

Thursday 26 September 2019

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITOR

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, this morning I welcome to our parliament, His Excellency Dr Sergio Moreira Lima, Ambassador of the Federated Republic of Brazil to Australia. His Excellency will be with us for Question Time and I will be hosting him to a cup of tea later this morning.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Mental Health Workers - Overseas Recruitment Drive

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.02 a.m.]

Earlier this year, the Chief Psychiatrist led a recruitment drive to the United Kingdom for mental health workers. The nine-day tour through five cities in Britain, reportedly cost taxpayers \$25 000. During budget Estimates, the failed former health minister, Michael Ferguson, said job offers had been made to 11 applicants. Reports on the ground are that none of these people have accepted positions. Have any contracts been signed and can you confirm that no-one has actually commenced working in the Tasmanian health system as a result of this \$25 000 recruitment drive?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I will need to take advice as to that number.

I can certainly inform the House and those with an interest in the Government's efforts to support those in our community with the need to access more mental health services, they can do so now under a government that has a \$104 million plan to build a better mental health system in our state. This includes 27 new community-based mental health beds and specialists in patient, child and adolescent mental health facilities for the first time ever.

While there is always a need, and no doubt always will be, for acute mental health facilities, we are supporting more community-based mental health support options to reduce the reliance on our hospital system but to also ensure that people are able to access the best possible support in the right environment. That includes outside of the acute setting. To try to end the cycle of illness and relapse, we are also taking action to better integrate services so people can get more holistic support in the right place at the right time. We are continuing a strong focus on prevention and early intervention -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 45, relevance. The question was whether any of those 11 people who had been offered positions have been put on a contract? If the Premier does not have the information could you ask him to come back to the House at a later date to provide it please, Madam Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - I believe he did offer to come back to the House with that information. It is not a point of order.

Mr HODGMAN - I do not have that detail to hand. However, I want to provide the House with the detail of what we are doing to support those in our community who need mental health support.

Ms White - So you are not going to come back to the House?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr HODGMAN - We are rebuilding the Peacock Centre with additional beds, building a brand new dedicated mental health facility at St Johns Park, fully staffed, and we have opened a 16-bed adolescent unit at the Royal, including specialist mental health facilities for young people for the first time ever. We have fully staffed an additional eight beds at Ward 4K at the LGH, including specialist facilities for mental health care as well. We will continue also to roll out our response to the Southern Mental Health Integration Taskforce trialling Mental Health Hospital in the Home and trialling the Housing and Accommodation Support initiative.

It is important to acknowledge the work being done by the government and the non-government sector to provide that better support for Tasmanians with a mental illness who need that support.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - Budget

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.06 a.m.]

We have heard the Premier give repeated assurances that the front line will be protected from the Government's savage \$450 million razor gang. However, the facts do not match the Premier's words. Surgeries have been cut by 15 per cent and shifts for casual and part-time nurses have also been cut. Can you confirm that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services across the state has been told to make cuts? Can you rule out imposing vacancy control on this service, which would prevent jobs from being filled when the service is already under considerable pressure?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As has been outlined by this side of the Chamber, we know that there was a certain climate that the budget was framed in. There were national headwinds that we saw when framing up this year's budget. The Government has worked and is working sensibly and responsibly, managing these issues and we are working through to identify savings as has been outlined by my colleagues on this side.

The Treasurer has outlined, both in this place and other places as well, that we are expecting to see \$15 million in additional revenue from GBEs this year. That will be raised, which means that the efficiency dividend across all of government will be \$35 million or half of 1 per cent.

I want to make sure that everyone is clear, both in this Chamber and in the community, that this side of the Chamber is investing more into hospitals. We have seen, over the past decade, 25 per cent of the entire state budget invested within our health care system. That has now increased to 32 per cent. This side of the Chamber has made commitments and we have continued to deliver. Under my predecessor, Michael Ferguson, we have seen a thousand more FTEs employed across our health system over the past five years. In the past few weeks we have seen this Government announce 44 new beds at the Royal redevelopment. We have seen a deal negotiated -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I am very sorry to do this, but it is Standing Order 45, relevance. Given it is Mental Health Week next week, this question was about whether or not you will cut services to CAMS. I ask the minister to answer the question, which is about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in our state.

Madam SPEAKER - As you are aware that is not a point of order. I ask the minister to proceed.

Ms COURTNEY - I suggest that if we are going into specifics regarding mental health that perhaps the Leader should direct that question to the minister responsible for mental health and wellbeing. I am outlining the substantial investment that we have seen in health across the system. The 44 new beds at the Royal, which will include mental health beds, which we can outline further. We are seeing in northern Tasmania at the LGH the redevelopment of 4K, which will be supporting young people with their needs.

This side of the Chamber continues to invest in health. We have continued to employ more frontline services across this state in the community, but also in our hospitals, as well as across our ambulance services. It is disingenuous for the Leader of the Opposition to come in here and create fear. We know from this week that is all they have. They come in here, they make allegations, make statements, but they are not coming in with a solution. All they are doing is trying to scare Tasmanians and scare workers within our health system.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania - Forest Stewardship Council Certification

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[10.10 a.m.]

Can you confirm the entity you call 'Sustainable Timbers Tasmania' received the Forest Stewardship Council's audit report in early June, nearly four months ago, and that, once again, Tasmania's forestry GBE has failed to secure Forest Stewardship Council certification? No wriggle room in that question, minister.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to receive the question from the Leader for the Greens, knowing that it is the Greens that are trying to put more than 1000 Tasmanians out of work with a policy to kill off native forest harvesting in Tasmania. Let us make it very clear with respect to

Sustainable Timber Tasmania: what we want as a government is a sustainable forest industry and a Sustainable Timber Tasmania and, guess what, that is what is happening under our watch.

Rebuilding the forest industry is a top priority and it has happened, unlike what happened under the Labor-Greens accord when 10 000 jobs were lost and two-thirds of those jobs in the forestry sector were lost. It was taken down to its knees - decimated. We are very proud of the record of the forest industry and what has been achieved over the last two years, and the prognosis going forward with an increase in production, increase in exports and an increase in jobs. The confidence is back, we are rebuilding and we will continue to do so.

With respect to Sustainable Timber Tasmania going forward, we do support, as a Government, the growth of a sustainable forest industry. Half of our state is covered by forest and more than half of our forests are reserved, including 87 per cent or more than one million hectares of old growth forest. Our forest management standards are world's best practice -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. There was one question, no preamble: has Sustainable Timber Tasmania received the FSC audit report and can the minister confirm they have failed to secure certification?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I share your concerns but it is up to the minister to answer the question as he sees fit. Please, could the minister proceed. It is not a point of order.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, as I was saying about Sustainable Timber Tasmania and their efforts to achieve forest stewardship certification, the Government supports their efforts. They have been continuing with that effort for a good deal of time. There is a lot of work involved; there is a lot of complexity to that. The level of environmental protection in Tasmania is more than three times the average level of protection across Australia. We are very proud of our forest management practices here in Tasmania. They are world's best class and that is what we are on about: best practice here in Tasmania. More than 30 years of forest practice management and people revere it around Australia and around the world and we are proud of it.

