-insertion capability for remote area fire teams

within Tasmania so we can insert specialist firefighters and respond quickly when needed. We will begin the establishment of a new state operations centre in a central location from which all our emergency services may coordinate our response to emergencies.

We have already announced the creation of three new specialist Aboriginal ranger positions within Parks and the creation of a \$100 000 pilot grant program to work with the Aboriginal community to draw on their expertise in fuel reduction and the maintenance of landscapes through cultural burning. These measures will help landholders and communities better prepare for the next fire season, making Tasmanian communities safer and more resilient in the face of a changing climate.

Our response to climate change cannot be limited to adaptation and risk management. We also need to mitigate the effects of climate change. Whilst Tasmania has a proud history of being a quiet leader on climate action, it is now time to showcase our innovation to the world and stake our claim as a renewables powerhouse. Tasmania's climate record is impressive. Tasmania was the first state in this country to have zero net emissions, and we did that in 2016. Tasmania has the cleanest air in the world and some of the leading climate research institutions.

Our greenhouse gas emissions have declined by 95 per cent from 1990 levels. The last greenhouse gas inventory shows that for the sixth year in a row we have met our legislated emissions reduction target and we have the lowest per capita emissions of all states and territories and are one of the lowest net emitters of carbon dioxide on the planet.

We have already set a target of zero net emissions by 2050, which is in line with other states' targets. Currently the Climate Change Act is under review and many submissions to that review have argued that our state, which already has such a low emissions profile, should set a more ambitious target. However, any new target needs to be evidence based and informed by both science and economics. Therefore I have requested that central agencies DPAC and Treasury, in concert with DPIPWE and State Growth, conduct a detailed analysis of the pathway our state would need to take, and the impacts on industry and jobs, to achieve a target of zero net emissions prior to 2050. This process will include targeted consultation with industry, the business sector and the community and will occur over the next six months. The outcomes of the consultation will inform amendments to the Climate Change Act and Tasmania's new Climate Action Plan for post 2021.

Whilst this detailed work is underway, we will ensure that we continue to lead the country on renewable energy. We have already committed to being 100 per cent renewable by 2022 and we are on track to meet this target. However, we know this state is well placed to be far more ambitious. Tasmania has the opportunity to ensure that the most compelling twenty-first century competitive advantage that industry and consumers want - renewable energy - underpins our economy in Tasmania, attracting investment, creating jobs and also supporting Australia transition to a renewable base load supply.

Today we are announcing a new renewables generation target of 200 per cent of our needs by 2040, which will see Tasmania double its renewable production. Our new Renewable Energy Action Plan will be released in April and will ensure that Tasmania remains the renewable energy powerhouse of Australia. An important part of this plan will be capitalising on Tasmania's competitive advantages to produce hydrogen for domestic use by 2022-24 and export by 2025-27.

Tasmania's low cost and reliable renewable energy means that Tasmania is 10-15 per cent more competitive than our mainland counterparts when it comes to attracting investment in 'green

hydrogen'. To capitalise on this, we have already announced a \$50 million package of support measures over 10 years to bolster and fast track renewable hydrogen industry development in Tasmania.

This Government is also committed to helping mainland Australia reduce its emissions by exporting more renewable energy. This will not only create new jobs and industries for Tasmania but will help meet the energy demands of the mainland whilst reducing Australia's emissions.

We are currently progressing the Marinus link, which is set to underpin 1400 new jobs in Tasmania, with up to 2350 jobs also being created from further renewable energy investment and our nation leading Battery of the Nation proposal. The combined investment has the potential to inject \$7.1 billion into the Tasmanian economy over the coming years, leaving no-one in any doubt that Tasmania is in fact the battery of the nation.

Our net emissions profile is the envy of the nation and we are one of the lowest emitters in the world. However, there is still more to be done. This Government will do its part in reducing our emissions by leading by example.

Supported by this Government's 14 fast charging stations at 12 locations across the state, Tasmania's electric vehicle network is now one of the best in the nation. By building this electric vehicle network, Tasmanians and visitors can take advantage of our clean and affordable energy to travel across the entire state.

It is important that the Government takes a leadership role in the use of low emissions vehicles. In this year's budget we will begin to transition our fleet which currently has only around 3 per cent in the low emissions category. I have requested Treasury to provide advice on an achievable, affordable but ambitious time frame to transition us to a low emissions fleet.

The introduction of our Waste Action Plan and the delivery of a container refund scheme by 2022 is also an important priority for this Government. Work has already commenced on designing a model with input from interstate counterparts, the local community, businesses and industry and legislation is to be introduced early next year.

Next year, we will also introduce a waste levy which will fund innovative reuse and recycling schemes and support co-investment with recycling businesses that will improve our capture of recyclables and will also generate more jobs for Tasmanians.

