



**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF DEBATES**

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**REVISED EDITION**



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The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

**VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC AMENDMENT (DRIVER DISTRACTION AND  
SPEED ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2022 (No. 20)**

**PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT) BILL  
2021 (No. 22)**

**First Reading**

**Bills received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.**

**HEALTH LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2022  
(No. 19)**

**Third Reading**

**Bill read the third time.**

**HOMES TASMANIA BILL 2022 (No. 35)**

**Second Reading**

**Continued from 7 September 2022 (page 55).**

[11.08 a.m.]

**Mr WILLIE** (Elwick) - Mr President, yesterday, just before I concluded for the day I was talking about government services and what Tasmania is expecting. Last night I was walking back to my office thinking about other important areas of government - education, a passion of mine. This might sound a bit far-fetched, but hear me out.

Imagine a scenario where the government came to parliament and said, we have the worst education results in the country and what we are doing is not working. We need to try something else. We are going to abolish the Education department, we are going to set up a statutory authority called Educating Tasmania's Future and we are going to put a skills-based board in place. Now, that sounds a bit far-fetched, but this is housing, which is a key area of government, and that is exactly what we are proposing to do.

In that scenario I described, we might have NAPLAN results released, they might be deteriorating which they have been for a number of years. We might be going backwards in 14 of the 20 indicators since it started. This is not so far-fetched. The minister might say, 'I am disappointed too. It is not good enough. I am going to seek some advice from the board. I am going to ask the board to come up with a plan to address this problem. Not my problem, it is the board's responsibility.' This is the sort of thing we will hear in this particular area of government.

Another important area of government - health. What we are doing is not working. We have some of the worst health outcomes in the country. We have ambulance ramping. We have an elective surgery waiting list that is ballooning. We need to try something else. We are going to get rid of the Health department. We are going to set up a statutory authority with a skills-based board and it will be their responsibility.

This is outsourcing of government responsibility. I accept that some of the reporting requirements under this statutory authority are probably greater than what the current government department has to do. Before continuing my contribution, I will read from the document the Government provided yesterday. In the oversight and accountability points that they made, they said:

The authority will be guided by a statement of expectations from the responsible minister, which will set out the policy expectations it is to deliver upon. The document will be tabled in parliament. Homes Tasmania will also prepare a corporate plan each year, setting out the work it will undertake in the upcoming three years. It will be required to report against each in an annual report, which will be tabled in parliament. This level of reporting and policy transparency is significantly higher than is currently required in the departmental agency.

It is pretty similar to a lot of government businesses and government entities. We had a TAFE bill that we discussed. There were statements of expectation in that as well. It reflects a lot of those other entities.

I raise that, and I accept that it is probably more than the Government has to do now. From memory, they do a quarterly report on their housing progress and there is a Housing Dashboard where they update figures around the social housing waitlist and the wait times. They have to produce statistics in the annual report for Communities Tasmania, which is tabled in parliament. So, I accept there may be some more requirements here. They produce a strategy and an action plan. They will probably keep doing those sorts of things, by the sounds of it. They want to look longer term. Fine.

Yesterday, in the other place, the same minister who is the minister for Housing is the minister for Energy. The Opposition in the other place were asking questions about Hydro, a government business. In one of the responses to the question - and the question was about Hydro's financial position for the time to date from the start of the financial year in July - he said, 'That question is not a responsible question. You fully well know you can ask that question in October when the annual report is produced'.

This is the same sort of reporting as Hydro. The same sort of accountability. However, the minister who is also the minister for Energy is telling the Opposition in the other place 'I am not going to answer that question, you can ask that question in October when the annual report is tabled in parliament'. These are the sorts of answers we will get when we ask questions about Homes Tasmania. 'You cannot ask that right now, it is only two months into the financial year. Ask that at an appropriate time'. Under the existing arrangement, we can ask questions about housing whenever we like, and we get answers about it because it is a government department. That is how it should be, in my view.

I wanted to make members aware of that. It is a different portfolio but that response from the minister yesterday, who is also the minister for Housing, is relevant.

I have some other questions, in terms of the document that was circulated to members from the Government. I will work through them.

In the new governance arrangements, the last line of the second paragraph, in particular, struck me. It said:

this allows expertise to be leveraged in board members that cannot be expected of a single individual.

I do not think that is the case of the current arrangement. Yes, we have a Director of Housing. We have a whole government department of expertise. We have a sector that is telling us that they have a great relationship with the Government, that they collaborate, and that there is a lot of expertise in the sector. Some of those people in the sector will probably go on the skills-based board as they are already providing advice to government. If the Government says the Director of Housing needs some more advice, why not set up an advisory? You do not need legislation to do that. There would be willing participants, there are lots of people who care about this, myself included, who would probably provide their advice for free.

I remember a time when the current Government came to government saying: boards are expensive, we need to get rid of boards, there are too many boards, Labor-Green government is no good, they keep introducing new boards. How many boards have we introduced in the last few years? Stadiums Tasmania comes to mind and there was another one where they were asking about a board. Here is another one.

The point I am making is that there is good collaboration between the sector and the department and good advice in the department right now. All of the staff in the department will become the staff in the new statutory authority, yet we need a skills-based board with paid positions. If I move down through this document there are points about greater collaboration and yesterday it was a common theme as stakeholders spoke about their collaboration with the Government already. This document states the bill will give the authority broad powers to enter into arrangements to achieve positive housing outcomes.

It empowers the authority to lease, transfer, buy and sell assets to deliver and facilitate new supply. Are they not able to do that now? It also allows the authority to enter into partnerships, trusts and joint ventures for purposes like developing land and delivering supply of social and affordable housing. Are they not able to do that now? I do not think there is anything stopping them from doing that right now.

For example, this allows Homes Tasmania to work with councils to develop more shop-top apartments and release land supply, working across government to better utilise government-owned buildings and working with the not-for-profit sector to deliver more social housing. That is happening now, in fact in my own electorate, and in the *Glenorchy Gazette* this month, the council is talking about the amount of land they have identified they are selling for housing. It is happening now. My question is, what in that statement cannot happen now? What in that statement means we have to have a housing authority to achieve those things?

Some other questions about this document. The bill increases the scope and now an increased focus on supporting a broader range of people in need. The bill increases the scope of those for whom housing services and supports can be provided from just eligible persons to include those on low or moderate incomes.

I said yesterday that can probably be done now through government policy. There is obviously the Homes Act that has eligibility requirements and requirements of government to reinvest in the Social Housing program, but we do target cohorts now. First home owners bill, HomeBuilder Grants. There is a way we assist potentially low- and moderate-income households into housing.

Leader, my question is, how will that be defined? How will we know what cohort is trying to be captured there? Will there be a definition of low and moderate income, will there be a threshold or will it just be a free-for-all with potentially people who are not considered to be struggling receiving more government assistance as a moderate-income household? My question is, is that going to be defined? Will there be thresholds? How will we know?

I move to a stronger focus on urban renewal and some dot points there. Strategic planning and land development to ensure new homes have access to services and amenities and education and employment opportunities: that has happened now. There is a housing facility, it is not in my electorate, but it is not far away, where there is a strong emphasis on youth and education services. It is located quite close to a government school and it works quite well.

Delivering a variety of housing options to address different needs and desires, including town houses, apartments, terrace houses and modular homes: I am pretty sure that happens now. In fact, Centacare Evolve, who were here yesterday, are doing a fantastic job of providing different sorts of housing. In your electorate in particular, Mr President, I have been through some of those developments. I know that they have spent extensive time on the mainland looking at developments over there and they have brought some of those learnings back to use in Tasmania.

In fact, when I was the housing shadow minister, probably four years ago, I went to Adelaide with Centacare Evolve Housing and other housing stakeholders. I went through some fantastic developments there. Some government, some social housing providers. There is one called Lightsview which uses inclusionary zoning in the planning system, medium density. They use innovative materials like a composite concrete board which has the properties of brick. It is really energy-efficient but it is cheap and easy to put up. You can render it and make it look nice. They are doing a good job meeting those diversity of housing needs already under the current system.

Encouraging development of diverse communities and integrations of people from different social and economic backgrounds: yesterday, I acknowledged under governments of both persuasions that we have seen clear policy change to move away from housing in broadacre development to mixed development. We know that achieves better outcomes, better neighbourhoods, safer communities. People who can live closer to services. That has happened over many years. We are seeing some of these social housing providers move into areas where traditionally there was broadacre housing and they are trying to change that mix. They are trying to offer more services. They are trying to provide more community spaces, more social supports and networks. That is already happening.



Creating a sustainable housing sector, so housing is appropriate, safe, affordable and accessible into the future: I will get to the borrowings question in a minute. However, I do have a few concerns there. I share the same sentiments as the member for Murchison. There is nothing wrong with debt as long as it is used for good infrastructure, maybe in this instance social infrastructure that is needed by the community and that can be serviced in a responsible way. I will get to that point in a minute when I talk about the financial arrangements. In fact, I will move there now. It is the next point on the sheet.

One of the biggest changes with this is the capacity to borrow. Leader, my question is, we have been told that there is \$3.5 billion worth of assets in the portfolio, and that the new statutory authority will have the capacity to borrow against or leverage against those assets. How will those borrowings be serviced? Will it just be the tenants' rent or are there going to be other revenue-raising measures used to service those borrowings? Will the borrowings impact the net operating balance in the budget, or will it be off the books of the budget?

The question here is - and I know that in this document that was circulated it says it will not impact government funding, the current government funding in the current budget across the forward Estimates, no doubt - but what about in the future? You will have a statutory authority with significant asset holdings. The government might say, 'we do not need to provide as much funding now, go leverage against your assets and fund those projects that way, because we cannot afford it'.

**Ms Forrest** - This is why you need to look at the whole state sector in the budget papers, not just the General Government sector.

**Mr WILLIE** - Yes. That is right, and if you look at the whole state sector, there are significant debt liabilities across that portfolio.

**Ms Forrest** - Yes, TasNetworks and Hydro.

**Mr WILLIE** - Yes. Huge debts. The risk here is government says, 'well, we are abrogating our responsibility, that is the board's issue, we have other things we want to fund. You have a significant asset portfolio. Go borrow instead'.

**Mr Valentine** - It skews the overall picture of the true financial situation of the government.

**Mr WILLIE** - It does, yes. You get into tricky accounting then, do we not? I know there are government businesses that have had to borrow to pay government dividends. They are increasing the debt profile of the overall government balance sheet, but it does not come up in the state budget, because it is paid as a dividend.

I have significant questions around how that will work in terms of this new arrangement. The other thing that is brought up in this document is greater research focus. We know the staff is going to transfer from Communities Tasmania to the new statutory authority. Is the Government not using their expertise now for research? Are they going to employ additional staff in this new authority to undertake research? Is that not something that can be done now, without this change?

Some other points before I wrap up, Mr President, that were brought up by the member for Murchison: the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) potential - and that is all it is at the moment. It is a pilot being run in collaboration with the ACT Government.

**Ms Forrest** - One part of it was. We do not know where it fits.

**Mr WILLIE** - One part, yes. The statement was that it requires a statutory authority to access that funding. To use the ACT as an example, they still have Housing ACT and they have a Suburban Land Agency that is a statutory authority, so they have two organisations that work in this space. The argument that we will not be able to access this pot of funding when it is in a pilot phase is not a convincing argument. If the Government wanted to set up an urban land agency, it probably could.

We are talking about a pilot being run with the ACT at the moment. I do not think it is a convincing argument to say we have to rush to set up this statutory authority so we can access this funding. The other question I had is, will this open up the ability for commercial builders to access funding to provide housing, not just the not-for-profits? I think, under the current arrangement, it might be everyday commercial builders who are building houses for profit that potentially could access government funding.

**Ms Lovell** - And land.

**Mr WILLIE** - And land, and I am interested in why, and what sorts of safeguards will be around that. Commercial builders are doing work for not-for-profits, but not-for-profits are the project managers and they are the ones dealing with government - they are being subcontracted to do the work.

**Mr Valentine** - Commercial builders are not 'not-for-profit'.

**Mr WILLIE** - However, under this change, it does open it up to commercial builders to directly deal with government to provide housing and access land. I am interested in what safeguards will be there for that.

In summary, Mr President, the biggest concern I have with this bill is about ministerial accountability. Yes, I can accept there may be more reporting requirements, but we already have that with government businesses.

Some of those government businesses we do not get to see on our committees. It is every second year. We have a minister who will not write to constituents. We have a minister who is also the minister for Energy yesterday answering questions about another government business saying, 'you cannot ask that until October'. He was also on the news one night saying he wished he could click his fingers and make this whole thing go away.

**Ms Forrest** - Which thing was that?

**Mr WILLIE** - The housing challenge. He said, 'I wish I could click my fingers and make this problem go away'.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Of course, through you, Mr President, he meant solve the problem. We all wish he could do that.

**Mr WILLIE** - He is the one in charge of doing that.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - That is what he is trying to do.

**Mr WILLIE** - Well, give it to someone else with a skills-based board to do. They are the main concerns I have about this, Mr President, but I will be interested in what other members have to say. I will also ask some questions in the Committee stage.

[11.29 a.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on the Homes Tasmania bill, and there are certainly many things to be said. A great deal of work has already been spoken about by the Government regarding this bill in the media, in correspondence to us, in ministerial statements, in the other place, here yesterday in the second reading speech, and yet all those words have delivered a remarkable lack of clarity, very little specific detail and much obfuscation.

I charitably describe a lot of it as 'word salad' because we have been served a salad instead of a genuine, specific and rational argument for the model presented in the bill, so it has been quite a task for us to assess it, which is a shame. When you bring something to this place and ask us to assess it and support it, it is helpful to have good, transparent policy process, rationally made argument with clear, specific detail.

I will provide my take on this. I will be as clear and rational as possible on the bill we have before us. To begin, we can probably establish a few things we are all likely to agree on. The minister has been keen to point to things we could agree on. The first one is we know things are bad in Tasmania in relation to housing affordability and housing insecurity. We all heard the stats. We know there are close to 4500 households waiting for social housing. It is up from just a year ago. We know that. The time for priority applicants to be housed is at a shocking level - close to 90 weeks. Unbelievable.

We know one in 82 Tasmanians receive homelessness services. That is a figure higher than the national average, quite a bit higher. We know 46 people a day are turned away from specialist homelessness services in Tasmania. That does not sound as much when you say 46 a day in a way, but it is 16 800, or just shy of that, turned away in a year. That is a lot of turn aways in this small state.

In Tasmania, the number of households where rent is increasing is up 11 per cent in the census data from 2016 to 2021. A higher proportion of us is renting. It is now close to 58 000 households in the state who are renters and we know the private rental market has catastrophically failed. Private rental vacancy rates are catastrophically low. It is the only word I can use to describe it. It is well under 1 per cent, 0.6 per cent was the latest figure. Burnie has a shocking figure of 0.2 per cent. Far beyond market failure.

Currently, we are seeing rent hikes as a big driver of people into homelessness. Then, not being able to afford those rent hikes because they are in the percentage of 10-20 per cent more at a time on their rent. That is because the only constrain we put on rent increases in this state - we are very backward in this respect - is market equivalence, which basically equals a

race to the top when it comes to what you can charge for rent and how quickly you can keep increasing it.

More people renting, catastrophic failure in the rental market driving homelessness - on top of the other things that are driving homelessness in this state. Over the term of this Liberal government across the eight years, things have become much worse. Not all these things are this Government's responsibility, absolutely not. There is a broader context around this. There are federal issues and federal leaders around this. However, this is the Government at a state level that has had the responsibility for managing it for us and it is much worse.

It is well established that we know things are bad, we can all agree on that in relation to housing affordability and in relation to homelessness. In the briefings yesterday, we heard that reinforced by community service providers who are at the front line of the housing emergency. I hear it from my conversations with people in that sector all the time.

Essentially, what they were able to express is they are desperate to have more homes to put more people in, which brings us to the second thing we could all agree on. We know in this state we want to build more public and social housing as quickly as possible. After eight years of virtual standstill on public and social housing, the Government has made ambitious commitments to a building program over the next decade to deliver 10 000 homes through building or acquiring. We are not necessarily talking about 10 000 additional to our housing stock totally, but building or acquiring 10 000 public and social housing homes.

Pleasingly, the federal government has also indicated an intention to invest more and provide funding mechanisms for building more public and social housing. Excellent. We need shared effort across levels of government.

We have a keen and capable community housing sector here, with not-for-profit community housing developers and providers already charging ahead with their own building programs. They have been a real success story in this state in recent years delivering for our state on the social housing side.

However, we have recognised constraints on building things quickly. The constraints that are most regularly identified - as we are all quite familiar with and we can all agree on - are workforce limitations, planning system constraints, land availability challenges. These are consistently identified as the barriers to quickly getting more houses.

To recap, we know things are bad on the housing affordability and insecurity front. We know we need to urgently build more but there are constraints.

A third thing we can all pretty safely agree on is that we have a sector of housing and homelessness service providers that are committed, capable and keen for innovation. A whole suite of services and programs are provided in this state in the area of housing and homelessness, with a skilled workforce and a demonstrated history of developing innovative, evidence-based new approaches to achieve better outcomes for Tasmanians.

We only have to look at examples. Let us go back to the Common Ground initiative, when it was first brought to this state more recently. We have Youth Foyer models being used by Anglicare for supported accommodation for young people from 16 to 25. For a number of years now we have been developing that side of things. We have Colony 47 adopting exciting

approaches like Advantaged Thinking approaches to underpin their work. Looking at things like their Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) that they brought in from a model from New South Wales, which provides integrated housing and mental health supports. The list could go on in that sector. They are skilled, capable and keen to innovate and they are driving that innovation as best they can within the constraints that they operate.

So innovation in that sector and development and rolling out better innovation of even more effective services are constrained. They are constrained by a lack of effective government leadership and planning, stalled reforms processes and, crucially, a lack of adequate, secure, operational funding from the state Government in an ongoing way. An example of that, to provide a small one: Anglicare has operated supported accommodation for young people across this state for many years, and it is based on that Youth Foyer model, an excellent model. I could be wrong and I am open to being corrected, but I do not believe that those facilities under that model here in this state have ever been provided with a level of funding that allows for the full implementation of the model. So they are not able to be accredited to that excellent model, that internationally recognised excellent model, because the state Government has always undersold them, sold them short, on operational funding to achieve the full model.

Another example, the Housing Connect model. In terms of innovative and effective processes, the Housing Connect model is a great one. One front door to a whole suite of services delivered through a partnership of five organisations statewide, an excellent initiative at the time. It has stalled, however, because it has been in a process of review and reform for some time. It has not landed anywhere yet, and we keep waiting. That is the sense of 'stalled-ness' that the sector is feeling at the moment. They are desperate for that to change.

To recap, we know things are bad in relation to housing affordability and insecurity. We know we urgently need to build more public and social housing, but there are constraints. We know we have a sector of skilled service providers keen to innovate but also in some senses constrained and stalled. Three things, I think, we can straightforwardly agree on.

Questions that occur to me then, are these: firstly, does the bill and the model in it fix those things? My short answer is, largely, no. It does not address the factors driving housing unaffordability and skyrocketing rents. We would not expect it to address a whole raft of those factors. They are well beyond it, but it is not going to fix that, it is not a magic wand for it. The key reason it does not do that within the scope of what it does cover is it cannot fix those things stopping us quickly building things. It cannot necessarily fix workforce limitations, planning system constraints. You can look at the area of land availability but quite frankly, we already have mechanisms it largely replicates to identify and free up Crown land and other land we have with housing supply order processes in place. We have a lot of those mechanisms there.

**Mr Valentine** - With its problems.

**Ms WEBB** - Indeed, with its problems. Not to say we would not want to fix and improve what is there, I will come to that. It is not a choice between doing nothing or doing this. The bill does not specifically point to any different way of working with the community services sector in regard to funding, reforms or models of working that is not available now and could not be done under the situation we have.

In terms of thinking of those things we can agree on, is this bill, and this model it contains, the best way to fix those things? My short answer to that is I do not know. Mr President, I do not know if this is the best way to partly fix some of those things. It has not been demonstrated why our current challenges cannot be addressed within the framework of the current system, but with changes and improvements made. It is interesting because when I looked through submissions made on the draft bill, the Housing Choices Tasmania submission noting the draft bill:

... does not appear to be any significant change to what the state housing jurisdiction is already able to do.

Others have made this point too, it is still unclear the extent of what is delivered that is different through this model, except for maybe one key thing which we will come to. The case has not been made why this change is the best indicated way forward. We have not seen any credible policy development process in which options and solutions were explored and tested against each other.

Another important question of those three things we could agree on is, other than when it would work and whether it is the best option, what other impacts might this bill and the model in it have that would impact on the state and on the citizens of our state? I do not think we know the answer to that question clearly enough. There are a lot of unanswered questions regarding what eventual impact this may have, what secondary impacts it may have, what unintended consequences it may have.

As we are all aware, sometimes it is the unintended consequences, the secondary impacts, the collateral damage that are often overlooked and pushed past in a rush to implement a shiny, new thing. My radar is also up in this instance in relation to, not so much to the unintended consequences, but whether there are maybe covertly intended consequences and what they might be.

Call me suspicious, but it is fair to say we need to be thinking about what agendas are being run here. We are talking about the fundamental basis on which the state Government provides public and social housing to support its citizens' right to housing. Talking about a very large state asset base and how it has been managed, developed, disposed of and prioritised. Ideological agendas at play here could be setting us on a course of fundamentally undermining a state government role and public assets.

