



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Thursday 12 November 2020

REVISED EDITION

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

QUESTIONS

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.03 a.m.]

On what date were you first made aware of the series of horrific allegations of child sexual abuse involving nurse Jim Griffin at the Launceston General Hospital?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I can inform the House and the member that advice was provided on 31 July 2019; that the LGH had received advice earlier that day that a member of staff was subject to immediate suspension of his registration to work with vulnerable people. I was advised that day.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.04 a.m.]

You have clearly failed to grasp the magnitude of Jim Griffin's crimes and the deep impact they have had on the community. You clearly do not feel responsible for your inaction and you do not want to be held accountable either. Yesterday you were asked why you waited a year - and now we have heard perhaps even longer since you knew - to establish an independent inquiry into the horrific child abuse perpetrated by former Launceston General nurse, Jim Griffin. You have attempted to hide behind police investigations as a reason for your inaction when those investigations ended in October last year when Jim Griffin died.

I ask you again: why did you wait a year between the revelations of these heinous crimes against children and the establishment of an independent inquiry?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I categorically refute any assertion that I would sit on this type of information. This information and what has become apparent is appalling. The entire community is appalled. I am advised that appropriate action was undertaken. All these matters now are for investigation by the independent investigator.

The Department of Health and I and everybody in this Government will fully cooperate. Any allegation that I would somehow act inappropriately with these types of allegations is simply wrong.

Budget 2020-21 - Native Forest Logging Industry

Ms O'CONNOR question to TREASURER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.05 a.m.]

After plundering high conservation value forests at public expense for the past 13 years, Ta Ann yesterday walked away from its Huon mill. Instead, it will consolidate at Smithton, closer to the tall eucalypt and rainforest carbon sinks of the Tarkine where the plunder will not only continue, it will accelerate.

Over the journey, this Malaysian timber giant has received an estimated \$44 million in subsidies, including on your watch. Can you confirm that despite your 2014 election pledge to end the subsidies to the logging industry, today's Budget will continue the funnelling of public money into propping up the native forest logging industry? Will you also confirm the clear evidence that this industry cannot survive without public subsidies? Indeed, as Ta Ann demonstrates, it can barely survive even with them.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms O'Connor, the Leader of the Greens in Clark, for that question and her interest in this matter.

I will be very clear about this: the single most damaging matter that has affected the native forest industry was the disastrous Labor-Greens government back in 2010 to 2014.

Ms O'Connor - Yet yesterday you were talking about our positive climate profile. You hypocrite.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - The Greens leveraged their role in Cabinet to hold the Labor government to a position where, right across regional Tasmania, there were jobs lost -

Ms O'Connor - Starting in 2006.

Mr GUTWEIN - businesses lost, where children had to sit in their loungerooms with their parents -

Ms O'Connor - Tell the truth.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, order. We had this same behaviour yesterday. I am going to urge the Greens - I fully understand your passion and your commitment but you do not have the right to scream over everybody else, and before you stand up, you are screaming.

Ms O'Connor - I am not.

Madam SPEAKER - You are raising your voice in a very loud and unnecessary fashion.

Ms O'Connor - That is highly gendered language.

Madam SPEAKER - Please do not argue with me. I am pointing out that you have a right to your opinion, as does everyone else. People heard your contribution in silence and I ask that you hear the Treasurer in silence. If you cannot behave, you will not be allowed to stay in the Chamber because it is causing grief for everyone else. You are a passionate woman, I accept that, but you cannot yell when it is not your turn.

Ms O'CONNOR - On your ruling, Madam Speaker, all we ask, Dr Woodruff and I, is that your rulings are consistent. Repeatedly in question time, Labor goes off and they do not get pulled up.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Please proceed.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of clarification, Madam Speaker. I found it very hard to hear the Minister for Health's response last time because Labor members were shouting across the Chamber. I want to point out the fact that Labor members continually interject when other ministers are speaking. It is the standard practice of the House during question time for members to have a discussion.

Madam SPEAKER - I have ruled. Please resume your seat. Tittle-tattling does not become you. I ask that Labor also behaves for this duration. Please proceed in a dignified manner, not you - the House.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms O'Connor - Try telling the truth.

Madam SPEAKER - Okay, warning one.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, the member for Clark cannot help herself, to be frank. On many occasions this place has been described as being the right forum for a battle of ideas. Unfortunately, that is something you have walked past.

The point I was making before I was so rudely interrupted was that under the Greens-Labor government back in 2010-14, harm was inflicted upon families and on regional communities simply because of a desire to remain in government. The price that the Labor Party paid and Tasmanians -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. The question related to the Budget and also asked the Treasurer whether or not the subsidies to the native forest logging industry will continue. We do not want a false history lesson in here.

Madam SPEAKER - You have been heard but that is not a point of order. Please proceed, Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - It is not a false history. The Labor-Greens government was propped up by you. As a result of being propped up by you what Labor did was turn its back on the regional communities of Tasmania. Right around this state there were businesses that were closing, there were people losing their jobs, there were kids sitting in lounge rooms with their

parents watching them lose everything. That was the price that you paid to remain in government.

Regarding the native forest industry, I commend Sustainable Timber Tasmania, which under this Government has returned a profit and is now providing dividends. That is the strength of the forest industry in Tasmania. This Government will not turn its back on those regional communities.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, standing order 45. Could the Treasurer please confirm whether or not the subsidies to the native forest industry will continue?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. You know the rules of this House are that I cannot put words in the Treasurer's mouth, so that is not a point of order. I ask the Treasurer to be relevant.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was making the point very clearly, and it has obviously been lost on the member, that Sustainable Timber Tasmania has returned dividends in the last three years. We will not turn our back on this industry. We will not turn our back on Tasmanians in regional and rural communities, unlike Labor and unlike you. Sustainable Timber Tasmania and the industry will be strongly supported by this side of the House because it provides jobs in regional Tasmania, it supports households in regional Tasmania, and it supports communities.

COVID-19 - Storage and Distribution of Vaccine

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.12 a.m.]

As reported in the media, there are concerns in relation to the transportation of the new COVID-19 vaccines once they become available. There could be problems with the logistics, whether we have enough planes suitable to carry the vaccines, the lack of dry ice to keep the vaccines stored correctly, the need for new technology to overcome storage issues, and overcoming the regional and remote geography of Australia in rolling out a national vaccine program.

Today you bring down the most important budget, many say, since World War II. We are all eager to move forward, to invest and to rebuild, but Tasmanians expect that the planning necessary for a safe and effective roll out of the vaccine is happening now and we need to ensure equity in the same way rationing was applied in wartime. What discussions have you had with the Prime Minister and federal Minister for Health about our plan to roll out the vaccine?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the independent member for Clark for her question.

Ms O'Connor - Independent for now maybe.

Mr GUTWEIN - Once again, we hear muttering from over there on the Greens' benches, adding nothing to the quality of debate in this place. The question Ms Ogilvie asked is an important question. I will not go into the detail of the conversations we had, but obviously it has been a matter that has been discussed at National Cabinet and it will continue to be discussed at National Cabinet.

Within the state there is a working group as part of the SCC that is looking at the logistics of the roll out but also the logistics of transporting a vaccine. The vaccine that has been spoken about has to be carried out at very low temperatures. As an island state we have, for 100 years, been able to get these things into and out of this state. I have no doubt we will be able to manage the logistics and the supply of the vaccine into Tasmania when it is available. There is a lot of work going on both within the state and at a national level. It has been regularly discussed at National Cabinet. It will continue to be so and there will be a suitable solution.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.16 a.m.]

You have failed to answer why you waited nearly a year to launch an investigation into heinous crimes against children by Jim Griffin. You have a duty of care to the families of the victims of former nurse Jim Griffin and to the victims themselves. The community expects nothing less than complete transparency from you. What you have offered to date fails short of these expectations. Yesterday you were asked what actions you have taken to identify any victims so they can be provided appropriate support and care. That is particularly important considering these crimes stretch back almost two decades.

I will ask you again: what efforts, if any, have you or the Government taken to seek out, identify and offer support to victims of these dreadful crimes?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As I outlined to the parliament yesterday, I have been advised that appropriate steps were taken with regard to the open disclosure matter. Regarding the police investigation, I am unable to comment on that. I am not the minister for Police and it would be inappropriate for me to do so. With regard to this matter I am -

Ms White - They were an employee of the THS.

Ms COURTNEY - I am not going to have a running commentary on this matter. My priority is ensuring that the independent investigator is resourced appropriately to thoroughly investigate these matters.

My priority is also to ensure that current and former staff and patients are supported. I have met with them and the secretary has met with them. They have provided appropriate support to ensure that people can come forward with confidence and are fully supported in

what is an extraordinarily difficult situation for things outlined that have been absolutely abhorrent.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, it goes to Standing Order 45, relevance. The question was very specific asking what actions the minister has taken to identify those people who may require support. She can stand up here and say she has done heaps. We would like to know what actions she has taken to identify those people to ensure they are getting the appropriate support.

Madam SPEAKER - With due respect, I believe she was answering it. It is not a point of order.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. In response to the member's question, as I said yesterday I am advised that the appropriate steps were taken with regards to the open disclosure process. I am not going to have a running commentary on these matters; it is not appropriate. We have an independent investigator stood up, and she has the breadth of terms of reference that are required. If members have concerns about these matters I suggest that they put in a submission, or approach the independent investigator. I am making sure that staff are supported, the patients are supported, and ensuring we do everything we can so this never happens again.

Budget 2020-21 - Emissions Reductions Initiatives

Mr STREET question to MINISTER for CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.19 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how Tasmania is leading the nation in terms of climate action and how the 2020-21 state Budget will demonstrate this Government's leadership role in emissions reduction initiatives?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Street for that question and his interest in this important matter. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand here as the first Liberal Minister for Climate Change to advise the House, as I have on many occasions, that Tasmania is a leader in climate action, not only in this country but across the globe as well. We have the lowest per capita emissions of all Australian states and territories and are one of the lowest emitters of carbon dioxide on the planet. We have already achieved our target of net zero emissions by 2050 four years in a row. The most recent data for 2018 shows that emissions are 111 per cent lower than in 1990. Earlier this year we announced our commitment to export clean hydrogen by 2030 and this House has passed legislation for our world-leading 200 per cent renewable energy target by 2040, the TRET.

As we rebuild a stronger Tasmania together and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, it is important we continue to innovate, to invest in new technologies and continue transitioning to a low-emissions economy. My Government will continue to lead by example. I am pleased to announce today that, as part of the 2020-21 State Budget, we will set one of the most ambitious targets in the country to transition our Tasmanian government vehicle fleet to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030. Capitalising on our renewable energy advantage, this will

demonstrate our leadership and innovation in renewable energy and climate action. This includes delivering a statewide charging network of 14 fast chargers and 23 workplace and destination charges and increasing the number of electric vehicles in our government fleet.

As the availability and range of electric vehicles continues to increase, we will increase our purchases to reach our target. We will begin to transition the ministerial vehicle fleet as well to include four hybrid vehicles over the next two years and I am pleased to note that we will receive the first of these by the end of the year. Our ambitious target will be underpinned by a Tasmanian government 100 per cent EV zero emissions strategy which will also include interim actions to improve efficiencies as we transition.

Based on currently available fit-for-purpose models and technologies, a 10-year transition will save around \$2 million in maintenance and around \$6 million in fuel costs. Importantly, it will reduce emissions by around 13 000 metric tonnes. Supporting early uptake of electric vehicles will also create a second-hand electric vehicle market and this will help to bring down the cost for the community as well. It will reduce our dependence on imported liquid fuels and increase demand for our homegrown renewable energy.

Importantly, our EV target will include battery, electric, plug-in hybrid, and hydrogen vehicles. This will align with our commitment to double our renewable energy generation by 2040 and to fast-track a hydrogen industry in Tasmania by 2030.

I am also pleased to announce that Metro Tasmania will be tasked to trial zero emissions buses in Tasmania - electric or hydrogen. This will see a northern and southern Tasmanian trial of these zero-emission buses underway within the next two years.