We all know how hard drought is on our farmers. They understand the impacts of a changing climate better than anyone. That is why my Government - together with the Australian Government - is drought-proofing our farm sector by building nation leading irrigation infrastructure. The proposed 10 irrigation schemes in tranche three of the Pipeline to Prosperity will provide an additional 78 000 megalitres of water, injecting an estimated \$114 million each year into the sector and the economy more broadly. Along with the Australian Government, we have already jointly committed \$170 million to deliver at least the next five irrigation schemes.

Today, we take the next step and I am announcing the preferred option for the Don Irrigation Scheme - the first of the tranche three projects to progress to this stage. The estimated \$28.5 million project will deliver some 5000 megalitres of irrigation water to high quality agricultural land in the Don, Barrington and Sheffield areas in the north-west. Once fully operational and the water utilised, the scheme is expected to deliver 130 direct and indirect jobs.

Madam Speaker, in the budget we committed to a record infrastructure investment of \$3.6 billion to build the infrastructure our growing state needs and to buffer the state's economy from national and international headwinds. This strategy has worked. Confidence levels remain high, our economic growth leads the country, record numbers of jobs have been created and we are well placed to face new challenges as they emerge.

Tasmania's population is growing at 1.2 per cent per year. This is nearly double our long-term rate and nearly four times faster than when we came to government. Although a growing population strengthens our economy by introducing new skills, new ideas and greater diversity, it also comes with the need for increased investment in infrastructure. To ensure we can meet this challenge, we are investing record amounts into major infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, houses, roads, bridges, dams and our parks. We have a strong pipeline of public work, stretching out for the next 10 years and beyond.

Tasmania's world-class parks are a critical part of Tasmania's unique brand and our international and national appeal. But most of all for Tasmanians, these parks are especially loved and part of our way of life. We will continue to invest in parks infrastructure to make them more accessible and enjoyable to Tasmanians and our visitors.

This Government will continue to invest significantly into our parks infrastructure, with \$31 million committed this term. That is in addition to our \$56.8 million commitment to Cradle Mountain, and our \$20 million commitment to develop Tasmania's next iconic walk. The new Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre is now complete. Stage 2 will be completed by July 2020, and the Dove Lake viewing shelter will be completed in the latter half of 2021.

The preferred location for Tasmania's next iconic walk lies in the Tyndall Range on Tasmania's west coast and offers a potential multi-day walking experience. We expect the feasibility study will be completed in the first half of this year.

Our massive investment in infrastructure also underpins a record amount of new social and affordable housing. Last year we completed and delivered 349 new social houses, with another 173 to be completed by the end of June this year and another 200 to be contracted over the next few months.

We are expanding our emergency shelters, with 35 additional dwellings provided, including 18 single bedroom pods at Bethlehem House, 10 units for women and children at the Hobart Women's Shelter and seven family-sized units also managed by the Hobart Women's Shelter.

This year, we will also begin construction of seven supported accommodation units for older men in the south, commence the Wirksworth development, providing much-needed residential care for the elderly in our community, and expand the Magnolia House shelter in Launceston.

We will also begin the delivery of two new youth foyers for young people - one in Burnie and the other in Hobart - which will be built by 2022 with funding of \$20 million to be provided in this year's budget. In addition, \$4.5 million will be spent on Thyne House in Launceston and \$2.2 million on the Launceston Youth at Risk project.

However, we know that there is even more to do and we will work hard every day to put roofs over the heads of people who need them most, whether it be the need for affordable housing or combating homelessness, or for gaining access to your first home or downsizing.

We will continue key incentives to further boost home ownership. We are extending the First Home Owners Grant for a further two-year period to June 2022. This grant provides \$20 000 for Tasmanians building their first home, as well as the stamp duty concession for eligible pensioners to downsize their home and the stamp duty concession for first home buyers of established homes.

However, we recognise that for many people home ownership can seem a distant ambition even with low interest rates and the incentives I have mentioned.

Our HomeShare program where the Government provides an equity contribution and takes a share of the home as a silent partner has been very successful. Around 200 Tasmanians on modest incomes now own their home through this program. The Government will also increase the maximum government contribution available under the Government's HomeShare program by 20 per cent to a contribution of \$100 000. If you are eligible for the First Home Owners grant you could also receive an additional \$20 000. This means that the Government will provide a HomeShare recipient up to 30 per cent of the value of a home to a maximum of \$100 000 in equity so that they will have lower interest payments and will find it easier to break into the market. This means that eligible homebuyers will be able to purchase a home much easier and save on the repayments as well.

Today, I can also announce we will transfer the management of almost 2000 more Housing Tasmania-owned properties to not-for-profit community housing providers. This will give them the capacity to build close to 700 social and affordable homes over the next 20 years. We will also be extending all management agreements to 2040, giving this sector and their tenants long-term security.