That is something that concerns me. I do not feel that has been sufficiently and transparently examined so that we can have confidence in the degree to which there are or are not ideological agendas at play here, covert, intended consequences.

Where does that leave us? Having shared some of that thinking that sits behind my approach to this bill, I will mention a few things in relation to the bill in more detail and how that is also playing on my mind. I cannot help but reflect that if you have identified that current practice is not working and there is a need to change, you are faced with two choices: do you fix the thing you have, or do you create something new? In this case, it seems the Government has chosen in a fundamental way not to fix what we have, but to discard it and create something new. However, we have not seen that decision-making play out as a transparent and evidence-based process. What specifically are the problems that we are trying to solve here? Where has that been consulted on, clearly identified, and quantified? Consultation only

occurred on this new model after the bill was drafted, well after the decision was made and announced back in March.

Mr President, as I alluded to in an aside to the member for Hobart a moment ago, there was never a binary choice for us here. We should not be pushed to think that there was. It should never have been a situation where we were somehow made to feel that the choice was between doing nothing and staying exactly as we are, or doing this model in this bill. Yet, from many stakeholders who we talk to, and some we heard from in briefings, there is a sense that they have. In light of that, they offer optimistic and somewhat puzzled support for this bill where they are desperate to see improvement. They are desperate to get more housing built as quickly as possible. They know what we have now is not working. They want change from their stalled situations and they want to see something happen. So they say, 'this is something happening, perhaps it might work. We could give it a try'. I think that is very disappointing, because I do not think that points to an appropriate process to explore and define and arrive at the best way forward, when we are just presented with this way forward.

It is interesting to contemplate and ask, because it is certainly not clear, whose idea was this? How was this option identified as the most appropriate solution to the specific problems that we have? It was announced quite out of the blue. Where did it come from? Who was the decision-maker? When did that decision happen, at the outset?

Let us remind ourselves about that. The announcement of the new housing authority. Out of the blue in March 2022, in then-premier, Mr Gutwein's Premier's Address in parliament, we heard that the Department of Communities was to be summarily dismantled. No warning. No consultation. Perhaps not even the head of the department knew that it was going to happen until just before the announcement that it would be pulled apart this year, and shut down. A department that was a mere six years old, that was formed in 2016 by this Liberal government, with the stated intention at that time to bring together services with natural alignments to reduce silos. I believe that was a very explicit intention of that department. Then out of the blue in 2022, six year later, we are getting rid of it. The reason given for that - wait for it - was 'to better align services and to reduce silos'. Blow me down, Mr President. This verges on the Orwellian sometimes, when we get into this territory.

Of course, as part of the scrapping of the Department of Communities, the current Housing Tasmania element of the department, perhaps ironically, was facing homelessness. What to do with Housing Tasmania? The Government's answer, clearly, was to package it up as an authority and give it a skills-based board to run. No consultation. No transparent process. No involvement, to my knowledge, of staff or stakeholders until well after that decision was made.

To me, this looks like a government that has given up on its own ability to develop and implement policy and to manage functional relationships with stakeholders. Not only given up on itself, but also perhaps, most sadly, has lost faith in the public service to develop and implement policy and manage functional relationships with stakeholders. Giving up and handing it over on the assumption that a more private sector approach will automatically be better. Giving core state Government responsibilities and functions to a small group, who are not elected, and are not public servants.

Maybe the core issue is that this state Government cannot maintain functional relationships with departments and the public service. Maybe that is why it is so ready to

dismantle and discard them, and instead set up something approximating their functions in an entirely separate entity.

I am hearing echoes here of what we saw last year with TasTAFE. It makes me wonder, what is next? From the member for Elwick's contribution, I am not the only one. What other core responsibilities of state Government will the Government deem to be dysfunctional and want to break up with? Which parts of our health system, which parts of our education system could be hived off? It is a concern, it begs the question: the way that this has been done, the way it has been decided on and presented, begs the question.

I will spend some time touching on a couple of particular aspects of the bill and some of the rhetoric, and raise a few questions, knowing that I will have plenty more in the Committee stage so I will not be veering into that territory here. It goes to my assessment of the bill.

The second reading speech says:

The authority will be responsible for delivering improved housing services.

How? In what ways will housing services be improved under this model or by this bill? What will be different? How are the improvements not able to be delivered under the current model? What is it about Homes Tasmania as iterated in this bill that makes these improvements possible, that would not be possible now? I have heard the minister assert that the model will deliver 'improved partnerships' and 'greater collaboration'. How, specifically?

Clearly, under the current model we have partnerships, and we have collaboration; there is always room for improvement. Why cannot it happen under this model? What is special about the model proposed in this bill that means we can have improvements and extensions that are not now available? There is one area, perhaps, we will come to it.

Livable communities, the second reading speech also talks about 'the broader role that the authority will play in ensuring the wellbeing of those in need of housing and homelessness services, as well as in building livable communities'. That is a lot to unpack. Again, specifically in what way will Homes Tasmania have a broader role in ensuring the wellbeing of those in need of housing and homelessness services, than the entity that is right now within the Department of Communities Tasmania? How will that be different?

There is nothing unique about this model that will deliver what could not be delivered under the current model, improved and done differently within the current model. Specifically, in what way - thinking about those livable communities - will Homes Tasmania have a broader role in building livable communities than we now have and see in the system? That is an interesting one. That seems to imply that there will be some insertion into the planning system, it seems to imply that there will be a way to facilitate other aspects of community building, but I do not see that necessarily reflected in the bill.

It begs the question, surely that is what we now do in a collaborative way, or we could potentially be doing in a collaborative way, across a range of areas within government who all work and work into the space of building livable communities, not just the state Government but different levels of government, particularly local government in that space too?



Another claim made in the second reading speech is that the bill establishes a new framework, the right framework to futureproof housing for many decades to come. It also says that we need to be innovative, agile and responsive, and we need to change the way we have been doing things to be more contemporary to prepare for the next decade and beyond. It is very hard not to feel that these are just buzzwords and catchphrases plucked out of the air. 'Futureproof', throw that in, sounds great. 'Agile', gosh, I think governments at all levels should be banned from using that word ever again. How ridiculous. 'More contemporary', sounds great, very impressive to say that we are going to be 'more contemporary'.

However, it is very hard to feel that beyond grabbing a few buzzwords and catchphrases to throw in, there is literally no explanation from the Government as to how the new arrangements in this model are able to be more agile, innovative and responsive, nor how they are more contemporary. Deciding to change something with no demonstrated evidence base, no apparent consultation into the decision-making - only post decision-making - does not make it contemporary. That is not responsive; it is reactive. Again, according to the second reading speech, we must change how we have done things in the past to allow more innovation, more efficiency and faster developments to get houses out of the ground and provide homes to people who need them as quickly as possible. Agreed.

What have been the main barriers? We have already identified that the main barriers holding up getting houses out of the ground are largely not related to matters in this bill. In their submissions, community housing providers identified a range of areas of reform that they saw as key to speeding up the process for getting houses out of the ground. Most of those related to planning systems. Some even had some out-there suggestions like compulsory acquisition expansion, things like that, which is quite an interesting discussion for another day.

However, none of the things that were suggested by those community housing providers related to matters in this bill, in terms of getting things out of the ground quicker, and making houses available more promptly for the Tasmanian people. This bill is not fixing that. I agree with the minister that we must change how we have done things in the past, to allow for more innovation. Is this the only way we can do it? No. Can we have a conversation about better ways to do it? Absolutely.

It is interesting to have read through some of the materials, including the second reading speech, and hear it in the Chamber, and to hear about the archaic Homes Act. The Government mentioned structural difficulties in the operation of the Homes Act and suggests that attempts to modernise old laws over time can overcomplicate and even render many of their provisions unworkable. In fact, if we were to continue to rely on the Homes Act, apparently there will continue to be many constraints on the provision of more homes for Tasmanians, specially more vulnerable members of the community. No examples were provided about that. There was no clarity on what will be done under the new model that could not be done on the existing act; to borrow, of course, and we will come to that.

Many aspects of the Homes Act have been directly carried forward into this bill. We know that legislation needs to be updated and changes need to be made. We need to add or remove things to either bring them up to date, or to move with a new approach or a new way of working. We have done a great deal of that with this bill, with the current Homes Act. However, large parts of this bill are literally the Homes Act brought forward.

At times, things have been reformatted and redrafted to probably a more contemporary drafting style, but there are literally swathes of that 'archaic' Homes Act in this bill. There is obviously no problem updating the 'archaic' Homes Act. We could have done it, and it did not mean we did have to put a new model in; but, there you go.

An outdated act, in need of review and updating, does not justify a fundamental change of model. You cannot equate those two things. You cannot equate a need to update an act with a switch to an entirely new model. The complete removal of the central responsibility of state Government from the public service of providing public and social housing, and to vest it into and untested and unproven separate entity is not the only outcome from deciding we have to update an act.

Mr President, the second reading speech also says this bill:

[will] ensure Tasmania has the most integrated, whole-of-system approach to developing land, building, procuring, maintaining, modifying and disposing of homes that may have passed the use-by date.

Again, there are more questions about that, because they are just words on a page if we have not had a demonstration of how it is more integrated. We have Housing Tasmania sitting within the Department of Communities Tasmania. It does not get much more integrated than that, with a whole range of services that sit around them.

We have government being responsible for the housing services. We also have government in other areas responsible for planning, responsible for infrastructure. We have that sitting within the state Government, and we should be able to think of our state Government as being integrated. I know the reality is that often it is not; but it does not necessarily mean that it is going to be more integrated by plucking a piece out and giving responsibility to an unelected non-public service board. In relation to this act we have seen a lot of nonsensical, opaque rhetoric, virtually no clear explanation or rationale provided, multitudes of questions with no clear answers given and for me, a distinct sense an agenda may well be being pursued.

My radar is most acute in terms of any agenda around public and social housing. Public and social housing are not mentioned in the bill, they are not descriptors we use in legislation, but it does prompt us to ask where are they in all this? Public housing is not even mentioned in the second reading speech which mentions increasing the supply of social and affordable housing in the first paragraph, thereafter only the first of affordable housing.

What is the Government's definition of affordable housing when they are using it in this context? Although affordable housing is mentioned in the bill, it is not defined and we will hear in relation to that, 'oh, it is because the definition shifts and changed over time and context'. Sure, that is the problem, right? We know the definition shifts and changes; therefore, it gives you a lot of leeway if you stop talking about public and social housing and start talking about affordable housing, it gives you a hell of a lot of leeway in terms of where you can go with that.

As an example, in various discussions on this bill and in briefings, we raised some conversation on Huntingfield developments. There is a large Huntingfield development we considered in this place because it came through the housing land supply order process, somewhat controversially, I felt, as per my attempted disallowance. There was a previous small

parcel in Huntingfield released prior to that and there was an intention that all 40 blocks were going to be affordable housing. Do you know how many of those resulted in affordable housing? Zero.

It is all very well to have intentions, to have statements, to use the words 'affordable housing', but it gives you a hell of a lot of leeway. Much as we continue to hear about the other massive development going into Huntingfield, the intention that 10-15 per cent is going to be social and affordable housing - ah, there we go.

Affordable to who, exactly? How much of that will be genuinely preserved for what we would think of as the purpose for social housing and the cohorts that need it? Well, it is yet to be seen, that fast track we did on the development in September 2019 on any buildings there. Some would say that is a reason for this need to get things out of the ground fast, we need it to happen faster, who knows? Maybe it could have happened faster if this had been in place.

The case has not been made and there is plenty to point to with what is happening right now and the need for improvement. There is plenty, but it does not mean this is our only option. I would like to understand the Government's current definition and understanding of affordable housing. It is using the term right now, in the bill and in the second reading speech.

Sure, the caveat being that it may change, but right now, what is it? What will the status of public and social housing become if this new model comes to pass? I wonder about the extent to which public and social housing will maintain prominence as a priority for Homes Tasmania, as iterated in this bill.

It is not clear enough what that trajectory is and there has not been enough reassurance given in any of the commentary on this bill. It certainly concerns me that we may be on a trajectory with this bill where more and more state assets - public and social housing - are sold off or given to private ownership or possibly turned over to other purposes. We know it can be really problematic, it can really get up people's noses if public land is given for a particular purpose to an institution and then the institution may decide to change the purpose of that down the track. That is something that we know the community can get fussed about. If public and social housing assets are to become diminished, decreased, used for other purposes, given away, that is something that I think is less able to be influenced and accountable under this model.

I note that appears to be a concern that was shared by a number of stakeholders in submissions on the bill. We know that there were various recommendations made in those submissions about a power to safeguard public assets and ensure they remained in use for public good and relieving housing stress in our community. Perhaps the Government would like to say something more on the record about how they have addressed those concerns raised and what they can point to to provide more reassurance about that so we have that on the record.

Others have talked about the financial side of this bill, and the entity that it puts in place, others who are better equipped to deal with it than I am. My understanding is that this is virtually the only area that is different when it comes to the model in this bill compared to what is possible now. Not what is now, because we know it is not necessarily operating as well as it could, and doing all the things that we would like. However, in terms of model versus model, with what we have now and its potential compared to what we have proposed under this bill, the only real difference seems to be that it can leverage borrowings on the asset base.

I still do not understand why we cannot do that to some extent now. I also wonder, what is the expectation in regard to any borrowings that Homes Tasmania may undertake? We have certainly been very familiar in this state with being saddled with housing debt, until very recently, in fact. We know exactly what impact it has when we have to devote significant amounts of funding to loan repayments instead of using it to provide homes and services. I am concerned - will we end up in a situation where Homes Tasmania - if it comes to pass - will be using properties that are now government and public social housing assets and potentially racking up debts, and also then potentially having to commercially use those assets or elements of those assets to maximise rental income to service debts? Then we see public assets being used in that way rather than the core purpose of providing housing and services to people in need.

Mr President, the second reading speech does indicate an area of focus for the Housing Tasmania authority, not a new one. It says:

This legislation creates a role for Homes Tasmania in broader housing considerations, beyond what the current department has historically held. This means it can consider our community housing needs and how our vulnerable are supported within this. It also means it can play a role in key worker accommodation and how that fits within the broader housing need, particularly in regional areas or areas of high demand.

It is interesting that it says that, and it describes it as being beyond what the current department has historically held. Actually, that element of the bill is carried forward from the Homes Act that we currently have it is 15A in the Homes Act that we have now that has been carried over into this bill in clause 47. We have the ability to look at things like key worker accommodation, we have the ability to look at - as it is stated in there - statutory entities, local governments, that sort of thing, and industry. I am interested why this has been framed up as something new, when on my reading it looks like it is something that is already in existence. I am not aware that it has been used recently. I would like to know whether it has been used in the current act.

I also wonder whether this is something that the Tasmanian community would expect our state Government to be doing, investing in and providing, when you think about it competing with the need that we have also to be providing for our public and social housing sector, and actually providing our citizens and those most in need with homes. We know that we have shockingly higher waiting lists, going up and up. We know the wait is very long, nearly five years. How can we possibly see it as appropriate to use our very limited resources in an effort to subsidise housing for an industry instead of providing it to our needy citizens? I want to know more about what the expectation is.

The Government says this is a new area. It does not seem like a new area to me. It looks like it is capable already under the Homes Act. Even so, it is in this bill. If it comes to pass, what is the plan? How is that going to be balanced? How are those various potential activities going to be balanced against each other? How will we decide whether providing funding or assistance to build a suite of houses for a particular corporate entity or industry interest weighs against perhaps a couple of suburbs over or, scattered through a town nearby, providing homes for Tasmanians currently homeless? I am interested to hear about that.

I will flag I do have some amendments principally that relate to the purposes of the act section and the principles in the act. I am still tweaking some of those. There will be a new version of them coming to members before the Committee stage. They are minor things we will deal with when we discuss it during Committee stage. I am hopeful people will see them as valuable adjustments. They are not policy changes. They are not particularly dramatic in the impact they have. They are some important tweaks I want people to consider.

One of the things I will pick up on we will look at in one of those amendments, but the proposed amendment came about because of a question raised when I was considering this bill. That was, under this model proposed in the bill, with the statutory authority, Homes Tasmania, who holds responsibility for reducing the numbers of Tasmanians experiencing housing stress and homelessness? Where does that responsibility sit under the model?

Of course, it should sit with the government of the day, executive government, with the minister for Housing. Primarily. We can all play our part, of course. All of us can play our part into that area. However, when we talk about fundamental policy responsibility, where does it sit? I think the creation of this authority, the institution of the skills-based board for it, who are responsible for that strategy and governance and putting these plans in place, does provide a lack of clarity. There is a blurring of a line. There is a gap between the minister and that board. I fear that into that gap, down that chasm, might fall the sense of fundamentally who is responsible and who we hold responsible.

Certainly concern was expressed in many submissions on the draft bill that under this model, social housing and specialist homelessness services would be seen less as essential services. That is a key concern. A balance of things. A balance of objectives and principles is needed and that is not adequately expressed or confirmed.

The member for Elwick also raised this as a concern in his contribution, and I do worry about the balance between providing a priority to social housing and public housing and against that, the greater opportunity provided in this bill for corporate welfare, which may then become prioritised. Particularly if it is ultimately a lot more lucrative and can be then justified as feeding back into repaying debts we accrued through the model.

Where does Homes Tasmania in this model connect into the private rental market, including, for example, intersecting with responsibility for policy in that area and reform of say, the Residential Tenancy Act? We know these two things intersect and there will naturally be crossover, because some of the activities that are the responsibility allocated to Homes Tasmania in the bill work into that market. I want to be clearer about what that intersection looks like. We have now inserted into clause 49(2) in this act - and this is new compared to the existing Homes Act. We now say, 'subject to the Residential Tenancy Act 1997' et cetera, and it talks about tenants in public and social housing being covered by that act.

I want that confirmed, that all public and social housing tenants are covered by the Residential Tenancy Act, under what is proposed in this bill. Alongside that, I want to understand, does anything in the bill jeopardise or diminish the tenure of public and social housing tenants from what we see in the current arrangements? That is a clear thing I want an answer to.

The second reading speech says:

a key feature of the bill is the strategic focus on building communities so our housing developments are planned and coordinated with our communities as they grow and change.

Now, that is interesting because I thought that was an area that is covered by our planning system. It is also an area covered by our local governments, and it is also an area covered by things like our regional land use strategies, currently being reviewed, apparently, sometime soon, coming to a government review near you.

There is plenty going on in the planning system. We have a planning reform agenda; we have Tasmanian Planning Policies; we have updating the regional land use strategies; we have a review of the State Planning Provisions. All of that is happening; none of that relates to this directly. We do not need this for those things to continue, and in fact, what is established under this bill, Homes Tasmania, will have to intersect with those as per the arrangements in our planning system. I am not sure to what extent it is different to now. I am not clear on that. I do not think we need Homes Tasmania in order to be working with our planning system and with the other entities and stakeholders in that system to try to get better outcomes.

I have heard the minister asserting that the new model will be able to be involved in urban renewal. What jumps straight to mind is that we currently have many stakeholders involved in our social housing sector, who are already involved in urban renewal through the planning of their housing projects and the delivery of a range of services that sit in and around the housing that they build, manage and own in all types of communities around the state.

Urban renewal is something that is already underway; it happens under the current model. Could we improve it? Sure, absolutely, we could talk about many ways, no doubt. We could learn many lessons from what is being done effectively now. We do not need a new model for that. I am pleased to hear that if this new model does come to pass it is going to get involved, sure, but it is not necessary to establish this authority in order to deliver that.

I am interested in the structure of the entity and staffing. What will look different compared to now? Staffing-wise, do we have some information about anticipated staffing of Homes Tasmania, should it come to pass? I am also interested in some comments from the Government about that issue of funding through to service providers in the housing and homelessness space. In its submission on the draft bill, Anglicare said:

The Housing Authority be given necessary powers to support a responsibility for providing safe, adequate and appropriate supported accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable Tasmanians, including ensuring adequate recurrent funding for services and staffing.

You cannot just build things, put people in them, and then not adequately and securely, over a long term, provide funding to deliver a level of service that is required. Clearly, the sector is looking for reassurance that this new model - should it come to pass - will do that more effectively and confidently than we have seen previously.

Others have talked about reporting. We know that there is a range of reporting. I presume we will still get the same data through quarterly dashboards and things like that. The thing that does concern me is that while, yes, we will still have annual reports, we will still have the Estimates processes, I am concerned and I did ask in the briefing, will we still be able to ask

questions in parliament to get answers? That is a key ongoing and more immediate way to hold government, and the functions of government, to account. I share the member for Elwick's concern that while we were reassured that yes, we can still ask questions of the minister about matters to do with this entity once it is there, we may not then receive any information. I also noted that answer provided in the other place.

**Mr Willie** - When I said October, I meant October next year, not this one. When they report on the financial year. Yes, a ridiculous answer.

**Ms WEBB** - When they do the annual report on 2022-23, that is right. The answer was utterly unacceptable. It is the same minister, with a different portfolio responsibility, talking about the same model that we are proposing here in a separate statutory entity. We have been told we can seek information directly from the minister, through questions in parliament as per usual practice; and yet we have just had that same minister, with a different portfolio area, bat that question away for 14 months.

'Come back and ask me in 13 months, I will tell you then'. Not good enough from a minister. That is the reassurance we have about accountability through the minister - through questions in parliament? Utterly unacceptable. Perhaps the minister would give us some reassurances about that.