Madam Speaker, as we rebuild a stronger Tasmania together, it is important we continue to innovate, to invest in new technologies and continue transitioning to a low-emissions economy.

Ms O'Connor - Well, stop logging the forests.

Mr GUTWEIN - I thought this would be one announcement that we could agree upon.

Greens members interjecting.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, as I have the opportunity, once again it would be remiss of me not to request that the Labor Party provide a fully-costed alternative budget. Tuesday next week is an important day for the Labor Party and the shadow treasurer. Will he finally bring forward an alternative budget? Will he explain to Tasmanians what they stand for and, importantly, how they pay for it? That is the test the shadow treasurer has in front of him and I must admit I do not think he is up to it.

Horseracing Industry - Ban on the Use of Whips

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

[10.24 a.m.]

The tide is turning. Every year more people are understanding the systemic cruelty inflicted on animals as part of the horse and greyhound racing industries. Seeing seven horses die in the last eight Melbourne Cups has put the tragic and brutal side of the industry in the spotlight. These animals deserve much better than being fed into an industry that treats them as disposable once they are no longer turning a profit and sends them to the abattoir. While the industry enjoys government support, we need to find ways to protect animals from cruelty wherever possible. Under current laws, beating an animal with a whip is a clear-cut case of animal cruelty, unless it happens on a horseracing track. The awful thing is, whipping an animal on the track may actually be even more cruel. Exhausted horses are pushed past breaking point in the race to the finish, putting them at even greater risk of serious injury and death.

Will you today commit to improving the lives of Tasmanian racehorses and potentially sparing them from a cruel, premature death? Will you introduce a ban on the use of whips in the horseracing industry?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her interest in this matter. The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that animal welfare measures in racing meet with community expectations. We also recognise the extraordinary care the vast majority of industry participants provide to their animals. The Government is investing more money than ever before into animal welfare and I am proud of that.

Tasracing's board sets the national thoroughbred rules and has detailed provisions to regulate the use of the whip in races. Riders are subject to penalties if they breach the rules. Initial reforms began in 2009, with ongoing changes being implemented since then.

Racing Victoria announced it has put forward a proposal to Racing Australia to undertake further action on the use of whips in racing. Tasracing looks forward to working with Racing Australia through the Riding Protocols Advisory Panel to discuss and debate any rule change. It is important that consultation occurs with industry participants, particularly jockeys and trainers, before any major rules are implemented.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.27 a.m.]

You have a duty of care to the staff at the Launceston General Hospital, who have been left devastated at the public revelations of the ongoing child sexual abuse by former nurse Jim Griffin. You have said repeatedly that support has been offered to help hospital staff. However, you would understand that the circumstances surrounding Jim Griffin's alleged offending has led to a deep distrust among some staff of departmental processes. Have staff

been given permission to access support from external services of their choosing, independent of those offered by the hospital? If not, will you commit to making that happen quickly?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. With regard to this matter, as I have outlined in one of my earlier answers, my highest priority is providing the support to both former and current staff that they require. I have met with a number of staff members, as has the secretary. My understanding is that the secretary is in the north this week for further engagement with staff to see what further support can be provided. A number of support mechanisms have been provided, but obviously in recognition of the deep trauma involved in this and in obviously a lot of matters coming to the surface publicly, it is important that we have the breadth of support that is required, so the secretary is engaging to make sure that the breadth of support that is required and that the staff need will be provided.

Budget 2020-21 - Job Creation

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, HOSPITALITY AND EVENTS, Ms COURTNEY

[10.29 a.m.]

Can you outline why the Government is focused on creating more jobs and how the Government will deliver for Tasmanians with this Budget?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I welcome the question from the member and I know he is very focused particularly on jobs in Lyons. The 2020-21 State Budget is all about creating jobs, investing in our community and providing certainty and confidence for a better Tasmanian future.

Tasmanians have done it tough this year and this pandemic has been devastating for so many, but this is why, as a government we are committed to supporting Tasmanians and providing the foundation for a strong recovery.

Over the last week and a half, I have been proud to announce a number of initiatives that will support Tasmanians and provide more opportunities. Yesterday I was pleased to be out at a building site where I met Melanie, a passionate and amazing young Tasmanian who is doing incredible things in the building industry. I was there to talk about our new \$2.5 million initiative that will support more women to train up and enter roles within industry. As part of this exciting program, the Government works in partnership with peak industry bodies and skills and training providers as well as supporting employers to help women develop the skills they need to succeed in a range of industries. This is all about laying the groundwork for Tasmanians to enter jobs by shifting community perceptions of traditionally male dominated industries.

The day before, I was at a local restaurant, talking about our \$1 million investment over two years to support the establishment of a new not-for-profit training organisation, led by industry. This new training organisation will help more Tasmanians develop the skills they need and also ensure that they have the skills to be able to follow meaningful careers in hospitality and tourism.

Again, this is all about creating jobs for Tasmanians, because as a government, we are focused on creating new pathways and improving access and employment opportunities. This is especially important for Tasmanians living in regional areas, who will significantly benefit from this investment in their future.

In my Health portfolio, I was delighted to announce last week that this budget will deliver new funding for elective surgeries. Thanks to an additional \$45 million over the next two years, it is estimated that we will now be able to deliver some 8500 additional surgeries. This funding will ensure that those on the waiting list will get their procedures sooner. This is more surgeries for more Tasmanians and will benefit Tasmanians all around our state.

Finally, I also announce the \$23 million investment for health technology. A new integrated health resources ICT system and a commitment to deliver a 10-year digital health transformation plan. With this new system, the department can better manage its work force in real time, to deliver high quality health services as well as planning more accurately for the future. It will also have the key benefit of freeing up our frontline staff, to spend less time on paper work and allowing them more time to spend focused on what they do best, providing high quality care for Tasmanians.

We thank our frontline staff who have kept us safe during this pandemic. We thank the businesses who have battled through one of the hardest conditions they have ever seen and kept Tasmanians employed and we thank the community. They have done an incredible job responding to a situation and ensuring that we have kept Tasmanians safe.

This budget, which the Premier will deliver in a few hours, is all about backing Tasmanians. We will rebuild this state, we will rebuild our economy and we will deliver the support our community deserves.

The only question today that will remain unanswered is whether David O'Byrne will deliver an alternative budget? They have failed to deliver an alternative budget. Do you support the \$45 million for elective surgery?

Ms O'Byrne - You cannot get people out of ED. You are bed blocked. Your hospital is bed blocked.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms COURTNEY - Do you support building and construction? They are the questions that we hope Mr O'Byrne will answer next week.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.34 a.m.]

You have rejected calls for a commission of inquiry into Jim Griffin's alleged offending. However, it has become clear that the inquiry you have established is grossly inadequate to uncover the full extent of this deeply troubling case.

Mr Griffin worked at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. He volunteered with the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association. It has also been revealed that Mr Griffin worked as a caretaker at the University of Tasmania student accommodation which gave him access to the keys of student rooms.

Full transparency and the disinfectant of sunlight is needed to restore the confidence of both the staff and the community and to compel evidence from anyone with information.

Minister, will you commit to a broad commission of inquiry with the ability to inquire into all agencies and organisations that Jim Griffin had interactions with as has been asked of you by the ANMF and HACSU?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for this question about this very important matter. As I outlined yesterday, this Government is committed to ensure that our children are safe. This is why we have stood up this independent investigation; that is why we are committed to implementing the outcomes. The terms of reference specifically say that the investigation will address any other matter relevant to the systems of Tasmanian Government agencies deployed and responses to the historical allegations of child sexual abuse that the investigator identifies in the course of this investigation as warranting investigation.

Ms Norton is appropriately resourced and if further action or investigation is recommended by the independent investigator then more action will be taken.

Ms White - So you will put them all through it again?

Ms COURTNEY - We have stood this up, it is the appropriate mechanism. If members have feedback that they would like to provide the investigator, the appropriate mechanism is to provide that to the investigator. The Premier and I are committed to this inquiry. We are committed to ensuring our children are safe. We are working hard to ensure that our staff, current and former, and patients are supported.

Ms White - It took a year.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms COURTNEY - It is not appropriate to have a running commentary on this.

Ms O'Byrne - It is appropriate that a minister takes responsibility for actions you failed to take for 12 months.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, I ask you to refrain.

Ms COURTNEY - It is important that members of the community understand there is a mechanism for them to come forward and they will be supported. We are committed to having all these matters investigated thoroughly.

Budget 2020-21 - Jobs Support in Primary Industry and Energy Sectors

**Mr STREET question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER,
Mr BARNETT**

[10.37 a.m.]

Can you outline how the 2020-21 State Budget is supporting jobs, confidence in the Tasmanian community, in particular in our primary industries and our renewable energy sector? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his question and his special interest in this matter. On this side of the House we are supportive of our Tasmanian businesses, our families and our communities. We want the best for them. This Budget provides the platform for our state to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to chart our way forward. That is what we will see today. It will be a bold vision to grow our farmgate value to \$10 billion by 2050 in the agriculture sector. We are pleased and proud of that goal and we will be delivering on that goal.

Water is liquid gold and that is why in this Budget we will be investing some \$30 million to continue our nation-leading water irrigation infrastructure projects across our state. On top of that, we are injecting the \$1.9 million to support our seasonal workforce, to support the fruit and vegetable growing sector, to ensure those objectives of picking the fruit, harvesting the vegetables, crushing the grapes and getting it off to market are met. We are backing it in and we are delivering.

On top of that, we are delivering for our world-class seafood sector with special industry development programs being targeted in this Budget. We are protecting Tasmania and Tasmanians through an enhanced and increased funding support for biosecurity at our borders and at our ports. They are the frontline workers. They will have the resources to get the job done to keep Tasmanians safe and in addition to ensure that pests and disease are kept out of Tasmania. That is our objective and that is what we are delivering on in this Budget.

It outlines our \$5 million to TasRail to support the forestry supply chain, to make it more efficient, make it easier to get the product to market. We are backing in to the hilt the forest industry, unlike those on the other side particularly during the Labor-Greens government. We remember that very well.

The mining sector will be backed with funding to support and encourage investment in this important sector.

We talk about renewable energy. We have so much potential here in the State of Tasmania and we are backing it in, injecting millions to implement a whole range of renewable energy initiatives including Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, backing in our renewable energy action plan and our globally-leading renewable energy target. We are setting the pace here not just for Australia but for the world. Tasmania is leading and we are backing it in this Budget. A renewable energy coordination framework and a new Tasmanian bioenergy vision will be delivered under this Government.

Our Budget will lock in the Tasmanian Renewable Energy Development Fund. You will see the funding in the Budget to kick start our renewable, green hydrogen, the best of the best Tassie hydrogen. That is what we are backing in.

On top of that, during the greatest health and economic challenge of our time, of our generation, this Budget will be delivering the critical infrastructure, whether it is for agriculture, fishing, mining or forestry. Our renewable energy credentials will be backed to the hilt. We are backing in those productive industries and we have those world-leading plans for renewable energy.

We have a leader who has delivered the safe hands to keep Tasmanians safe. That has been our top priority and we have plans to grow our economy and create more jobs and you will see that today. That is in stark contrast to the other side, with their relentless negativity, carping, criticism and cynicism. They have flip-flopped. They said, 'Let us stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government' in terms of the response to coronavirus and then on the other hand they called for a royal commission. It is still on their website. The Tasmanian Labor website still calls for a royal commission. Where do they stand? It is appalling.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 48. The minister has had sufficient time to propagandise and bloviate. I ask you to ask him to cease and desist.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. They are a little bit sensitive on the other side. They do not like hearing the truth. They do not like hearing the facts.

My point is, on one side you say you stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government, and on the other you call for a royal commission. You are saying we are not doing enough. You criticise Public Health advice. Where do you stand? Nobody knows.

Let me conclude with the recent *Mercury* editorial. I will finish with this quote.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 48. The minister has had more than sufficient time. I ask you to rein him in, please.

Madam SPEAKER - You can ask all you like but I am the boss of this place. Could you please stand up, minister? Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. I was concluding with a quote.

Ms O'Connor - Six minutes.