In addition, and in response to urgent demand for more social housing, we will commit \$22 million from the housing debt waiver to build 220 new social and affordable houses by June 2023. This adds to the more than 80 houses that will be built from the \$12 million in community housing provider grants announced by this Government in December 2019.

Through these new commitments, the Government will deliver an extra 1000 social and affordable houses, which is on top of our Affordable Housing Action Plan targets.

I am also announcing that for this winter, the emergency housing brokerage services will remain uncapped so those who need emergency housing can access it. We have also provided a further \$150 000 for the Safe Night Space program which will enable it to continue throughout 2020.

Madam Speaker, we have the fastest growing economy in the country but we know that not everyone is able to grasp the opportunities it presents. We are determined to help build the bridges that connect people to those opportunities through our strategic growth initiative. We want Tasmanians, regardless of their background, where they live or their circumstances, to be able to grasp the opportunities that present.

We recently announced the continuation of the successful Sorell employment hub, a program that assists local jobseekers in the Sorell and south-east region, which was part of the Government's Jobs Action Plan. Over 100 people have secured local jobs as a direct result of the individualised focus, transport and training opportunities the hub provides.

Another area which is experiencing rapid growth is Glenorchy. The NBL deal, the redevelopment of Wilkinsons Point, the proposed MONA hotel, as well as the growing needs of local businesses and industry in the area, like our state-of-the-art ferry builders, Incat, will create enormous job opportunities for the people of Glenorchy. To help local people capitalise on these new opportunities we will establish a Glenorchy jobs hub, with funding of \$1.3 million over two years, which will be included in this year's budget. The hub will provide support to those seeking a job, connecting them with local employers as well as the transport they need to get to work.

As part of our ongoing strategic growth initiative, we are working with the George Town community with a \$1 million package to support projects in that community. We will continue to work with our community partners in the Derwent Valley, Break O'Day municipality and on the west coast to ensure the programs we have begun are achieving the right outcomes for those communities.

Madam Speaker, health is a key priority for this Government.

We have seen the investment in health grow year on year since we came to office in 2014. To put this in context, the 2019-20 budget for health is now \$650 million more than the last Labor-Greens budget in 2013-14. That funding is supporting around 1200 additional FTEs in our health system, including 872 in the past two financial years alone. Today, Tasmania has a higher level of hospital staffing per capita than any other state in Australia.

We have also quarantined health from further efficiency dividends over the forward Estimates, delivering a further \$87 million into Health's budget.

I am also pleased to announce that in our upcoming budget we will be providing additional funding of \$500 000 per year for Palliative Care Tasmania for the next two years. Palliative Care Tasmania does outstanding work and we know how important they are in our communities.

We also recognise that more Tasmanians are increasingly seeking support for their mental health. The Government is delivering our \$104 million new, best practice approach to the integration of mental health services.

This includes establishing a Mental Health Hospital Avoidance Program which will aim to improve the model of care for those who find themselves in the emergency department. The model will feature GP out-of-hours assistance, expanded crisis response functions, community-based alternatives to the ED for assessment and treatment 24/7 and expanded adult community mental health services.

Adult Community Mental Health services will be revised to enable the provision of best evidence-based case management and treatment for people living with complex needs. We have already established a Mental Health Hospital in the Home program and we will be developing an integrated suicide response that connects after care support with a community-based crisis response.

Community mental health facilities at St Johns Park and the Peacock Centre will also become integration hubs, providing 27 new mental health short-term recovery beds, as well as opportunities for the co-location of social, housing, employment, disability and health services. For the first time in Tasmania, the new wards at the Royal and LGH will provide dedicated child and adolescent mental health inpatient facilities.

The Government has listened to community mental health organisations and we understand the need for funding certainty to do the important work they do and to provide workforce security.

Today I am pleased to announce that future funding agreements will be over three years, allowing them to plan ahead with confidence and continue the great work that they do in our communities.

Madam Speaker, we understand that education is the passport to a better life and every child deserves the best possible education.

Equity and inclusion are the heart of everything we do in education and our new needs-based funding model for disability, which supports an additional 2000 students, and our groundbreaking Working Together initiative for three-year olds, providing free preschool for young children who would not normally engage in early learning programs, reflects this. Working Together is a nation-leading program and is being hailed by families as a great success.

Having excellent teachers to support our students is one of the key predictors of educational outcomes. We are reducing teacher workloads, employing an extra 250 teachers, re-shaping our education workforce right around the state and finding new ways to attract and develop quality teachers.

Our plan to extend all Government high schools to year 12 is working, with TCE attainment having increased by 10 per cent since we came to government.