I note there is an expectation that advisory committees will be set up to the proposed board of this Homes Tasmania entity, and that is positive. Advisory groups are one form of consultation. It should not be a box we tick to say 'yes, we have done consultation, we have an advisory group'. There should be an expectation that consultation would simply go beyond an advisory group. That remains to be seen. We also have a ministerial reference group on housing and homelessness. The minister has told us that it met in July this year and has been working to help develop the 20-year housing strategy.

Will that reference group to the minister continue? What relationship would the ministerial reference group have to the advisory committees to the board of Homes Tasmania? The other missing piece is lived experience. Where are the voices of lived experience in terms of consultation and advisory groups? They need to be there, not just in people who are receiving services through the entity of Homes Tasmania and those who get funds, but also members of the community who would potentially receive service, who are waiting for service or who may need service - that would also be a lived experience group to be interacting with. I am interested to hear about where that may be present in the model.

One final thing about the model - and again, this is probably prompted by the current sad and disturbing context that we find ourselves in regarding the commission of inquiry. Some of the services that are included in the area covered by the bill are shelters and support services for children and young people. That is often delivered through funded services and I presume that would be the same under the bill. That should prompt us to ask ourselves, who is responsible for child-safe practices within this model? Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the safety of Tasmanian children involved in this service system, should this model come to pass? Does that come back to the board of Homes Tasmania, as the funder of those services? Does it come back to the minister, as the portfolio responsibility for the area that it is operating in?

Where would we find ourselves - God forbid - if, in a commission of inquiry down the track, we were looking at services funded through this entity and delivered in the community to children and young people and we wanted to track back responsibility for child safety and child-safe practices? If the Government could provide an answer to that, it would be much appreciated.

In the second reading speech, the Government asserts that nobody in this House can deny we do need to do things differently. It also says this in the speech:

... we want to make it clear that this Government is committed to pulling all possible levers to addressing our housing challenges.

I agree with that first statement. We absolutely all do agree we need to do things differently. That does not mean we all agree this is the right 'different' that needs to be done.

In terms of that second one, 'committed to pulling all possible levers to addressing our housing challenge', I cannot let that pass as a statement made by this Government. Many in this place, in the other place and in the community have been pointing out the numerous things this Government could be doing differently for years now, all to no avail, for a government determined to ignore evidence-based advice that does not fit with its ideological agendas. All the while allowing obscene escalations of our state's housing emergency. To read in the second reading speech the Government's claim they will leave no stone unturned in delivering homes and housing support services Tasmanians deserve is, quite frankly, nauseating. After eight years of failing to deliver on announcements and promises, after refusing to consider sensible reform and regulation to alleviate market failure in our private rental system in this state, at best comments like that are delusional. At worst, I fear, there is gaslighting, yet again.

Here are some things the Government is not doing differently. Here are some levers it still refuses to pull. Reform of the Residential Tenancy Act which could immediately then deliver us sensible rent controls. Not market equivalence. A sensible decision about what is a reasonable amount a rent could and should rise in any given year. That is not a race to the top, just sensible regulation. Removal of no-grounds eviction, so people cannot just be kicked out at the end of a tenancy in order to deliver a rent rise and get new tenants in - other jurisdictions have gone down this path. There are very clear ways you can protect landlords and make sure there are still clear pathways available to eviction when it is needed. However, no-grounds eviction has no place in a contemporary private market rental. No place at all. Pets and minor modifications: we are way behind on that and this is a fundamental barrier for some people in our private rental sector. This is something we could address through reforming this act. Better protections in the act against discrimination for single-parent families and welfare recipients. This is a range of things that should and could be discussed were we to reform our Residential Tenancy Act and put conditions in place that better protect those in our rental market. Particularly, the ones around rent are the thing, because that is driving homelessness at the moment - rental increases. We have neglected to do it for years.

Another lever it is refusing to pull, even though the evidence-based calls are there: regulating the short stay accommodation market. Properly empowering local government to set locally appropriate limits and regulations for whole houses being shifted into the short stay market. Another identified key driver of problems in our private rental market. Absolutely failing to respond to that.



How dare this Government say that it is prepared to pull all levers when it is a blatant lie? They are blatantly refusing to pull many levers.

Here is what I would encourage members to think about. Yes, we have some challenges and need for change. The right way forward would have been to clearly identify, quantify, analyse and consult on the challenge, design and possible solutions tailored to those issues, consult further on the possible solutions and take forward a well understood, co-designed plan, which may well have involved a new model.

Importantly, a process like that would also have provided a framework within which to identify and fully discuss other potential impacts and risks possible in the available ways forward. That is not what we have seen with this model. It seems clear that all the things that this model can do are basically able to be done now, setting aside leveraging the asset base, although it is not clear to me that we cannot do that. In many cases, the things in this model are being done now, perhaps not to the extent that is wanted. It is not to say we cannot improve what is being done now, but the possibility is there.

The question is, why do we need to change the model which should be able to deliver the outcomes we want? To sum up, I am highly concerned by this bill and the new model it seeks to establish. With my background in the community services sector and the last decade of that working in policy research and advocacy, among other areas, particularly housing and homelessness public policy, I recognise the magnitude and urgency of problems that we face here. No-one can suggest that I do not.

I very much want to see improvements going forward. I very much want to see us able to house, particularly, our most vulnerable Tasmanians. I am very aware that we have failed to progress enough across the last decade in what the state Government has sought to do, or failed to do. Overall, we have gone backwards. We need to do more, we need to do things differently. I am yet to be convinced that this bill presents us with the best option going forward, without other additional risks.

I am interested to hear answers to some of the things brought up by other members and some of the things I have raised. I do have amendments that I will bring on some language aspects in the bill, but I remain highly concerned at this moment.

[12.32 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, I acknowledge the previous speakers. I have been listening intently and will continue to do so because, like all other members, I have a very good understanding of the challenges that are being faced in our communities regarding sourcing appropriate, affordable - any type of housing, to be perfectly frank.

Before I begin my contribution, I acknowledge and thank the minister who provided a response to me this morning for a request for somebody in my electorate who is desperate to have some housing for herself. She is a single parent, four children, living with her mum, some challenges with the family situation, and no opportunity to have a house. She is virtually coming in to my office every second day.

I acknowledge that the minister has personally responded to my request, so I thank him for that. I will not give any details but this is what you get - or this is what you are supposed to get - as an elected member, making representation to a minister in regard to a housing issue.

So thank you, minister. We do not have a solution. We do not have a house. We do not have any likelihood of a house at this point, certainly not appropriate housing, but there is a commitment that the minister hopes that we can do something soon, and so do I.

The reason I am pointing that out is how am I going to get a response from the chairman of the board under the Homes Tasmania Bill? Or do I get an appointment with the CEO? Do I get a response? Is there someone down the chain who I could get a response from? Those are some of the questions that I have regarding what is proposed here today. However, I did want to acknowledge that, and I thank the minister.

As others have said, we are all aware of the challenges, and certainly with what has been done, there needs to be more done. We need to build more houses, we need to be able to provide more options. So many times in this place we have talked about that opportunity.

Recently, I went to Agfest and I went through every accommodation facility that they had onsite, the tiny houses. I also went through a shipping container converted into a house and got some details on that.

Last night, when I finally got back to my room, I turned the telly on because there is nobody there and there was an advertisement for Creative Modular Homes, a Tasmanian company, and the prices start from \$99 000. Now, would they be absolutely perfect for my family in the north-east? Probably not, but they would be perfect for the gentleman who comes in every day and asks, do I have anything in the way of housing? He is sleeping in his car four nights a week and three nights at the local motel so he can have a shower. A tiny house for him would be perfect. They are portable, they are not stationary forever so you could put them somewhere, organise with the council to possibly have a space at a recreation ground like they do at the Hobart Showground.

There are opportunities that I see every day. I call the housing area regularly and say, 'I have been informed there is a house in such and such street, in such and such town that is not being lived in'. Do you know what they sent back to me and said last week? We need proof. So, what do they want me to do? Take a photo that nobody is living there? Look at the power usage. I could soon work out that water and power usage means no-one is living there.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - I find that very interesting. I made the same inquiry about two units where I live and the response that came back was that the electricity is being paid in both units and the rent is being paid in both units.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am not saying that the rent is not being paid, but I am saying that the power usage, you could soon tell whether somebody is living in a property or not.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - They are leased out so I could not understand -

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was asked to provide proof. Now, how am I going to provide proof in my position? I cannot be going around with a camera saying, 'well I know he is staying at his girlfriend's place'. How can I do that? I cannot do that. That is entirely inappropriate. That was the response that came back, so it is no wonder that I get pretty cranky, but the people that I represent are not only desperate, but they are pretty angry too.

Those are a couple of examples of what we are dealing with so we are well aware of the challenges and I absolutely acknowledge that we have to do something. I commented yesterday at the briefing - for which we are always very pleased that people make presentations, and the department delivers its view on what is being put forward. I said, 'perhaps I have been around here too long now and I have seen so many iterations of plans'. I asked the Library to do some research about what has been previously. I have been here since 2004 - so 2003-04 was the Bacon ALP government's Affordable Housing Strategy, AHS. Every objective that was on that document that was provided to me - and I thank the research arm of our Library - is relevant today: a sustainable social housing system, the capacity to expand the supply of social and affordable housing in response to the community's immediate and long-term housing needs, a range of effective and responsive housing models. My tiny houses, my modular houses I have just talked about. From \$99 000 you can get a one-bedroom, fully functional house.

This went on in 2006, Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited established as a public company. Initially six community housing organisations worked with DPAC, Treasury and Housing Tasmania to develop TAHL.

I will not go on about the lack of action, because there were good people who had good intentions with that and I am certainly well aware of that. However, from the 700 houses that were promised, I think in the order of 15 were delivered. Since I have been here, I have seen we do not necessarily get the outcomes by outsourcing the responsibility.

TAHL was wrapped up and ceased operating in 2010, citing that due to the global financial crisis they could not access any funds. Obviously, that was a difficult time for governments. Anyone who was trying to make ends meet through that time would certainly acknowledge that.

2013, Better Housing Futures and Housing Connect policies.

I have kept a lot of these documents. You can re-read them and they all say the same things. The issue is still the same. Outsourcing the responsibilities on this is not going to be what we need because, who do we contact?

**Mr Valentine** - The more things change, the more they stay the same.

**Ms RATTRAY** - All well intentioned by various governments. I am not saying there were no well-intentioned efforts. In 2015, the Hodgman Liberal government introduced the Affordable Housing Strategy and pledged to deliver 900 new homes over the 2015-19 period, that was the first action plan.

In 2019, the Hodgman Liberal government introduced the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-23 and announced an extra 1500 new affordable homes at an investment of \$125 million to tackle it.

In 2020, the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council provided its COVID-19 response report to Government. It included recommendations to embark upon a construction blitz program to deliver affordable housing. Obviously, that blitz has come with some significant challenges. These are challenges I do not believe a Homes Tasmania board, with a lot of hierarchy underneath it, is going to meet with what we need as a community.

In 2022, the Rockliff Liberal Government released the consultation draft for this bill, Homes Tasmania, to create a statutory housing authority and the new housing body will deliver 10 000 new homes by 2032 with an investment of \$1.5 billion.

It is quite a history, but unfortunately, we have not seen the results of those well-intentioned programs since that 2003-04 initial strategy.

I do not disagree with the Leader on behalf of her Government's second reading speech where it says:

We must be innovative, agile and responsive and we need to change the way we have been doing things to be more contemporary to prepare for the next decade and beyond.

Well, what is wrong with putting some more smaller, sustainable homes into areas? We know in itself that is a challenge.

At the briefing yesterday, I read out a statement from Ben Wilson, CEO of Centacare Evolve, the chief executive of the community housing developer. He talked of the challenges of providing infill housing in already existing community spaces where they have been able to source a parcel of land whether it be through council initiatives, because that is being taken up around our state and I congratulate any of our local government areas that have been proactive in this area in searching for parcels of land they can provide to our community housing developers. He cited the fact they lost twelve months of development time because there was an objection placed on the development put forward for 24 units, in the Youngtown area. I could be corrected on that, but it is what I understand.

It went to the TPC and they ruled in favour of the developer and reinstated the 24-unit development. However, it was the time loss and we know how things have significantly increased in price in a fairly short time so that they are not going to be able to build the original development. Certainly not for the price they had originally anticipated. I expect quite a lot of frustration came with that process, but it also comes with a money component. That was a community not willing to say yes, we want to embrace this development because there was a 'not in my backyard' approach.

Unfortunately, that is a lot of the issue as to why developments get stalled. I understand that people have a right to put forward an objection, but it does become a part of the issue around providing -

**Ms Armitage** - Just to check, was it a 'not in my backyard' reasoning or was it because they thought the development was too many houses for the area or they were too small? I would not want the people of Youngtown to be labelled with a 'not in my backyard' when it might have been they considered the development was too many houses on too small lands.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Too many units, too many people and too many cars.

**Ms Armitage** - It also might have been for the people, because I can remember when I have been on council in the past, sometimes these were put in with not enough infrastructure and services or looking at the people who are moving into the area to make sure the properties are adequate.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I appreciate that perhaps not all of them -

**Ms Armitage** - I do not know why they objected and wondered whether you did.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Concerns around density, car parking, fitting within the environment and the current dwelling types in the area. Take what you will from that, but it is not unique to that particular community and I acknowledge that. It is difficult for developers to be able to say that part of the development is going to be for public and social housing because whether we like it or not, there is some stigma around that. That is a great sadness because we all have plenty of areas in our communities that have a lot of public and social housing. Obviously, we need more. There are plenty of good people who live in those areas. I know plenty of them and I would be happy to stand up for them.

We continue to be challenged by so many aspects of providing housing in our state. I recall a number of times where governments have had housing summits. I believe there was even a federal housing summit more recently. The second reading speech refers to:

The reference group is working closely with us to develop a 20-year housing strategy for Tasmania.

My understanding is that reference group is well represented by a cross-section of the community where they put ideas and solutions into the Government for the Government to act on. I want to understand why something like the reference group and those initiatives are not something that are being worked through, consulted on with all of those myriad good people. We have heard that there is plenty of expertise within the current situation. It is a matter of acting on some of those very good initiatives and finding that land available and going through the development and planning process. We know that sometimes a change in land use can take some time but you get on to the ones that you can do more quickly, and then you work through the ones that you do more slowly or that will take a longer time.

Through that, there might be an opportunity for more community engagement. I do not say that every community is ever going to accept developments with open arms and I am not talking about broadacre developments; I am talking more about a 24-unit development which in some communities would be fantastic. There are a few areas close to my home town that have expanded and they have six units at the end of a cul-de-sac. They are two-bedroom units and it works quite well. There may be opportunity in some of those areas as well. Land acquisition enabled that development to go ahead, involving Centacare. I have not had any negative feedback, so I continue to look forward to hearing about more of those.

At times, a single block in our communities can fit three two-bedroom units, with a bit of a stretch. That is not a huge development but meets the needs, particularly of that older demographic who may not have anyone permanently at home with them anymore. From time to time they may need somebody to stay over, and the two-bedroom unit with a very small yard to maintain sounds like a very reasonable outcome for a lot of people.

Mr President, I appreciated the contact from the minister. He has certainly been active in engaging with members and he sent through the statement of ministerial expectations. As others have said, those expectations seem to be at a higher requirement than what currently happens. That is all well and good but it is the scrutiny as well. I know that other members have talked about that opportunity for scrutiny through that process if there is annual report in

October and the Estimates process. Other than noting the annual report - as we know, you do not get a huge amount of time to spend on one area when you are providing scrutiny for the budget and the line items that come with that budget. I am struggling to see where we would have the scrutiny that we already have in this place for a department when this will be outsourced to a board.

Like some other speakers, I have some concerns about establishing another board. How much does it cost to establish a board? Someone has done some numbers on that. After you have been here a while you have seen some of the failures of establishing boards. I will give TasTAFE the benefit of the doubt at this point in time, that they are going to get their act together. I hope they are going to get it together fairly soon because I have not seen a lot of positive changes, but it is early days from when that board was established. However, we can refer to some others where there a board was established or authority was established and it has been a very unsuccessful outcome for the people of Tasmania. My vote was not placed well for some of those at various times, but at the time I was convinced.

I have thought long and hard about whether I could support this way forward and I have even been up-front with the minister, and made no secret of the fact that I will continue to listen. However, at this point in time, I am not inclined to support this into the Committee stage. If it does get through to the Committee stage, then I will be looking at the amendments that have been proposed by the member for Nelson, who I believe is going to distribute an amended version. I thank her for her work in that area.

We received an extensive set of paperwork about what will be different with the new authority, but again, the scrutiny is not there. That makes me very concerned that it will be handed off by the Government, whereas I believe that the Government needs to be completely hands on here. I say that with great concern.

Other members have spoken around what cannot be done now. We certainly need to do more, we know that. However, that cannot be done with the current arrangements where you need some focus, whether it be through a reference group or by some specialists in the field that are brought in on a contract basis to get in amongst the people in the department who need support or advice or guidance. Why are we not able to do that, on behalf of the Tasmanian people, rather than establish a board? They are the questions.

I listened to the new federal Minister for Housing on the radio and I took the opportunity to source the transcript. Yesterday, I talked about the fact that it appears that the federal government has a new focus and new initiatives around housing and homelessness for all Australians. This is what the minister said on 2 August 2022 to Tasmania Talks:

With a national housing and homeless plan, what we want to do as I said -

**Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.**

## QUESTIONS

### King Island - Shipping Services

#### Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.31 p.m.]

On Tuesday 23 August I asked the Leader a number of questions with regard to shipping services for King Island. I noted that retail fuel prices were on average usually 40 cents to 45 cents higher on King Island than in regional Tasmania. I asked for a breakdown by percentage of cost for each component or element of charge by Bass Island Line that related to (1) fuel supply/commodity; (2) transport - road and sea; (3) wholesale-storage and distribution; and (4) retail.

I was informed TasPorts does not set the price of fuel at service stations on the island and that is set by the retail operator. The Leader advised it is not possible to provide a breakdown by percentage of the elemental costs referred to above involved in fuel supply to King Island. TasPorts manages fuel distribution and transport to its customers. It sells fuel on King Island on a wholesale basis. Bass Islands Line's role is limited to the sea freight transport component. TasPorts does not set retail prices and notes the margin applied to fuel by retailers will be a matter for the retailers.

In 2014 Flinders Island appointed Resonance Consulting to conduct a fuel supply study. The costs associated with the supply chain were based on summary cost data and information provided by TasPorts. Resonance Consulting had not sighted actual invoices or costs or been provided with any commercial or contractual arrangements. The report described the imputed cost of supply to the island of LSD, excluding GST, is predominantly the fuel commodity. The supply chain was summarised as per below:

Fuel supply/commodity 81.2 per cent  
Transport (road and sea) 6.3 per cent  
Wholesale (storage and distribution) 6.9 per cent  
Retail 5.6 per cent.

The Australian Institute of Petroleum provides daily details of the terminal gate prices (TGP) around the nation on their website. My research shows a difference of at least a dollar between TGP and the retail price on King Island.

My question is to the Leader, if a breakdown can be provided in 2014, and in light of the above information, can a breakdown of costs now be provided for King Island?

#### ANSWER

I thank the member for her question and her pursuit of some answers, but the previous advice from TasPorts still stands that a breakdown cannot be provided. This remains the case for two primary reasons. Firstly, TasPorts is one of two fuel suppliers on King Island. TasPorts supplies fuel to one service station out of the two on the island, as well as farmers who have arrangements in place with the organisation. TasPorts also supplies fuel to Hydro Tasmania to

support their electricity generation. The remaining customers are serviced by the other fuel operator.

Given that TasPorts is not the only provider, the fuel supply contracts operating on King Island are of a commercially sensitive nature and disclosure may endanger or disrupt the King Island market.

**Ms Forrest** - I only asked you for percentages.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Secondly, fuel prices vary depending on the terminal gate price at the time that fuel is purchased by TasPorts. In order for TasPorts to reflect the most accurate pricing on the island, the wholesale price is calculated based on purchase and sale average at a minimum of once a week, so it is only ever as accurate as the stock on hand.

TasPorts manages fuel distribution and transport to customers. It sells on King Island on a wholesale basis. TasPorts does not set the retail price and the margin applied to fuel by the retailers would be a matter for the retailers.

**Ms FORREST** - Mr President, I have a further question related to answers provided last week, but I reiterate I asked about percentages. I find it extraordinary that percentages of a breakdown of components of transport could be commercially sensitive. Dollar amounts, perhaps, percentages no. Anyway, maybe the Leader might put that back to TasPorts. I will ask my next question.

### **King Island - Freight Services**

#### **Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.35 p.m.]

I asked the Leader on 24 August about the high cost of living on King Island, mainly due to transport costs of food like fruit and vegetables. The Leader stated that Bass Island Line (BIL) is now offering the opportunity for local food outlets to source products from mainland Tasmania via sea freight, which is considerably cheaper than transport by air. Refrigerated containers have now been secured. BIL is now exploring the possibility of a trial subject to market demand. That was the response I was provided.