The board of Sustainable Timber Tasmania has a strong commitment to third-party forest management certification and the state's public production forestry business. Certification provides confidence to customers and consumers via independent third-party auditing but the forest from which their products are sourced is managed responsibly. I can advise the certification is recognised at an international level by the Program for Endorsing the Forest Certification, PEFC, the world's largest certification scheme. In addition, the Government supports STT's goal to obtain FSC, as I have mentioned, and aim to be dual-certified with two internationally recognised certification groups. STT has recently been audited by SCS Global Services against the new FSC Australian forest stewardship standard and the Government and STT look forward to receiving that auditor's report, and when there is more to report I would be happy to do so.

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

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I am sure it is not a point of order. I totally understand your passion. I have been practising mindful deafness to your constant interjections because I know it is your passion. You know standing order 45, you know the rules and where I sit.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, I am entitled to be heard when I raise a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER - You are, and I am going to let you be heard.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you. Madam Speaker, the standing order 45 on relevance says the minister's answer shall be relevant to the question and it is to be read with standing order 44, such questions not to involve argument. That is why the question was very straightforward: can the minister confirm that we failed to secure FSC certification with a report he sat on for four months?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, since I have been in this Chair you would know of my frustration with standing order 45. It is up to this House to address the way that is handled. This is a standing practice that has been accepted in this House for decades. I do not understand why but it is. I am afraid that is not a point of order.

Newstart Allowance - Support for Increase

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.16 a.m.]

Older Tasmanian workers are finding it increasingly difficult to get jobs, with August 2019 data showing total female employment decreasing by 600 and male unemployment by 800. That is a total of 1400 people who have lost jobs, which is a dreadful statistic if it happens to you. The Newstart allowance of \$302 per week for an individual is insufficient to cover basics. Research shows 54 per cent of people living in Hobart and 70 per cent of people living in the rest of Tasmania support a \$75 a week increase. I am sure you will appreciate the need to look after older workers. Will you please support a \$75 per week increase in the Newstart allowance?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and note that it is a matter for consideration at a national level and for determination by the Commonwealth Government. We want more Tasmanians in work, as the member would appreciate. That is the best way of ensuring that Tasmanians have a foot on that ladder to prosperity, to self-fulfilment and to achieving their full potential and the very best they can be. Thankfully, there are more Tasmanians now employed, 13 500 jobs created since the 2014 election with 8400 more women. There has been a 6.6 per cent increase, that is around 2300 more young people. There are 700 fewer long-term unemployed, that is a 13.4 per cent drop. There are more full-time jobs and more part-time jobs. Our unemployment rate is down. It is down 0.8 percentage points since the 2014 election. It is lower in every region and every local government area.

I was pleased that recent data confirmed that Tasmanian businesses are hiring. The number of internet job vacancies, for instance, in July grew 13.2 per cent compared to July last year. That is the highest growth rate in Australia. These results clearly show that there has been some progress made. Under the former Labor-Greens government 10 000 jobs were lost from our state. We are doing a lot to support and to maintain the growth in our economy, to support more jobs through the Budget, with \$3.6 billion going into infrastructure. Across the state, we are investing into education and training to give Tasmanians the best skills that they need to get that job.

We have reformed our payroll tax regime. It is the most competitive in the country. It helps Tasmanian businesses hire, and we do so similarly through improvements to payroll tax and small business grants to local businesses to employ apprentices and trainees. I do accept that there is

more to be done in areas across the state. I acknowledge the member for Clark's strong interest in the people of Clark. We will continue to do all we can to keep our economy strong as it is, the strongest in the country, with more people employed and more businesses employing in what is the most confident business community in the country.

Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Mrs PETRUSMA question to MINISTER for TOURISM, HOSPITALITY and EVENTS, Mr HODGMAN

[10.19 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's long-term plan to support our tourism and hospitality industry and to maintain the momentum in Tasmania's visitor economy? Is he aware of any other approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. We have established there are no alternatives but there certainly are other approaches, which I will get to in a moment. Tasmania's economy is the strongest performing in the country, with 13 500 more Tasmanians employed now than when we first came into government. It does not happen by luck. It is happening because we are delivering our plan to grow the economy alongside the most buoyant business community in the country. We have a very strong plan to invest in our competitive strengths and that includes tourism, our great visitor economy. Our plan is not only to increase the number of visitors coming to Tasmania but to make sure they stay here longer, see more of the state while they are here and, most importantly, spend more while they are here. That creates jobs and opportunities for businesses in this great sector right across the state, and our plan is working.

The latest Tasmania Visitor Survey released today confirms the strength of our visitor economy. The results show that visitors continue to inject record amounts into our economy and into communities across the state. Visitors spent a record \$2.5 billion in the year ending June 2019, up 4 per cent on the previous year. This result smashes the target that we and the industry set ourselves in the T21 Visitor Economy Strategy of growing visitor spending to \$2.47 billion by 2020. We have hit \$2.5 billion by June 2019 and it is the second quarter in a row we have done so. Visitation remains strong, with 1.32 million visitors, up 1 per cent, and Tourism Tasmania has confirmed that 67 per cent of all visitor nights are spent outside of Hobart, which shows that our visitors are now dispersing across our state and spending more time in our regions.

While there are national headwinds in the economy and some other states have experienced a drop in the number of visitors to those places, Tasmania's visitor economy remains strong in what is a competitive market place, but I have always said we cannot be complacent. We need to do more to keep ahead of the pack. Tourism and its success is such an important driver of our economy. It is fuelling the strength in Tasmania's economy but we need to work hard to stay ahead of the pack.

I acknowledge the efforts, passion and commitment of our excellent operators across the state. Tourism Tasmania will continue to invest more in marketing, which is possible under this Government with a strong economy and a budget in good shape, through its new brand campaign which will be launched soon to reposition our state and create a new buzz about what we offer.

In this year's Budget our plan is not only to invest into the infrastructure our state needs but also to maintain the growth in our state. We have a number of important initiatives to market and promote the state, to invest in tourism infrastructure, and attractions and events, and also increase visitors to and around all parts of our state.

Today we launch the Regional Tourism Attraction Loan Scheme to further drive regional dispersal. Applications are open for the \$20 million program that provides low-interest loans of up to \$1 million for tourism operators to develop new products, experiences and attractions to help grow our visitor economy in regions across the state.

There are no alternatives. As we know, there is a different approach from the Opposition, but if they are to be taken seriously they have to have a plan. I have not seen any alternative tourism policy, other than the Greens who want to tax tourists and shack owners, but from Labor no policies or alternative budget to say what they would do and how they would pay for it, which shows they cannot be taken seriously. It appears they do not even want to be taken seriously because we found out yesterday that the member for Braddon, Dr Broad, in preparing for parliament, googles jokes. That shows how seriously they want to be taken. There is no serious alternative. We simply cannot afford to take our tourism success for granted. This Government is the tourism industry's strongest ever supporter. That is why it is the best performing tourism economy in the country.

Deloraine Ambulance Station - Staffing

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.24 a.m.]

Community and volunteer ambulance officers in Deloraine are rightly concerned about proposed changes to their station by the Hodgman minority Government. They held a public meeting on Tuesday -

Mr Ferguson - You wish. You dropped a member.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms WHITE - I am sure the volunteers find it hilarious too; thank you for your insincerity.