Packages of learning are an exciting new approach to keep individual students engaged with learning in years 9 and 10 and allows them to explore new pathways to vocational education and employment. Last year, five schools took part and this year these packages are being offered in 12 government schools and one non-government school.

We have increased funding and student places for TasTAFE and that investment is paying off, with apprenticeship and traineeship starts increasing by 9.7 per cent, against a downward trend nationally.

We are investing record amounts into education to keep students engaged in learning and improve educational outcomes.

Soon we will be launching our new Adult Learning Strategy to provide more opportunities to participate in work and life, promote lifelong learning and build stronger communities. Investing in the wellbeing of children and young Tasmanians is critical for our state's future; they are our next generation and the future of our state.

Today, I am announcing that in the upcoming budget we will be providing funding to commence Tasmania's first ever comprehensive long-term whole-of-government Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy. It will not only include the first 1000 days of life - where there is very clear evidence that a good start from conception to age two is vitally important to a child's development - but it will take them through to 25 years of age.

Another very important part of our agenda is working to ensure we keep our most vulnerable safe and we realise that more needs to be done on family and sexual violence. In recent times there have been some distressing and shocking incidents of family violence both interstate and here in

Tasmania. It is horrific incidents like this that remind us that we have a long way to go to change the attitudes that lead to such terrible, senseless and unforgivable acts of violence.

Since 2015, we have invested over \$50 million in new funding to combat family violence. However, we must ensure our efforts are geared towards making sure we can keep people - mainly women and their children - safe, and that perpetrators are held to account.

In the coming year we will also introduce a number of legislative reforms aimed at protecting victims and ensuring offenders are dealt with in a manner consistent with community expectations.

We have introduced legislation to amend Section 194K of the Evidence Act, to allow victims of sexual offences to speak out if they choose to, while providing appropriate safeguards and protections.

We will make legislative changes to the names of sexual crimes, especially those involving young people, to better reflect the true nature of those crimes. For example, language used in the crime of maintaining a sexual relationship with a young person in no way reflects the gravity of that crime.

We will also be tabling a bill to enhance existing processes for dangerous criminal declarations to ensure Tasmania's most dangerous criminals are not released into the community, and we will create a second-tier classification to ensure strong post-release conditions.

Furthermore, we have introduced legislation to address one punch or coward's punch incidents, sending a strong message that these cowardly acts of violence will not be tolerated.

We will also continue to pursue our plan for mandatory sentencing for child sex offenders for those who commit serious assaults against our frontline workers, like correctional officers, ambulance officers, nurses, midwives, medical orderlies, hospital attendants and child safety officers. Tasmanians on the front line provide essential services to the community and any threatening behaviour, violence or aggression toward them is completely unacceptable. All Tasmanians deserve to work in a safe environment and this Government will continue to support and protect them.

Madam Speaker, during our first term we worked hard to restore police numbers and our second term is about investing in an additional 125 police officers. Last year, additional police were deployed to Launceston, Glenorchy, Bridgewater, Burnie, Devonport, St Helens, Smithton, the Firearms Service, and a new dog handler is also now in place. This year, new officers will go into Hobart, Launceston, Burnie, Sorell, Bruny Island, Kingston, Oatlands, George Town, Scottsdale, St Helens and Deloraine as well as the establishment of a new statewide crime command, which will coordinate a whole-of-state approach to disrupting and preventing serious and organised crime. Six specialist 'ice' investigators will continue our war on ice-related drug activity, and four officers will start the first stage of our full-time Special Operations Group for rapid response and to support high-risk police operations.

Unfortunately, crime will never be eliminated completely but Tasmania remains one of the safest places to live in Australia and the world and this Government will keep working hard to keep it that way.

Madam Speaker, another priority for this Government is taking action on the cost of living. In our latest budget we announced some of the most generous concessions in the country, providing \$72.7 million in last year's budget for concessions on electricity, water and sewerage and council rates.

In this year's budget, we will be extending the state's first sports voucher system, Ticket to Play, for a further four years to provide financial support to help families and their kids participate in sport when they otherwise may not have been able to do so.

We are also proud to announce that we will commit an additional \$185 000 for Loaves and Fishes emergency food relief. This will allow this tremendous service to continue its fantastic work in both the north and the south of the state.

Tasmania's rich and diverse heritage is an integral part of our life, treasured by the community and admired by visitors. Conserving, protecting and re-imagining our heritage listed places is vitally important to their longevity and the future success of our tourism and hospitality industry. It is now crucial that we move to protect these assets and create vibrant experiences that respond to visitor and local expectations.

Today, I can announce that from 2023 onwards we will invest \$1.5 million per annum from the increased revenues from hotels and clubs that the future gaming policy delivers to support the National Trust and revitalise our unique heritage properties that drive visitation. We will also ensure the Heritage Places Renewal Loans scheme is available to the National Trust Tasmania to continue their important work to conserve our built and natural heritage.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, this Government's long-term plan for Tasmania has delivered this state with the fastest-growing economy in the country, along with record numbers of new jobs. We are investing record amounts into health, education, housing and infrastructure and to protect the most vulnerable.