My follow-up questions to the Leader are:

- (1) Have TasPorts or Bass Island Line informed the retailers on King Island of these matters? If so, how were they notified and when?
- (2) Have TasPorts or Bass Island Line asked the retailers what quantity of perishables they bring to the island each week? If so, when and how was this information sought from retailers?
- (3) Does TasPorts or Bass Island Line understand these perishables are now flown in at least twice a week? Therefore, what arrangements are in place to ensure the



quality of these products when they sit in a container for a week, or even longer when bad weather delays shipping to the island?

- (4) Have TasPorts or Bass Island Line had any discussions with the airlines that service King Island regarding the freight task?
- (5) Have TasPorts or Bass Island Line undertaken any assessment of what would be the impact for the airlines that provide service to King Island? Particularly as in some cases, they also heavily rely on the freight component. If so, what was the outcome of this assessment?

## ANSWER

I thank you the member for her question. Before I get into the answers, Mr President, members may have noticed I have a new helper here behind me. I have been short-staffed in my office this week, so we have had Meg Windram to help with questions.

- (1) TasPorts has identified the opportunity to introduce a perishables shipping service which will operate in addition to the existing air freight service. This fills a gap at present with the only means to important fresh and perishable foods being air freight, which is the most expensive mode, and leads to increased costs for customers. As a result, BIL have recently commenced implementation of a weekly refrigerated shipping service to freight less than container loads ahead of conducting a three-month trial, subject to market demand. The service has been available to transport perishables since 16 July. The refrigerated service is available to transport both frozen and chilled freight and could also include other non-perishables to and from the island.

BIL has been communicating the offer of the more cost-effective refrigerated freight service with retailers on island.

- (2) BIL has been advised the perishable weekly freight task to King Island is approximately 12-14 tonnes via TasPort's shipping agent on King Island, noting the shipping agent also represents the interests of the island's two supermarkets.
- (3) The BIL service is offered as a potentially less expensive solution as an alternative to the current air freight solution, not a replacement for it. BIL's mainland Tasmanian shipping agent, Freight Connections, have assisted with the freight forwarding solution to Devonport 5 West, for loading on to the *John Duigan* for its weekly services.

The freight forwarding solution for this leg is described as follows. The depot is IGLOO Cold Storage cool stores in east Devonport. Empty containers are there prior to the two-day receiver window, so they are onsite and good to load when needed. Chilled and frozen storage will be onsite, so it addresses any cold chain queries as they will be always be under temperature control. Both the frozen and chilled containers will be stored at Grassy Port and TasPorts, on BIL's behalf, distributes to customers on the day of arrival.

- (4) No, the focus of BIL's discussions have been with potential customers.

- (5) There is no requirement to undertake an assessment with other service providers. BIL's focus has been on establishing a new sea freight perishable service to King Island for the benefit of King Island residents, in order to allow reductions for the price of perishable goods.

### **Social Housing - Data**

#### **Ms WEBB question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.40 p.m.]

I ask the Leader of the Government:

- (1) How many houses have been constructed for social housing in each of the local government areas (LGA) of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough in each of the last five years, reported by:
- (a) the LGA the home has been built;
  - (b) the number of homes in each that have been constructed to Silver Level of the LHDG and Gold Level and above of the LHDG; and
  - (c) the number of new homes in each that replace social housing properties that were demolished; and
  - (d) the net gains of the number of social housing properties in each over the time period?
- (2) The number of social housing properties demolished in each of the local government areas of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough in the last five years that have not been replaced by another social housing property?
- (3) The number of houses expected to be constructed for social housing in each of the local government areas of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough in the next two years, reported by:
- (a) the LGA of the homes being built; and
  - (b) the number of properties in each that will be constructed to Silver Level of the LHDG and the number constructed to Gold Level or above of the LHDG; and
  - (c) the number of new homes in each that will replace social housing properties that have been demolished; and
  - (d) the expected net gain in the number of social housing properties in each LGA over the time period?

## **ANSWER**

We have a general response, then specific answers.

The general response is, all our social and affordable housing capital program is driven by demand which has been previously delivered under action plans. To inform our capital program on where homes will be built and what type of homes we need, we are developing a 20-year housing strategy. This strategy will be finalised in mid-2023 and will be the key document that ties demand around the state and types of demand with supply and will guide our planned new housing authority, Homes Tasmania, in where and when homes will be built, as well as the types of homes. For example, over 50 per cent of our housing register are eligible for a one-bedroom home, meaning we need a significant increase in our one-bedroom housing supply.

All new social housing dwellings are required to be constructed in accordance with Communities Tasmania's Design Policy for Social Housing. The only exceptions to this are where there are site-specific limitations or for target client group reasons, where this is not practicable or appropriate. Where practical, all new social houses built under this Government have adhered to the design policy, which is comparable to Silver Level on the Living Housing Design Guidelines, (LHDG).

If it is okay with the member for Nelson, the next two out of the three answers are data-heavy. I seek leave to table the answers and have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Ms Webb** - That is fine.

**Leave granted.**

**See Appendix 1 on page 77 for incorporated document.**

### **Housing - Rapid Rehousing Program Data**

**Ms WEBB question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.43 p.m.]

Today I ask the Leader of the Government with regard to each of the Rapid Rehousing programs (Family Violence, Mental Health and Prisoner), and in each of the past five years:

- (1) How many households have exited the program?
- (2) Of the households that exited the program, how many were:
  - (a) single-person households;
  - (b) couple households; or
  - (c) family with children households?

- (3) Of the households that exited the program, how many exited into:
  - (a) a private rental tenancy;
  - (b) public or social housing tenancy;
  - (c) crisis shelter or temporary/transition accommodation tenancy; or
  - (d) homelessness?
- (4) Of the households that exited the program:
  - (a) how many were evicted from their Rapid Rehousing tenancy; and
  - (b) of those households that were evicted, please provide the reasons for eviction pursuant to section 42 of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997, and the number of evictions correlating to each reason.
- (5) Of the households that exited the program, how many have:
  - (a) re-entered the Rapid Rehousing program at a later date as a repeat tenant; or
  - (b) applied or sought to re-enter the Rapid Rehousing program at a later date but have not been provided with a tenancy?

**ANSWER**

Mr President, again, with the permission of the member for Nelson, the answer is data-heavy. Are you happy if I table it?

I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Leave granted.**

**See Appendix 2 on page 80 for incorporated document.**

**Management of TasBuild Limited**

**Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.45 p.m.]

TasBuild was created to manage the portable long service leave scheme for eligible employees in the Tasmanian construction industry by registering records of any reported relevant employment undertaken by a worker in a single account so that employment reported across multiple employers counts toward achieving an entitlement.

- (1) With regard to the TasBuild 2021 financial statements, the balance sheet shows assets of \$184 million, but the liability for long service leave is only \$134 million. The balance of \$50 million is retained revenue.
  - (a) To whom does the retained revenue belong?
  - (b) What will happen to surplus funds if ever the Trustees believe they have sufficient funds to discharge any future liability?
- (2) Where employers not ordinarily in the building or construction industry make contributions to the fund for activities which are deemed to be building and construction activities, say an engineering company installing plant on a building site, does the employee for whom the long service leave contributions have been made have any access to amounts in the fund if they no longer work for the building and construction industry?

If so, what are the access possibilities?

- (3) Does the employer have any entitlements to a refund of long service leave amounts in cases envisaged by question (2)? If so, what entitlements?
- (4) In cases where employees for whom contributions have been made to the fund are no longer employed in the building industry and unlikely to return, can the employees gain access to his or her long service leave entitlements? If so, under what conditions?
- (5) Does the employer have access to any entitlement funded by his or her contributions on behalf of employees no longer employed in the building industry and unlikely to return, and if so, what are the conditions?
- (6) What assumptions has the actuary made when estimating future long service leave liabilities, including:
  - (a) What assumptions has the actuary made about the numbers of members who will never be eligible to receive payment from the fund; and
  - (b) What assumptions has the actuary made about amounts which have been contributed in respect of members who will never receive a payment from the fund?

## **ANSWER**

(1)(a) TasBuild was established as a private trustee company to administer the construction industry's long service leave scheme. The rules of the scheme are determined by the board, which has equal representation from employers and unions, together with an independent chair.

(1)(b) The Construction Industry (Long Service) Fund Trust Deed determines that:

Except for reasonable fees for acting as a director of The Trustee or of any other Corporation owned or controlled by any Trustee or for the provision of other services to or for any Trustee, the Settlor may not receive any benefit or property of any kind from the Fund or the Income nor from or under any other of the powers, authorities and discretions conferred by the Deed or by the proper law of the Deed from time to time in force. Schedule 1 of the Trust Deed clearly outlines the powers and responsibilities of the Trustee in management of the assets.

- (2) An employee has a long service leave entitlement once that employee has reached 10 years of relevant employment, which can be achieved through a number of different periods of construction work employment with different employers throughout this scheme. To be covered by this scheme, a person must be an employee for the purposes of the Construction Industry (Long Service) Act 1997. The scheme is administered by TasBuild through the Trust Deed and the Rules of the Construction Industry Long Service Fund. The act provides for reciprocal arrangements (section 21) which, in some circumstances, allows for a payment to be made either wholly or partly in respect of a period of service in the construction industry in Tasmania. For example, this could be utilised where an employee moves between states and territories for construction work, where a reciprocal arrangement is made by the relevant minister.

The scheme provides an incentive for employees to continue construction work by providing the opportunity for long service leave accrual, even if moving between employers or leaving the industry for periods of time. The Trustee may determine that any specified work is, or is not, construction work, as outlined in part 8, General of the Rules. The Trust Deed and the Rules also have a provision for hearing decisions, objections, and arbitration, providing opportunities for both employers and employees to seek an outcome which considers their unique circumstances.

- (3) Generally speaking, an employer would not be entitled to a refund. However, if at any time the employee returned to construction work, they would continue to accrue long service leave entitlements if eligible for the scheme.
- (4) Employees who are no longer employed in construction work, and unlikely to return to this work, may be eligible, dependent on their personal circumstances, to apply for a pro rata long service payment. The Trust Deed and the Rules provides for hearings, decisions, objections, and arbitration, providing opportunities for both employers and employees to seek an outcome which considers their unique circumstances.
- (5) Generally speaking, an employer would not be entitled to a refund. The Trust Deed and the Rules have provisions for hearing, decisions, objections, and arbitration, providing opportunities for both employees and employers to seek an outcome which considers their unique circumstances.
- (6) TasBuild makes available a comprehensive annual report on its website, which is [www.tasbuild.com.au](http://www.tasbuild.com.au).

**Ms Forrest** - That is where I got the information.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Oh, I do not need to do this answer.

The report is quite transparent and provides statements of comprehensive income, financial position, changes in equity, and cash flow. The act places the operation and administration of the scheme at arm's length from the government of the day.

TasBuild administers this scheme through its Trust Deed and Rules. It sets a contribution rate that employees may pay in relation to each of their employees in relevant employment. This is a percentage of the employee's ordinarily weekly gross wages, and is currently set at 2 per cent.

TasBuild invests the long service charges paid by employers to generate investment and growth. This approach ensures that workers in the construction industry are able to receive a long service benefit and the employer long service charge is maintained at the lowest rate possible.

**Ms Forrest** - Through you, Mr President, I asked what assumptions the actuary made. There was no mention of the actuary in that last question. The question was completely ignored. Question six talks about the assumptions made by the actuary. That is what the question was.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Through you, Mr President, I will make sure that part goes back in.

### **Tasmanian Government Concessions**

#### **Ms LOVELL question to the LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.54 p.m.]

With regard to concessions offered by the Tasmanian Government:

- (1) What is the number of concession recipients for each of the financial years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22, disaggregated by:
  - (a) concession type;
  - (b) eligibility type; and
  - (c) location?
- (2) What is the amount of funding for concessions for each of the above financial years, disaggregated by:
  - (a) concession type;
  - (b) funded agency or government business entity?

- (3) What is the level of utilisation or take-up of concessions for each of the above financial years, disaggregated by:
- (a) concession type;
  - (b) eligibility type; and
  - (c) location?

## **ANSWER**

I thank the member for her question. Tasmanian government concessions are summarised in *Discounts and Concessions: Tasmanian Government Concession Guide 2022-23*.

Mr President, as an aside, I believe all electorate officers will have copies of those sent to them. If not, I can organise that.

Further to the answer, the guide is released annually in paper and electronic format. Information for the guide is collated from government agencies by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Throughout the year additional concessions are added to the electronic guide as they are announced in response to community needs. The Tasmanian Government provides approximately 90 concessions and discounts to assist individuals and families with the cost of living.

Concessions are managed and provided by the Tasmanian government agency responsible for the service that the concession applies to. The Tasmanian Government does not centrally collate information on concessions, including the number of concession recipients and the level of take-up for each concession. Concessions are added to or removed from the list of Tasmanian government concessions throughout the year, meaning the total amount of funding evolves over time.

## **Tobacco Price Boards**

### **Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.56 p.m.]

- (1) Is the state Government considering a proposal to require retailers to remove price boards for tobacco products from public view?
- (2) If so, can the state Government provide further details about these and other related changes it is contemplating regarding the sale of tobacco products in Tasmania?
- (3) What, if any, consultation has the state Government undertaken with regard to these moves with the retail sector?
- (4) I note the recently released Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan made no mention of this - if this is the case - so why has this apparent change of policy come about?



- (5) If the Government is not considering removing price boards for tobacco products from public view, then why has it been reported to me that a health department officer has verbally informed a retailer that such a move is about to take place?

## ANSWER

I thank the member for her questions.

- (1) One of the action areas in the Government's 2022 -2026 Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan is to:

Create supportive environments that protect Tasmanians from tobacco industry harms. We will strengthen laws to protect more Tasmanians from smoking products ...

The Tobacco Action Plan further describes how this will be achieved:

Strengthen laws to reduce the visibility and availability of smoking products ...

The Department of Health is exploring options to strengthen laws as described in the Tobacco Action Plan. Price boards are one of the few remaining visual cues in retail premises that refer to tobacco, so it is appropriate that the ongoing use of price boards is considered as part of this action.

- (2) Options for strengthening laws are still under development by Department of Health officers.
- (3) When policy options to meet the aims of the Tobacco Action Plan in this area are developed, consultation with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken. The consultation will be in line with Australian obligations under the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. I will give that website in case anyone wants to go there, member for Launceston. It is <https://fctc.who.int/who-fctc/overview>.
- (4) As noted above, the 2022-26 Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan makes specific references to strengthening laws to reduce the visibility of tobacco products, and price boards are one of the few remaining visual cues in Tasmanian tobacco retail premises along with product availability notices - for example, 'Tobacco Products Sold Here' - and mandatory signage - for example, 'If you give or sell cigarettes to anyone under 18 you are breaking the law - and Quitline stickers, that sort of thing.
- (5) As noted above, the Tasmanian Government has not yet considered this issue. It is an option being assessed by officers at a departmental level.

## **Historical Review into Actions of William Crowther**

### **Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE CONCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[3.00 p.m.]

The Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC) is calling on the Government to commence an inquiry to review the historical evidence and the statements made by the Hobart City Council, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council regarding the actions of William Crowther and others in respect to the circumstances surrounding William Lanne's skull, using evidence provided by appropriate experts in their field. Furthermore, CHAC is calling for an inquiry into how the remains of an unknown person - specimen XXX2, University of Edinburgh - came to be approved by the government of the day to be buried on the north-west coast of Tasmania by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre under what CHAC members believe is the false identity of William Lanne, according to credible evidence they have received.

My questions are to the Leader:

- (1) Will the Government commit to an inquiry into these matters? If so, who will the Government engage to undertake the inquiry who can be considered appropriate experts in the field?
- (2) Why is the Government not acting to protect from destruction a priceless Aboriginal relic that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre intends to bury on the north-west coast of Tasmania when such burial may contravene the Aboriginal Heritage Act, despite CHAC's written request to intervene?

### **ANSWER**

I thank the member for her questions.

- (1) I am advised the University of Edinburgh repatriated human remains to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in 1991. The minister is also advised it is international and national best practice that the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural heritage - including human remains - by institutions, such as universities and museums, to Aboriginal people be unconditional. Further, the Government has been advised, that in a general sense, repatriation processes follow a rigorous approach by both the institutions and the Aboriginal people involved, including evidence to support the repatriation of remains to their place of origin.

On this basis, the Government acknowledges the concerns and the position of the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC) board of directors on the matters raised. However, the Government is not of the view these matters would benefit from a formal inquiry or intervention at this time.

- (2) The Tasmanian Government recognises the significance and the importance of the petroglyphs to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery applied for Aboriginal heritage permits to repatriate petroglyphs taken from Preminghana in the 1950s and

1960s. Preminghana is Aboriginal land and the title holder is the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania. Permits were subsequently issued for the relocation of the petroglyphs by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in November 2020 as per the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975. The Tasmanian Government acknowledges it is nationally accepted that materials recognised as spiritually and culturally important, or acquired in an unethical way, should be returned to their rightful owners unconditionally. Upon signing the permits, the Tasmanian Government reiterated it stands ready to provide support, as needed, to ensure the petroglyphs are safely returned, protected, and managed for the benefit of all Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Our position has not changed.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

### **Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee - Membership**

[3.03 p.m.]

**Mr PRESIDENT** - A message from the House of Assembly.

The House of Assembly has appointed the following members to serve on the Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee on the part of the House.

The Speaker, the Premier, Ms O'Connor and Ms White.

Signed,  
Mark Shelton, Speaker,  
House of Assembly,  
8 September 2022

## **HOMES TASMANIA BILL 2022 (No. 35)**

### **Second Reading**

**Resumed from page 26.**

[3.04 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, before the lunchbreak I was referring to the fact we have a new federal Housing minister and fortunately, that Housing minister resides in Tasmania and represents the Tasmanian people. I can only expect - as others will - that will be a positive thing for Tasmania, because you always have a deep connection to your own state. This was some information provided on a radio interview on 2 August where the interviewer asked about the Albanese Government's commitment to delivering its ambitious housing reform agenda, which included the National Housing and Homelessness Plan and the response from the minister was, with the National Housing and Homelessness Plan:

... what we want to do is, as I said, work with States and Territories, with the community housing providers, with the sector and the building and construction industry around a national plan.

That gives me a lot of confidence and encouragement this new minister for Housing in the federal parliament is going to work with all states and territories. I am with other members who have raised the matter of what cannot be done now with the current procedures and processes we have in place, that is going to be able to be done if we move to what has been proposed by the Government with the Homes Tasmania Bill.

I am interested in the responses the Leader will provide to those very extensive questions not only posed by the member for Nelson, but also the member for Elwick and to some extent, the member for Murchison, who also talked about that. We have had some discussion on National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation and the parameters on that federal fund for housing. When there could potentially be some changes to the parameters of that fund, why is there such a significant urgency to change what we have in place, acknowledging we do need to do more?

I do not have a lot more to add, there has been a lot of strong lobbying for both sides of this argument and I have read all of that with interest. I go back to the fact when you stand or sit in this place and vote for a particular direction the government puts forward, you have to be very comfortable that is where you want to put your vote on behalf of the people who elect you to this place.

I am not comfortable, at this point in time, that this will not take away the absolute responsibility which I believe should be to executive government, to the government of the day and certainly, to the minister to respond. As I have indicated in my initial opening address here today I have received a direct response from the minister. How are we going to receive that sort of response - albeit it was not exactly what I wanted to read, it did not give the people I am representing any real joy in saying there will be accommodation available in the very near future. It is also a direct response and so you completely understand the minister and their department have a real understanding, but it will be at arm's length and the scrutiny will not be as effective as it has been in the past.

For a number of reasons cited, even when I continue to listen to other members' contributions, I do not intend to change my position on this. I have thought long and hard about it, hardly slept much at all last night. That is always a sign for me that I do not feel comfortable, on the behalf of the people I represent, that this is the most effective, efficient and only way forward for some of the extensive challenges that we have in this state.

I am happy to work with the government of the day. We reach out from our office and present properties that could house a family, or could house various people who are needing housing opportunities at the moment. All we get is pushback, and 'provide me with some evidence'. That is not very helpful. I am willing to continue that dialogue with the department, but I do not see how, in the future, I am going to be able to continue that dialogue with a board. I have tried on many occasions in other areas to get direct contact with a board and the CEO. You get shoved down the line and end up with nothing. That is where I sit at this point in time.

[3.11 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, I thank all those who briefed us yesterday, both in favour of and opposing the bill. I appreciated the information provided by Centacare, Housing Choices, Housing Connect Partners, CatholicCare and Colony 47, and the difficulties that they face every day in being responsive to the needs of the people who walk through their door. I must admit, I have not always got on with them. When I have been on

council, I have sometimes opposed their developments because of things like lack of infrastructure, lack of services - not because they are not in my back yard. Generally, we work it out. They might change, they might do a couple less, they might look at a larger block of land, but that is the beast that it is when you are working on behalf of the community. Sometimes you agree, sometimes you do not, and you are trying to negotiate and work together and get a good outcome. I appreciated them coming yesterday, and giving their view on this bill. I also appreciated the briefing from Sophie Underwood on behalf of the Planning Matters Alliance and the concerns they raised.

I noted the land development that has been mentioned with regard to Huntingfield and also Technopark in Launceston, and the housing land supply orders process, which incidentally, I did not support, and I did not believe that it should be taking so much out of council's involvement in the process. However, the bill got up, and I am pleased to see that with the development - and the Leader might correct me if I am wrong with this, I know particularly the one that is occurring in Launceston, and I would assume that Huntingfield is the same - that while 15 per cent of the blocks are for social housing, the rest is not just on the open market. 35 per cent is for the shared equity, or the housing market entry program, it might be called. So, 15 per cent for social housing, 35 per cent for the housing market for the people to make it a little bit easier for them to get into, and then the remaining 50 per cent on the open market. I see that as a good thing, because -

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Through you, Mr President. For clarity, are you talking about a particular subdivision?