They held a public meeting on Tuesday 17 September and invited Premier Will Hodgman and yourself to attend, but neither of you did. On the night of the public meeting, the Deloraine ambulance was responding to cases in Latrobe, Sheffield and East Devonport. The volunteers at the Deloraine Ambulance Station are regularly sent to jobs in Devonport and Launceston to plug holes in your broken health system and every time this happens, the community of Deloraine is left vulnerable with no local ambulance response. Will you finally listen to the community and the dedicated volunteer ambulance officers and put any decision about changes to the Deloraine station on hold until you have properly consulted the community and the volunteers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I make it very clear that this side of the Chamber values our paramedics, we value our volunteers who serve our state, whether it is for the upcoming fire season, the role people play in the SES, or the important role that volunteers play

supporting our ambulance services. I see the shake of the heads across the other side and it is unfortunate that on a topic as important as this we are just hearing murmurs from the other side.

We care about provision of services -

Mr O'Byrne - Action speak louder than words, minister.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Ms COURTNEY - for regional communities. I thank the amazing paramedics as well as the volunteers for what they do around the state.

I have met with the paramedics at Deloraine. Minister Shelton attended there several weeks ago to talk about and understand their concerns and see how we can address them, and we are working with the community. I know the chief of Ambulance Tasmania has also met with the community. I was pleased that local member, John Tucker, attended the meeting on behalf of the Premier and me.

Mr O'Byrne - If you keep sitting in the longer meetings, that would be great.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne, warning number one.

Ms COURTNEY - We have been highly engaged with this issue. We have been working with the community, unlike your side which is just creating fear, which is unfortunate. I care about the provision of services for Deloraine and all regional areas, which is why this side of the Chamber -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, going to relevance. I asked the minister if she could confirm that she would commit to putting on hold any decision before she goes back and talks to that community. This is a very important issue for that local community. I ask that she draw her attention to that question.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, on the point of order, the House is more than aware that not only is the member not aware of what the minister is about to say, but I have already heard the minister indicate directly to the point of relevance on the consultation that she herself and colleagues have been undertaking. Obviously it is a mischievous point of order, again.

Madam SPEAKER - Yes, it is a mischievous point of order so it is ruled out of order. The minister gets an extra minute if she wishes to take it.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We will continue to work closely with the Deloraine paramedics, volunteers and the community to ensure we are listening and delivering the right service for them, which is why I had offered to go to see them early next week. Unfortunately, that time does not work for the volunteers there, so we will find another time to visit them.

It is completely disingenuous when Mr Shelton, John Tucker, other local members and I have been engaging with the community. I have been speaking with them. I am standing here saying that we will continue to work with them to get the right outcome for their community. We come in here to this Chamber and all we get from the other side is them creating fear for a local community.

Mr Ferguson - No policy.

Ms COURTNEY - What we are trying to do is bolster local services. What we are trying to do is address concerns that have been raised with us.

Mr Ferguson - They've got nothing.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Ferguson.

Ms COURTNEY - Coming into this place like this is really unfortunate. On this side of the Chamber we have invested in our ambulance services. There are 92 more paramedics and dispatch officers since coming to government. We are going to see over 40 more paramedics in rural and regional areas. All the feedback I have had from speaking with many districts is how they are welcoming this.

I acknowledge the fact that there are concerns. That is why I have met with them, Ms White. That is why my colleagues have met with them and that is why I am seeking to meet with them again.

Ms White - Commit to putting a decision on hold until you meet them again.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms White, warning number one.

Ms COURTNEY - It shows that you have no policies, no alternative budget, no plan for Health and all you want to do is create fear in local communities.

Climate Action - Logging of Forests

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.30 a.m.]

It is clear your Government has failed to secure FSC because of its unsustainable logging practices and commitment to log 356 000 hectares of native forests. On Tuesday you praised our Prime Minister for his climate leadership on the international stage, despite him boycotting the UN Climate Summit to cosy up with Donald Trump, the world's worst climate denying criminal. Yesterday, you falsely claimed Tasmania was the global climate leader even though you, the Premier, did not march and support our children's future at last week's global climate strike.

Other countries are desperately planting as many trees as possible to draw down carbon, but you see 356 000 hectares of carbon-trapping, high value, native forests as a wood bank for plundering. Do you agree a global climate leader would not log and burn native carbon-rich forests?

Mr Barnett - Wood is good.

Mr O'Byrne - I think you probably should stop saying that. Do not say it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne, stop waffling.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the questions. They go to a range of issues, which I have addressed, and more than happy to do so again today to confirm the fact that Tasmania is a leader in -

Ms O'Connor - Failed to get FSC again.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, warning number one.

Mr HODGMAN - climate change action. That is irrefutable. It is true to say that Tasmania has not only a strong claim to make in this regard, but also a strong track record of delivering under a Liberal government.

The first jurisdiction in the country to be zero net emissions. Our self-sufficiency in renewable energy by 2022, 100 per cent, through the investments that we are making. The actions under our Climate Action 21 Plan, a number of which go to supporting Tasmanian businesses, government and the non-government sector to invest in technologies and initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint.

Dr Woodruff - Do we have FSC or not?

Mr HODGMAN - I am addressing one part of your questions. To ensure that we continue our efforts to be a climate change leader under this action plan we have been able to deliver the lowest per capita emissions out of all Australian states and territories. We are leading the country in this regard.

Dr Woodruff - You are not a leader. You are following the coal industry.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, warning one.

Mr HODGMAN - Emissions per person have decreased: a reduction of 96 per cent as I said yesterday in this place between 1990 and 2017.

Mr Ferguson interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Ferguson, warning number one.

Mr HODGMAN - One of the lowest net emitters of carbon dioxide on the planet and a lot is being done through our Action Plan, rolling out electric vehicle charging stations, assistance to small and medium businesses to help them reduce their operating costs through resource efficiency initiatives, energy audits to support businesses to improve their energy efficiency -

Dr Woodruff - Meet the children and tell them why you are chopping down the trees.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, warning two.

Mr HODGMAN - targeted fuel reduction program, which this Government has completed and initiated to protect our communities also has environmental benefit, irrigation infrastructure, which has continued under this Government: investment in our renewable hydro assets, all of these things as well as having in our state some of the best climate change and climate scientists and researchers in the world. They are here assisting government to be leaders in climate change.

More does need to be done. I acknowledge and support the efforts of all those who came to the rally recently and who expressed their views on this matter, and understand how important it is

to them. I hope they understand the things that we are doing to reduce our carbon footprint and to place Tasmania in the strong position that it is. It would be wonderful to see the Greens acknowledge these facts, but they cannot even do it in this place. How could we trust you with a group of children to tell them the truth?

With respect to our forest industry, the minister has spoken about the status of FSC and I spoke yesterday about what is proposed with the potential production forest land and what is required under legislation that passed this House. No amount of scaremongering and dishonesty again from the Greens in this regard will change those facts.

I will, again, affirm this Government's very strong support for our forest industry. It is one we should be proud of. They are very highly qualified managers of our land, but also at their heart they have a strong interest in our environmental credentials. It adds value to their product and to their industry, and thankfully, to an industry that now employs a lot more people than it did when you were in government, and when you were cutting people's jobs out of it.