The Government that I lead knows there is more to be done.

We will be a government of conviction. We will be a government of compassion.

Madam Speaker, importantly we will work hard to ensure that Tasmanians wherever they live, whatever their circumstances and whatever their background will be supported to grasp the opportunities that our growing state now offers.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

[3.21 p.m.]

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Exeter Show

Launceston and Tamar Valley Traffic Vision

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Madam Speaker, I would like to address the matter of the recent successful Exeter Show which was held last Saturday on the leap day. I hope you were there. It was an outstanding show and a fantastic demonstration of the community coming together. To name just a few of the activities: it involved agriculture, vintage vehicles, some of our wonderful local community organisations, equestrian events, entertainment and rides, food vendors and home industries.

The show was opened by Bridget Archer. Many of my colleagues were in attendance, including Sarah Courtney, the Premier, Peter Gutwein, Senator Askew, and our candidate for Rosevears, Jo Palmer. Lots of candidates for Rosevears were there all having a go on the sheaf-tossing competition. I pay tribute to the fantastic community that brought this event together, in particular the wonderful volunteers, the sponsors and the stallholders and everybody who attended. I do not know how many people there were but it was crowded and it was a beautiful day, wasn't it, Ms Courtney?

Ms Courtney - It was a lovely day.

Mr FERGUSON - It was a fantastic day and everybody was extremely happy to be present. It is never fair to mention names as it is always just the tip of the iceberg with an event like this but I commend the whole committee, led by the president, Phil Goss, and a special hats-off to other committee members especially long-standing members, Trevor and Sue Clark, who have been involved with the show for something like 35 years, which is pretty amazing.

On behalf of myself and our whole community, I pay tribute to the Exeter Show Society committee for the fantastic work they did. I acknowledge all the sponsors. The major sponsors were the Tasmanian Government, the West Tamar Council, LAFM, Chilli FM, Beans Brothers and Barbers Sawmill.

Another important initiative in my electorate of Bass, which I am managing in my role as Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, is the Launceston and Tamar Valley Traffic Vision. Over the next five years this is intended and designed to result in reduced congestion and better safety and travel reliability for our travelling public on the north-south corridor in Launceston.

Time will not permit me to go into a lot of detail but I want to zero in on some of the specific projects that are either in feasibility planning or being built at the moment. We are currently undertaking a feasibility study and costing of a second Tamar River crossing between east and west Tamar, which is a very exciting potential project that the Government is driving ahead with and hoping to get some good feedback through the feasibility work.

We are also working with the Launceston City Council on the construction of an entirely new way of looking after traffic around Invermay; construction of a new signalised intersection at Goderich Street and Gleadow streets with two right-turn lanes from Gleadow Street into Goderich Street. That project will also integrate with the construction of a new link road from Lindsay Street to Gleadow Street via the City of Launceston. That is government working in partnership with the local councils.

The most visible demonstration of this project delivering on our traffic vision is the current upgrade of the East Tamar Highway connector. Every member of this House will have driven through this intersection numerous times. Currently it is a very problematic and no longer fit-for-purpose intersection. That is a \$7 million project which is now underway. It commenced in September. It is on track to be completed on time in April. That is being delivered by Shaw Contracting. They are doing a fantastic job, not only on the actual construction project but also the traffic management. No vehicles have been taken off that; it is continuing to operate. They are doing a great job and they deserve to be commended, as do the great people in my department of State Growth.

There are no traffic lights on this intersection as was discussed at one stage. It is a straight-through road for vehicles that are travelling heading north on the East Tamar Highway. They will be able to avoid going around the roundabout component of that project altogether. Hats off to everybody involved. I should also acknowledge the previous Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Mr Rockliff, who guided through those early stages. That is very exciting and people are looking forward to it. The Government is delivering the infrastructure that our growing state needs.

Forestry Watch Survey Report

[3.26 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I am glad we have an adjournment debate today because I wanted to share with the House the results of the Forestry Watch survey report, which was issued on 20 January this year. This is the work of scientists and citizen scientists who are going out, in this instance, particularly to forests in the Huon and Styx valleys to find evidence of our swift parrot habitat as well as the masked owl habitat.

It is clear that the reason that Sustainable Timber Tasmania has twice now been rejected for Forest Stewardship Certification is that on the evidence, evidence that was accepted by the FSC auditors, 'sus timber' is logging high quality habitat for the critically endangered swift parrot as well as pushing the masked owl closer to the brink.

One of the scientists working through Forestry Watch is Dr Jen Sanger, who has been undertaking work at the University of Tasmania into the increased risk of bushfire that is associated with native forest logging.