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Yes, I have mentioned Huntingfield and Technopark in Launceston.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Technopark.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Yes. The one that came under that new bill that was passed. The housing land supply order process, which was Technopark. I am fairly sure that it was 15 per cent, 35 per cent, and then 50 per cent. To me, that at least avoids the old broadacre housing schemes and it is more integrated to have 50 per cent of the blocks on the open market. It certainly makes it a better area.

I am hopeful that this bill will alleviate some of the significant pressures that are facing Tasmanians right now in having access to safe, warm, and secure places to live. I hear the member for McIntyre's concerns with regard to boards and CEOs, but if I was to use an example of a board and a CEO, the one that I deal with the most is TasWater. I get a very good response from the CEO of TasWater. I have been to the board. I have an issue currently for a constituent. It is in the member for Windermere's electorate, on your side of the street, and I could hand it to you, but -

**Mr Duigan** - As long as you are getting an outcome.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It is someone I know quite well. I have had a response not only from the chairman of the board, but several members of the board, and the CEO. All willing to do what they can to assist. I understand what the member for McIntyre is saying about boards and entities. However, if I use the example of TasWater and the previous CEO, Mike Brewster, out of every issue that I had, it would be fairly accurate if I said I had 95 per cent successful negotiations when working for a constituent. I am still meeting the new CEO. I do not see a

problems with boards and CEOs, because I find them equally approachable, and certainly willing to work with you.

The establishment of Homes Tasmania as an authority to be responsible for delivering improved housing services and increasing the supply of affordable homes fulfils a dire need that exists in the community. Families are sleeping rough and couchsurfing. Recently, I had communication with a young girl. She was 14. I have mentioned in this place before that I work with Tasmania Police in the role of Independent Person. This 14-year-old girl had been brought to the police station because she had been stealing. The police said to me, 'we have not seen her before, we do not really know her. Why did she hit the radar now?'

When I was talking to her, she said she was homeless. This 14-year-old girl was sharing a car or a couch with another 14-year-old girl and her mother. The mother and the other girl, slept between their car and whoever's couch they could find to sleep on. The reason this girl had started stealing was because she simply did not have any money. She was waiting for money to come through, working with social services, or whatever they happen to be called now, to try to get some income. She went to a special school, and by 'special' I mean a school for people who disengage with normal school. Apart from that, she said she hung out with her friends and had no money. She stole in order to eat and to do other things and to get clothes.

There are people like that - a 14-year-old girl, and her 14-year-old friend, and the girl's mother. How awful is it that they have nowhere to live? To me, rental and purchase prices are out of control, and becoming even harder to manage with interest rates continuing to rise. People are resigning themselves to a reality where they do not have access to stable, affordable housing. I am sure no-one here would believe that is an acceptable outcome. I agree that it is time to do something differently, to tackle the issue of housing in Tasmania.

While Homes Tasmania establishes yet another board, as long as the people who are on the skills-based board represent the geographical interests of regional Tasmania, then I support it. I do have issues with boards. It is no secret in this place that I constantly ask the questions of board membership, but my main gripe is the fact that so many board members are from the mainland, or the south, and the north and the north-west seem to get overlooked. We all live in Tasmania, and I believe we all have a place on those boards.

That is my concern, rather than a concern about yet another board. I do not necessarily like another board, but what we are doing at the moment is not working. So, if a board helps the situation, then I am prepared to look to it. What we have been doing so far to address the issue of reasonable and affordable housing in Tasmania has not been meeting the significant demand. I see merit in trying something different. As has been mentioned in the other place, many people have been financially squeezed out of the private housing market, but do not qualify for social housing - an already oversubscribed service, in any case. They lose the opportunity to build a life that provides enough certainty to raise a family, pursue a meaningful career, and fully participate in their community lives.

Last week, *The Examiner* reported that Launceston's economy is losing more than \$200 million a year as employers struggle to attract staff due to low vacancy rates and skyrocketing rents. The Launceston Chamber of Commerce highlighted that hospitality, tourism, health and community services - all vital for the region's wellbeing and economic stability - were sectors particularly affected by the shortage. People are unable to bring families

with them from the mainland or overseas, and people who are already living here are struggling to build a stable, happy family life.

The Government's plan to invest \$1.5 billion to build 10 000 homes by 2032 is indeed very ambitious. However, I choose to remain optimistic in the hope that it can be done and that Tasmanians will be able to access safe, affordable and stable homes. However, Tasmanians also need to be listened to, and their interests need to be looked after. The Ministerial Reference Group on housing and homelessness, as the Leader mentioned in the second reading speech, is a further important step towards ensuring that all Tasmanians have somewhere safe, stable and affordable to live, not just for the immediate or medium-term, but over time so people can build their lives, their families and meaningful careers.

A number of questions have been raised about how Homes Tasmania will work more specifically and how they will help to deliver eased conditions for housing and homelessness and I look forward to the Leader's reply.

How will the Homes Tasmania board be comprised? As I mentioned, I want to see more Tasmanians on Tasmanian boards. We put vast levels of resourcing into selecting board members, some of our public corporations and GBEs, and I want to make sure this board will actually be representing regional interests. I am interested to hear more about that from the Leader.

On a similar note, I want to understand how the organisation itself will ensure that more homes and housing assistance is going to be delivered, and how quickly. I am aware a statement of ministerial expectations will set the direction of the organisation and the board. However, I would like to know if this will be backed up with any key performance indicators or other benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of the organisation and the performance of the board.

I know that I am not the only member in this place who has received constituent inquiries about housing and social support for families. It is absolutely tragic, some of the situations I know other members have dealt with and which I have dealt with myself. Not only is there tremendous strain on many Tasmanian families who are dealing with housing insecurity, but also on social services who work with these people on the ground.

We would all want more houses to be constructed and delivered in a timely way. While this bill shifts management of social housing out of government to a statutory authority, I hope this results in a more agile, flexible and responsive delivery of more social housing options.

We want fewer barriers to constructing more housing, not more. I am listening to what the Leader and other members in this place have to say on the bill, on Homes Tasmania on how this will actually be achieved and I will support any measures that responsibly make this happen. I have been listening intently and will continue to listen, but currently, I am leaning towards supporting this bill as it upsets me terribly to know people are sleeping out in the cold or in their cars or cramped up in a friend's living room or shed.

It is not what we should expect in a developed place like this. Housing insecurity permeates every other facet of a person's life and I sincerely hope this bill will make strides toward ameliorating the insecurity that many Tasmanians are currently facing with housing.

[3.23 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - Mr President, I first acknowledge the briefings the Leader arranged. We had interesting information provided during those briefings and as always, it is appreciated. I do not think anyone would deny the need for more housing. The waiting list, it seems, is forever, always significant. To think people are waiting for years to be able to have a roof over their heads - they can at least have some surety of being safe for years into the future.

It is important that problem is addressed. I do not think anyone denies that. I genuinely want to understand how this new body being created through this bill is intended to operate and operate to the advantage of Tasmanian people, but at the same time making sure we are able to effectively scrutinise its operations. I want to first go to the briefings. There are a number of organisations good enough to come and to talk to us about what it is they do. From the outset, there were a number of words of angst spoken at the briefing and I want them to know that was not aimed at them. It is important each of the organisations providing homes understand how appreciative we are of their work. I want that to be clear. Certainly, my frustration is more with how we are seeing this problem addressed.

We heard from Mr Ben Wilson, who is the CEO of Centacare Evolve Housing talking about 450 homes, 3000 under management, 25 local government areas, that their business is about properties with a client support program and they are looking at projects like St Joseph Affordable Homes. They provide work for 21 apprentices and trainees. There are disadvantaged youths entering industry. All of that work is really good work. We need to take our hat off to them for the work they do in that area. Employment is important. and covers so many aspects of issues in the community. People finding good work and employment, but also addressing some of the social issues that exist. I thank them for the work they do.

As noted by Mr Wilson, there is huge potential for what needs to be done in the area. There is frustration there, and I am paraphrasing him, I am not quoting directly, that currently they can only deal with four-year strategies. There is a need for much longer strategies than that. Obviously, four years because that is the life of the government. Housing is one of those things, along with health, that really needs to be a bipartisan, tri-partisan, multi-partisan area. We cannot just throw four-year strategies at these things. I could not agree more with that statement by Ben Wilson.

Of course, there are complexities that come with trying to put a strategy like that in place. We heard during the briefings from some that said in five years time and you have a five-year strategy, by the time you get to that point, things have changed. The environment has changed. The housing circumstances change in terms of interest rates and all of those sorts of things. The provisions of materials to build houses and conditions for training and those sorts of things, change over time. You are never going to get it perfect. As I have said for years, if we have a vision as a parliament to go down a certain line and stay within that parameter we build for ourselves over a 20-year time frame, we have a much better chance of hitting the target than if we aim at nothing.

Certainly, those big issues, community issues, we are here to help solve. Yes, we are here to scrutinise the policy. I appreciate that. However, you have a really well formulated strategy that has multi-partisan support and take the politics out of it, you have a much greater opportunity to be able to reach those goals. Education, health and housing are major issues. Big ticket items.



We heard from Kim Bomford from Housing Choices Tasmania, one of the largest providers in Tasmania with 2100 dwellings, the largest of those in the north-west, housing around 4400 Tasmanians. They have around 280 homes with 260 in the pipeline in terms of construction and ramping up the construction side. They have committed construction partners. They are saying they need a new model to build construction packages. She also said the Government's 20-year plan is what we need and different ways of bringing projects to the table. She made a very interesting observation during that briefing and that was that the waiting list is only the expressed demand. There is untapped information as to where people really do wish to live. It would be interesting to have that total picture.

Mr Wilson said we have a planning system that basically is a roadblock, not his words 'roadblock', but that was basically the sentiment and that we needed a board that can facilitate for better progress, in effect. Again, not his words, but effectively what he was saying.

We also heard that government was not agile enough or quick enough to respond and that has already been spoken about. Kim also told us about community housing providers, that there were 500 dwellings transferred to community housing providers for management in 2014 to attract Commonwealth rent assistance. It is interesting, is it not? Why we have to do that, obviously the federal laws required that to happen for rental assistance to be able to be applied. It is interesting. Why would we not be working with the federal government? Now there is the opportunity, as the member for McIntyre pointed out - or was it the member for Launceston? - about the Housing minister now being in Tasmania.

**Ms Armitage** - That was the member for McIntyre.

**Mr VALENTINE** - We have the federal Housing minister on our shores and our own Housing minister, Mr Guy Barnett. We could change things in that space if there was a will to enable proper management of these facilities, to be able to get proper rental assistance, make sure that the federal laws change, saving having to put houses out to third parties to manage in order to get it. That just seems to me to be a little odd.

You heard from Housing Connect Partners, Mr Andrew Hill, CEO from CatholicCare, and it was really interesting to hear from their perspective. They want to be able to respond to community need. It is important to them. He talked about generational homelessness. He said bricks and mortar are simply a tool to support individuals and families. They are looking at it as a more holistic issue than how it is handled and Didi, I think it was, I did not catch the last name, said they need the keys in hand to deliver the services.

Danny Sutton from Colony47 talked with us as well. They are not keeping up with supports and supply. Getting the keys is important and \$1.5 billion and 10 000 homes is a good commitment and, he said, how are we going to get there? Availability for finance has improved and how is master planning going to be undertaken? How is the material going to be acquired to actually build the houses? I think he was the one who made the observation that assumptions that were made five years ago are not relevant today. So, a 20-year strategy being talked about, how is that going to look by the time we get a long way down the track with a strategy like that? He questions that.

He says we need a broader vision; a framework and a strategy. They are not there. We need an agile response. I hear all of that. Andrew Hill, the CEO from CatholicCare, said having everything under the one authority removes disjointed action. It means you can be more

agile and you get better outcomes. Well, I think it is a vision that he is talking about there, and I suppose he is saying this may well be the model that is needed.

Ben from the Salvos said it will provide more flexibility. We had Chris Jones from Anglicare seeing it as an opportunity to get more houses and that government have told them that contractual arrangements will continue, so that took away that concern.

An important change would be being able to use the bricks and mortar as a tool to deliver, being able to borrow against the assets. Danny from Colony 47, 'Is the current arrangement going to deliver?' He questions that. Diversity in building types and fit-for-purpose buildings, putting more people into private rentals than social housing. That is what we heard.

We heard from Sophie Underwood. She had a number of concerns, some we have already spoken about. I will mention some: delivery of housing should not be exclusive of strategic planning; that the 2017 Tasmanian Planning Scheme did not include social and affordable housing, which is an interesting point. Some might say, well it is a purely planning scheme, it should not be mentioning it. It is aspirational. It shows the purpose and the benefit of having a planning scheme.

She talked about the Housing Land Supply Order, that it was positioned as surplus land being utilised, but in 2021 the powers of the land supply order process were changed so the Director of Housing could acquire any land and fast-track it. She mentioned Huntingfield, which has already been mentioned. She said it is one of the largest tracts of land for affordable housing, and it did not go out for public consultation. Because it did not go out for public consultation, or at least as effective consultation as you might through a normal planning process, it undermines the Tasmanian Planning Commission. It is less strategic, engaging with members of parliament and not councils.

She also talked about there being a problem because of the nature of this body and the collaboration with people in construction and the like. The weak donations laws might leave a gap there for the donation laws to be exploited to possibly advantage some. She was concerned about that. She was concerned about the intention of the Property Council to bypass councils, that it was a threat to the community voice, because it is being removed by the planning system being bypassed. The development sector needs to see the bigger picture. She saw this particular body that is being looked at in this bill as something that could be eroding transparency and strategic decision-making. There are significant issues there.

I turn to the second reading speech, and there is a statement that says, we need the right structures in place. Well, the question for me - and I think it was the member for Elwick who might have mentioned this - is, how do we know it is the right structure? Where is the proof? That body in the ACT being set up - what was it called?

**Mr Willie** - It was like future area urban land.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Now, has that delivered? Well, I do not think that has been proven yet. We really will not know and I suppose jumping onto that bandwagon might be a bit premature when it comes to holding governments to account in that housing space. Also, in the second reading speech, it says we need to change the way we have been doing things, to be more contemporary, to prepare for the next decade and beyond.

Now, while I say we can deride the broadacre developments of the past, and most people would see that they were not a good move back in the 1950s, it was the government that built them. Not this Government, but it was the government that built them and from within government. I do not think that was any external body or board that organised that. It was within government and it was a bad idea in the long run. It points up that government had the capacity back then to deliver the infrastructure and we could change the policy settings and build the capacity again within our own government.

That is the point; it can be done; it has been done. Yes, it might not have been done in the right way, but it is possible for governments to set themselves up and there would be many who would say that was such a huge task back then. Well, putting it off to another body is going to push the task off to them. It is going to make the government of the day a little more removed than it would have been in the 1950s when they were building that housing.

Where and what we build determines the fabric of our communities, the second reading speech also says. They got that right; there is no question about that. If you build the broadacre, that did not work, and we have the land use strategies in place now and they are so important and planning is for a reason. I spent quite a bit of time when I was in local government chairing the land use strategy development, the first for 30 years in the south. The north and north-west had similar committees that were putting together land use strategies.

There is a heck of a lot in land use strategic planning and I have read it into the House before, but I want to read it again for the members who are here, so that you understand how extensive land use strategies are.

There is a strategic framework within which it is all developed. It looks at biodiversity and geodiversity, water resources, coastal issues, managing risks and hazards. It looks at cultural values, recreation and open space, social infrastructure, physical infrastructure, land use and transport integration, tourism, strategic economic opportunities, productive resources, industrial activity, activity centres, settlement and residential development.

Housing is just one component of a land use strategy. Now, you can put that framework in place. Then you can put a strategy into it, which indeed happened back then. However, if every time somebody has a desire to develop something because there is not enough and they want to go outside of whatever that is stipulating, it is extending the infrastructure issue; the infrastructure that needs to be provided in the ground to be able to make those sorts of developments happen. If you go outside a carefully structured land use strategy, you are saddling the community with a significant infrastructure bill - sewerage, water, all of those sorts of things, not small issues. Public transport.

It is important that if we set a strategy that we give it an opportunity to actually perform and that is the problem with saying we will just buy up whatever land is available and we will turn it into housing, 'Oh by the way, we need to look at the land use strategy. It is getting in our way.' It is a silly way to do things. It is not strategic. It is not good.

The second reading speech talks about the services and supports we need to ensure our wellbeing. It is a great aspiration, but bypassing the planning law is less likely to deliver on that front, the wellbeing of people. Cheaper land is further away from where the work is. People who are placed further away can less afford to travel because they do not have the

resources. They need public transport, and that costs the community if you are going to place them out at Kempton for instance, when it is Hobart.

To give them their due, in the second reading speech it talks about how this structure can play a key role in key worker accommodation and that will be interesting to explore as to how rent levels can be restricted to allow the service sector to live closer to their workplace. It is a great aspiration, but as I said at the briefing, I go back to a program that existed many years ago under the federal government called Building Better Cities. It was Brian Howe, and Wapping was that project. It was supposed to be a mix of housing. It was supposed to be a degree of social and affordable housing and there was some housing in there for people with mental health issues and it was a mix. You go there today and you see how much of that space is actually mixed housing. It is a gated community, it did not work.

By just giving this over to another body, I do not think it necessarily means we are going to get what we want. It is the policies that matter and it is the drivers. Yes, the minister is the one who has to give the letter of expectation, but if it is removed to a board as opposed to an individual, it is going to be a board that is responsible and it will be an amorphous thing in terms of who takes the blow that is being delivered because someone did not get it right.

It cannot be narrowing down to a particular functional point and it is important that we explore the capacity for the department as it currently stands - or the Government as it currently stands - to be able to undertake some of these things as opposed to putting it just that little bit further out.

When I read the second reading speech it talks about how it will assist in developing policy for housing. The Government certainly needs that, to be able to put the right policies in place, but why another level of governance to be able to do that? We are all elected to try to see these things achieved for the community. We are here to scrutinise this sort of legislation to make sure it is the best legislation. To make sure it is a fit-and-proper move to be able to meet community need, to be able to see it work into the long term. There are all of those sorts of things we are here to do. However, it seems to me as I read it, and it might have been the member for Elwick who mentioned, it is simply saying the Government cannot do this, and they are just looking to push it off for someone else to undertake.

Ten thousand homes by 2032. One thousand homes a year. That is a lot of homes. The point is with that organisation expected to deliver it and it does not deliver, who is it that can be held accountable? It needs to be ultimately an elected individual as opposed to non-elected. There is less accountability with this model. I would like to be proven wrong. The fact is, the boards are selected by the minister, not elected by the people. It is almost like the Government is washing its hands to get rid of the problem and pushing it off to a board so it can avoid the day-to-day issues that will arise. It is like divesting the Government of housing stock to have third parties deal with the day-to-day problems that those in social housing face. In those instances, those third parties take the heat, not the Government. Is that what our community wants? I do not think it is.

Is this a backdoor method of providing an avenue for the construction industry to develop and grow the capacity for them to profit off the provision of public land they would not otherwise be able to access through the normal planning system? Someone else might have made that observation.

The document provided to us yesterday, headed 'What will be different with the new authority?' Maybe the Leader can answer this for me in her wrap-up: what boards actually report to or advise the Director of Housing now?

It talks about greater collaboration. The new authority will have a 'greater focus' on collaboration with sector and community representatives. That is what the Government should be doing now. Their focus should be on that and putting it off to another board does not necessarily mean the government of the day should not have the same level of focus this new entity is supposed to have.

The bill provides the authority with broader powers. Well, change the act. Provide the department with a greater remit. Why is that not being done? It is better to be under the full control of the government. The paper here says:

The bill gives the authority broad powers to enter into arrangements to achieve positive housing outcomes. It empowers to lease, transfer and buy and sell assets to deliver and facilitate new supply and allows the authority to enter into partnerships, trusts and joint ventures for purposes like developing land and delivering supply of social and affordable housing. For example, this allows Homes Tasmania to work with Councils to develop more shop-top apartments and release land supply.

They are great aspirations. However, the Government has the power to do it now. We do not need this body to make that happen. That is the question I keep coming back to. What is stopping the Government from doing it now? Tell me if the Premier's Local Government Council still exists. A perfect opportunity for the Premier to strike up conversations with councils to achieve some of this. I had this vision a body like this could end up being, an authority turning into a behemoth that is difficult to turn around given its wide remit, should things go wrong.

I turn over and see a heading there of Stronger focus on Urban Renewal:

The bill gives the authority the powers required to deliver housing options for all Tasmanians while still prioritising those in greatest need. These options include affordable private rentals, affordable land release, affordable home ownership, key worker accommodation, social housing, supported accommodation and crisis and emergency accommodation.

All good aims, I do not have a problem with the aims, but how does it all fit in with what DPAC is now expected to address, given that Communities Tasmania has been disaggregated?

There are dot points that follow down and I will not go through them all, but the third dot point down says:

Encouraging development of diverse communities and integration of people from different social and economic backgrounds.