Drivers Licences - P Plates

**Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,
Mr FERGUSON**

[10.35 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering on its commitment to removing barriers for young people to get their P plates?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon for her excellent question. This Government wants to support young people to get their P plates so they can get a job. We want to support young people to get their Ps so they can get themselves to their college, their university classes, to their apprenticeships, so that they can gain more independence and take hold of the confidence that now exists in the Tasmanian economy. There are now more jobs and there are now more opportunities. We are extending high schools to year 12. It is important for our young people to get the support that we have promised to do. Tasmanians can rely on the Hodgman Liberal majority Government to deliver on our commitments.

We took our strong infrastructure and road user policies to the last state election. We were very clear with the Tasmanian people about our policy platform and what we would do for the Tasmanian community. That is, of course, unlike Labor, who have no policies whatsoever. We also committed to removing barriers for Tasmanians to get their driver's licence, particularly their P plates. We are delivering on that commitment.

I am thrilled to advise the House that from Monday, 30 September, there will be more options for young Tasmanians when wanting to get their P plates. This is the next stage in our commitment, which is all about making it easier for young people to safely get their licence, especially in rural and regional areas of our community. The Government has previously reformed the system to allow the private sector to be able to also conduct the L2 learner driver's test. This has been a great success.

Private driving instructors have a lot to offer. They have successfully conducted testing activity for the L2 licence assessment, which is a driver's assessment, for over four years now. This has seen a reduction in wait times for L2 driving assessments, which is great news. It is supporting our young people and removing barriers from them being able to gain progress with their licensing. For many Tasmanians, getting their P plates is a key enabler of access to study and work opportunities, as well as essential community services. I particularly single out young people in regional areas who do not have the access to transport options that city people do.

We want to make sure that as many Tasmanians as possible, not just young people, but adults as well, are able to gain their licence while also ensuring that they meet the required level of safety and competence, which I know is important to every member of the House.

From Monday, Tasmanians will be able to undertake their driving test for their P plates with a private authorised driver assessor, or with a government driver assessor. They will have a choice. For the first time this means the private sector will be able to conduct P1 driving tests. This will increase the availability, times and locations that driving tests can be taken. Authorised driving assessors will be able to conduct assessments Monday through Saturday, including outside the previous hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This will also allow testing to be conducted in more locations, including regional areas where there is an appropriate range of traffic conditions accessible. It is about choice and supporting people to move ahead in life.

Last year, over 11 700 provisional driving tests were undertaken in Tasmania. I hope this new initiative has the support of members opposite, although I am not sure given the muttering going on over there. They do not really support regional Tasmania. This new initiative has the capacity to further increase the number of tests provided. They are very bitter over there; it is a shame.

This initiative will help to reduce the current wait times for testing, which I am advised currently range from four to five weeks, depending on testing location. This is how it will work: the driving instructors in the pilot were selected following a rigorous process to ensure that the same standards of testing are held across all assessors, both public and private. The Department of State Growth will be working closely with the instructors over the life of the pilot to ensure its integrity, which is important. The pilot will run for a minimum of 12 months and the outcomes will be reviewed by the department to put a continuing delivery mode in place, with road safety and integrity of the licensing system continuing to be at its very core.

This is yet another way that the Hodgman Liberal Government is making life better for Tasmanians, which is what they voted for at the last election. It is about making it more accessible for young Tasmanians in the city and in the regions because we, on this side of the House, support them all. We want Tasmanians to safely get their licence without compromising safety but, importantly, remove barriers -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, standing order 48. The minister has had sufficient time to answer a Dorothy Dixier.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. I make those decisions, so that is ruled out of order. I did hear that he was winding up.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I am so passionate about removing barriers from young people -

Ms O'Connor - I am entitled to raise that as a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER - I hope you are not chipping me, Ms O'Connor, because that is immediately out of the door, and sulky looks and chewing gum is not appropriate either. Thank you.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, we have a plan, we are delivering on it and we are pleased to be able to do so for the Tasmanian people who voted for this policy.

Education - School Budget Cuts

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.42 a.m.]

The Government's promise not to cut frontline services cannot be believed because you have broken it before. No-one will forget the cuts in your first budget, when you slashed the equivalent of two teachers from every school. We do not know how much you are cutting from Education this time because it is hidden under a sea of black ink.

Mr Ferguson - You're not supposed to tell fibs.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Ferguson, that is warning number two.

Ms WHITE - Minister, we know there are cuts but we do not know the extent. Can you guarantee that individual school budgets will not be cut?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I will tell you what we will not be doing: we will not be closing schools as a budget savings measure, like Labor and the Greens did between 2010 and 2014. The member only has to read the budget, read the annual report, when it comes to the Department of Education and get a full understanding of the very good news when it comes to investment in frontline services in Education.

We have employed more teachers since we came to government in March 2014. That is there for everyone to see. We have also recruited 231 extra teacher assistants and 221 extra teachers in our schools. We have school nurses in our schools, good, solid, frontline services, and over 60 full-time equivalent support staff in our public schools. It is an investment we are very proud of, particularly when it comes to the synergies between the Education portfolio and the Mental Health and Wellbeing portfolio. We are also investing in infrastructure and that is very clear. Tens of millions of dollars have gone into improving school infrastructure across Tasmania, including a new Sorell High School -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I am so sorry -

Madam SPEAKER - I do not think you are so sorry.

Ms WHITE - It does go to standing order 45, relevance. I asked whether the minister could guarantee individual school budgets will not be cut. I ask if you could draw his attention to that question.

Madam SPEAKER - I will draw his attention to it. It is not a point of order and the minister has another minute.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Can I have some clarification on this new pattern in the House of awarding ministers an extra minute in punishment for raising points of order?

Madam SPEAKER - No, it is for frivolous points of order. It is my privilege and we have had many interruptions on points of order that are not points of order today. Many of you have been in this House a lot longer than me, Ms O'Connor, and you know how the system works. They are political stalling points. I ask the minister to resume his place and talk freely for an extra minute.

Dr WOODRUFF - A point of clarification, Madam Speaker. I understood that the Standing Orders prescribed the length of question time, answers and questions. Can you please explain -

Madam SPEAKER - No, what you understand is there is great flexibility. In other words, when you go well over one minute with your long, descriptive questions, it is up to the minister to have more discretion. He can have a longer time. In this case we are hearing a lot of frivolous points of order and I will award them as I see fit. Minister, please continue.

Member Suspended
Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor

Ms O'Connor - Rewriting the rules as we go.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, you may leave the Chamber.

Ms O'Connor - Can I ask when I can come back, Madam Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - I would like to say this afternoon but I will leave it until after question time and give you a little time to reflect on today's behaviour.

Ms O'Connor withdrew.

Madam Speaker, earlier this morning I opened the Early Childhood Australia National Conference with some 1300 people in Tasmania looking at what we do in investing in the early years. Yesterday in the Chamber I spoke about Working Together for Three Year Olds Initiative, an investment, new money, new investment at the front line of education.

The member who asked the question would know that we have committed to 250 more teachers in our schools over the next six years. This is an investment in the front line, an investment in our schools, an investment in our future when it comes to our children, based on the very fair Fairer Funding Model, the Gonski model and it is truly needs-based. Next year there will be more investment when it comes to reducing the barriers to learning in our schools such as trauma-

informed practice. We are investing in a new disability funding model, a truly needs-based funding model, a fair system for people so we can reduce every single barrier possible, no matter what the circumstance. No matter where people live in Tasmania, they have an absolute fundamental right to quality education. It is exactly what the Hodgman majority Liberal Government are delivering.