Madam SPEAKER - I urge you to be quick.

Mr BARNETT - I will. I was finishing with a quote despite the interjections from the Greens that are delaying my response. It is a very important quote from the *Mercury* editorial -

Open the borders, close the borders, lock down the state, ease restrictions:
Labor is working hard to undermine the Government's coronavirus response

but instead of showing the voting public how it could be a credible alternative the party shows a lack of resolve and a lack of consistency.

The big question, Madam Speaker, is will they have a credible alternative budget or any alternative budget at all?

Housing and Homelessness

Ms STANDEN question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH

[10.44 a.m.]

With private rental protections due to cut out from 1 December we are hearing from tenants being threatened with eviction or rental increases that they cannot afford. At least 1600 Tasmanians are facing homelessness on any given night. As income support payments are being wound back, younger people, older women, single people and low-income and unemployed families are especially vulnerable. There is an impending homelessness crisis looming and your Government has no plan to deal with it.

Your June quarterly housing report showed that you built just five new social homes out of a promised 80 per year from the historic Commonwealth housing waiver. Shelters, which are the last line of defence against homelessness, are literally bursting at the seams and under current residential tenancy laws they are forced to evict tenants after just 14 weeks. Can you confirm that shelters are turning away 31 requests for emergency accommodation every night? That would be 31 families turned away with nowhere to go.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am very proud of our Government's track record in responding to the needs of Tasmanians in acute housing stress and investing in more capacity throughout our housing system from crisis housing and homelessness support through to massive new record state investment in delivering social housing properties and stock right across the state.

I remind those opposite of a range of initiatives recently announced and under way that are assisting those in greatest need. In June 2019 we announced an extra \$5 million to expand the capacity of existing crisis shelters and more funding for emergency brokerage accommodation. This funding has gone on to support Tasmanians most in need and facing homelessness with more emergency and short-term accommodation while new housing stock is being built under our Affordable Housing Action Plan. By July 2020 this funding had delivered all of the 35 new units of homeless accommodation that we had promised, including expansion of Bethlehem House and the Hobart Women's Shelter.

Ms STANDEN - Point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance. The question was very specific. Can the minister please confirm that 31 requests for emergency crisis accommodation assistance are being denied every night.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, but I would like the minister to be relevant.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I am talking about here is the Government's response to demand for emergency crisis accommodation. Just this last week we have announced that there is a \$16.8 million commitment in this year's Budget that is coming down today to extend the Safe Space program so there is 24/7 wraparound support available for people sleeping rough in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

Ms STANDEN - Point of order, Madam Speaker. You did advise the minister that you were interested in the answer. Are 31 requests being turned back from shelters every night?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order in the House, please. Minister, please proceed and do try to be relevant.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Speaker, we have recently co-invested with Hobart City Mission in purchasing the Balmoral Motor Inn in Goodwood, providing another 31 affordable social housing units for people in acute housing stress.

The number of people needing assistance with their housing fluctuates daily. We monitor it closely. We have Australia's most integrated housing support system assisting them. We are building the capacity of that system every day and with every budget, and you will hear more about our record Tasmanian state investment in our housing and homelessness system as part of the Budget today.

Housing and Homelessness

Ms STANDEN question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH

[10.49 a.m.]

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report says that one in 80 people in Tasmania received homelessness assistance in the 2018-19 year, which is higher than the national rate. Tasmanians are seeking assistance in historic numbers because of the housing crisis this Government has created.

On every measure Tasmania sadly leads the nation on homelessness figures. One third of requests for housing involve Tasmanians escaping family and domestic violence. Alarming, there are currently more than 150 families languishing on the rapid rehousing program waiting list. Do you find it acceptable that families in dire need are being forced into homelessness? They have nowhere to go. What will you do to address the needs of these 150 families who desperately need roofs over their heads?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, these questions keep coming: do we think it is okay that people are in dire housing stress? It is as if somehow we are responsible for the circumstances that deliver them to that. I am Minister for Housing and what I continue to do, what I continue to be proud of, is our track record in responding to that need at a range of different levels. Extra investment

in rapid rehousing places, which we have made under our Commonwealth housing debt waver savings, means there are more places for women escaping family violence.

There are more places for people exiting corrections in brokered head-leased properties, where they can get shorter term and transitional accommodation while they sort their lives out and secure longer-term accommodation. This is also what our investment is about in extending the Hobart Women's Shelter. There are more places for women and women with children, and for family groups in a series of units we have secured. These have been short-term, temporary expansions of those facilities as we move to develop more longer-term supported accommodation and affordable accommodation options for them in Hobart and in other parts of Tasmania.

The Goulburn Street units are nearly completed and will be ready to receive people in need of housing, particularly older Tasmanians. The Waratah Hotel is nearing completion of its makeover as a supported accommodation facility. I have recently referred to the Balmoral Motor Inn. We also have commitments to expand the Launceston women's shelter, Magnolia House, and provide extra capacity there.

We are providing more accommodation and supported accommodation for young people who find themselves at risk of homelessness, with new youth foyers in Burnie and expansion of Thyne House in Launceston, a new youth foyer in Hobart in addition to Trinity House and extension of programs for youth at risk in Launceston, building on the successful model of Colville Place in Moonah.

We are investing in the capacity of our system to bring people in off the street, out of their cars, out of their housing stress and their emergency needs at a greater level than any Tasmanian government previously has including \$100 million dollars to build another 1000 social housing properties over the next three years. The *Canberra Times* headline today was that their government announced it was going to build 400 houses over the next four years. That is fantastic for them. We are going to deliver another 1000 over the next three years on top of our Affordable Housing Action Plan targets -

Ms STANDEN - Point of order, Madam Speaker, relevance. The question was very specific: what will the minister do to house those 150 families who need a roof over their heads today? All these supported accommodation facilities will take months, if not years, to open. He knows it.

Madam SPEAKER - I think the minister can answer that one.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Speaker, when it comes to people who are in housing stress and housing crisis, nothing could be more relevant than this Government's commitment to building more houses, as we have been doing, as we continue to do and as will be supported again in the Budget that will come down today.

Madam SPEAKER - I have a unique situation here. It is the first time we are probably going to get two questions in, if we go quickly. It is tradition to give the question to the Greens, so I am going to give it to -

Ms OGILVIE - Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Do we have more to go, Clerk? We have one more to go.

Budget 2020-21 - Infrastructure Plans

**Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,
Mr FERGUSON**

[10.55 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the Government's plans for infrastructure, particularly our roads and bridges? Is he aware of any other job-creating infrastructure plans?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question. He is, like every member on this side of the House, committed to building the infrastructure for our state and putting people into work. That is what we are doing. With an incredible delivery already I am grateful for the chance to update the House on our plans.

This Government is building intergenerational infrastructure. It is what we need for today. It is what we need for tomorrow. Our state needs that infrastructure: more homes that my colleague has been talking about, better schools, better roads, more bridges, irrigation schemes as well as renewable energy assets, health, housing and justice facilities.

In the Budget that will be brought down at 3 p.m. today we will invest around \$2.4 billion for better roads around our state, to make our roads safer and improve travel time reliability for locals and visitors. Through our strong and enduring partnership with the excellent Morrison government, a strong investor in our state, we are delivering.

We are delivering projects in every region. Every member in this House, your electorate, every region around this state will benefit. In the south, there is \$175.5 million for the Greater Hobart transport solution. A range of projects are being delivered right now.

There is \$65 million as our share towards the Tasman Bridge upgrade. That is a critical upgrade for so many reasons and a great partnership between the state and federal governments. It is so important.

There is \$37 million for the duplication of the Midway Point and Sorell causeways to match the \$150 million we are receiving from the Australian Government. That will completely fund the \$350 million we need for the entire corridor from Hobart through to Sorell and the south-east traffic solution. Just brilliant.

There is \$23.2 million for duplication of the East Derwent Highway at Geilston Bay. Do not forget the \$576 million Bridgewater bridge, which is now in the market for early contractor involvement. We have commenced the planning approvals. It is happening.

In the north, close to my heart, there is \$50 million for the Tasman Highway upgrades on the Sideling and \$12.7 million for upgrades of the West Tamar Highway between Exeter and Launceston.

Mr O'Byrne - He cannot even reseal Davey Street.

Mr FERGUSON - I heard, I was triggered. Davey Street, which we recently took over, is being resealed. There is \$55 million for the northern roads package, including upgrades to the Batman Highway, the Frankford main road, the Birralee main road, and \$33 million for the Launceston and Tamar Valley traffic vision. This is very important. The takeover of the Wellington-Bathurst street couplet, next stage of the feasibility we promised into the Tamar River crossing and safer -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - They laugh. They did not match us on this but we are getting ever closer. Maybe you could pop it in your alternative budget. We are doing re-engineering with Launceston City Council on the Invermay traffic issues, with new intersections and new traffic management plans. That is funded.

On the east coast, \$20.8 million for continued upgrades on the Great Eastern Drive as part of our \$72 million investment in the visitor economy roads package. There is also \$4.4 million to extend the Great Eastern Drive to Binalong Bay Road.

In the north-west there is \$147 million for the next four years -

Ms O'Connor - Four-and-a-half minutes.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, and more to come.

For the next four years of upgrades to the Bass Highway as part of our partnership with the Morrison Government, the hard-working Gavin Pearce and this Government, we have secured \$200 million for the north-west community. The commitment is from Deloraine right through to Marrawah and is sensational. There is \$12 million for the coastal pathway on the west coast -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 48. The minister has had more than enough time.

Madam SPEAKER - He has 12 more seconds according to my Apple clock.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The west coast deserves respect and I want to say there is \$18.8 million for the Lyall Highway and \$8 million for the West Coast Wilderness Railway. This is all off the back of infrastructure that we have built. The Mowbray connector, Richmond Road upgrades, the Great Eastern Drive, upgrades of visitor roads on Bruny, Hastings Caves, Prosser and Waterhouse roads, the Lyall Highway nearly finished and more than half the Midland Highway, including the Perth Bypass done a year ahead of schedule.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Are you near the end, minister?

Mr FERGUSON - I look forward and encourage members opposite to look forward to 3 o'clock and we will all look forward to Tuesday when the Labor Party will probably squib their opportunity to not only bring down a wish list, a shopping list, but a properly costed alternative budget.

Madam SPEAKER - The time being 11.01 and the subscribed number of questions being asked, we now move on to petitions.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Question time did not start until 10.02 a.m.

Madam SPEAKER - I made a mistake. We started at 10.03 a.m. One question to the Greens.

Environmental Protection

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and PARKS, Mr JAENSCH

[11.01 a.m.]

Communities around Tasmania have spent years lodging formal complaints to the EPA about the devastating impacts of fish farm operations on marine waters, on boating safety and on residents' lifestyles. They have given up on the environmental regulator, which never acts to stop industrial-level nutrient overload, plastic pollution and constant mentally harmful noise. The beaches of Long Bay and White Beach on the Tasman Peninsula, Deep Bay, Brabazon Point and Kays Beach on the Huon, and the length and breadth of D'Entrecasteaux Channel beaches are choked with green slime and the waters are filled with brown-snot algae instead of marine biodiversity.

You have vacated your role as the minister responsible for environmental protection. Will you listen to the community and the science and step in and change your policy directive to the EPA and instead instruct the EPA to prioritise environmental protection instead of industry productivity, which is what you currently direct them to do?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her interest and concern in the health of our environment. I can confirm that EPA Tasmania received a number of emails in the last week of September regarding extensive seaweed washed onto White Beach at Nubeena and other locations.

Ms O'Connor - Long Bay. Bruny Island.

Dr Woodruff - Deep Bay.

Madam SPEAKER - I don't know why you bother answering if they are going to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Speaker, that is most inappropriate. The minister has been asked to answer a question -

Madam SPEAKER - The minister has just given up and walked away because of your interruptions.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it is because he does not have an answer. This is so inappropriate. I have never seen anything like it.

Madam SPEAKER - It is the minister's prerogative to answer as he pleases. He was not being listened to, he was being spoken over, and he chose to go back to his seat. Please proceed back to your seat.

Time expired.

MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Attendance of Legislative Council Minister for Estimates Committees

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a message from the Legislative Council -

The Legislative Council desires to inform the House of Assembly that it agrees to the request of the Assembly in its message dated 11 November 2020, and has given leave for the Honourable Jane Howlett MLC, Minister for Racing and Minister for Sport and Recreation, to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Estimates Committee in relation to the Budget Estimates and related documents.

C M Farrell, President,
Legislative Council,
11 November 2020.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Is there any other formal business?

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - No, Madam Deputy Speaker, only to mention that at the conclusion of the MPI the House will be suspended until 3 p.m.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, we all know that.

Mr FERGUSON - Okay then. That is the nicest thing you have said all day.

Ms O'Connor - I'm not here to be nice to you. You shafted us in the Estimates schedule and you will pay a price.

STATEMENT BY DEPUTY SPEAKER

Attendance by Members of the Legislative Council for Budget Speech

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, I am on my feet.

Honourable members, in anticipation of a full attendance of members of the House together with members of the other place in the Chamber this afternoon for the Budget speech, the social distancing with members' seating will not be achievable in most instances. In that case, I encourage members' continued use of hand sanitisers and wipes. I have arranged for masks to be available in the lobby and on the table for members to use.

Madam Speaker also takes the opportunity to thank all members for their mindfulness of one another's health by the informal arrangements that have been mutually agreed and your attention to the safe health practices with which we all are now very well familiar.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Environment and Parks Portfolios

[11.08 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Motion) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: the Environment and Parks portfolios.

I believe the evidence of question time and the Minister for Environment and Parks' response to our very important question on behalf of thousands of Tasmanians who live along coastlines that are inundated at the moment with green slime from industrial-level fish farming tells us everything about why this Government has shut down the Greens' scrutiny of the Environment and Parks portfolios during the Estimates process.

Last year, members had five hours to scrutinise the Minister for Environment and Parks. What we have now is two hours in the current schedule, an hour for Environment, and an hour for Parks. We would have had half an hour less if the Labor Party had had their way. The Labor Party proposed to take an extra half an hour off that two hours and we would have had only an hour and a half.

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, on a question of relevance. This is actually a reflection on the vote and the debate yesterday. This needs to be about the grievance debate.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Thank you, Leader of Government Business. I was about to say a similar thing. Dr Woodruff, you cannot reflect on a vote that happened yesterday. We need to get back onto the business of today.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. While Dr Woodruff and I will not be reflecting on the vote, we can reflect on the time allocated in the Estimates schedule.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - The time allocation yesterday was part of the resolution of the House, so that has been agreed to. Do not reflect on that part.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am speaking to the fact that we have an agreed two hours. We do not need to talk about the debate but the fact that the Government only allocated two hours towards the incredibly important portfolios of Parks and

Environment, two of the most critical portfolios this Government has responsibility for, tells everything about the priorities of the Liberal Government -

Ms O'Connor - And the Labor Party.

Dr WOODRUFF - and the Labor Party, thank you, who would have shortened the debate by half an hour.

We have an appalling situation where there is no effective Environment minister and the display of the minister for Environment this morning tells us everything. He has vacated this portfolio. The community across the state is seeing this on every environmental issue. On every single environmental issue, the minister for the Environment washes his hands and either says, speak to the minister for Primary Industries, or the minister responsible for gaming, or that is nothing to do with me, go and speak to the environmental regulator.

Well, the Environmental Protection Authority - supposed to be the independent regulatory body - is nothing like it. The EPA is a creature of the Liberal Government. It is a creature of the policy directives of this Environment minister. The Environment minister's policy directive at the moment to the EPA, and I am reading from the statement of expectation for the Environment Protection Authority: the Environment Protection Authority is expected that in the course of making decisions of balance, the board has due regard for the social and economic circumstances prevailing in Tasmania and, quote -

The objectives of the Government with respect to those circumstances.

In particular, the minister says -

... I expect the board to take account of the need to create a more prosperous and equitable society and this relies in large part upon providing employment opportunities ...

There is nothing in the minister for Environment's statement of policy direction to the board of the EPA which talks about protecting the environment. What we see on every decision, every single time and continual Right to Information requests that we receive, stacks of information about EPA correspondence, the director of the EPA is facilitating a situation to continue for the industry to produce; for operations to continue without any ceasing and without any cut back in scale or any reduction in expansion in their area. Instead the environment, the values of the environment, are continually degraded.

Threatened species are a joke under this minister. We have a wedge-tailed eagle recovery plan which is 10 years out of date. They just do not care. The Westbury prison is on a site which is right next to a threatened wedge-tailed eagle nest. The minister just turned away from the local community who was writing, desperate for the minister to step in and protect all the natural values in the Birralee Road Reserve, the Westbury Reserve, which is under the minister's responsibility as a reserve. The minister could not care less.

The residents of Rosny Hill right now are preparing, with all the money that they have raised in their community, to fight in RMPAT against the massive 300-metre long development on top of Crown land, a nature conservation recreation area. The minister refuses to step in and protect the threatened species, the leafy sun orchid. The minister was happy to sign away

Crown land for a private jetty to a massively rich developer who wants to have his own jetty there and it would have threatened our spotted handfish. The minister just says, yes, no problems. Give it away.

The minister takes no action to intervene on the duck hunting season. We have the minister for Primary Industries providing scope for incredible devastation of the migratory duck population seeking refuge here in Tasmania. The minister for Environment is not interested. He is never interested except in industry productivity.

Time expired.

[11.15 a.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, the Greens would like to pretend that they are the only people who care for our parks -

Ms O'Connor - Did you stop Estimates cutting the time to an hour-and-a-half?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms STANDEN - On the one hand we have Greens attacking aquaculture, forestry and looking to lock up parks and reserves, damaging the Tasmanian brand, and damaging the regional economy. On the other, we have the minister who just wanders off and fails to answer a straightforward question -

Ms O'Connor - On the other hand, we have Labor that both sides everything.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, if you do want to make a contribution, be quiet.

Ms STANDEN - You cannot wander off and avoid answering a question in relation to the environment. It was an extraordinary abrogation of his responsibilities as a minister of the Crown. I would like to argue very strongly in relation to Environment and Parks and the important role of Parks and Wildlife staff, DPIPWE staff, who are supporting the beating heart of the tourism industry, particularly in regional Tasmania.

On the one hand, we have visitor services on Maria Island, support staff being relocated to Triabunna in the very week that the borders were reopened. These are the staff who provide information to visitors on devils' nesting places, on how to interact appropriately with threatened species, on walks of interest that are appropriate for physical challenges for visitors in this place, and on interpretation of cultural heritage. We have a minister prepared to relocate those staff off island so that they distant from providing that key support to tourists in the very week that the borders are open.

We have a situation where a number of staff are on 50-hour contracts. That does not mean 50 hours a week - it means as little as one hour a week. These are the cave guides, these are the indigenous rangers, these are the important backbone of DPIPWE who provide important services to the people of Tasmania and our tourism economy. They are denied income security because so many of them are dependent on contracts and seasonal work.

The seasonal workforce is really the key to rebuilding the Tasmanian brand. So many of those people on fixed terms and low hours could be invested in: the biosecurity workers, for example, who are stood down over winter for those three or four months. For the petty savings, what do we lose in terms of investment in that workforce and continuation of services in those low demand periods? We have seen an extraordinary period through the pandemic where in agencies like the Department of Communities Tasmania the workforce has been moved into surge capacity in other areas. Exactly the same thing could be happening within DPIPWE.

We could be seeing further investment in the workforce so that staff, like those biosecurity workers and those who are supporting the surge capacity for fire management in the peak season and the tourism visitation - it could be in low demand periods. Instead they are redirected to ongoing repairs and maintenance for tracks to improve the visitor experience and amenity of these places, to improve access and importantly to provide support for regional jobs.

It is possible to protect the environment and provide meaningful regional jobs. These are very often entry level jobs, jobs that require a Certificate I or II level certification. Why not be looking to rebuild TasTAFE as Labor has proposed, to support these entry level workers with improved qualifications and a jobs and career pathway? What is this Government's plan to address jobs, particularly in regional Tasmania? There is a ripe opportunity in regional Tasmania to build on the workforce within Environment and Parks to provide more support particularly for the regional economy to provide the beating heart of tourism industry regrowth as it seeks to get back on its feet as visitation returns post-COVID.

I would like to briefly touch on an opinion piece that appeared in today's *Mercury* newspaper by Thirza White, the acting secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union who talks specifically on those areas and the missed opportunity. She says -

In the past two years we have seen crises come thick and fast: the 2018 bushfires, followed quickly by flooding in our states North and North-West, a fruit fly incursion, the largest whale stranding in our history and then a global pandemic.

These are staff who are incredibly resilient and skilled subject matter experts in an enormous range of areas providing support and incident management but also the ongoing work of the department. Ms White continues -

It is Parks and Wildlife Service employees who fight fires in our national parks. It is biosecurity officers who are responsible for protecting our borders and ensuring tourists are complying with COVID restrictions. DPIPWE is our surge workforce. More DPIPWE employees were deployed to the COVID-19 response than any agency.

Despite this, austerity measures have such a tight grip in DPIPWE that employees are denied the resources to do the job.

There are stories of staff being asked to do their jobs without the equipment that enables them to do their jobs properly and safely. There are vehicles that are inappropriate for fire management and the list goes on. Ms White goes on to say -

But perhaps the most damaging is the long-term unfilled vacancies and precarious employment in DPIPWE.

They are the areas that I have just tried to outline.

The growing number of fixed-term seasonal contracts in staff are effectively stood down each winter. The contracts only guarantee employment for 50 hours a year - less than one hour a week guaranteed.

It is time we acknowledged these quiet achievers and invest in this workforce.

Time expired.

[11.22 a.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Environment and Parks) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank Dr Woodruff for this MPI and welcome at any time the opportunity to answer questions on my portfolio areas. But what I -

Dr Woodruff - You do not, you ran away.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, I do not think you want to be asked to leave on your own MPI. You have made a contribution. I ask that the minister is shown the same respect as he showed through your contribution.

Mr JAENSCH - The questions often are not real questions. They are just grandstanding looking for effect. In question time today I was asked a question. I had the answer and started to deliver the answer. I was interrupted and shouted down by the Greens.

Dr Woodruff - You were not.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Dr Woodruff, this is your first warning.

Mr JAENSCH - They are clearly not interested in the answer I have here. It is just another stunt. It is the Greens playbook 101; they will go for protest over process any day. They ask a question but are not interested in the answer. It is question time for them and what they are looking for is a hit for an audience.

For the people who are genuinely concerned about algae and the work that is being done by the independent EPA, I had a briefing just this week on exactly this issue and the seasonal conditions, the oceanic conditions, the temperature issues, and the nutrient streams that all go together to deliver the set of circumstances which delivers algal bloom in the areas and other areas which have no agricultural runoff or fish farm activity as well routinely under these sets of conditions. I had a briefing on that and was prepared to provide an answer, but clearly the Greens did not want to hear that today and they missed their opportunity to get an answer for their constituents on these matters.

I am very happy to continue answering that question when people contact my office and I have been writing answers to them. If the Greens want to ask this question in another question time they are welcome to do so.

We love scrutiny and are looking forward to the Estimates process. I am advised the structure of the 2020-21 Estimates Committees and the timing remains essentially unchanged from previous years. There is a total allocation of 97 hours of scrutiny. The committee membership arrangements and the timing are matters that are decided by this House. I do not sit there putting in my bids or objections or blackballs on this as a minister being scrutinised. I will do what this House decides when it comes to the Estimates process.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Minister, because that was a debate yesterday we will not reflect on it.

Mr JAENSCH - No, we shan't, but I welcome that scrutiny in whatever format the House decides.

I want to respond to a couple of other matters that have come up but in particular, in terms of the MPI being on Parks and Environment today, I am proud to be the Minister for Environment and Parks in this Government and of the responsibilities and actions that this Government and my departments are taking to deliver their charter, our policies, and their responsibilities that I am responsible for as well, right across the board.