The Forestry Watch coordinated a group of scientists and citizen scientists who went into three coups in the Huon and Styx valleys which were earmarked for logging, SX038E, RU030E, EP048C and EP021C. The primary findings were as follows: areas of coupes had no sign of anthropogenic disturbance, indicating old growth forests; high quality swift parrot habitat and masked owl habitat; proximity to swift parrot foraging habitat; and high density of fallen trees providing habitat and stored carbon. For members who are uncomfortable with the term 'old growth', it is defined by the Forest Stewardship Council as 'ecologically mature forest where the effects of disturbances are now negligible'. Each of the three coups that Forestry Watch scientists went into conformed with the FSC definition of old growth.

In Tasmania's case, old growth is often eucalyptus regnans forest, the tallest flowering plant in the world. It has the highest known carbon density of forests worldwide and continues to accumulate carbon indefinitely. Logging of old growth followed by intensive harvesting cycles

causes the release of carbon stored in forest soils in a process that continues centuries after initial logging.

Only last week, I was in the north-west of the state and visited the beautiful 45 hectare forest at Lapoinya, which is earmarked by 'sus timber' for clear-felling, burning and replanting. In this lovely forest, which has not been logged for at least a century, I saw rainforest trees, myrtle and sassafras, and streamside burrows of the giant fresh water crayfish, *Astacopsis gouldi* - there are multiple streams on this property. It is a beautiful little intact forest which 'sus timber' wants to smash into the ground and then burn and plant a plantation.

I have sent a series of questions to the GBE about the proposed logging of an old forest at Lapoinya and am still waiting for answers. One of the questions that this GBE, as well as the Government, must answer, must wrap its head around, is the science that is telling us that when you log native forests you increase the risk of more intense and severe bushfires. When you log an old forest, you take the moisture out of the soils. There is a whole lot of undergrowth and kindling that is left on the ground, and then you get regeneration of trees that are highly combustible. Regrowth, according to the scientists, goes up like a powder keg when you have high fire danger conditions.

So-called Sustainable Timbers Tasmania and the new Minister for Climate Change should be making themselves aware of the fire risk associated with logging. We just heard the Premier talking about the importance of keeping the community safe from bushfires. This is part of that equation. We need to end native forest logging for its own sake and for the intrinsic values of those forests. We need to protect the carbon in those forests. Our forests sequester up to 4 million tonnes of carbon every year until 2050 and critically, we need to change forestry practices in Tasmania so we are not exposing communities, individuals and wilderness to further risk of more extreme and intense fires.

If the new Minister for Climate Change wants to be taken seriously on this issue, he must move away from the politics of division over forests. He needs to ask for a meeting with Dr Jen Sanger from UTAS, or Professor David Lindenmayer from the Australian National University, who says that forests that have been logged and regenerated are significantly more likely to burn at higher severity. This is the science.

We are a parliament that is bound to do right by the people of Tasmania and on behalf of the Greens and every Tasmanian who recognises we are in a climate emergency, and this requires a change of thinking, the humility to say you were wrong, and to set a different course, I call on the new Minister for Climate Change to put in place the steps necessary to end native forest logging in Tasmania, to protect our threatened and endangered species and to protect our communities from more intense and severe bushfires which, as we know, are coming down the line at us now every couple of years or so.

If Mr Gutwein wants to be taken seriously as the Minister for Climate Change, he needs to wrap his head around the fact that business as usual in our forests is not only no longer an option, it is recklessly irresponsible to continue down that path.

Doors to Mentors Program - Ulverstone

[3.33 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Collective ed. and the Central Coast Community for their commitment to supporting our young people. Last week I had the pleasure of being part of the launch of the Doors to Mentors program at Ulverstone, a wonderful opportunity that supports and encourages the engagement of our youth with businesses in the Central Coast community. Doors to Mentors is a community-driven mentoring program that helps our young people identify and achieve their aspirations. It is making an enormous contribution to supporting our young people from the ages of 15 to 24 in the Central Coast area.

The program started last year in August, when the Collective ed. initiative launched the Central Coast 100 Day Challenge at a workshop. Collective ed. is an initiative of the Beacon Foundation and is funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation and the departments of Education and State Growth. There are six place based Collective ed. sites throughout Tasmania, with one based at the Ulverstone Secondary College, but other schools across sectors are engaging with this particular program at this site.

The main purpose of Collective ed. is to create conditions for all young Tasmanians to thrive, by providing young people with meaningful and engaging career pathways during years 11 and 12 and after school. This collective approach places the community voice at the centre of the decision making and supports the community to join the dots across business, service providers and government - all of those who hold a piece of the jigsaw - and aims to achieve intergenerational whole-of-community change around an area that matters most to our community.