Statement by Speaker

Questions and Answers

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I am going to take this time to make a point myself.

It is the longstanding practice of Speakers to allow a high degree of latitude in the application of standing order 44, which proscribes questions can contain argument, opinion, inferences and preambles. The quid pro quo in the application of standing order 45, that answers must be relevant, is also not strictly applied and the ministers are permitted to answer the question as they see fit.

Although not prescribed, as a general rule of thumb, around one minute has traditionally been the limit for a question and around three minutes for an answer, which I have not seen since I have been here.

In the event of a point of order taken about relevance of answer, you may remind the House of the practice in (6) above and point out that latitude given to the questioner but also ask the minister to be mindful of the topic and scope of the question but you are not able to put words in the minister's mouth.

Police - Recruitment

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[10.48 a.m.]

Can you provide an update on the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's commitment to increase police numbers and recruit a further 125 more police officers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering on our plan to build the next generation police service by recruiting a further 125 new police officers over the term of this Government. This will increase Tasmania Police to an authorised strength of 1358 full-time equivalent positions. I can announce that we are welcoming 18 new constables, 10 men and eight women to the ranks of Tasmania Police. This brings police numbers to 1273 FTEs. This represents 153 more in our community and on the beat since we came to Government. This is in complete contrast to Labor, who sacked 108 police officers when they were last in government with the Greens, damage which took us four years to rebuild.

I am pleased to announce that of the 18 new graduate constables, nine will be posted to Launceston, five to Hobart, two to Burnie and two to Devonport. Our new police constables are joining a profession that will challenge them, reward them and offer them variety on a daily basis. I wish them all the best for an enjoyable, long and fulfilling career that is almost one of the most challenging you could ever take on.

The main focus will always be to have police on the beat at first-response police stations in the regions and in rural stations around the state. Let us not forget that under Rebecca White and Jen Butler's Labor, there would be more than 200 fewer police on the beat. It does not bear thinking about and would be disastrous. It would mean less crime was detected and fewer cases would be solved.

Mr O'Byrne - How are the stats going in Launceston?

Madam SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, if I give you another warning it will be three and you will be out, so this is the final warning of a warning.

Mr SHELTON - Do not forget in the five years since we came to government Labor has shamefully tried to block every attempt to keep communities safe and protect victims of our frontline workers and our most vulnerable kids. If Tasmania wants to know what Labor and their Greens allies approach is to law and order then they only have to look no further than the past, when they sacked many police officers and bungled major infrastructure projects. Who could forget Labor's spectacular failure on building the PV *Fortescue*? It practically never even got wet and put marine policing operations and the protection of our state's marine resources at risk.

While Labor and the Greens' approach to law and order is to sack police and turn a blind eye to crime, we take it seriously and side with the community. The Hodgman Liberal Government makes no apologies for being tough on crime, building our police numbers and backing them to protect our communities and keep them safe.

In conclusion, I remind people watching that tomorrow is National Police Remembrance Day. That is why, if they are looking, the ribbons are being worn.

The Tasmanian eSchool - Teaching Numbers

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.53 a.m.]

At least one school, the Tasmanian eSchool, is facing a cut to teaching numbers next year. Your Government has confirmed that four teaching positions will be cut at a time when enrolments have increased by over 100 students in just 12 months. That means the school is being forced to collapse prep, grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3 into one class with over 30 students, with the majority of these students being high needs. How can these cuts possibly be in the best interests of children at the eSchool and how can you claim to be protecting the front line from your savage cuts?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Scare tactics are no substitute for policy; I want to make that very clear. The Tasmanian eSchool is the Department of Education's online

learning provider offering education programs and online courses for students from kindergarten to year 12 based on the Tasmanian and Australian curriculum. The Tasmanian eSchool plays a very important role in ensuring all Tasmanian school-aged learners can access education, investing so we can ensure our kids can access quality early learning, no matter what their circumstance.

In 2015 we reviewed the Tasmanian eSchool to ascertain the efficiency of the programs and organisational structures in achieving student outcomes. The review panel provided 10 recommendations in 2016 and I am pleased to advise that all of these recommendations have been achieved.

It is disappointing that Labor has recently decided to attack the eSchool without the facts. As I said, scare tactics are no substitute for policy. Their scaremongering campaign has caused unnecessary concern for families and students.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order! This is getting ridiculous. I ask you to reflect on your behaviour and ask for a little bit of calmness in this place. Allow the minister to be heard in silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We will not, and we have not, cut our teacher quota at the eSchool. The level of resourcing within the Tasmanian eSchool remains the same. The Tasmanian eSchool will continue to maintain teaching staff above the 2016 eSchool review recommendations.

Ms White - Enrolments have doubled.

Madam SPEAKER - I said total silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Additional support staff have been employed, including school psychologists and social workers and teacher assistant hours have also been increased. While four teachers have their contracts come to an end in 2019 - which seems to be the concern the member is questioning us on - these four positions are not being removed from the school and they will be filled in 2020, so there are absolutely no cuts. The four teachers who are transferring out of the eSchool are all moving to positions within the department, so their jobs are maintained and I congratulate them all on their new roles.

It is important to clarify that before Labor embarks on a scare campaign which frightens communities, particularly the parents and families that really value the eSchool. It is a really good investment and a great school and that is why we reviewed it in 2015 to improve it and build on that. We have agreed with all the recommendations. It is playing a very important role and I assure the school communities that there will be no cuts.

Coastal Pathway - Cooe and Wynyard

Ms DOW question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.57 a.m.]

In 2017 you stood with local mayors and community advocates on the disused rail tracks at Cooe and announced \$1.86 million of community infrastructure funding for the coastal pathway

between Cooee and Wynyard. Two years later, this important community infrastructure project has stalled and the Burnie City and Waratah-Wynyard councils are facing an \$11 million bill to remediate coastal erosion that has the potential to undermine the state-owned rail corridor and the Bass Highway.

Do you think that it is fair and reasonable to suggest the \$6.6 million of funding allocated by your Government to the entire north-west coastal pathway project be repurposed towards the immediate remediation of the coastal erosion between Cooee and Wynyard? Will you commit to releasing the coastal erosion report, covering the cost of immediate and future erosion, and stand by your Government's commitment to build the north-west coast pathway?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question on one of those commitments we have made to support recreation and our visitor economy on the magnificent north-west coast. Our commitment is strong and there is no proposal, as has been suggested, to redirect our funding commitment, nor indeed our efforts to ensure that the north-west coast continues to be a part of Tasmania's visitor economy boom. Why wouldn't it be, because it is such a wonderful place for anyone to visit. We are working very closely with the Burnie City Council and Waratah-Wynyard Council to address the issues of coastal erosion which have arisen, since the commitment we made, along sections of the north-west coastal pathway.

Dr Broad - What did the mayor say?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad, through the Chair.

Mr HODGMAN - What did Kony say? I would be really careful. You have got yourself in a pickle this week.

Dr Broad - What did he say?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad. I am asking you not to do this across the Chamber, you are to do it through the Chair.

Dr Broad - He's inciting interjection.