In terms of our investment in Parks, this is an issue which is difficult for the Greens as we saw this morning with the discussion about climate change and electric vehicles which they begrudgingly whimpered a tiny 'Hear, hear' to the Premier after hearing what he had said. Once upon a time -

Greens members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor and Dr Woodruff, you will have an opportunity to make a contribution very soon.

Mr JAENSCH - Once upon a time the Greens believed that Tasmania's parks and reserves and our wild places and cultural landscapes were our greatest assets and that they were going to be the future economic drivers for our state. It is this Government that is investing in excess of \$80 million over four years to make sure we can do that in ways that protect the values of our natural areas and support a visitor economy of people coming here to see and experience these areas for themselves in a truly sustainable industry which this state has become a world leader in, particularly because of the way we present and manage our natural and wild places.

We make no apologies for investing a record \$80 million over a four-year period in equipping our parks and reserves. As reported in the media, in today's Budget there is an allocation in this year and the forward Estimates of \$68.5 million for delivery of a Cradle Mountain cableway and gateway precinct. This builds on our previous commitment and investment into the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre which has now been opened - I opened that - and the Dove Lake Shelter, which I am advised is now up out of the ground and starting to take shape so people will be able to see what their new point of arrival and experience at that lake will be. It will be a lower profile and have a lower impact on the environment than a car park heaving with vehicles, which many of us have experienced when visiting that remarkable wild place in the past.

I want to briefly touch on what was waste management but under this Government is transitioning to resource recovery in a circular economy. We are committed and well on track to delivering a waste levy statewide for the first time next year which will fund education, waste minimisation and further recycling and circular economy initiatives across Tasmania. In 2022 we will roll out a container refund scheme and there is a lot of work going on to design that - we are choosing an appropriate model right now. That will need to be something we develop specific legislation for to deliver a Tasmanian model to make sure that we not only divert waste from landfill but have clean streams of recyclables presented into a circular economy, making innovative products rather than burying things in the ground.

In the Environment portfolio I was also very pleased and proud this week to receive fantastic news that 40 orange-bellied parrots have returned to their breeding grounds at Melaleuca.

Time expired.

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, we are used to being gaslit in this place and being told untruths, but to have the minister stand there and say he loves scrutiny is beyond the pale. This is a minister who has been allowed to get away with just two hours of scrutiny in the Environment and Parks portfolios, and we know that Labor was prepared to cut that number to one-and-a-half hours. This is a minister who allegedly loves scrutiny but ran away from Dr Woodruff's question at the end of question time about the impact of industrial fish farming on public waterways.

The minister can stand there and say it is due to seasonal factors. I encourage the minister to go down to beautiful White Beach on the Tasman Peninsula. That is not a seasonal algae contamination event; that is now a permanent coating of green algae all over beautiful White Beach. White Beach is no longer white.

I encourage the minister, who thinks this is a seasonal issue to go around the corner to Long Bay where again, there is slime mass, a slime coating, all through Long Bay. I encourage the minister to go to Bruny Island where again you see the contamination of public waterways from industrial fish farming.

As Dr Woodruff has pointed out, a huge part of the problem here is the fact that we do not have an independent Environment Protection Authority. The EPA has been given its marching orders by government and that is to prioritise industry. This is not a government that prioritises environmental protection and we know that, as a result of the Estimates schedule.

In this place, through that schedule, this House is letting down young people. Members of both major parties are letting down young people. They are letting down their own children. They are letting down every Tasmanian community group who is concerned about this Government's neglect of nature and in fact, degradation of nature and the public common wealth of our public lands and our public marine waterways.

It is telling that Ms Standen got up in this place, and did not talk about the natural environment; could not bring herself to do that. I racked my brain to think if Labor in the last six years, has ever asked a question that goes simply to environmental matters. Or asked a

question about the protection of parks, or asked a question about real climate action. I cannot find one in my memory bank and I do not believe there has been one.

For this year's Estimates, we have 30-minutes dedicated to the Climate portfolio. That is shameful. Two hours dedicated to Environment and Parks from five hours last year. Again, that is shameful and it lets down a vast array of community groups: the Hobart Walking Club, the Pandani Walking Club, the Australian Heritage Council, the North West Fisheries Association, the Circular Head Walking Club, the Southern Tasmania Licensed Anglers Association, the Tasmanian National Parks Association, the Anglers Alliance, the North West Walking Club, Bushwalking Tasmania, Bird Life Tasmania, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Council, the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club, the Environmental Defender's Office, the Friends of the Great Western Tiers, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust.

All these are community groups that put in a public submission on the Lake Malbena original comment process to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, not assessment, at the federal level.

We also have both major parties wilfully letting down organisations like the East Coast Alliance. We only have one hour, for example, to quiz the Minister on Planning when there are significant planning questions outstanding as a result of the passage of the major projects legislation, the almost certainty that the Mt Wellington Cableway Company will lodge a major projects application for the cable car up kunanyi, the very live prospect that the developer of Cambria Green will do the same thing, again giving a massive middle finger to the East Coast Alliance and the Planning Matters Alliance.

In the Parks portfolio, we have large scale privatisation. We have a government bending over backwards for private developers. We have a director of Parks who is basically a free real estate salesman. All those excellent people who work in Parks to protect our parks are being undermined by this Government's 'development at any cost' approach to public protected areas. Everyone who works in a visitor centre, everyone who works to try to protect threatened species and to properly manage our parks, their work is being undermined daily by this Government and the senior management in the Parks Service. I am quite comfortable saying that because it is true.

Under this Government we have the senior management in Parks determine that the Lake Malbena assessment originally to go to the federal government would be at a level 3 reserve activity assessment instead of where it should have been at level 4, which would have required public consultation.

This Government's record on Environment and Parks absolutely speaks for itself and right across Tasmania there are community groups that understand that deeply, like the fishers and walkers who gathered at the Liberal Party state conference on Saturday morning and rightly blasted helicopter noise at the Government members who would trash wilderness values at Halls Island in Lake Malbena in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

This Government's record on the environment and parks speaks for itself.

[11.36 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I find this debate quite interesting. Once upon a time the Greens would come in here and tell us that ecotourism was our future. That Tasmania could do that better than anyone else in the world and that ecotourism and presenting our natural values was one of our major natural advantages in the world. Where did we go wrong?

I am happy to speak on this matter of public importance. This Government's vision is to provide economic growth and stimulus for our regional areas. We are investing in our parks and reserves in an unprecedented level. This is particularly evident in my electorate of Lyons with investment in every corner supporting the ability of the state to maximise the economic benefits of our strong and vibrant visitor economy. They are projects which provide investment and stimulus, driving construction across the state and in particular in our regional areas.

At the Freycinet National Park we have committed to the delivery of significant infrastructure, through the execution of multiple aspects of the Freycinet Peninsula Master Plan. The master plan responds to community consultation feedback and sets a clear pathway for infrastructure to support sustainable visitor use. The plan identifies five key initiatives including: improving wastewater management; a new visitor gateway with staged developments to address traffic and carparking concerns; a network of transport solutions to manage visitor arrival and movement; a network of experience nodes, or visitor attractions, to disperse visitors and an entrance corridor to create a greater sense of arrival.

The recent completion of the Freycinet shared use track, an initiative of the plan, spans 4.2 kilometres between the Freycinet National Park visitor centre and Wineglass Bay walk track head. It provides a safe and immersive experience for visitors. The completion of this track represents an important milestone in managing visitor access through the park and assists in reducing traffic congestion.

The shared use track is just one of the improvements at the park, with recent works undertaken to upgrade the Wineglass Bay Lookout walking track. The track upgrade includes new steps, seating and drainage works to improve safety and the visitor experience. Other initiatives being delivered include a second lookout at Wineglass Bay, a new visitor gateway, improved wastewater and a network of transport connections.

On Maria Island, a project is currently implementing tranche 2 of the Maria Island investment business case which involves a wastewater transfer system across the island. The project gives priority to both improving the visitor experience on the island, as visitor numbers continue to grow, as well as ensuring the core visitor infrastructure of the island is upgraded to ensure this increased visitation is sustainable.

It is important that we plan and invest in infrastructure for the expected visitation growth now, with a view to improving the visitor experience within the park and the local Spring Bay community without adversely affecting the natural and cultural values that make Maria Island a unique and sought-after destination on the east coast of Tasmania.

At the Tasman National Park, the development of a park gateway brings the improvement of viewing platforms, tracks, toilet facilities and carparks at key experiences including Devil's Kitchen and Tasman Arch as well as the re-development of facilities at the Blow Hole. The stairway at Remarkable Caves has recently been completed and this will improve the

experience at this iconic site. Car parking at Stormlea has been completed to service the Cape Raoul and Shipstern Bluff walks, walks which when added to the Three Capes Track experience, provide the opportunity for extended economic activity in the region.

Up the east coast and within all of Lyons, recreational boaters will benefit from new boat and trailer parking infrastructure at Coles Bay, Swansea, Burns Bay and Fortescue Bay.

On the Overland Track, significant investments in the renovation of the public huts on this world-famous walk will massively improve the experience for users of the track. Waterfall Valley Hut is already complete and is receiving rave reviews. Work on Windermere Hut is currently being undertaken.

The Government has committed to upgrade popular camping sites on the east coast, including Diana's Basin, Humbug Point and areas within the Mt William National Park. These works are progressing well. These works are being undertaken because they make the best use of our amazing natural resources and our competitive advantage.

I now want to talk a little bit about waste and a key component of the Environment portfolio in this Government's waste agenda. The Government is investing significantly in the area of waste management in Tasmania. We are working with local government, the resource recovery industry and the community to improve recycling and re-use of waste in Tasmania. We are committed to finalising our Waste Action Plan and we have commenced work on a number of initiatives outlined in the plan. We remain committed to delivering a Tasmania container refund scheme by 2022, and are in the final stages designing key aspects of the Tasmanian scheme. Ultimately, we will have a contemporary container refund scheme that is appropriate for Tasmania in our unique circumstances.

We also remain committed to introducing a waste levy next year which will fund innovative reuse and re-cycling schemes and support co-investment with re-cycling businesses that will improve our recovery of recyclables. We will also generate more jobs for Tasmanians. This Government is getting on with the job of implementing the key initiatives outlined in the draft Waste Action Plan.

Matter noted.

Sitting suspended from 11.44 a.m. until 3.00 p.m.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2020 (No. 47)

Her Excellency the Governor recommended expenditure for the purposes of the bills from the Consolidated Fund.

First Reading

Bills presented by **Mr Gutwein** and read the first time.

Madam SPEAKER - In accordance with the resolution passed by the House on 11 November 2020 I now invite members of the Legislative Council to enter the Chamber to listen to the Treasurer's speech.

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

Second Reading

[3.04 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass -Treasurer - 2R) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the bill be read the second time.

This year COVID-19 has delivered challenges, disruption and uncertainty. Not since World War II has a single event had such far-reaching global impacts. More than 50 million people have been infected, with over 1.2 million people losing their life, sadly, 13 of them Tasmanians.

As a Government we acted quickly, we acted decisively, and we used our island advantage to protect our community and save lives. We followed advice and swiftly put in place restrictions on activities and movements to limit the spread of the virus, followed by a sensible and responsible glide path to easing them. This included banning cruise ships, restrictions at our borders, working from home and, in some cases, not working at all. These immediate steps, difficult as they were, enabled us to control the spread of this insidious disease, and in recent months they have allowed us to return, in a staged and careful way, to a more normal, albeit a COVID-19 normal, way of life.

Tasmanians have demonstrated compassion, courage, great resilience and ingenuity through these times and today I sincerely say thank you.

The challenge we face has two elements. It is a health crisis and an economic one as well. We must deal with both. We must continue to manage the risks to our health and safety that the virus poses, as well as the significant and unprecedented impacts on our economy.

I will not sugar-coat these challenges for the Tasmanian people. The road ahead will not be easy. There is no vaccine yet available and the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on countries around the world, many of them are our trading partners. There are things we cannot control, such as volatility in international markets or how soon a vaccine may become available. However, what we can control is how we respond to the situation; our health response, and our economic response.