Our community development and community and disability services all being put off to DPAC, but we have this body that has got these sorts of things at play. How is that all going to work? How are we going to see that knitted together to deliver a good outcome? I have not

seen the detail on that. Arguably, it is not just about housing, Homes Tasmania is as much about people as infrastructures. It blurs the lines of accountability.

There is a statement on the following page, three paragraphs down from the top, that says:

Housing Policy cannot be developed in a vacuum. Homes Tasmania will deliver the most cohesive approach to homelessness and housing services in the country.

Again, who is going to be responsible for what? It is not just infrastructure, it seems to me there is that integration, and need to understand more how that can deliver for the people of Tasmania.

Moving over to the last page of that document where it talks about other considerations:

There are other issues not addressed by the bill which affect the delivery of social and affordable housing in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government recognises that there are other acts, schemes, policies and procedures that may impede the delivery of new housing supply, and which present challenges to achieving the government's ambitious social housing build program.

It almost reads like it is going to be too hard for the Government:

Separate proposals have been developed to address issues related to planning and residential tenancy to further accelerate land supply and a further \$15 million has been committed to extend in the Headworks Holiday Program.

Is that going to be simply for construction industry benefit? Is that passed onto the housing program? Those benefits that are for the headworks charges. The charges for connecting to the sewerage and stormwater and like. So, where do those benefits go? Do they go to the developer? Do they go to this body? Do they come back into the program to be of benefit and reduce the cost of housing? There are a few questions there.

The last paragraph on the first page of the second reading speech says:

Housing is a whole-of-community need. Where and what we built determines the fabric of our communities, the services and supports that we need to ensure our wellbeing, our culture, and connection to each other and to the world around us. Urban design and renewal is integral to this and it is what makes livable communities.

I thought, it is easy to put those words together, but delivering that is another thing. When we see the capacity under the Director of Housing to buy up land, just doing that as an opportunity arises is not really a good strategic way forward for urban design and renewal, wellbeing of communities, those sorts of things. I hasten to say I am not having a go at the Director of Housing; that is the legislation, that any land can be bought up and be fast-tracked into development.

I am sure there will be scrutiny during Estimates. Some members have pointed to whether that is going to be sufficient. The member for Murchison said, 'Committee B could pull them in and talk about what is being delivered.' There are opportunities, I agree.

At the top of page five of the second reading speech, it says:

The functions and powers conferred under the bill provide the foundation for Homes Tasmania to effectively plan for and manage the housing and homelessness system as well as to acquire, develop, or redevelop and manage homes in line with the purposes set out.

I make the comment, that can be done now. Change the act so it can be done now. Change the act to give the power for the department to be able to undertake some of those duties.

I have said enough and I have my concerns. I will listen to further debate very carefully, I will listen to the Leader's wrap-up, but at this point in time, I find it difficult to support. We think of the likes of Macquarie Point; we think of other arm's-length bodies that do not seem to have delivered in the past. Why is this going to be any different? That is my question.

[4.04 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - Mr President, I value the contribution from other members - it helps us to think about all the different aspects of it. I rise to give my thoughts on the Homes Tasmania Bill, legislation that has seen a rapid gestation of barely two months from the close of its public consultation period on the initial draft, its subsequent passage to the other place less than two weeks ago, and now ready to greet us here in a newly minted form. If it passes unscathed it will complete its race to independent and fully functional adulthood by the end of the month; an extremely rapid process for such an important issue.

We can only hope the issues it seeks to address can be resolved with an equal turn of energy and enthusiasm. It is not to say that its intent is without merit. We have seen an almost united front from all sides of politics, acknowledging we have a huge problem with the availability - or lack of it - or affordability of housing for an increasing number of our fellow Tasmanians. I thank the Leader for the briefings from the department and the outside stakeholders who have allowed us to openly explore the intent and concerns surrounding this bill. I also thank the contributors to the community consultation process for their considered submissions, who have given us all a deeper perspective on a highly complex issue.

The numbers are well known and increasing, with reports of 4500 families on the housing waitlist. There is now getting close to a 70-week delay for priority applicants alone. I can only imagine how impossible it is for these families to maintain the hope of finding a place that they can call home, let alone the bureaucratic process to prove eligibility. I agree with the member for Franklin from the other place with his comments that:

This is a wicked problem, a problem with no stopping rule, where every attempt at solving it cannot be withdrawn and may well exacerbate the issue. The problem is a symptom of another problem and there are no right or wrong answers, only better or worse outcomes.

I am not sure I necessarily agree with his desire to have greater political control over the solution. Maybe that has been part of the problem with imposed political influence and party policy. Can Homes Tasmania facilitate this? Perhaps so; however, an independent board with an empowered CEO might be just what is needed to create a separation from overt political control while still being publicly accountable. The goal of building and acquiring 10 000 new homes is an ambitious target. Maybe this model could allow it to be achieved.

However, going back to the member for Franklin's comments, as he has raised strong concerns that have been echoed by many in the debate, I draw members' attention to this extract from the letter he sent to us all:

Further, I fear that the bureaucratic restructure that will come from this bill will divert attention and resources away from the housing crisis at the worst possible time, with vulnerable Tasmanians suffering as a result.

I have to ask what plans the Government may have to prevent this from happening if this bill passes, as it may well be one of the largest elephants in the room at this point. To reflect on this query for a moment, the key mechanism in starting to understand the nature of a wicked problem is to ask enough informed questions that might help to reveal the true nature of the issue, and then to consider whether any attempt at remedy will produce a better or worse outcome; because once a remedy itself is tried, it cannot be taken back. There is no restore point in this process.

The member for Franklin raised a number of these points, and I hope they can be addressed in a considered manner rather than swept aside in the haste to establish a new entity, as community and industry confidence in a new entity is a critical factor.

Given the nature of public debate on this issue, much of it quite heated, we have seen lots of ideas put up and some of them acted upon. One of the most recent here has been the speculation on the availability of longer term rentals, with a surge in short stay tourist accommodation offerings based in private houses. This has been seen as a particularly demonic influence by some commentators, with property owners naturally attracted to the apparently much higher returns and flexibility offered by such schemes.

Hobart City Council has reacted by moving to limit new whole house approvals for such enterprises, to stem the loss of long-term rental properties. Whether it will make much difference is yet to be seen. Maybe being seen to do something will send its own signal to the Hobart community and perhaps to other municipalities as well.

Madam Deputy President, we have also had to include deeply underlying issues. To address one of these, Dr Lisa Denny, a well-respected demographer and a commentator on a variety of Tasmanian trends, recently highlighted in her Twitter feed a number of interesting statistics that have not yet been raised.

In a tweet on 24 August, under the *politas* hashtag, she commented:

Analysing rebased 2021 ABS population data for Tasmania for report, just wow, since the 2016 census Tasmania's population actually grew 9.7 per cent, not the 4.6 per cent we thought.



She also included a graph of the startlingly steep growth line reaching toward the 570 000 population threshold. As of 30 June, we are currently at 526 386 people. In a subsequent reply to a respondent, who pondered this might help to explain the housing challenges, she offered this comment:

Particularly, as much of the growth was in the 29-39-year-old age groups, 17 000 more than what we thought, migration ages profiles have changed considerably. We need to understand this much better. The immediate observation that can be drawn from this is that our unprecedented population growth can be as a significant factor in reduced availability of housing. As we have the reality of considerably more people living in our island state in a way that has blown the ABS's projects out of the Bass Strait.

In my own electorate, and that of many others around the state, we have seen a frenzied house building that is failing to keep up with the demand. If we explore Dr Denny's blog, that is available on her website, she goes into much greater detail in exploring these changes. Perhaps what is most worrying is the trend since 2021 that she describes in this next quote:

Tasmania recorded a significant net loss of 20 to 34 year olds during 2021. For all other years since 2017 and the average since 2014, Tasmania had recorded a net gain for the 25 to 34 age groups which was reversed in 2021. While Tasmania has historically always recorded net loss 20 to 24 year olds, it was considerably more in 2021 compared with previous years.

The net gain for age groups 40 to 69 was higher than average, particularly so for those aged 55 to 59 and 50 to 54 years of age.

The longer term impact on Tasmanian's population will be a larger bite in our age structure with a reduction in both the size and proportion of prime working age and reproductive age people, resulting in a more rapid population ageing.

Whilst Dr Denny does offer some caveats on the interpretation of this, as a possibly one-off correction of migration data, it does offer a sobering challenge that may well be spread into other areas such as access to health care and education, issues that are already subject to much heated debate and community concern at this very moment. As an example, in my own electorate and I am sure in others too, getting a timely GP appointment is increasingly difficult, especially so if you are a new resident, with many practices closed to new patients. We look to education, and in my electorate, Latrobe High School's enrolments have been growing by roughly 50 students per year, to the extent where it is turning away out-of-area enrolments at the moment on a weekly basis.

At what point do we put up a sign saying Tasmania is full? That is not to say we do not welcome new Tasmanians, it is simply a recognition that perhaps our secret is out. This is a magical place to live, and our core services are struggling to keep up with a rapidly growing population that is once again seeing a trend in returning to an ageing community.

Can Homes Tasmania provide a new wherewithal, an impetus to ensure a base supply of affordable housing for our wider community? A supply that may even free up vacancies in a congested and even more expensive private sector rental market? This is perhaps the crux of

our deliberations. If we expand on this line of debate, it is worth nothing in mixed overseas residential developments, the provision of community needs such as a health, education and public transport services, are usually the last piece in the development puzzle and come far too late. Often long after the final block has been completed, with residents desperate for local services to meet their daily needs.

It is gratifying to note the debate in the other place has explored the concept of creating livable communities that fully meet the expectations of our wider population. It is not enough just to build houses. We also have to build in livability as well as capacity. There have been ongoing moves to reduce the size of new blocks to the extent where new houses almost touch across the fence line, with a quarter-acre block consigned to history. In my own municipality with the old grid references, the blocks are huge and we could have a lot more people living in some of those areas than our planning schemes allow. Maybe some of these community housing projects with smaller units and shared facilities might offer inspiration for a new way of developing land designed for living and not for the biggest house and the smallest house. There has to be a true sense of community with a real sense of identity, and implicit community support.

It is also reassuring to know the minister has taken the time to visit successful social housing projects on the mainland. He should be fully aware of what is possible.

I expect if Homes Tasmania is to be established they must take a truly holistic approach to the provision of housing, one that comes with the necessary community infrastructure and service delivery in place to fully meet the needs of residents. Maybe the Leader could offer a Government view on the part Homes Tasmania might be playing in facilitating this.

Madam Deputy President, I was particularly inspired by another member's contribution to the debate in the other place. The member spoke with compassion and lived experience, having worked in the not-for-profit community sector for many years. The three categories of housing need she described can be refined to the necessary service delivery. Firstly, homeless people that need full wrap-around support service. Secondly, people in the middle who might be losing their home through no fault of their own and may be employed, but vulnerable and on the cusp of homelessness and increasingly so, given the escalating costs of living; and lastly, young people looking for a first home whilst not having quite enough resources behind them to take that first step to independence. We have all heard of professional young people who cannot get into the market and are finding it very difficult.

Many of these young people are in stable careers, be they trades or white-collar industries and yet they are living with their families in a way that can add to the overall pressures of finding homes large enough for the whole family. In terms of the triage of support it tails off from the first to the last categories, and this is possibly another issue to be considered in what is a mix of wicked problems. All of them have a symbiotic impact on other categories.

Then, if we add in the impact of inflationary pressures on housing costs and interest rate rises, are we in a perfect storm of despair? The other concern raised is that of governance and rightly so. If we are to see another statutory authority owned by the government with a board structure, there must be a mechanism that minimises political interference in operational matters whilst allowing full public scrutiny. I am reassured by the point that whilst the minister may issue directions to the Homes Tasmania board that are in the public interest, the minister

may only do so after consulting with the board. This is a point that does echo an amendment made to the TasTAFE bill.

I also note in the bill I do not believe there is a mechanism where the minister can appoint the CEO to the board. Again, a reassuring point of good governance ensures a separation of roles, accountability and operational responsibilities.

The draft statement of ministerial expectations also provides some welcome insight into the strategic and operational side of a Homes Tasmania entity. However, there was a line in section 3.1 in the overarching expectations that caught my eye. It says:

Operate with competitive neutrality, avoiding market monopolies, and creating contestability to achieve governance outcomes.

It does come across as a bit of a word salad, as a term used before, that might impede getting the best outcomes for our community.

What would be the problem with Homes Tasmania as a government-owned entity having a competitive monopoly in social housing? With a \$3.5 billion asset base and the ability to borrow money at highly competitive rates, backed by government security, I see a naturally competitive advantage with this, especially so, when it has the audacious goal of building and or acquiring 10 000 new homes in 10 years. It has to have sharp elbows in a tight market for developable land and the means to build land banks for future development.

Before I close on governance, there has been some concern both in other place and from direct stakeholder comment over the risk of improper processes regarding fast-track rezoning of land for development that would be possible under this new authority.

Given the potential capital gains that could be made in these processes, we may need to consider additional safeguards to ensure transparency and the avoidance of any suspicion of improper pecuniary interest from involved parties. Unless, of course, the Government can advise us what safeguards will be in place to eliminate the risk of possible unethical practices.

I would also like to understand, for not-for-profit stakeholders, how they build a genuine and openly symbiotic partnership with Homes Tasmania. Especially so, when building a strong professional relationship with the Homes Tasmania CEO will be a critical factor. Choosing the right person for the role may be a crucial element in its success or not, as to some extent they could subconsciously become the kingmaker or queenmaker in the Tasmanian social housing industry.

Moving on to more positive considerations, it is unusual in this policy area to observe what seems to be an outbreak of goodwill towards the intent of this bill from a variety of stakeholders - Shelter, TasCOSS and Anglicare to name just three among many. That is not to say bodies do not have concerns with this legislation, but we hope their expertise can be fully acknowledged by the Government, and that the necessary adjustments have been made to the bill.

Part of this deliberation on Homes Tasmania must fully recognise the ongoing work of many not-for-profit entities that work both independently and in partnership with government, philanthropists and corporate partners, as well as the local councils and other bodies that seek

to unilaterally address the community needs for homes and housing. I am sure we can all cite initiatives in our electorates that continue this work at a local level, and have made significant improvements to housing security in our local areas. We might even hope that if Homes Tasmania does become a reality, that the establishment phase does not inhibit addressing the desperate and urgent need for additional public and social housing.

The underlying issues may have taken the Government by surprise, and whilst we can look back and wish that had been different, and that more timely decisions had been made, we face a reality that has to be addressed. The Government has proposed this means of resolving it. I will be listening to the debate, in the close, with keen interest through the filter of: is it better or worse than what we currently have in place?

I welcome the member for Nelson's proposed amendments, and look forward to hearing from the Government with those amendments. We may yet need to consider further amendment, and I will be keen to hear the debate when we go into the Committee stage.

I am actually of a mind to support this legislation because the Government has been elected to govern. This is the Government's response to an issue. Ten thousand homes in 10 years is a huge undertaking. I am a bit wary, because I think in 2014 before the election, they said that Tasmania will be the healthiest state by 2025. That did not eventuate. There is an independent review in four years. This Government now has been in power for eight years. In four years time, when the review - or before that, because we can have them in - we can see how many of those 10 000 houses are built. This is purely this Government's initiative. This Government has taken a fair risk, I think, and if, in three years time, before the next election, they have not got some significant runs on the board - because this is their initiative, this is what they have put in place to deal with this problem, I think that is a really important thing to remember.

I do not have to agree with the Government's policy. That is not my role in this place. I have been here to make sure that the legislation that comes to enable that policy decision is safe and is in place. I appreciate the amendments from the member for Nelson to try to improve that.

I go back to the National Water Initiative when the water and sewerage was touted, 2006, and they said with the greater equity in water and sewerage, Tasmania would be able to access greater funding from the National Water Initiative. Now that may or may not have been the case. People may or may not have issues with what has happened in the water and sewerage industry in Tasmania, but there are a lot of people out there that have better quality drinking water, there are lot less stage three complaints coming in just because it was big enough to handle some of those issues. Yes, we did have times when there was sewage running down the streets in Salamanca. Yes, they have tried to work on those. Yes, the member for Launceston has stated that she did not have many troubles working with the board of water and sewerage, Mike Brewster and company, because she had direct access to them.

I do not think it is the board. I think it is the board that chooses the CEO, and the CEO can create a structure where we can link into that with issues and complaints, like they do with water and sewerage. So I am not quite so concerned. I know the member for Launceston will be happy that I pumped up its tyres there, but I am just about to deflate them again.

I do not have an issue with a skills-based board being people based in Tasmania. If they have to get somebody good from the mainland, that is not an issue for me either. If we think about it, Victoria is 3.3 times our size. Western Australia is 40 times our size. We are a small region. We need the best people in Tasmania. Personally, I do not care whether they live on the west coast, the east coast or New Zealand, as long as they can do the job, and are understanding.

That is the difference with having a skills-based board over a 10-year period. At the moment, we have a government for four years, and then the next government comes in and tries to create a structure or a project. I go back to what the member for Hobart said about broadacre back in the 1950s. Big mistake. Who was in charge of that? Government. Should they have had a skills-based board instead of politicians making those decisions? Perhaps.

That is where we are at the moment. What is not going to work is if we continue doing what we do. What is not going to work is if we say let us just fix up the legislation and let us just do this bit over here.

Let us give this legislation a chance; let us give this group a chance to go out, put it on the line, 10 000 houses, or 10 000 homes in 10 years. In three years time, the community will ask, how many have you put in place? Oh, 45, the community will vote about that and say what you suggested as a solution to this problem has not worked; or in three years time there might be 2000 more homes, and the Government can say, we got that right.

I think that is where we are. I am not here to define government policy, I am not here to say this is right or this is wrong. I am here to ensure the legislation that we put in is sound, is ethical and will be reflective of what the Government is about. Do not get me wrong, there are times when I have gone at the Government about what they are doing in other spaces, and you all have heard that. However, in this place we have elected a government to have responsible policy and a responsible way forward in this issue.

If we do not pass this, and nothing changes, the Government will say, well we tried, we tried to innovate, we tried to put in a legislation that would allow us to do this, and they did not pass it because they were a bit worried about what would happen. We have not invested enough time into this to consider whether the policy they are putting in place is the right one. However, I am certain that the Government has, because they are staking their reputation on this bill. They are staking their reputation on this organisation with a board and a CEO.

From my point of view - I think I even convinced myself - I am going to support this because I think we need to. I think we need to put that aside. We cannot continue what we are doing at the moment, because it is not going to get any better, it is not going to change. So, let us give them a chance. Let this change. I am supportive of this legislation.

[4.27 p.m.]

**Mr HARRISS** (Huon) - I thank all members for their contributions. I have listened intently and taken in most of it. I would probably be lying if I said some of it has not gone over to the keeper, but that, I can assure you, has more to do with my brain capacity than the members' contributions.

It is widely accepted, and we have mentioned here throughout this debate - and rightly so - that all Tasmanians have the right to a roof over their head and a place to call home which

is affordable, safe and secure. A place where families or individuals have a sense of being and belonging. This is a starting point. From there come such things as education, participation in sport, jobs and community involvement. As mentioned by the member for Murchison, if you look at the bigger picture, without access to safe, secure, accessible housing the cost of health and our social services system rise.

In so many ways Tasmania, and the people who live here, have historically had more opportunities than the rest of the country to access affordable housing. That is prior to the property boom that started about the turn of the century. Tasmania led the nation for years in home ownership at about 70 per cent up until 2011. I hope my children will be able to afford a house of their own that will give them the safety, security and sense of belonging that I mentioned before.

The homelessness and lack of access to social housing facing many of our fellow Tasmanians poses a massive challenge to this Government, and has done in the past as well. We must start making a real difference for those in need. Have those issues been given a high enough priority over the term of this Government? Doubtless there has been goodwill and intent, but I am not so sure that delivery has matched intent. The fast-track development of Huntingfield, which has been mentioned by several members, is probably a stark example. Maybe that development shines a light on one of the major blockages in efficiently building more houses, and that is the planning system.

The Affordable Housing Action Plan 2015-19, and the current one for 2019-23, again show intent by government, but I am not convinced that the strategy has to date produced the anticipated and stated outcomes since its inception. There have been some 1450 long-term homes built under this scheme. Against this backdrop, one might suggest that to have 10 000 homes over the next 10 years is rather optimistic. Even when the policy was announced, this Government was well aware of the many constraints affecting the building industry - which, I might add, will not go away overnight.

Yes, we hear a lot about record spending and commitments to build a targeted number of houses, which are all welcome; but the true measure is output, the rubber hitting the road. Madam Deputy President, the \$64 000 question is, how do we get a significant proportion of some 4400 applicants on the housing register into appropriate accommodation? How do we address the ever-growing homelessness issues impacting too many Tasmanians, and have some of the stated 10 000 homes over the next 10 years off the drawing board and into construction?