Madam SPEAKER - You do not ask a question like that. You ask a question through me.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. If he does not think he has himself in quite a pickle this week, given the things that he said and his entirely inappropriate behaviour, which I note was not in any way condemned by the Leader of the Opposition. For the member's benefit and I know we had another lecture yesterday on how to Google things, if you go away and Google -

Dr Broad - Google 'half-time Hodgman' and see what comes up.

Madam SPEAKER - All right, that is enough, Dr Broad. You do not have a warning yet, but you are getting a good one, there you go.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We will continue to strongly support the community, also the coastal pathway in our concept, the plan that we have to work closely with all

parties and look to a favourable outcome. Meetings have been held with the mayors. I have spoken with relevant local government members and mayors in the community. They are well aware of the issues. We have undertaken inspections on the proposed pathway subject to the erosion. Contrary to assertions that have been made as well, the Bass Highway is not under imminent threat from coastal erosion.

Ms Dow - It is potential, is the word.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, if you are not prepared to listen to the Premier when he is giving you an answer, then I will ask him to take his seat. Please do not interject. I am going to let him continue. What I am saying is, if you do not want to listen to him and you are going to talk over the top of him, then I will ask him to resume his seat. He is trying to answer your question.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker, we will continue to work cooperatively with councils. We do not support the view of anyone, including the mayor of Burnie, to think that the state alone should be responsible for resolving these matters, but to work together to address and to deliver what would be another wonderful addition to Tasmania's visitor economy and the great north-west coast.

Crime Statistics

Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[11.02 a.m.]

According to your Government's own reports, rates of robbery have increased by 23 per cent in the last year. Armed and aggravated robbery also went up by 20 per cent. Knives were used in almost half of these violent attacks, while guns were used in a third of armed robberies. Your figures for the first month of this year show nothing has changed, and Launceston continues as Tasmania's crime capital. The stats do not lie. Your Government is failing to do its most important job: to keep Tasmanians and their families safe. Your lacklustre announcements mean the majority of extra police officers will not be on the streets until 2022.

You have now been in the job for 88 days since the dumping of failed former minister, Michael Ferguson. What specifically have you done to turn the state's disturbing crime numbers around?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. First of all, as I have not been sitting down for long, I announced that there would be another 18 police officers on the beat as from tomorrow. As we know, Labor sacked 108 during their time. We have taken four years to replace those. We are building our police force with another 125. There has never been a safer time to live in Tasmania. The total offences are more than 30 per cent lower than they were a decade ago. In 2018-19, the total number of offences increased by 6 per cent, but this followed a 4 per cent reduction the previous year. The trend shows that total offences have not breached the long-term average.

The figures released this week show that the overall crime rate is heading downwards, with the total number of offences reduced from 2294 last year to date, to 2015 this year to date. Due to the

targeted police activities, the July figures indicate a decrease in crime level in Launceston of 16.5 per cent from the 631 last year to date, to 527 this year to date. This demonstrates that crime across Tasmania fluctuates due to the criminal group trends and the activities of a small number of high volume offenders.

Tasmania Police continues to focus on targeting and bringing to account the small number of offenders who are repeat criminals and who create the greatest degree of harm to the community. The key points for the community is, whose policies are working for them to make them safer?

We know Labor and the Greens approach was to have fewer police, 108 in fact, so you detect less crime and put more pressure on the officers who were still on the job. That is why we have spent the first four years training new recruits to maximum capacity to replace the 108 police officers that Labor sacked. That is why we are recruiting a further 125 officers. We are doing that because it is the right thing to do and Tasmanians deserve to be safer, remembering that under Labor there would be 200 less police than we will see.

It does not bear thinking about: 200 fewer police on the beat at the end of this term than Labor would have.

Ms White - I do not know where you get that number from. It does not even make sense.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr SHELTON - The majority Hodgman Liberal Government has a strong law and order policy and more importantly a set of values that underpin it.

Recognition of Visitors

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I draw your attention to some wonderful guests from the EACH program at Creek Road, Hobart. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

Neighbourhood Houses Network

Mrs PETRUSMA question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[11.07 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering on our long-term plan to assist our local communities to thrive by investing in our tremendous Neighbourhood Houses Network?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am happy to answer this question. I thank Mrs Petrusma for her question and her passion and investment over many years in our Neighbourhood House Network across Tasmania.

The Hodgman majority Liberal Government is a strong supporter of neighbourhood houses. This week, as we speak, the annual Neighbourhood Houses conference is being held in Devonport at the Paranaple Centre in my electorate of Braddon. I extend our thanks and support to the staff and the volunteers of our network of fantastic neighbourhood houses and their peak body Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania for the work that they do every day in communities for people in need right across Tasmania.

Through our strong budget management, we are ensuring that more money is being invested in supporting Tasmanian communities, including through our fantastic neighbourhood houses right across Tasmania. We are delivering on our election commitments to resource the neighbourhood houses of Tasmania and we have committed \$8.8 million to assist the houses and the work they do in communities right across our state. This work is also supported by the peak body Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania which has been recognised by our Government with an additional \$45 000 in core funding provided in the 2019-20 budget, which will enable them to help the entire network to improve its functions, its governance, its planning and its service to its community.

In terms of delivering our commitments, we have developed a number of new ways of working more closely with the houses to drive better outcomes for their communities through protocols and strategic frameworks that describe our work with them as government. We are also delivering \$150 000 to enable neighbourhood houses to upgrade security arrangements, to provide safety for their staff, volunteers and visitors and to protect the tools and equipment that people rely on.

Round one of the security grants round was delivered in April this year and round two security grants have now been finalised and successful houses will be notified shortly. This will deliver a number of significant improvements, from security lighting and CCTV cameras, secure perimeter gates and fencing to protect the equipment that our neighbourhood houses and their communities rely on but also to ensure that our staff are safe: the staff and volunteers of the neighbourhood houses when they lock up of an evening and leave their place of work.

The reason that our Government can invest even more in these essential services to assist Tasmanians in need and build stronger communities is because on this side of the House we understand the importance of strong budget and economic management, unlike Labor, those opposite, who refuse to prepare an alternative budget and who are coming in here every day, every week, desperately trying to spread fear in our public sector workers that their jobs are under threat, despite our assurances to the contrary and despite their appalling track record when they were in government. This is a disgraceful tactic. The Opposition's tactic of making people fearful of their jobs needs to desist right now. There is nothing worse than making our hardworking -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, could we have some respect for the minister, please?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Making people fearful for the future of their jobs when they are already in some cases working in traumatic conditions with the most vulnerable people in our communities is a despicable political tactic and it should stop. It is a desperate effort from those opposite, who do not even have an alternative budget of their own, to try to get some traction on our sensible budget control measures.

It is not washing in the general community. It is not washing in Braddon where the Neighbourhood Houses are meeting today. It is not washing in the front bar of the Wharf Hotel in

Wynyard where people go, and when we talk about how things are going in government no-one is coming to me and saying we have to stop our budget control measures. In fact, they are asking how much we are trying to save and I tell them 50 cents in \$100. Those people get it.

The Opposition's tactics are not working because ordinary people out in the electorate expect that we manage their money as efficiently as we can so that we do not have to raise other taxes, fines, fees and fares to provide more of the services that they want, but also because it is their money. We are managing their money. We get that but Labor does not. The public knows that Labor does not get it and that they have no track record on managing the state's economy or the state's budget. They have no budget of their own, no plans and no policies, but we are delivering for Tasmanians through our Neighbourhood Houses in our vulnerable communities because we have managed the budget well and we will keep on doing it.