In the face of the most deadly global pandemic the world has seen in this century, our response must be proportionate and it must be strategic. We can never tax our way to prosperity, nor can we cut our way to recovery. The way to rebuild a stronger and more resilient Tasmania is to invest heavily, to support jobs, to regain confidence, and to rebuild our economy and our community.

We entered the pandemic from a position of strength, with one of the strongest economies in the nation and with no net debt. We used our balance sheet as an economic stabiliser,

delivering the largest economic and social support package in the nation as a proportion of our economy, at over \$1 billion.

The social and economic support package included \$150 million for our health preparedness and response, and provided \$4 million for mental health support services. We provided \$4.3 million for emergency accommodation and homelessness services, \$5 million for community organisations to support vulnerable Tasmanians, \$2.5 million for child safety and wellbeing, and \$2.7 million for family violence.

We provided the funding to deliver thousands of meals, and activated emergency pandemic grants and temporary accommodation grants for our health workers if they needed to self-isolate away from home. We froze rental payments for social housing tenants. We also led the nation's states and territories by introducing support for temporary visa holders with up to \$3 million available.

Importantly, we wanted to support businesses and jobs through the restricted period so they stood ready for the other side. That is why we froze, waived and capped government fees and charges for businesses, provided electricity bill relief for more than 20 000 businesses, waived payroll tax for the entire 2019-20 financial year for over 440 businesses in the hospitality, tourism and fishery sectors, which were the sectors that were hardest hit, and for businesses with wages less than \$5 million.

We delivered business support grants totalling \$80 million, waived rent on government leases, provided millions in low-interest loans, and we provided land tax relief for affected businesses for 2020-21. These measures are working.

At the height of the pandemic, 19 100 Tasmanians lost their job, yet around two-thirds of them have now returned to work. CommSec found that activity in the June quarter was still 20 per cent higher than the decade average and today there are more Tasmanians employed than September last year. Even in the face of this global pandemic, Tasmania has once again been ranked as the best performing economy in the nation.

Equipment investment was up 15.2 per cent on the decade average, demonstrating the resilience and confidence of our business sector. Retail trade is 14.1 per cent higher than last year, the second highest annual growth of any state. Tasmania was one of only two jurisdictions to see more people in jobs today compared to the same time last year. Our businesses continue to be some of the most confident in the country. We must continue to build on that.

The pandemic is not over yet and Tasmanians continue to face challenges. That is why we have taken a glide path approach to carefully and sensibly ease our way back to business and to life as we know it. The last thing we need in Tasmania is a second wave, which Treasury has modelled would cost our state a further \$500 million to \$600 million through necessary restrictions to protect lives.

It is why in this Budget, Tasmanians will see many targeted and temporary support measures continue this year, and next year, to provide support to Tasmanians when they need it.

Madam Speaker, it should come as no surprise that this support has come at a cost. I have been open with Tasmanians about that from day one. GST receipts this current year are expected to be \$347 million lower, as a result of contraction in size of the national pool of \$25.4 billion over the next four years. The Australian Government has forecast GST to return to growth over the period of the forward Estimates, albeit from a lower base. Furthermore, due to the staged reopening of our economy and the economic stimulus measures we have put in place, the impact has been mitigated to some extent on our source revenues. These are expected to be broadly similar with previous forecasts, and strong growth is expected over the forward Estimates period. However, over the next two years, operating deficits are forecast. This year, the deficit will be \$1.1 billion, before improving to a deficit of \$281 million in 2021-22.

Importantly, as our economy returns to growth, there is a pathway back to the black, with a return to a modest surplus in 2022-23. The investments we make today will stand us in good stead, underpinning a strong return to growth in our economy of 3.75 per cent in the 2021-22 financial year. As a result, our net operating balance improved significantly over the forward Estimates, and the Budget returns to modest operating surpluses in 2022-23 of \$14 million, and in 2023-24, of \$17 million.

We have taken unprecedented measures to save lives and support our community, and due to the strength of our financial position going into this COVID-19 pandemic, we have a clear pathway out.

In this Budget, we will continue to leverage our strong balance sheet to stimulate our economy, support our community, attract investment, and support jobs through targeted initiatives and record infrastructure investment.

As a result of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on our revenues and the unprecedented infrastructure investment in this Budget, over the next four years, our state will need to carry a level of net debt. In 2020-21, it is expected that net debt will be \$1.854 billion, rising to \$4.38 billion over the forward Estimates. Importantly, this debt will be manageable, with interest rates remaining at record lows, and it will be the lowest level of net debt carried by any jurisdiction in the country.

Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the largest shocks to our way of life, our economy, and to our Budget. In addition to specific commitments made and outlined in this Budget, funding of \$145 million in 2020-21 has also been allocated to a central COVID-19 provision in Finance-General. This approach reflects the establishment of a similar central provision in 2019-20 to assist in meeting uncertain, or unknown, costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The provision initially supports response measures that align with recommendations made by the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, also known as PESRAC, by supporting businesses, stimulating economic activity, through improving the environment, creating regional jobs, and supporting young people into training and apprenticeships.

Of the \$145 million provision, \$50 million has been allocated to initiatives to support businesses and our economy, assist women back into work, support the cultural and performing arts sector, improve our environment, and invest in public housing infrastructure upgrades.

To ensure we continue to have a whole-of-government approach to respond to COVID-19 with resources ready and available for a pandemic, but also for other state emergencies which may arise such as bushfire or floods, \$4.4 million will be invested for an ongoing centralised COVID-19 coordination centre for the next 12 months, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. The remainder of the provision will be held as a contingency for COVID-19-related health, economic and social response measures, and to support the ongoing management of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as supporting the next phase of the PESRAC's recommendations.

Madam Speaker, there is no vaccine for confidence, and when times are tough, businesses look to government to provide the conditions and the support for them to get on and do what they do best: employ Tasmanians, strengthen the economy, and create opportunities for growth. This Budget unashamedly uses our balance sheet strength to support our community, support our businesses, and support our people. It provides the economic platform to create jobs through infrastructure and community investment, providing certainty and confidence to rebuild Tasmania.

The 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget is all about jobs, confidence and community. Today, I am announcing the largest and most significant infrastructure program in the state's history. Over the next four years, this Budget provides nearly \$5 billion of infrastructure investment, to support jobs, confidence and our communities. This investment will support jobs and increase aggregate demand right across our economy. Treasury states that if our economy can start to recover sooner, that by June 2022 employment will have increased by 10 000 jobs. Furthermore, over the four-year period of the forward Estimates, using commonly understood multipliers, we expect this infrastructure package will support around 6000 jobs annually and a total of around 25 000 jobs over the four years.

We will build the intergenerational infrastructure communities need. We are backing Tasmanian businesses, supporting their recovering growth and making it easier for them to employ. We are investing even more into education and skills to ensure more Tasmanians have the ability to grasp the opportunities and lead a more fulfilling life. We are investing more into housing, health, and essential services around the state, as well as investments in programs and resources to keep our communities safe. We are futureproofing our industries and investing to protect the Tasmanian way of life.

Over the Budget and forward Estimates our landmark infrastructure investment includes around \$4.1 billion in the general government sector and investment of nearly \$800 million through our government businesses. In fact, a record \$1 billion investment has been budgeted for this year alone.

When we came to Government in 2014 the infrastructure investment that year was just \$324 million. We will more than triple that this year. Our infrastructure program invests a record \$2.4 billion in better roads and bridges. This includes almost \$1 billion over the next two years for safer roads and bridges infrastructure around our state, helping to safely connect Tasmanian families at a time when we need to reconnect more than ever. This includes intergenerational assets like the Sorell and Midway Point causeways, the new Bridgewater bridge and the Midland, West Tamar and Bass Highway upgrades.

Early this year we completed and commissioned the largest-ever investment in health facilities, the Royal Hobart Hospital K Block. In this Budget we will invest \$391.2 million

across our hospitals and health system, with the 2020-21 Budget including \$89.8 million for Royal Hobart Hospital stage 2 redevelopment, including an expanded ED; \$79.8 million for the continued redevelopment of the Launceston General Hospital; \$33 million for the continued upgrade of the Mersey Community Hospital; and \$19.8 million for more mental health beds. In addition to the \$11.5 million in upgrades to be delivered this year, the Budget provides a further \$10 million for our regional health and ambulance facilities.

Because we understand the importance of our schools and training, this Budget invests \$218.1 million in educational infrastructure, including \$9.9 million for the completion of Devonport High; \$24 million for Legana Primary School; \$40 million for the new Brighton High School; \$20 million to revitalise Cosgrove High School; \$25.3 million for the new Sorell school; and \$18.9 million for the new Penguin school. We are also providing \$28 million for six new child and family learning centres across the state.

Tasmania is an island and ensuring freight efficiency to market is essential. To get our freight to market and to support our trade industries we are investing \$208.8 million into TasRail to deliver tranche 2 and tranche 3 of the rail revitalisation over four years. We will invest just over \$5 million into TasRail to support our forestry industry to transport our southern timbers to market more efficiently.

There is \$160 million for TasWater to continue accelerating its infrastructure pipeline around the state and support to enable the decommissioning of TasWater's Macquarie Point wastewater treatment plant. The Budget also includes \$218.4 million in 2022-23 as part of our commitment to replace the TT-Line vessels. We will have more to say once the task force has completed its work early next year about the opportunity to maximise Tasmanian jobs from this significant investment.

We will also deliver better justice facilities as part of our infrastructure spend, with \$111.1 million for the new northern regional prison; \$14.4 million for the Burnie court complex; \$79.9 million for the southern remand centre, and \$9.3 million to support upgrades for the shared facilities at Risdon Prison.

When it comes to our ICT infrastructure, for too long we have been expecting twenty-first century services from twentieth century technology. This Budget sets it right with \$135.4 million in ICT investment to support better Government services. This includes \$57 million for the whole-of-government digital transformation expenditure program; \$46.1 million for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management's Project Unify to upgrade ageing ICT systems that support policing operations; \$21.6 million for a new human resources information system in the Department of Health; \$4 million for critical IT network upgrades in TasTAFE; and \$3.2 million over four years for the student systems renewal, including case management system in the Department of Education.

This Government knows our businesses are the engine room of our economy and that they will lead our recovery. National surveys consistently report we have some of the most confident businesses in the nation as well as strong business conditions compared to other jurisdictions, but we know there is more to do.

As a government we recognise the valuable investment business makes in training the next generation of Tasmanian workers and we want to ensure businesses are confident and prepared to take on more apprentices, trainees and young people.

To ensure our businesses are incentivised to hire, we will extend our successful Payroll Tax Rebate scheme and small business grants schemes for a further 12 months until 30 June 2022, and we will broaden these schemes to all industries. This will be an investment of more than \$22 million to significantly boost jobs for apprentices, trainees and youth employees. Combined with Australian Government supports such as the Boosting Apprenticeships Wage Subsidy, it means there has never been a better time to hire an apprentice or a trainee.

We will also extend the payroll tax rebate for all youth employees for a further 18 months from the end of this year to 30 June 2022. These schemes are already supporting nearly 4000 apprentices, trainees and young people. We expect these initiatives to support an additional 4000 new full-time jobs for apprentices, trainees and youth employees. Legislation will be introduced into parliament today so that these incentives can commence from 1 January next year. Not only will these initiatives help young people get their foot in the door and for many it will be an opportunity for a first job, but it will also help out businesses with a ready supply of skilled young people for the future.

We also want to make it easier for business to do business. That is why we will continue with our deregulation agenda to remove unnecessary red tape. We know in these uncertain times certainty and regulation is paramount to attract and accelerate investment. We have recently passed our major projects legislation introducing contemporary planning laws providing clarity and certainty for investors. We are now implementing phases 1 and 2 of our regulatory reforms sending a clear message that Tasmania is a state that is open for business.

We also know the government services interfacing with the development community can be improved to help them to get to market sooner. That is why we are investing \$3.4 million over four years to increase Land Titles Office and Crown Lands resourcing to enable faster release of titles to market, as well as \$2.4 million over four years to support regulatory approvals and permit processes.