The Collective ed. 100 Day Challenge had three goals in mind: to achieve impact in a priority area of the community; to begin to build highly collaborative and inclusive ways of working; and to engage the whole community in the business of change making. The community group workshoped together to identify and then develop their chosen theme for the 100 Day Challenge workshop and the winning theme for the day was, 'Young people have the resources and support they need to transition to a meaningful pathway'.

Following the launch of the challenge Collective ed. established a working group made up of a cross-section of the community including parents and young people, education providers, local government, business and industry representatives and other service providers. The working group was tasked with actioning the ideas from the community workshop, including developing a mentoring program for Central Coast youth focusing on meaningful pathways, and this was named by the community Doors to Mentors. The group's aim was to identify 100 mentors in 100 days and I understand the group achieved this goal. In fact they managed to identify 106 mentors, so congratulations to all involved. It was great the other day in Ulverstone to listen to a mentor and the impact this person had, not only the positive impact it had on the young people but also themselves, as well providing some great self-worth in what they are doing to support the young people in the community, which is fantastic. Another important part of the work that is being driven through the group is developing ways to track young people post year 12 and I look forward to following this important work.

I am absolutely and consistently inspired by many communities right across Tasmania that have that vision of coming together in a collective way across sectors of education, across business and community groups, and the Central Coast is a great example of that. It was a privilege to have

the great fortune of witnessing first-hand the commitment and passion of those who want to provide the best possible opportunities for our young people and there are many hundreds if not thousands of people across Tasmania who are committed every single day to do exactly that. It was a great privilege to be part of that launch last week.

Tasmanian Leaders Program

[3.37 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of activity over the last few months we have not been sitting but, as members know, there is still a lot that gets done in terms of government and members out in their electorates. I want to speak about the Tasmanian Leaders Program, commonly referred to as Tas Leaders or TLP, which celebrated the graduation of 24 young leaders on Friday 21 February. It was the thirteenth year of the program and it was my absolute pleasure to address the graduates and deliver the graduation certificates on this occasion on behalf of the Minister for State Growth, Michael Ferguson. It was held in Hobart this year and I was very happy to be able to carry out that task, as I had done so a few years ago.

I was joined by the participants, their very proud families and supporters and the Tasmanian Leaders board, including the chair, Mr Rob Woolley, and Tas Leaders alumni, many of whom attend for subsequent graduation ceremonies. It shows that once people have participated in this program they tend to have an affinity for the program and many become ambassadors officially for the program as well. It was wonderful to see various graduates from previous years at that function.

As many of you will know, the Government has been a proud supporter of the program since it was established in 2007. It was wonderful to see another year of emerging Tasmanian leaders from all walks of life and many different industries, professions, the private and public sector, who made the most of the opportunity to participate in this program, which in many instances and, indeed, I would hazard a guess, in most instances is very life-changing.

As I said on the night, I am very confident that they will have taken on a great deal of both personal and professional development from the program. It is a fairly intense program, completed over 12 months many who still work full time. They take time away from work to complete the various stages of the courses. There is a significant amount of study and project work that they have to complete as well.

One of the enduring features of the program is that they build very strong networks amongst themselves as well as long-standing friendships, which will continue to enhance their leadership capacity in the future as they network throughout Tasmania. We know that living in Tasmania is very much a network of ideas and people. The bigger network you have stands you in good stead. Leadership of course is such a valuable tool in any workplace and leadership development is very important.

When I was a young professional trying to forge a legal career, it was very male dominated. It is just the way it was. I am not being critical but it was a very male-dominated profession and still can be in some practice areas. I would have loved to have had the opportunity to complete a program such as this. I think those who participate in the program with the support of their employer recognise that it is a great opportunity.

We as a government have a vision for continuing to build on Tasmania's strengths to make Tasmania the best place in the country to live work, invest and raise a family. I believe we already are the best place to live work, invest and raise a family. We have built capacity in our current and future leaders and entrepreneurs. People with these skills, particularly carrying out this program, are a great asset to our state.

Our Government is committed to supporting and nurturing emerging leaders. We are continuing our support for the Tasmanian Leaders Program with our current commitment already in place through to 2021. As I said, one of the great strengths of the program is that it provides opportunities to work with a cross-section of our community and industries where people share stories their experiences of lessons learnt. They learn from their achievements every day across our beautiful state.

Special thanks goes to the Tasmanian Leaders Board for their ongoing commitment to the development of our leaders of today and tomorrow. To the program itself, thanks to Angela Driver and her committed staff and associates and to the public and private sector employers who not only significantly contribute to the program financially but also give up their employees for a period of time and providing that support that is necessary to train and support our future leaders.

I have someone in my office who is a graduate of the leaders program. It was certainly life changing for him. I could not support the Tasmanian Leaders Program more personally than I already do and as a minister of this Government as well.