Time expired.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUATION REFORM AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 41)

First Reading

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

SITTING DATES

[11.14 a.m.]

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 15 October next at 10 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Seek Leave to Suspend Standing Orders - Leave Denied

[11.15 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I seek the leave of the House to move a motion without notice for the purpose of moving the suspension of Standing Orders to debate the following motion of censure -

That this House censures Elise Archer, Guy Barnett, Shane Broad, Jenna Butler, Sarah Courtney, Anita Dow, Michael Ferguson, Peter Gutwein, Eloise Haddad, Susanne Hickey, William Hodgman, Jennifer Houston, Roger Jaensch, David O'Byrne, Jacqueline Petrusma, Jeremy Rockliff, Joan Rylah, Mark Shelton, Alison Standen, John Tucker and Rebecca White on the following grounds -

1. The members' failure to offer meaningful support to young people in their fight for a safe climate;

2. The members' failure to stand up to their federal colleagues' shameful advocacy for the coal, oil and gas industries, as well their willingness to accept donations from these industries'
3. The members' shameful support for logging natural forest carbon banks;
and
4. The members' complicity in global climate and environmental vandalism that has led to a climate and biodiversity emergency.

As Greta Thunberg said in front of the UN Climate Summit, how dare all of you vote against supporting young peoples' strike for a safe climate? These young people, 15 000 or more young Tasmanians, their mums, dads, aunts, uncles and friends stood up on the lawns of the Tasmanian Parliament last Friday demanding leadership on climate change. If the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, wants kids just to be kids, then leaders need to be leaders, and every person in this place who yesterday voted against supporting young people striking for a safe climate, it is an absolute failure of leadership and shame on all of you. You are a disgrace.

We censure every member of this place and we will make sure that out in the community our constituents know how every person voted in this place when they were given an opportunity to support young people striking for a safe climate. It is an absolute failure of leadership and a failure to support young Tasmanians in their struggle for the security of their futures, lying to the public about Tasmania being a global leader in climate action - and let us be clear about that. Go and have a look at the greenhouse accounts. The reason that Tasmania is a net carbon sink is because of the struggle of the conservation movement and the Greens over decades to protect our natural forests. Our forests are what gives the Premier of the day the opportunity to get up here and pretend that he is a global climate leader when he is not, because his Government wants to log 356 000 hectares of some of the most beautiful carbon-dense forests on the planet.

We had it confirmed in parliament today that the Government has failed to secure stewardship certification for Sustainable Timbers Tasmania. While the Minister for Resources could not bring himself to tell the truth, by omission we now know that a report which was handed from the Forest Stewardship Council to Sustainable Timbers Tasmania on the last Friday in May this year condemned, in effect, STT's logging practices which are driving species towards extinction. These are logging practices in swift parrot habitat, masked owl habitat and Tasmanian devil habitat, and the Forest Stewardship Council rightly said to the Tasmanian Government and to our Forestry GBE, 'You do not deserve FSC certification because your logging practices are not sustainable'. In a time of climate and biodiversity emergency, there is no justification on moral grounds for logging those forests.

There is an absolute failure of Tasmanian Labor to commit to climate action when just recently at a Labor state conference they approved a motion which supported current forestry practices, that being the same policy as the Liberal Government. We know that responsibility for Sustainable Timbers Tasmania's incapacity to get FSC certification rests squarely on the Liberals' shoulders and they are being cheered on by every member of the Labor Party, which stood in this place last night and refused to support children striking for a safe climate. This is the same Labor Party that supports the Adani Coal Mine, takes massive donations from the coal, oil and gas industries and has signed up to the Parliamentary Friends of Coal, which is an absolute moral failure and a massive slap in the face to young people.

How can young Tasmanians, who attended that climate strike in their thousands, seriously believe that both the Labor and Liberal Parties are hearing their concerns? They cannot. I arrived home last night after that vote and I had to deal with a really distressed child and I asked, 'what is the matter, darling?'. 'I am experiencing existential angst, mum.'. That came from watching this debate in here last night.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I draw your attention to the fact that you are supposed to be debating the need for leave and not the substantive motion. I also point out, I take tremendous personal offence at what you have been doing this morning because I went to that rally and I also believe in it and I believe most of this House supported your motion with a few additions. I am very disappointed you are doing this but I ask you to stay on note and address the request for leave. Stop lecturing us.

Member Suspended
Member for Clark, Ms O'Connor

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for telling me how you feel, Madam Speaker. The vote in this place last night speaks for itself. Ultimately, we are elected into this place to vote, not to pay lip service to young people and the need for climate action. It is our vote that counts and what Labor, the Liberals and every member in this place, apart from Dr Woodruff, Ms Ogilvie and I, voted for was only to acknowledge the climate strike. You did not vote to support those kids. We censure every member of this place, Madam Speaker, and that includes you.

Madam SPEAKER - Alright, you may now leave the Chamber for being offensive, yet again. You have not apologised and out you go. You can stay out now for the afternoon. You can come back in at adjournment at 6 p.m.

Ms O'Connor withdrew.

Madam SPEAKER - The question is that leave be granted -

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Speaker, I am seeking the call.

Madam SPEAKER - On what basis?

Dr WOODRUFF - It is a debate and I am the second speaker on the debate.

Madam SPEAKER - Okay.

[11.23 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Thank you, Madam Speaker. This House needs to suspend Standing Orders to deal with this matter today, given the urgency of this issue. As if we needed another disastrous report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), they have, a few hours ago in Monaco, delivered their Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. It is devastating news for those of us who are fighting the battle against a climate breakdown. It makes very clear that our ocean and cryosphere, which is all the snow and ice on the planet, are under immense pressure, that the changes to the oceans and cryosphere affect all of our lives and the time for action on this is now - not tomorrow, not next week but today.

On that basis, every member in this place has to understand that our inaction, our failure to support the demands of the School Strike for Climate movement, which is now a global strike, our failure to understand that we are so far from being global climate leaders, these things must be changed. We must reverse these failures. We can do it. Every member in this place can do it. We can no longer sit here and ignore the actions of other people in Australian parliaments.

We call on this parliament to suspend Standing Orders so we can debate this motion of censure because the Greens believe it is important that every single member of the House, the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, understands that we have personal responsibility to Tasmanians. We are here in the Parliament of Tasmania because we represent the people of this state. It is our obligation, the obligation of the members listed, to stand up to their federal colleagues, to stand up to the federal Labor Party, to stand up to the federal Liberal Party to make a clear statement that here in Tasmania -

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. You are to address the seeking of leave. I ask you to contain your comments to the seeking of leave. This is not the general debate.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, you are correct. I will come back to the point of urgency. It is not something we can put off until the next session of parliament. We have only years left to turn around the whole planet, which means every single person must, as a country and in Tasmania, play a part in that. We must be responsible for the actions of other people in our parties and the censure is directed at the Liberal and Labor party members who are failing to act on behalf of Tasmanians. Every day they come to this parliament and pretend, offering faux support for the climate strike. You can turn up or not, but it is your actions and what you say when you do it that count.