To assist our peak industry bodies, a \$500 000 support fund has been created this year to help them support the businesses they represent as our economy and community rebuild. There is also \$1 million to establish a new not-for-profit tourism and hospitality RTO to ensure that as we emerge from COVID-19 we have the skilled and trained workforce necessary to ensure our world-class attractions are fully complemented by world-class service. This comes on top of the \$1 million to support business access to mental health supports and \$200 000 to support our tourism and hospitality businesses with financial counselling, including in rural areas.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 provision will provide \$10 million for a building projects support program to bring forward community or commercial shovel-ready projects that will help stimulate the Tasmanian construction sector and support jobs. The program will be delivered through a single competitive grant funding round and will provide funding of up to 25 per cent of the construction cost of the project for projects over \$2 million up to a maximum of \$1 million. Projects will need to have achieved planning approval if necessary, be able to start construction within three months, and be expected to demonstrate positive community benefits as well as broad economic or social benefits.

The cultural and creative industries, including the performing arts and theatre sectors, have been amongst the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why the Tasmanian Government has put the cultural and creative sector high on our priority list in terms of support during the pandemic. This was reflected in the very early action we took with the substantial

stimulus measures announced, including new funding of \$1.5 million for a comprehensive support package to assist artists to develop partnerships across the arts and screen sectors, and more than \$2 million in funding brought forward to extend the contracts of 19 Tasmanian arts organisations and fast-tracking final payments for funded artists and art organisations to improve immediate cash flow and allow for planning into 2021.

We have recently announced the major events framework and the summer social package to provide certainty for the arts and cultural sector as we head into summer. However, we know we need to do more to assist the sector, especially in our regional areas, to assist them to bounce back. That is why we are providing \$500 000 over two years to support screen production investment, and \$1 million over two years to implement the Community Arts and Cultural Development program. Today I can announce a further \$2.5 million for an arts and cultural support fund, with \$1.5 million in grants to support performers and artists, and \$1 million to produce new work.

The Tasmanian Government remains committed to supporting the arts and cultural sector to ensure we regain the economic, cultural and community benefit that it delivers for all Tasmanians.

We also recognise the ongoing impact of public health restrictions on our hospitality sector, which is why we will continue to provide temporary and targeted support for this important industry, which employs thousands of Tasmanians across the state. This is why we have provisioned \$10 million for additional support for hospitality businesses to ease cost-of-business pressures and will provide a reimbursement up to a capped amount against their energy bills, electricity and gas, for the first quarter of this financial year.

Support will be provided to pubs, bars, clubs, cafes and restaurants which have eat-in dining or drinking, with turnover of above \$50 000. We will work closely with the sector to design the program to ensure it will be targeted towards those most in need who have experienced a significant decline in turnover. Given that restrictions will continue to directly impact the sector for some time, we will also waive annual liquor licensing fees for 2021, relieving the hospitality industry of around \$1 million in costs. It is measures like these across our important industries that will help our community, return our economy to growth, and support more jobs for Tasmanians.

We know that our infrastructure program will lift aggregate demand, support confidence, and create jobs. It will create significant opportunities for all Tasmanians to take part in the rebuild. To give Tasmanians the best opportunity to have the skills they need for the work ahead we are investing more into skills and training, into TasTAFE and schools, and helping Tasmanians to gain new skills for future-ready jobs.

We want more Tasmanians to participate in and benefit from our economic rebound. That is why the Budget funds an additional \$7 million for the Energy, Trade and Water Centre of Excellence at Clarence, bringing the total investment there to \$21 million. This will ensure students can learn with equipment that reflects modern workplaces and provides the additional benefit of a much-needed boost for the construction industry and local economy.

Job Trainer, jointly funded by the state and Australian Governments, will see \$21 million provided to increase the number of low- and no-fee key VET courses to develop our future

workforce. We will fund more teachers in TasTAFE with an additional \$2 million over two years in high-demand areas, including aged care, electro-technology, plumbing and nursing.

The Budget also includes \$1.3 million over two years for the Glenorchy Jobs Hub, a further \$950 000 to extend the Sorell employment hub, and nearly \$900 000 will be provided to Hamlet and Troublesmiths over two years to assist people of all ability to enter the workforce. We will also provide \$570 000 over three years to support the achievement of the intended outcomes of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and school-based traineeship program, and for the delivery of Aboriginal cultural respect training for state Senior Executive Service and senior managers.

This Government has a Tasmanian Women's Strategy to help empower and enable women to achieve gender equality in our state. Already we know that over 70 per cent of the public sector workforce is held by women, and women comprise nearly half of the Senior Executive Service at 46 per cent in 2019-20, up from 36 per cent when we introduced our Tasmanian Women's Strategy in 2018.

We have seen through the pandemic that jobs for women have seen a stronger recovery in Tasmania. However, we also recognise that we need to do more, particularly to attract and support more women into non-traditional roles, with these sectors set to play a vital part of supporting our recovery. That is why the 2020-21 Budget includes \$2.5 million over two years to develop a statewide program to enable and empower more women to participate more broadly across our economy. To achieve this, Government will work with peak industry bodies, and skills and training providers, to support women to train and enter roles in industry, and to support employers to help them develop the skills that they need to succeed and to shift community and employer perceptions of traditionally male-dominated industries.

We are also investing a further \$400 000 over two years for measures to enhance industry liaison and to develop leadership pipelines for women in these fields. In what has been a very challenging year for the Tasmanian community, it is more important than ever that opportunities for women and girls are front and centre in our vision for a stronger, more resilient Tasmania.

Our substantial infrastructure spend, combined with our strong balance sheet, means that we can go further to invest in the essential services Tasmanians need - into health, education and housing. Our health system was already facing increased and unprecedented demand before COVID-19. Now it faces challenges unforeseen just a year ago.

Our incredible staff have kept going above and beyond, putting themselves on the front line in the fight against COVID-19. To each and every one of them, I say thank you.

As a Government, we have been clear that we are committed to supporting them to care for our community. That is why this Budget includes \$9.8 billion of health spending over the next four years - unprecedented resourcing for our system that is recruiting record staffing, opening beds, and investing in the facilities our staff and patients deserve. This is \$1.7 billion more than last year's budget: a 21 per cent increase in operational expenditure, which is on top of the \$391 million capital program being delivered across Tasmania.

It is a boost to our funding base that will help meet demand in our hospitals and underpin improved health outcomes. We are also injecting \$45 million into elective surgery, taking our

additional investment to \$60 million in elective surgery. This funding will provide an estimated 8500 additional surgeries over the next 18 months, above and beyond what was already due to be delivered.

The Government and the THS are committed to meeting demand, with \$50.2 million over the next two years to support staff and beds in our major hospitals. This is in addition to the \$299 million over four years to continue the rollout of our commitment for 250 new beds at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

We have a strong track record investing in health, employing since we came to Government an additional 1500 health professionals, including 252 full-time equivalent doctors, and 876 full-time equivalent nurses - on top of the ongoing investment into our regional and rural health facilities, including ambulance stations, transport and other infrastructure.

However, when it comes to health, this Government recognises there is always more that needs to be done. COVID-19 has also taught us the need to not only look after our physical health, but also our mental health, as many people experience personal and financial hardship and have had to keep away from loved ones and friends to keep them safe.

For too long, the mental health system, especially for our young people, has required reform and integration to deliver better outcomes. I am pleased to confirm that more than \$8.1 million is provided over two years to implement phase one of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services review recommendations, and continue the Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program initiatives. In addition, \$4.9 million will be provided over two years to implement the reform agenda for the alcohol and drug sector in Tasmania. These are essential investments, designed to deliver better mental health and care for Tasmanians.

Madam Speaker, we believe that a good education is the passport to a better life. In addition to the \$204 million for new and refurbished schools, including \$28 million for the six new Child and Family learning centres, we will continue to deliver our plan to better educational attainment rates and outcomes. This includes ongoing investment into our year 7 to 12 implementation plan, and more teachers and support staff.

Since coming to Government in 2014, attainment levels to year 12 have increased, and we have delivered 269 additional teachers and 250 more teacher assistants. As part of our six-year plan for education, over the next four years we will hire a further 199 teachers and 80 more teacher assistants.

This Budget also extends funding of \$14 million over four years to support low-income Tasmanians with school levies and charges, and we are providing \$150 000 to deliver the Hobart city schools master plan, and \$1.1 million for our state libraries.

We believe every Tasmanian child deserves the right to a first-class education, and we will continue to make the investments necessary to build a better education system for better education outcomes in our state. It is why we are increasing our record investment into Tasmanian education to \$7.5 billion over four years.

This Government believes every Tasmanian deserves the basic right to a roof over their head. That is why we are investing record amounts to deliver new housing and homelessness

services for Tasmanians in need, including over \$300 million in this Budget. This includes the \$100 million investment announced as part of our construction blitz, which will build up to 1000 new homes over three years, with an expression of interest currently underway.

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

This Budget also continues the rollout of the Government's second affordable housing action plan and other housing projects, which will see more than \$10 million for a new Hobart youth foyer, including operating costs; more than \$22 million for new supported accommodation facilities around Hobart. The delivery of the Huntingfield Land Release project's subdivision will provide around 470 residential lots; almost \$5 million for a new Launceston Youth-at-Risk Centre including the operating costs; \$4 million to expand the Magnolia House Women's Shelter; \$5 million to expand Thyne House and transition it into a Youth Foyer model; more than \$10 million for a new Burnie Youth Foyer, including operating costs, and \$2 million to deliver the North West Men's Shelter.

The Budget will also continue to deliver on the program of works through funding made available by the agreement to waive the state's housing-related debt to the Commonwealth. This program expects to assist a further 400 households into suitable accommodation through to June 2023 including the delivery of 300 new social housing dwellings; co-funding the purchase of the Balmoral Motor Inn for long-term supported accommodation; remodelling of the Windsor Court unit complex and other initiatives.

This Budget builds on the exceptional work done to date since we commenced our Affordable Housing Strategy which has seen more than 2400 households supported into housing that suits their needs. This is a track record we are building on with this Budget.

I am pleased to announce that through the COVID-19 provision, a further \$15 million will be allocated for public housing heating and energy efficiency initiatives which will ease the cost of living pressures for our public housing tenants. These funds will complete the Government's program of replacing inefficient, direct electric heating and gas heating in all public housing stock with energy efficient heat pumps. A second program will also begin to progressively replace the ageing existing standard electric hot water systems in public housing stock with new heat pump hot water cylinders. This program will focus on replacing the older systems first in around 1200 public housing properties. Together, these programs will increase energy efficiency and decrease operating costs for both our tenants and in respect to ongoing maintenance.

This investment will lead to lower power bills for Housing Tasmania tenants, reduce emissions and, importantly, this investment also means more local jobs for Tasmanian suppliers and installers in every region of our state.

COVID-19 shows that we need to continue to futureproof our industries and economy and to protect our Tasmanian way of life. In Tasmania, through this budget, we will continue to strengthen our status as a global renewable energy powerhouse delivering transformative investments in our iconic attractions and continuing our nation-leading transition to a low emissions economy.

The 2020-21 Budget also positions our state for the return of interstate and international visitors when it is safe for them to come, with \$198.1 million in investments over the next four years. To ensure our iconic destinations are world-class, sustainable and protected, the budget includes more than \$68 million for the Cradle Mountain Experience and \$19.4 million for Tasmania's next iconic walk in the Tyndall Ranges. These investments will not only ensure Tasmania continues to retain its reputation as one of the most extraordinary places to visit in the world but they will create jobs and provide additional economic stimulus across our north-west and west coast communities.

Funding will also include \$8.4 million for the Freycinet Peninsula wastewater program; \$3.2 million to boost maintenance in our national parks and \$1.6 million to improve boat and trailer parking for recreational fishers. In addition, \$4 million has been provided to the West Coast Wilderness Railway this year to assist it to operate, as west coast tourism recovers post-COVID-19.

As we welcome back visitors from low-risk jurisdictions, including international flights from New Zealand in 2021, we will invest \$10 million as part of a \$17.5 million upgrade to meet the requirements for an international terminal. We will invest \$5 million towards an \$11 million upgrade of Launceston's airport infrastructure. These upgrades will provide the space and facilities to ensure we adapt to operate through a COVID-19 environment.