It is obviously a very complex issue, and I am not aware of any other jurisdiction that has solved the problem. Like the member for McIntyre, I recognise the positive conversations that seem to be happening at a federal level from a new minister within a new government. I have previously mentioned in this House that KiwiBuild program in New Zealand and I will read a piece from the *International Journal of Construction Supply Chain Management*, volume 10, number 2, 2020. I refer to this because it has some similarities to what this Government is aiming to achieve:

In 2017, the Government published a policy called the KiwiBuild programme, which was expected to build 100,000 high quality, affordable homes for New Zealanders over ten years. It was intended to become an effective measure in helping to solve the crisis. The New Zealand Herald (2018) reported that over 17,000 people registered interest in these

KiwiBuild houses, with \$2 billion dollars to be invested in the project over ten years. The New Zealand Herald further reported a massive demand for affordable houses in New Zealand, as many people had high hopes and expectations for the KiwiBuild programme. KiwiBuild was to be executed in two ways: by increasing the supply of affordable houses, and by transforming the way in which houses are built. However, unfortunately, the KiwiBuild programme has been unable to deliver on all its objectives. Coughlan (2020) argued that the KiwiBuild programme will take more than 400 years to reach its targeted primary objective of 100,000 affordable homes ...

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### Recognition of Visitors

[4.33 p.m.]

**Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT** - While the member for Huon is having a moment to think about overseas jurisdictions, I welcome our guest in the public gallery who is visiting from Maryland, near Washington in the US. He has been travelling around and visiting most parliaments around Australia. We welcome you to our parliament.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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**Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT** - You can go to the US if you like, member for Huon or you can stay in New Zealand, or come back to Tassie.

**Mr HARRISS** - I have been once. Four hundred years is a long time. Madam Deputy President, I hope we in Tasmania can learn from experiences like this, and not be here dealing with some of the same issues that have plagued what, I would say, was a much needed and well intentioned program to build more affordable housing in New Zealand.

In another life, not so long ago I might add, I can recall spending too many days trying to cut through unnecessary red tape affecting housing construction, with planning being chief on the list. The consequences are that builds are unnecessarily delayed and all too often stopped. The Government must address planning constraints if it wants to provide better and more streamlined housing solutions.

I have read the draft statement of ministerial expectations relating to the bill which provides some insight and understanding of the Government's aspirations for the Homes Tasmania board.

I note that the minister has to consult with the board to produce a statement of expectations. I presume this will be similar to the standard of principles ministers are required to provide GBEs. In her reply, the Leader may like to indicate how dynamic the statement of expectations is, and with what regularity it may be updated. The Leader indicated in her second reading that we must be innovative, agile, and responsive. Surely this includes the statement of expectations.

I have tried to look at this bill from a practical, hands-on, concrete-in-the-ground view, and what better outcomes are possible. We heard in the briefings, and I thank the Leader for organising those - they are always very informative - that there is concern that something needs

to change. If we continue to do the same thing, we will continue to have the same outcomes, and that is undersupply of services and housing. If having a statutory authority with a skills-based board and all the services under one umbrella, can assist in the delivery and streamlining of building homes and providing homes and providing housing services, I believe this to be a good thing.

There is obviously goodwill and intent on the Government's side in seeking to establish the new statutory authority, and I hope it will facilitate all the Government's stated aspirations. Time will tell.

Madam Deputy President, I support the principle of the bill, but the Government will have to do significantly better than it has to date with increasing supply.

[4.37 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, it has been a very lengthy debate, and I certainly appreciate all contributions, all the yeas and the nays and the reasons why. My advisers have been working very hard on answers, and there are multiple people with a similar answer, so we have tried to roll them all into one.

I will make a start, Madam Deputy President. At this stage of the debate we have all agreed that we do need to do things differently. None of us want to see people in need of housing and those needs not being met. If there was an easy solution to this, we would not be debating this here today, and we would not need to have a public housing body delivering these services.

Clearly this is complex. However, it is the role of the government of the day to drive policy to address challenges. This is the Government's policy response to the current challenge. I note the support of the stakeholders in this change. I particularly note the support of the community housing providers, who recognise that this model more closely reflects how they are structured to leverage their asset base and use the skills of a governing board to drive delivery.

The priority of this bill is more houses, faster. This is what all sector stakeholders have told us. This is where the focus of this Government is, and this is what this bill strives to achieve. Development bodies are frequently used in other states to drive delivery of houses, because this model works. South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia all use development authorities.

In Tasmania, we have a belief that demand and the supply must remain integrated. So, rather than separate out housing supply from demand, we have kept them together in this bill. The demand is clearly set out as driving principles in clause 10 of the bill, which is the test against which the rest of the powers in the bill are fettered. This means that commercial activities can only be undertaken where they meet the purpose of the bill: to support those in need. As the member for Elwick raised, we could create a development body to increase our housing supply, but this would divorce the supply from the demand, and we are committed to having an integrated and cohesive system, which this model delivers.



A number of questions raised by members are consistent, and I have put some of those together, or my advisers have put them together collectively, and then we will address some of the more detailed questions after that.

A critical element of this structure that needs to be clarified is the accountability and ultimate responsibility for this authority. Importantly, this bill establishes a statutory authority, not a government business. It is incorrect to draw comparisons with Hydro Tasmania and the minister's response to questions on that body. It is also incorrect it will only be available at GBE hearings, as it is not a GBE.

This means it will be available for scrutiny, as is currently the case during budget Estimate hearings. The time allocated to these hearings every year is negotiated as we all know. In addition to this, there will be a tabled annual report, statement of expectations, a corporate plan, question time in parliament and right to information processes. Furthermore, this body remains in the public service, staff remain public servants and Homes Tasmania will be a government body delivering public services.

I can confirm that all staff, both now and into the future, will be employed under the State Service Act and remain public servants. This body will not be at arm's length from the minister. The minister ultimately remains accountable and will be accountable for questions in parliament under this portfolio in the same way that role is currently.

It is important to note questions of an operational nature are not the purview of a minister and under the current departmental model, these types of questions would need to be referred to the department for response by a minister. Where members have raised concerns about questions being deferred to a board, this would occur with operational questions, which is also consistent with current separation of responsibilities.

To further clarify questions on responsibility, specifically including who is responsible for child safety and other elements of the authority remit, there remain levels of accountability, as is currently the case, with the minister holding ultimate accountability. For example, staff will be responsible for delivering within their remit within the organisation. The CEO will be responsible and accountable for the overall operations and staff performance. To confirm other members' points, the CEO will be appointed by the board.

The board is also accountable and responsible for the CEO's performance and delivery, with this very clearly set out in the statement of expectations, much more so than the current departmental secretary. The board is then responsible and accountable to the minister and will be appointed on fixed terms by the minister. The minister remains ultimately accountable to both the parliament and the people of Tasmania and, of course, as was mentioned, will be tested at elections. Who holds accountability for reducing housing stress is raised by the member for Nelson; therefore, it is throughout all these levels, but stops ultimately with the minister. Responsibility of the minister does not change under this model.

In relation to why we need a board, rather than bringing these skills in through contractors or consultants, it is important the people we bring in have a level of ownership and accountability for the advice they provide and the designs they make in driving outcomes. Consultants simply do not have this in the same way that a board does. Further, the level of expertise and knowledge that can be assessed through board members would be very expensive in a consulting or contracting arrangement.

This brings me to the member for McIntyre's question on the cost of the board. I am advised that the board can be sized by the Department of Premier and Cabinet as a category D, governing critical. The chair role has been determined at a maximum rate of \$60 749. Directors have been determined at a maximum rate of \$34 080. The board must meet a minimum of six times a year. This was raised by the member for Elwick and it is important to note this is a minimum requirement. The board must meet frequently enough to meet its functions set out in clause 15 of the bill. Delegations are also provided to ensure that operational matters are not impacted by board meetings in much the same the current delegation works.

Board membership will be based on skills as set out in clause 14. However, the concerns raised by the member for Launceston about regional representation are noted and are one of the reasons that advisory committees have been included, so representative views can inform decision-making. Of course, ensuring we meet the skills of the board is important and we are currently working through an expressions of interest process to ensure we have strong leadership that understands the various challenges, opportunities and differences across our state.

Of course, relationships with boards or an entity for that matter can change depending on the individuals involved. As raised by members in this place, we have all had a range of different experiences, some more positive than others, with different entities, including boards and government agencies. Relationships therefore, are not determined by structure and the accountability of this structure, rather than presumed relationships, should be what it is judged on.

The member for Hobart asked about boards currently reporting to the Director of Housing. I can confirm no boards currently report to the Director of Housing.

Questions have been raised about the Ministerial Reference Group and advisory committee, how they interact with the board and where lived experience is represented. This is relevant to the accountability structure as it reflects the minister is responsible for setting overarching policy directions and vision, which is supported through the reference group, and their current work on the 20-year housing strategy. The board and advisory committees, which the minister expects to include lived experience - and this can be reflected in the statement of expectations - will provide direction on how to implement the policy and strategic vision of government. This is where the practical experience from the sector and skills and knowledge of the board can drive how we can better deliver homes.

There have also been questions about the statement of expectations and how frequently this will be updated. I think the member for Huon was one person that asked the question. It is a usual process for these documents to be updated annually, which ties into the reporting requirements with a corporate and annual plan. The member for Launceston was interested in KPIs for the organisation. The statement of expectations, which is currently in draft, can incorporate specific measures to be reported against. The statement must be consulted on with the board, and the sector and this provides the opportunities to capture specific KPIs which can then be reported on.

The member for Murchison specifically raised questions about the statement of expectations and its reference to the Women's Strategy. One of the key actions from the Women's Strategy is to develop an evaluation framework. The Tasmanian Government is

partnering with experts to develop the framework. The evaluation framework will set the measures against which the Women's Strategy will be assessed, which will, of course, then flow through to policies and programs and housing.

It is the minister's expectation policy directions set out in the statement of expectations, such as the Women's Strategy, would form part of the corporate plan under clause 25 of the bill. Further, the annual report, which is tabled in parliament, requires Homes Tasmania to report on actions taken against the statement of expectations in clause 26(2)(d) of the bill. This provides a much higher degree of reporting and transparency on these policies than is currently required and available from a government agency.

We are also developing a gender impact assessment process, which will be used to assess policies and programs across Government and their impact on women. This will work alongside the Women's Strategy evaluation framework to measure and improve gender equality. These actions are in addition to the Joint Sessional Gender and Equality Committee established in the parliament that can examine the gender impacts of legislation and anything else that is referred to it, noting this was a result of a notice of motion from the member for Murchison.

In relation to accountability, the member for Murchison also questioned how the authority would be accountable for how the money is spent and how the leverage on that \$3.5 billion asset base is used. Homes Tasmania, as was the case for the Director of Housing, will be able to borrow funds from the Treasurer. In addition, the authority will be able to borrow from other lenders. This flexibility will ensure the authority has the option to raise funds in the most appropriate manner for future developments.

With the funding already committed in the budget papers and across the forward Estimates period, together with the retention of income derived from public housing rental, Homes Tasmania has a solid income stream to finance its ongoing operations. However, it is conceivable that instances will arise where access to additional funding sources will be beneficial, particularly with regard to facilitating the delivery of innovative new supply initiatives. Homes Tasmania can access funding sources such as the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), to support future capital developments where access to such funding will be desirable, efficient and effective.

As with all decisions of the board, and Homes Tasmania more generally, any decision to borrow would need to be taken with due consideration for the purposes and principles as set out in the bill, and that is in clauses 3 and 10.

Finally, where Homes Tasmania seeks to borrow funds from an entity other than the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation, approval must be secured from the Treasurer before this can occur. Homes Tasmania can borrow funds to accelerate the delivery of key projects, including land developments such as Huntingfield, where borrowed funds can be repaid in a timely fashion through sales proceeds. Using borrowed funds for these projects allows other funds provided to Homes Tasmania to be utilised for the delivery of social housing and supported accommodation.

The delivery model for developments is limited under the current act, as it does not provide flexibility to enter into joint ventures and partnerships that this bill will provide for. This is significant in the ability to provide for urban renewal and work with sector partners in

delivering increased housing supply. These types of models have been successfully rolled out in other jurisdictions like New South Wales and Victoria, and it is a key part of this bill.

The member for Hobart asked a question as to how we know if this is the right structure and what proof we have of this? The way we know this is the right structure is that it works in New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia and in Victoria. Our community housing providers, who work nationally, support this model and use it themselves. This structure is the right structure to deliver on scale, which is what we need to be doing.

I also want to address how the authority will work with different housing providers. The bill does two things: it establishes Homes Tasmania as a governing board, and it modernises the Homes Act to ensure that the new authority has all the powers and functions it needs to improve housing and homelessness services in Tasmania. Members have noted that many parts of the Homes Act have been carried over, whilst drawing attention to some changes and raised concerns about the intention of the broadening powers. The definition of 'housing provider' is an example of such change. A housing provider is an entity who builds or manages homes for eligible persons. The bill removes the requirement for a housing provider to be a not-for-profit entity.

Importantly, however, all the functions and powers of the act, however broad, are tied to being for the purposes of the act. A fundamental clause in the bill is clause 10(2)(b), that it is desirable to ensure that housing assistance is, and that housing support services are, able to be provided for the persons most in need. The relationships that Housing Tasmania will have with housing providers in the future will be set in the housing strategy and the next housing action plan.

As I have said, the bill is all about delivering more houses, faster. A number of members have raised HousingFirst as a response to deliver better outcomes in Tasmania. This principle is absolutely supported and is the key driver of the bill. To do this, we need the housing supply. The bill recognises the HousingFirst principles, which, firstly, rely on the adequate supply of housing through partnerships with housing providers and which, secondly, rely upon partnerships with housing support providers and community support providers to deliver the wraparound supports needed to help vulnerable Tasmanians to find and keep a home.

These fundamental principles are all prescribed for in the bill. The bill reflects the broader role that the authority will play, ensuring the wellbeing of those in need of housing and homelessness services as well as building livable communities.

I recognise this is not a change to the current functions and powers of the Director of Housing. However, it is a change in focus. Importantly, these functions and powers are recognised as being fundamental intentions to be kept and carried over to the authority. As set out in the draft statement of expectations, Homes Tasmania must continue to progress the important work underway to improve the Housing Connect model to respond more effectively to the housing crisis and homelessness in Tasmania. By doing this, it will provide Tasmanians with the most integrated and cohesive housing and homelessness system in the country.

In relation to providing these services, I want to address the questions on how the authority will work with housing support providers. That was asked by more than one member. The Tasmanian Government currently invests \$36 million each year in wraparound and support services. The establishment of Homes Tasmania does not change these arrangements. It is

important that Homes Tasmania will continue to partner with housing support providers to work together to support those most in need and help them find and keep a home. Housing support providers will continue to play an integral role in the delivery of homelessness and housing services in Tasmania and their voices will be more strongly involved in decision-making through the advisory committees than is currently the case.

I will now address some of the questions raised in relation to the following specific items. There were questions about, how can assets be safeguarded given borrowings? Homes Tasmania, as was the case for the Director of Housing, will be able to borrow funds from the Treasurer. In addition, the authority will be able to borrow from other lenders. This flexibility will ensure the authority has the option to raise funds in the most appropriate manner for future developments. As with all decisions of the board, and Homes Tasmania more generally, any decisions to borrow would need to be taken with due consideration to the purposes and principles as set out in the bill. They are in clauses 3 and 10.

Finally, where Homes Tasmania seeks to borrow funds from an entity other than the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation, approval must be secured from the Treasurer before this can occur. Assets will continue to be in the control of the Crown, as Homes Tasmania is an instrumentality of the Crown as stated in clause 9. New housing models can be pursued that leverage funds and can achieve the delivery of new housing without the need to transfer assets from Homes Tasmania to other housing providers.

There were questions about the definitions of social and affordable housing. Social housing is rental housing provided by not-for-profit and government organisations and includes both community housing and public housing. Rents are set at an affordable level by way of government policy and usually based on income. How you define affordable housing depends on if you are talking about buying or renting. Rental stress is a well-defined concept in the private rental market and is commonly accepted as occurring when a household with an income in the bottom two quintiles is paying more than 30 per cent of their income in rent.

Affordability in the home ownership sector can be defined by looking at the Government's shared equity program, MyHome. This establishes a clear eligibility criterion where a borrower is unable to afford to purchase a home without assistance. Both of these limits and eligibility criteria are available on the department's public website. This bill, through the purposes articulated, provides a role for Homes Tasmania in both social and affordable housing areas.

I will now move to balancing key workers and public housing tenants. The Home Act provides the flexibility for Homes Tasmania to provide housing where there is a demonstrated need - for employees of a public authority, such as police, nurses, doctors, teachers, or for employees of a commercial or charitable undertaking that supports a social or economic benefit, such as seasonal or key workers. Importantly, the bill does not create an obligation for Homes Tasmania to deliver housing in this regard, it merely creates the opportunity to do so.

With regard to how the authority will balance the allocation of resources between public, social, and key worker housing, this will be established in the Tasmanian Housing Strategy. This is appropriately a matter of policy, not legislation, and will be dealt with on an evidence basis as part of this work.

There were comments and questions on the Residential Tenancy Act and the applicability of that. The Residential Tenancy Act 1997 will continue to apply to all public and social houses tenancies administered by Homes Tasmania and our partner community houses providers. The applicability of the RTA is assured through the provisions of the RTA and is not diminished by the introduction of the Homes Tasmania Act. It is important to note the good work that has already been achieved in supporting Tasmanians in need and improving housing for Tasmanians.

I want to reiterate the Tasmanian Government's commitment to continue to invest and further reduce housing stress and homelessness. Tasmania has the highest expenditure of all states for housing and homelessness, spending \$375.13 per person in the population in 2020-21, much higher than the national average of \$222.22 per person. Through the 2022-23 Tasmanian Budget, and over the forward Estimates, the government will supply a record \$538.3 million of capital investment into social and affordable housing and homelessness initiatives, with \$204.3 million this year alone. The Tasmanian Government is committed to reducing homelessness and increasing assistance to people who are homeless when help is needed. Tasmania has the lowest rate of homelessness per population nationally. We are the only jurisdiction to increase our social housing stock to keep pace with population growth.

Tasmania's social housing dwelling growth was 1.2 per cent higher than the population growth over the past four years. All other jurisdictions experienced low social housing growth compared to population growth. However, we know there is more to do and our current approach is unable to meet demand.

A number of members have raised concerns with other constraints on delivering more houses faster. The Government acknowledges that there are challenges more broadly than this bill addresses, including in planning and residential tenancies. As committed in the second reading speech, we see this as the first step to addressing those challenges. As the member for McIntyre stated, there are some challenges that are complex and require time to get right. We want to be able to leverage the expertise of the board and consult with the sector and the Tasmanian community to ensure we get these changes right. We intend to review what is needed to address these challenges and bring legislation back to parliament, if necessary, in 2023.

In relation to the member for Hobart's question on the Headworks Holiday grants, these are already in place through the Department of State Growth and are targeted at increasing land supply. This is an example of how the Government is targeting broader housing market challenges. Members have raised why changes cannot simply be made to the current model. While, of course, it is possible to improve the legislation we currently have, it does not allow for the increase in supply we need to achieve to be able to deliver on the HousingFirst model and to address our significant and growing housing register demand.

Put simply we need more houses and need them fast. We need a model that allows for increased supply at scale. While a lot of these things can be done in a government agency, the financial structure and governing skills of a board with expertise that have delivered in these areas before, allow us to deliver on a much larger scale. It does this through the asset-based leverage and through the ability to enter into joint ventures and partnerships, learning from other jurisdiction development bodies. However, we want to do this without losing the focus on those most in need and we have retained our housing and homelessness services with our supply body. We want to do this through a holistic approach, which is where there is increased

focus on the whole housing market and how we ensure there is enough housing supply for a range of housing needs. This approach ultimately means we can better support our vulnerable.

Many other elements raised by members, including those mentioned by the member for Mersey on our population increase and how we manage these are, as members rightly point out, policy matters rather than those requiring legislative changes. The Government is addressing these through our housing strategy, which can help to guide our response. As you know, this was released today and I encourage all members to engage with that process, to inform the development of the strategy and how we address these issues into the future. Mr President, I will just seek some more information.

One more bit of advice, and hopefully this will answer the member for Nelson's question. The definitions are different for each program and are all available on the public website. The social housing is 25 per cent.

**Ms Webb** - Yes, I do not think so. I never asked for that. Is it affordable, is the one I was after? You ran through social already. We are all very clear on social.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It is all here. MyHome affordable home ownership is on the website. This is what you are talking about?

**Ms Webb** - No, I clearly asked for the Government's understanding of affordable housing, what you regard your current definition of that to be.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Well, this is what we regard it to be, but the member is not, well she is well aware of it so I think -

**Ms Webb** - My concern is that over time those websites change and this record then that I am trying to seek from you about the Government's understanding of affordable, what that means with affordable housing, becomes ephemeral once those websites are changed and gone in the future, for future reference when people are looking back to this *Hansard*.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - All I can say at the moment on that, member for Nelson, is it is what it is on the website at the moment and it is presumed to be that way for a long time.

I am seeking advice. I am assured the advice that I have is correct, but obviously it is not what the member is looking for so I cannot add any more. I am sorry.

[5.10 p.m.]

**Mr PRESIDENT** - The question is that the bill be now read the second time.

**The Council divided -**

**AYES 8**

Ms Armitage  
Mr Duigan  
Ms Forrest  
Mr Gaffney (Teller)  
Mr Harriss

**NOES 5**

Ms Lovell  
Ms Rattray (Teller)  
Mr Valentine  
Ms Webb  
Mr Willie

Mrs Hiscutt  
Ms Howlett  
Ms Palmer

**Bill read the second time.**

## **HOMES TASMANIA BILL 2022 (No. 35)**

### **In Committee**

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

#### **Clause 3 -**

Purposes of Act

[5.17 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** - I have an amendment to move in my name. Clause 3, first amendment, page 8, before paragraph (a).