King Island - Need for Feed Initiative

Circular Head - Hay Run 2020

[3.44 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I have spoken before of the generous nature of the people who live in some of the most isolated parts of my electorate of Braddon. King Island is one of those places. With a population of about 1600 people and an area of 110 000 hectares King Island, has a wild, rugged beauty and is the home of some of our most famous agricultural products including cheese and beef, despite being directly in the path of the Roaring Forties.

The residents of King Island are a proud and strong community, resilient and generous, so it came as no surprise when I learned that recently the King Island Lions Club and local farmers had worked together to organise a shipment of hay to be sent to Victoria for distribution to farmers struggling through the drought.

King Island contractor and farmer Greg Morris led a band of dedicated drivers to load 700 bales, one by one, into the hold of the Eastern Lines vessel the *Straitsman*. The loading took 14 hours. It was a big job. During this time, the local Lions Club kept drivers going by offering them cake and coffee. The process was repeated at Port Welshpool in Victoria, where the offloading of the hay took a similar time, but without refreshments. The hay was then distributed through the Need for Feed initiative of Victorian Lions which has been an active drive since 2006. Need for Feed helped to fund the huge costs involved in shipping across Bass Strait. The local King Island Lions Club has contributed \$2000 and the local community has donated \$10 000. These donations will also help with shipping costs and go directly to assisting farmers and their families in drought areas in Victoria.

The King Island community is not the only region of Braddon where the generous nature of the residents has been evident over the Christmas break. The Circular Head community is also well known for its generosity and resilience. Under the leadership of local identity, Bernard Atkins, a stock agent who often travels to the Corryong area in Snowy Mountains, Victoria and Rob Johnson, the head chef of the renowned Tall Timbers resort, Hay Run 2020 was launched.

The Yolla Producers Cooperative at Wynyard raised awareness of the drive through its 700-plus members. Such was the response that some of the co-op members gave cheques of over \$1000 each, specifically to be spent on fencing supplies. With the support of Monson Transport and Hodge Transport, two loads of hay and supplies have been delivered to the Corryong district and four more are planned. In addition, Hay Run 2020 has sent three loads of fencing supplies and hay into Oatlands and the St Helens area. These are predominantly for bushfire-affected properties.

The Smithton Senior Citizens' Club donated \$5000 to buy fuel to help deliver supplies. Amongst the supplies sent to Victoria, I am told there were 20 boxes of torches, as many of these homes were without power for more than three weeks. It is hard to imagine fires so fierce that steel fence posts were literally melted into unrecognisable shapes, or animals that perished so quickly that they were still standing.

The Corryong district is in the Upper Murray region. It is where the Man from Snowy River allegedly hailed from and it is home to some of south-eastern Australia's best cattle breeders. It is from this region that many cattle are sourced and brought to Circular Head to be fattened by local farmers for processing through the local abattoir.

I am proud of the generosity shown by these regional communities in my electorate and congratulate King Island Lions, Bernard Atkins, Circular Head Lions, all the donors and Smithton Senior Citizens for outstanding effort in these difficult times.

Bushy Park Show

[3.48 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, Bushy Park Show was held on 15 February 2020 at the Bushy Park. What a great show it was. It is one of the oldest regional shows. It was established in 1865 as a garden show. The show featured wood-chopping, which is a great feature at most of our shows and holds them together. It also had cattle and sheep showing competitions and that is where I met up with one of the long-time locals, John Pilcher, who was doing the cattle judging. It also had equestrian events and a 'poli peel-off'.

I was involved with the 'poli peel-off' and sat along with my colleague Guy Barnett. The 'poli peel-off' is about peeling potatoes. It was quite an interesting competition this day. Two heats were held. In the first heat was my friend and colleague Guy Barnett, the Bushy Park policeman Peter Gibson, Brian Mitchell and Jen Butler.

The Bushy Park policeman, Peter Gibson, took the award out for this heat, closely followed by Brian Mitchell. Unfortunately, my colleague Guy Barnett let the side down a bit. In the second heat, Craig Farrell, the Derwent Valley Deputy Mayor, Jessica Cull-Cosgrove, and Derwent Valley councillor, Natasha Woods and myself competed. Yours truly came in second. I was quite impressed with my potato peeling ability.

We then had the final of this event. I took out third position, closely behind Peter Gibson and Natasha Woods, who took the award out. The interesting competition that came along after that was the longest peel competition. I have to admit that mine was about that long, Guy's was about that long, and Craig was about that long with his peeling. I was quite impressed that Craig took out the award, followed by Guy.

I congratulate the Bushy Park Show Committee organisers and volunteers for all their efforts again this year. What a great show it was.

The House adjourned at 3.51 p.m.