The Government will continue to safeguard our primary industries, our trade sector, and position Tasmania for exponential growth as a global renewable powerhouse, generating billions in investment and thousands of jobs. We have already introduced a bill to legislate our target to generate 200 per cent of our current renewable electricity needs by 2040. The Government has already committed to a \$50 million Tasmanian renewable hydrogen industry development funding program representing grants, concessional loans and support services, and \$16 million has been allocated in this budget period to ensure that Tasmania is well placed to take advantage of, and become Australia's renewable hydrogen epicentre.

Furthermore, the Budget includes \$3.8 million over four years to support the delivery of Project Marinus, Battery of the Nation, renewable hydrogen, the Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan and a renewable energy coordination framework.

As the world transitions to a low emissions economy, it is clear that Tasmania has the clean, reliable and affordable energy that Australia needs. We have already achieved our target of net zero emissions by 2050 four years in a row and because of this success the Budget includes \$300 000 to review our Climate Change Act and emissions reductions target with a view to strengthening our legislation and taking a more ambitious approach. To reduce emissions further, we will implement an online meeting preference policy to reduce unnecessary air travel, saving time, cost and emissions across the State Service.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce today that the Government will set a target to transition its vehicle fleet to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030. We have already made significant progress to support electric vehicle uptake, including delivering a statewide charging network and increasing the number of electric vehicles in our fleet. The ministerial fleet will also transition to include four hybrid vehicles over the next two years. I am pleased to note that we will receive the first of these by the end of the year. The 2020-21 Budget allocates \$2.3 million over three years to progress our transition. Our target will be

underpinned by a Tasmanian Government 100 per cent electric vehicles zero emissions strategy which will also include interim actions to improve efficiencies as we transition.

Metro Tasmania will also be tasked to trial zero emissions buses in Tasmania - electric or hydrogen - with both a northern and southern trial underway within the next two years with any additional resources required allocated in the coming budget next year.

Capitalising on our renewable energy advantage, this will be one of the most ambitious targets of any state in Australia, demonstrating our leadership and innovation, renewable energy and climate action. To support businesses looking to reduce their emissions, the Budget includes a \$10 million no-interest loan scheme for large Tasmanian greenhouse gas emitting businesses and industries to trial existing clean technologies or to test new innovative production processes that will lead to reduced emissions.

Over \$30 million will be invested in waste and resource recovery initiatives across Tasmania to help us build a circular economy as part of a stronger Tasmania. The 2020-21 Budget delivers on our commitment to our waste action plan and container refund deposit scheme, with \$9.5 million allocated. Legislation for both will be introduced in the new year.

The Government will also progress the introduction of a statewide levy on waste disposed at landfill. The levy will fund future waste minimisation, reuse and recycling initiatives, with the resource recovery sector to increase recycling and generate more jobs for Tasmanians, starting in 2021.

In this Budget the Tasmanian Government will provide up to \$5.5 million in grants that will be matched dollar for dollar by the Australian Government and recycling businesses to invest at least \$16.5 million in new commercial recycling opportunities that create long-term sustainable jobs in Tasmania. In addition, the 2020-21 Budget also includes \$10 million to co-invest with the existing waste management sector in Tasmania to build the infrastructure needed to collect and sort recyclable waste. These initiatives will enable Tasmania's emerging recycling industry to plan for, and invest, in critical infrastructure, address key waste streams and to plan for market development in Tasmania, helping to rebuild a stronger Tasmania.

Our agricultural sector and produce are world class. Ensuring that our farmers continue to have reliable access to water and to keep growing, \$168.7 million has been included for tranches 2 and 3 of our irrigation projects, including \$15 million to prioritise the Don scheme over the next two years.

We have our Tasmanian trade strategy and we will bolster this with \$2.7 million over two years to ensure our produce remains at the forefront of menus worldwide. Our agricultural workforce resilience package of \$1.9 million will continue to attract and retain workers and position agricultural businesses to adapt and respond to the pandemic.

We will further support Tasmanian agriculture with targeted actions including industry support and a further \$3 million over five years towards the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and \$7 million over two years to modernise our Crown and TIA research farms. To protect our industry at the borders \$10.5 million has been provided over four years for biosecurity and \$4.6 million has been provided for the Weeds Action Fund to allow farmers, Landcare and other community organisations to tackle weeds that impact on valuable agricultural and environmental assets.

This Government will also continue to support our aquaculture industry to be a \$2 billion industry by 2030 with a \$250 000 investment in this Budget to deliver contemporary marine spatial planning to support its continued sustainable growth.

We are investing in our emergency services to keep Tasmanians safe. Whether it is the battle against crime or bushfire, flood or pandemic, our emergency services are there for us and we know we need to keep acting decisively to meet the challenges before us. We are investing in an additional 92 police to provide community safety over the next four years. This includes 72 to meet our commitment of 125 additional police officers and an additional 20 to allow for an expanded full-time special operations group that is vital to responding to security and safety threats.

We are also providing additional funding of \$2.5 million to complete the large vessel replacement program further strengthening the security of our borders, our marine resources and our marine safety.

This Budget also includes investment of \$7 million to refurbish and upgrade the Launceston Police Station and \$13.2 million for police housing around the state.

We will also deliver a new Tasmanian Government radio network with funding of \$120.9 million over four years, which will be one of the most transformative government communications projects in Tasmania's history. For the first time this will mean Government agencies and state-owned companies will be able to use a single network that is secure and scalable, increasing the speed and coordination of emergency communications in the field.

In a changing climate we know the threat of bushfires is greater. Reducing the risk of bushfires is essential in protecting Tasmanian life, property, infrastructure and our unique and beautiful natural assets. That is why the Tasmanian Government is leaving nothing to chance when it comes to investment in bushfire preparedness. We are providing \$8 million over two years to support the State Fire Commission's activities and to improve Tasmania's ongoing capacity to respond to bushfires by developing a dedicated division within the Tasmanian Fire Service to manage the planning and response to bushfire at a whole of state level.

The Budget confirms \$9.3 million to bolster our nation-led fuel reduction service by adding two new burn crews in the Tasmanian Fire Service, including the allocation of nearly \$300 000 to a revamped Red Hot Tips program to assist Tasmanian land holders to manage bushfire risk on their property and reduce fuel loads. In addition, we are funding \$2.1 million over four years through the Department of Primary Industries, Parks Water and Environment for a bushfire winch insertion capability in remote and inaccessible areas. We are fully funding \$3.5 million for the construction of a purpose-built state operation centre so that when fires, floods or pandemics hit, our response can be scaled up or down according to the need.

The Government has provided \$1.7 million to State Emergency Services to develop its capability in community protection planning for flood and storm hazards. This will support community education and development and importantly, further support the implementation of the Government's response to the Blake review into the floods of June and July 2016.

This Budget also includes \$2.7 million for the National Emergency Alert System with \$5.4 million to address costs associated with the 000 Emergency Service.

The health and wellbeing of our emergency responders is a key priority for this Government. As we know, police, fire fighters and other emergency service workers are susceptible to post traumatic stress disorders and other mental illnesses. That is why we are providing an additional \$250 000 to support the mental health and wellbeing of our volunteers, to complement the already \$6 million commitment to the proactive and preventative Health and Wellbeing Program.

This is a budget that has our community at its heart. In NAIDOC Week, I am pleased to confirm the Tasmanian Government remains committed to resetting our relationship with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities through recognition, advancing reconciliation and working to achieve real outcomes. Most recently, we have taken the important step towards improving outcomes for Tasmanian Aboriginal people with the signing of the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap and have started work with the Tasmanian Aboriginal communities to develop Tasmania's first Implementation Plan.

Today's Budget includes \$1.2 million over four years as Tasmania's contribution to a joint funding arrangement with the Australian Government to support Closing the Gap, investing in the capacity of Aboriginal community organisations to deliver services that result in better outcomes for Aboriginal people. We know there is still more to be done and we will continue to deliver on our commitment to reset the relationship with Aboriginal communities.

Throughout the pandemic, the Tasmanian Government has provided the most generous economic and social support in the nation and we will continue to respond as needed to support our most vulnerable. We also recognise the important roles community organisations play in the delivery of much-needed services. The 2020-21 Budget provides \$351 000 over three years for Volunteering Tasmania and \$1.6 million to emergency food relief providers over two years and in addition, a further \$185 000 to Loaves and Fishes Emergency Food Relief this financial year. We will also be providing an additional \$350 000 over two years for TasCOSS to assist the community sector to respond and adapt to COVID-19 challenges.

I want to recognise these organisations and the people who work for them for the critical work they do. Thank you.

We also know how important sport is to community connectedness. It is the life blood of our community. That is why we are investing more than \$4 million across AFL, basketball, football and cricket in Tasmania, as well as an additional \$4 million for Ticket to Play to help more young Tasmanians participate in community sport. We are investing \$250 000 to develop a sports facility strategy for Tasmania and \$2 million over four years for additional operating costs at the Silverdome. The Derwent Entertainment Centre will be transformed into a national elite standard basketball facility with a multi-sports facility development adjacent through a \$68.5 million investment. The Tasmanian JackJumpers NBL team will be provided \$11.6 million in funding over five years.

There are also two other major projects that the state Government is advancing that I want to provide some further detail on today. The Government has provided funding of \$250 000 to the Launceston City Council to progress planning for the redevelopment of UTAS Stadium, to enable seating capacity to be increased and for the stadium to be ready to play a part in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. This redevelopment is expected to require an investment of up to \$50 million should it proceed. Further details will be provided in the new year once the planning work has been undertaken.

With the proposed change in ownership of the Devonport Showgrounds as well as the ageing facilities at that location, Tasracing is determined to build new racetracks for both greyhounds and harness in north-west Tasmania. Agreement has been reached between the Devonport Agricultural and Pastoral Society, the purchaser of the showgrounds, and Tasracing, the leaseholder, for transition of the site to a housing redevelopment of more than 200 homes. This Budget includes an investment of \$8 million over the next two years to underpin the development of new facilities for harness and greyhound racing on the north-west coast. The Government will work with the Devonport City Council to develop tri-code facilities at the existing Devonport thoroughbred racecourse. This would result in tri-code facilities in each of the three regions.

Madam Speaker, as part of our plan to rebuild a stronger Tasmania the Government established the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC). In July this year I welcomed PESRAC's interim report, which contained 64 recommendations to help restore demand and jobs, address structural issues as a result of the impacts across sectors, and recommendations on government delivery methods to enhance coordination and long-term delivery benefits. I can confirm that across government the 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget is progressing all the interim recommendations. PESRAC is currently engaged in a comprehensive consultation program with the Tasmanian community. I expect their final report, which will include recommendations framed around our two- to five-year recovery in the first quarter of next year, to inform future budgets. I thank Don Challen and the members of PESRAC for their excellent work to date.

With quiet confidence and cautious optimism returning, Tasmania is returning now to a more normal way of life. There will be uncertainty and volatility ahead, just as it is across the world and in Australia, we will not be immune from the impacts of COVID-19. It is how we respond that matters. We will take action with the levers we have to keep us safe and to provide security, certainty and confidence for Tasmanians, our businesses and our community.

As a Liberal Government, our philosophy is to grow the economy and for a Tasmania that stands on its own two feet. To do this we must create the right environment for businesses so they are confident to invest and to support and create jobs. I have no doubt that we will not only recover but we will rebuild a stronger and more resilient Tasmania for all Tasmanians.

This Government has done it before and we will do it again. However, just as we worked together to get on top of this virus we must all continue to work together to rebuild this beautiful state. We must continue to do the right thing and we must continue to support one another. If we do that we will rebuild Tasmania not just for now but for generations to come.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PAYROLL TAX REBATE (APPRENTICES, TRAINEES AND YOUTH EMPLOYEES) AMENDMENT BILL 2020 (No. 48)

First Reading.

Bill presented by **Mr Ferguson** and read the first time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the House do now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 3.55 p.m.