*Insert* the following paragraph:

- (aa) to assist in reducing the incidence of housing stress and homelessness in Tasmania;

That is a relatively straightforward insertion into the purposes of the act, to explicitly state that a function or a purpose of the whole activity under this act is to assist in reducing housing stress and homelessness. It was raised by a number of submissions that were made in the draft act.

This has phrased it slightly differently so it fits with the format of the purposes of the act. I hope people will see that as a fairly straightforward and sensible inclusion. I am happy to answer any questions about it.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I thank the Member for Nelson for working with our department on these amendments. The Government will indicate, as we go through these amendments, there is nothing there that we find extremely controversial. We will discuss them as we go through them. This one is simply recognising the housing stress and reducing this is a key improvement.

We have no objection to this amendment, and we will support it.

**Amendment agreed to.**

[5.19 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** - I move a second amendment on this clause in my name. Page 8, paragraph (a).

*Leave out* the paragraph,



*insert* instead the following paragraph:

- (a) recognising that housing is a fundamental human right, increase the opportunities for eligible persons, and persons on low or moderate incomes, to live in safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing;

This amendment is fairly straightforward, and is to adjust language to more accurately reflect an understanding about a rights-based principle behind housing that is fairly well accepted. I find it more forward-looking to have a rights-based focus there just in those principles and the high-level principle rather than a human need, which is not really an accepted principle.

If there are specific questions about it I am happy to answer them. I did note we have some rights-based language in other legislation in the state. The Education Act, which was updated in 2016 under this Government, included references to the right to education and the right to certain elements of education. I think it is well placed for us to insert that where possible when we are looking at legislation that aligns to accepted rights.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The Government accepts the principle of the fundamental right, and here we have the fundamental human right. The previous language was based on advice, not that it was not quite right, but the wording is now changed to the point that it is acceptable to the Government.

**Amendment agreed to.**

[5.21 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** - I move a third amendment in my name, on this clause 3, page 8, paragraph (b)

*Leave out* all the words after subparagraph (ii).

So the intent of this, just to be really clear, is that in part (b) the final paragraph that reads:

so as to assist in the economic and social participation of persons who, without such provision, may be restricted, in whole or in part, from economic or social participation in society;

The amendment strikes that whole paragraph out, and the thinking behind that is that if we read (b), that sits there as it is, it is, as a purpose of the act to -

- (i) enable the provision of housing assistance and housing support services; and
- (ii) facilitate the provision of community support service -

I think those are two very clear purpose of the act without having to qualify the fact that we provide those so people can either economically or socially participate in society. We provide them when they are needed to people who need them, and there is not a contingency that you have to be in some sense or to some measure a participant, either economically or socially. That paragraph is unnecessary and puts the wrong message there associated with

those other two parts. So (b) (i) and (ii) stay and just that paragraph goes. Again, I am happy to clarify further if that is not clear for people.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The Government has considered this and looked very closely at it and we find that it still retains the purpose of the bill; therefore, we accept the amendment.

**Amendment agreed to.**

[5.23 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** - I wish to move a further amendment in my name on this clause. It is the fourth amendment, page 9, paragraph (h).

*Leave out* the paragraph.

*Insert instead* the following paragraph:

- (h) to ensure the existence of viable, diverse and accessible -
  - (i) services for provision of housing assistance;
  - (ii) housing support services; and
  - (iii) services related to homelessness.

A brief explanation, it is to a little more explicitly lay out that viable, diverse and accessible - so adding in that idea of 'accessible', which came through some submissions on the draft bill, and is an important thing to add in. In a more complete way, it reflects the services there to which we are expecting that viable, diverse and accessible nature. Not just housing assistance and housing support services as exist in the current (h) but housing assistance, housing support and services related to homelessness. It is just for completeness and I am happy to explain further if there is a lack of clarity.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - The wording changes retain the purposes in the bill and is consistent language in the bill. We do not have an issue with that and accept that one.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Clause 4 agreed to.**

**Clause 5 -**  
Interpretation

**Ms WEBB** - Just to clarify, some elements from some of these interpretations and definitions, I am looking at the definition on page 15 for housing assistance and it goes over the page.

Some of the clarity I was seeking was really, particularly in (a), where it says:

the provision to an eligible person of accommodation in residential premises in the short, medium, or long term;

I want to clarify, does that include homelessness shelters, does it include transitional housing and does it include supported accommodation facilities? I want to get that on the record for clarity.

I will ask some other questions at the same time. Moving over to page 17 in relation to housing support provider, it reads there:

means a person or body that provides housing support services to eligible persons, whether or not that person or body also provides housing support services to persons who are not eligible persons;

I do not believe that has changed from the current definition that we would have, or if it has, could an explanation be provided about the change that has been made? Those were the two key questions I had on those matters, thank you.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - In relation to your first question on homelessness shelters and transitions, the answer is a good solid 'yes', things will be right. With your next one on the housing support provider, is there any change? I am advised that we do not think there is any change, but we are just taking the time to check on that. We will just seek advice on that.

This advice is that there is no change.

**Clause 5 agreed to.**

**Clause 6 -**

Meaning of *eligible person*

[5.27 p.m.]

**Mr WILLIE** - I was looking at the meaning of an 'eligible person'.

I am in subclause (4). The previous subclause outlines:

... For the purposes of subsection (2), Homes Tasmania must, in determining whether an assisted person is or will be, in the need of housing assistance, take into account the following:

- (a) whether the assisted person, or any associated person, is reasonably likely to be able to obtain accommodation that will meet the reasonable accommodation requirements of the assisted person or the associated person only if the housing assistance is provided to the assisted person;
- (b) the health needs, or mobility needs, of the assisted person or any associated person;
- (c) the safety of the assisted person, or any other associated person.

Then, in the section I am referring to:

- (4) Nothing in subsection (3) is to be taken to limit the circumstances or characteristics, of a person or member of a class, that Homes Tasmania may take into account in deciding whether to make a determination under subsection (2) in relation to that person or class of persons.

I am interested in the other circumstances that Homes Tasmania will take into account when determining an 'eligible person'. That seems quite open to me that you have at least those requirements and then to see if Homes Tasmania determines otherwise.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Madam Chair, to put a bit of background to it - an eligible person is someone who is or will be in need of housing assistance. These are the people Housing Tasmania will provide assistance to. This clause enables Homes Tasmania to require someone seeking housing assistance to provide evidence that they are in fact eligible for such assistance. This is a requirement now, and will not change with the establishment of Homes Tasmania. It is reasonable to require someone seeking to access housing support, which is a limited and targeted resource, to demonstrate that they are in need of this support, and meet any eligible criteria that are in place.

In response to feedback from Shelter Tasmania, this clause under subclause 6(6) of the draft bill was revised to allow Homes Tasmania to exercise discretion in considering someone to be an eligible person, even if they are unable to evidence this, provided there is good reason for the person being unable to provide evidence.

Madam Chair, it is a catch-all clause, but it could be for someone like an ex-prisoner, who obviously needs help and direction. They may not necessarily be in housing stress, but they would fall under that. It is a carry-over protection from the former bill.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, Madam Chair. That is interesting. You were asking about subclauses (3) and (4), but they have gone to subclauses (5) and (6), which is a separate thing altogether. I have questions about subclauses (5) and (6).

It is interesting that subclauses (1) to (4) are basically lifted from the Homes Act straight into here. They have been rearranged slightly from the order of things in the Homes Act, but virtually unchanged from that act, which as we know, is antiquated and much too cumbersome to fix. We will see that as we go through, that large parts are lifted, like this.

Contrary to one part of that answer, I consider (5) and (6) here are actually new parts put into the legislation that are not replicated from the Homes Act, and are worth looking into a little bit more. I would like to do that. I seek some confirmation about whether these elements were previously in legislation. I did not readily see it.

Clause 6(5) is about asking for evidence of eligibility.

Homes Tasmania may, by notice to a person, require a person to provide to Homes Tasmania, within a period specified in the notice -

- (a) evidence as to whether the person is an eligible person; or

- (b) evidence, of a kind specified in the notice, as to whether the person is an eligible person.

Clause 6(6) is about having discretion that if that evidence is not readily available to the person to provide, there is some discretion for Homes Tasmania to exempt them from providing the evidence.

Of course, we would want to determine eligibility for people coming to seek assistance. I am not quibbling with that. I would like to know why it has been put into the bill, when I do not believe it was there before. My key question is how often does this happen? Is this a once-off test of eligibility when someone comes to seek assistance? People can sometimes have lengthy periods in which they are waiting for assistance. They have applied, and they are waiting - whether it is a waiting list or another circumstance under which they are not able to be provided housing.

Does this allow, and is it anticipated, that this prompts some regular checking of eligibility under the bill? I would like to hear more about that if that is the intention. If it was going to be a regular checking of eligibility, how will that work? Is it anticipated that it is quarterly checking of eligibility while on a waiting list? An annual checking of eligibility? I am aware that we do check with housing waiting list people about their continued eligibility and we put some people off the waiting list. It is a way of clearing the decks at times. It is potentially problematic, and I would like to know if that has been put here to help better facilitate a more regular policing of eligibility across waiting times.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I will seek some advice on that. I can confirm that subclauses (5) and (6) are new to the bill.

**Ms Webb** - Be careful that we do not have contradictory answers provided too often.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - They are new, you know that. There is no change proposed to how Housing Connect assesses. Currently we have six-month reviews of the housing register, and there is no intent to change this by adding subclause (6) to the bill. Subclause (6) was added in response to Shelter Tasmania. Basically, it will not change how Housing Connect do their assessments because it will happen every six months anyway.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, Madam Chair. I asked for an explanation, given that these are new, about why subclause (5) has been put into the legislation instead of existing wherever it existed as a policy or a rule before. What was the prompt to put it in? I understand subclause (6) was added on the prompting of Shelter Tasmania. You do not need to repeat that for me. But it is subclause (5) that was added in the first instance. I would like an explanation for that.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Because we are setting a criteria, we obviously need evidence to support that, and this was added in good practice to provide evidence, if evidence is needed.

**Clause 6 agreed to.**

**Clause 7 -**  
Meaning of *housing provider*

**Ms WEBB** - Madam Chair, I want to test my interpretation of this, compared to the Homes Act, and how 'housing provider' stands now as defined in this bill. What has changed from the Homes Act to this, in terms of who can be defined as a housing provider? I am particularly keen to have examples provided of who may be captured by this definition, if there are different elements to it from the previous iteration.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Madam Chair, I have something here that has been prepared on this clause. Hopefully this will provide the answers that you are looking for.

The creation of Homes Tasmania represents a new approach for delivering housing in Tasmania. In order to be innovative, and to partner with a range of entities to deliver new housing solutions, we need to do things differently. We need to think differently, and we need to redefine a number of outdated terms and definitions.

This bill expands the definitions of a housing provider from what was contained in the Homes Act of 1935. It modernises and updates it to a more contemporary standard that is less restrictive. In layman's terms, this bill defines a housing provider as an entity that constructs or modifies residential premises for the benefit of an eligible person, or manages residential premises that are leased to an eligible person. The entity concerned must be a body corporate, a trust or an entity of the Crown that has as one of its purposes or objects that it sells or leases residential premises to an eligible person, or manages residential premises that are leased to an eligible person.

While this definition is broader than the one in the Homes Act of 1935, which only covered entities that constructed housing, it is not open-ended. This definition only defines an entity as a housing provider if they construct, modify or lease residential premises to eligible persons. This is important as it ensures the focus of such an entity's activities remains on those Tasmanians most in need of housing assistance. I hope that helps.

**Ms WEBB** - For full clarity, because it is largely replicated across, and my understanding is it allows for those who lease to eligible persons, whether or not they also lease to non-eligible persons. That is the key difference. Can we be clear about that - the body corporate or trust et cetera which is also not able to sell or lease to eligible persons. Is that the expanded difference?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Thank you, Madam Chair. I will reiterate part of what I read earlier.

**Ms WEBB** - You do not need to re-read.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It is only one sentence and then it will be clear. It manages residential premises that are leased to an eligible person. I think that answers your question.

**Ms WEBB** - For sale?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Yes.

**Clause 7 agreed to.**

[5.44 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Madam Chair, I seek leave to report progress.

**Leave granted; progress reported.**

## **LAND USE PLANNING AND APPROVALS AMENDMENT BILL 2022 (No. 29)**

### **First Reading**

**Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

[5.48 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the Council at its rising do adjourn until 11 a.m. on Tuesday 13 September 2022.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

### **TasTAFE Concerns**

[5.49 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, I do not often take the opportunity to speak on the adjournment, particularly on a Thursday night, but this time it is important.

About 10 August I contacted TasTAFE in regard to a constituent of mine who owns a cabinet-making business experiencing significant frustration.

Earlier today I gave TasTAFE the benefit of the doubt and said it is early days, but I am done with giving them the benefit of the doubt. It is not because I was on the losing side either, at an earlier time, it is because it is important to the people I represent. I was told that it will be fine, somebody will be in touch with this particular owner and it will all get sorted. I had a message this afternoon and a series of email and phone contacts with TasTAFE; yes, we are on to them and yes, we have contacted this person, yes, we have sorted it. I received a message this afternoon, and I will not name anybody because that is not fair:

I think ... has gone missing in action, have not even had a chance to talk to him yet. And to rub it in they have sent me another invoice.

The apprentice has done two days of TasTAFE this year, two days, and they have got the cheek to send an account. I have made a series of contacts on behalf of my constituent, I have asked for the CEO's number, I hope it arrives, pretty quickly, because I am fed up and so is my constituent.

**The Council adjourned at 5.51 p.m.**



# Appendix 1

WITS No.: WITS No. - Unit Acronym

## Questions without Notice

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**Name:** Hon. Meg Webb MLC

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### Questions:

With regard to the Government's policies around access to affordable and accessible housing:

- 1 How many houses have been constructed for social housing in each of the Local Government Areas of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough in each of the last five years, reported by:
  - a) The LGA the home has been built;
  - b) The number of homes in each that have been constructed to Silver Level of the LHDG and Gold Level and above of the LHDG; and
  - c) The number of new homes in each that replace social housing properties that were demolished; and
  - d) The net gain in the number of social housing properties in each over the time period.
  
- 2 The number of social housing properties demolished in each of the Local Government Areas of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough in the last five years that have not been replaced by another social housing property.
  
- 3 The number of houses expected to be constructed for social housing in each of the Local Government Areas of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough in the next two years, reported by:
  - a) The LGA the home is being built; and
  - b) The number of properties in each that will be constructed to Silver Level of the LHDG and the number constructed to Gold Level and above of the LHDG.
  - c) The number of new homes in each that will replace social housing properties that have been demolished; and
  - d) The expected net gain in the number of social housing properties in each LGA over the time period.

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**Answered by:** Hon. Leonie Hiscutt MLC  
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

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**Answers:**

*General response:*

All our social and affordable housing capital program is driven by demand, which has been previously delivered under Actions Plans. To inform our capital program on where homes will be built, and what type of homes we need, we are developing a 20 Year Housing Strategy. This Strategy will be finalised by mid-2023 and will be the key document that ties demand around the State and types of demand with supply and guide our planned new Housing Authority, Homes Tasmania in where and when homes will be built, as well as the type of homes. For example, over 50 per cent of our Housing Register are eligible for a one-bedroom home, meaning we need a significant increase in our one-bedroom housing supply.

All new social housing dwellings are required to be constructed in accordance with Communities Tasmania's 'Design Policy for Social Housing'. The only exceptions to this are where there are site specific limitations, or for target client group reasons, where this is not practicable or appropriate.

Where practical, all new social houses built under this government have adhered to the design policy, which is comparable to Silver Level on the Living Housing Design Guidelines (LHDG).

*Responding to the specific questions:*

- 1 There have been 364 new social housing dwellings completed in the four selected LGAs over the past five years. Of these, 71 have met either Gold Level and above of the LHDG, or the Australian Standards, AS1428 and AS4299.

Unfortunately, more than half of the homes built do not have the data available to determine which LHDG level they are completed to.

The following table shows the LGAs these new social housing dwellings have been built.

Table 1: New social housing dwellings - past five years by accessibility standards – selected LGAs

LGA	Dwellings built to following Disability Standards				Total number dwellings built
	AS1428 and AS4299 or Gold Level and above of the LHDG	Silver Level of the LHDG	Minimum	Data not available	
Clarence	47	24	27	44	142
Glenorchy	24	31	16	139	210
Hobart	0	0	0	1	1

<b>Kingborough</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>364</b>

Notes to the table:

1. Data only includes social housing dwellings and excludes supported accommodation.

2. Data is current as at 31 July 2022.

Regarding questions 1c and 1d, the Department of Communities is continuing to work on composing this information and will provide on notice as soon as possible.

- 2 This information is complex to obtain and the Department of Communities is continuing to work on composing this information. It will be provided on notice as soon as possible.
  
- 3 The current pipeline of works offers the details on the houses that have been confirmed to be constructed over the next 12 to 18 months – it does not cover the full two-year timeframe specified. Of the projects that are currently planned in the pipeline of works, there are 356 new social housing dwellings expected to be built in the four selected Local Government areas and these are broken down by expected LGA in table 2 below.

Table 2: Pipeline of new social housing - by accessibility standards – selected LGAs

<b>LGA</b>	<b>Dwellings built to following Disability Standards</b>				<b>Total number dwellings built</b>
	<b>AS1428 and AS4299 or Gold Level and above of the LHDG</b>	<b>Silver Level of the LHDG</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Data not available</b>	
<b>Clarence</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Glenorchy</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Hobart</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Kingborough</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>345</b>

Regarding question 3c, the Department of Communities is continuing to work on composing this information and will provide on notice as soon as possible.

Regarding question 3d, the Department of Communities is unable to predict the number of houses that will be sought to be purchased by existing tenants or affected by arson or other issues, as such this number is difficult to determine.

Guy Barnett MP  
**Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing**

## Appendix 2

WITS No.: WITS No. - Unit Acronym

### Questions without Notice

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**Name** Hon. Meg Webb MLC

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#### Questions:

In regards to each of the Rapid Re-Housing Programs (Family Violence, Mental Health and Prisoner), and in each of the past five years:

- 1 How many households have exited the program?
- 2 Of the households that exited the program, how many were:
  - 2.1 Single person household;
  - 2.2 Couple household; and
  - 2.3 Family with children household.
- 3 Of the households that exited the program, how many exited into:
  - 3.1 A private rental tenancy
  - 3.2 Public or social housing tenancy
  - 3.3 A crisis shelter or temporary/transition accommodation tenancy
  - 3.4 Homelessness
- 4 Of the households that exited the program:
  - 4.1 How many were evicted from their Rapid Rehousing tenancy?
  - 4.2 Of those households that were evicted, please provide the reasons for eviction pursuant to section 42 of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* and the number of evictions correlating to each reason
- 5 Of the households that exited the program, how many have:
  - 5.1 Re-entered the Rapid Rehousing program at a later date as repeat tenant?
  - 5.2 Applied or sought to re-enter the Rapid Rehousing program at a later date but have not been provided with a tenancy?

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**Answered by:** Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

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**Answers:**

1 How many households have exited the program? see table

Family Violence	173
Prisoner	29
Mental Health	8

2 Of the households that exited the program, how many were:

2.1 single person households? see table

Family Violence	24
Prisoner	29
Mental Health	7

2.2 couple households? Nil (under any of the Programs)

2.3 family with children? see table

Family Violence	149
Prisoner	Nil
Mental Health	1

3 Of the households that exited the program, how many exited into:

3.1 A private rental tenancy? see table

Family Violence	23
Prisoner	1
Mental Health	Nil

3.2 public or social housing tenancy? see table

Family Violence	105
Prisoner	9
Mental Health	4

3.3 A crisis shelter or temporary/transition accommodation tenancy? see table

Family Violence	3
Prisoner	Nil
Mental Health	1

3.4 homelessness

Nil, however the Department does not have details where support workers and/or a tenant does not provide details (see Abandoned/Unknown statistics below)

Other Vacate Statistics (not requested however relevant to vacate locations)

Vacated to Family/Friends/Mainland see table

Family Violence	13
Prisoner	3
Mental Health	4

Abandoned Properties see table

Family Violence	5
Prisoner	5
Mental Health	Nil

Unknown where vacated to see table

Family Violence	21
Prisoner	2
Mental Health	3

Returned to Prison: Prisoner = 9.

4 Of the households that exited the program:

4.1 How many were evicted from their Rapid Rehousing tenancy?

Three households were evicted from Rapid Rehousing tenancies.

4.2 Of those households that were evicted, please provide the reasons for eviction pursuant to section 42 of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 and the number of evictions correlating to each reason

One household was evicted for rent arrears and two for property damage.

5 Of the households that exited the program, how many have:

5.1 Re-entered the Rapid Rehousing program at a later date as repeat tenant?

Nil across Programs that the Department are aware of, however not all tenant details (names) are provided with leases due to the sensitive nature of the tenants.

5.2 Applied or sought to re-enter the Rapid Rehousing program at a later date but have not been provided with a tenancy?

Nil across Programs that the Department are aware of, however tenant Support Workers and Housing Connect are the agencies that manage tenants and their application. As in 5.1 there may have been repeat tenants however not all tenant details (names) are provided with leases due to the sensitive nature of the tenants.

Minister Guy Barnett  
**Minister for State Development,  
Construction and Housing**