Ms STANDEN - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I take deep personal offence at the inference that I do not care for the future of young people and climate change. As shadow minister for climate change and as a parent, I attended the climate strike last Friday. I spoke passionately in support of amendments to the motion yesterday declaring a climate emergency amongst other things. I ask her to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - In this case it is not a point of order. You were not named directly. She is unable to withdraw the comment unless she had named you specifically in the general comments. However, I ask the member to speak to the seeking of leave.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I seek the leave of the House to debate this matter today because it is clear that the members mentioned in the censure motion voted to support a statement that says, 'Tasmanians understand we are in a global-leading position on climate change.'. We do not. It is dangerous to peddle that mistruth. It is a lie to say that we are global leaders in climate change. It is not good enough to have a wimpish statement about acknowledging concern on an issue that has led to the global strike movement and is leading to the extinction of species and the possible extinction of the human species. It is not good enough.

One of the ministers mentioned, Michael Ferguson, is shaking his head and even he would reject today, still, the United Nations and the IPCC statement. This is what we have to change. We have time to do it. We are losing the race but when there is a leak in the boat, you do not jump in and hack at it to make it bigger. You do not chop down 356 000 hectares of carbon-rich forest. You do not fail to stand up to your federal Liberal and Labor party colleagues and call them out for taking money from the gas, coal and other fossil-fuelled industries.

You do everything you possibly can. We need to have this censure debate so that every member in this House can leave tonight, go home and talk to the young people who were at the strike, wherever they meet them, and make it really clear that they do understand what action looks like on climate change. It is not only nice words and holding placards. It is doing something and we are the only people in this state that can do that. We have that special ability and a special right. It is our responsibility to change and make it clear that every single member who was mentioned in the censure motion, every member has the opportunity to do something good for this state, does so for their children's future. On that basis, we are calling that today we suspend Standing Orders to debate this motion.

Time expired.

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Deputy Speaker, we will not be supporting the seeking of leave.

Yesterday the House made this state's position in respect of climate change perfectly clear, and it is that we are a global leader; we lead the country. There is always more to be done and I made that point yesterday. I also made the point that we support those kids who turned up. Many of us in this House have children who attended that rally, so we do support them.

The point that needs to be made very clearly -and it has been called 'outrageous moralising' by interjection on the other side - is that Ms O'Connor made it perfectly clear on Saturday night in her statements to the media that she saw this climate action strike as all about votes, all about the political position of the Greens and what we have seen this week is Ms O'Connor failed to get the headline that she was seeking; failed to get the media coverage this week -

Dr Woodruff - It is how you vote in this place that counts.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, you have had your contribution.

Mr GUTWEIN - failed to get the media headline that she was seeking. What we have seen today is the single, largest dummy spit that I have seen in this place in the 18 years that I have been in this place. To come in and present to the House a censure motion as a stunt, which is all it can be called, simply to get the headline that she has been searching for all week, is outrageous. It is outrageous in terms of moralising and it is political self-righteousness at its worst.

On that basis, we do not support the stunt that has been brought into this place by the member who, quite frankly, cannot control herself to the standards of this House to remain in this House. Therefore, this side of the House will not be supporting the seeking of leave.

The House divided -

AYES 2

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 21

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Courtney

Ms Dow (Teller)
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Ms Hickey
Mr Hodgman
Ms Houston
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah
Mr Shelton
Ms Standen
Mr Tucker
Ms White

Motion negatived.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Bushfire Preparedness

[11.38 a.m.]

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

That the House take note of the following matter: bushfire preparedness.

Last summer Tasmania suffered through massive bushfires that terrorised local communities and burnt an enormous 3 per cent of the state surface area; a whole 6 per cent of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was burnt. Homes were lost, ancient rainforest ecosystems and alpine communities were lost. King Billy pine and pencil pine forests are now gone for ever. We know that the loss would have been far greater if it had not been for the work of people on the front line, volunteers and paid. The Greens give our deepest thanks to people, volunteer and career firefighters, the SES, local communities who rallied and supported all of us who were affected by the fires, and to make sure that more people were not affected.

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities review, which was undertaken and the information was provided to us from that review, the report into those bushfires in August painted an alarming picture of summers that were to come. It painted a particularly scathing picture of the Government's failure to be ready in time for last summer's bushfires. The report's authors described the Tasmanian Fire Service's state operation centre as dated and barely adequate to the task.

The report was crystal clear that the TFS needed to be able to properly accommodate and integrate the needs of partner agencies in times of crisis, those agencies being the Parks and Wildlife Service and so-called Sustainable Timbers Tasmania. It also made the point that the operations centre needed to be substantially reconfigured and expanded. The AFAC report found crews attending the Gell River fire in the south-west late last December and early January were not

properly resourced, that there were no aircraft available to identify hotspots and that the frontline crews consequently withdrew too early. The report authors also identified communication issues between the Parks and Wildlife Service and Tasmania Fire Service and found that resource requests from Parks were delayed.

Since that point, we have had a new Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services who has only accepted in principle the report's nine recommendations, and has only said they will subject to the budget process, the same budget which has had cuts and efficiency dividends exacted upon it, including to each of the services I mentioned, Tasmania Fire Service and Parks and Wildlife Service. This is in the context of what is an already incredibly dry east coast which has an acknowledged high bushfire risk and it is essentially a frighteningly irresponsible response from this current Police, Fire and Emergency Services minister and the Government. We are deeply concerned there has been a lack of funding into the services they need to be as well-equipped as they can be for the coming season.

The bushfire season is not happening from December. It is not like that any longer. The bushfire season is with us now. We seem to be in a state where we always have a bushfire season. We have 80 people who are currently not available to be deployed as remote area teams because the TFS has not attended to the safety issues they needed to in time for this bushfire season. We have had eight months now since the firestorm of last summer, eight months of internal capacity building and risk assessment that ought to have been happening. Instead, that has not been done and we will have 80 fewer people available at any time a fire breaks out in a remote area in Tasmania than there were last summer. This is a really terrible situation for communities who may be threatened by bushfires in remote areas and are not getting the support they need.

It is deeply concerning that the Government fails to appreciate the increasing risk for the state. We want the minister to stop sitting on his hands on this and tell us how much money has been put into the extra capacity required by the AFAC review and who is responsible for the planning and enforcing of fuel management on private property at township levels, because that was something the review recommended the minister manage immediately. Is it the case that we now have an updated version of the inter-agency fire management protocol? Do we have practice now around managing new fire starts in remote terrain? Do we have a whole-of-state fuel management and burning program coordinating the activities of the three agencies responsible? These are some of the recommendations from the AFAC review which have only been adopted in principle, yet each of these is an essential part of our ability to be able to respond appropriately to the next fire.

Time expired.

[11.45 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to this very important matter. We know that the overall seasonal bushfire conditions for Tasmania are dire. Remote fire teams are still suspended. That matter has not been resolved. The east coast is drier than usual, especially between the Forestier Peninsula and Scamander. The Eastern Drive area has above-normal fire potential. All experts agree that this season will require considerable response efforts and we are not ready as a state. The minister has not even moved on recommendations from the AFAC review.

The Tasmanian Standing Committee on Community Development stated:

The committee finds on the evidence presented that volunteer firefighters are at risk of being undervalued and underrated and that the Government should use best endeavours to ensure the full acknowledgement and recognition of these services.

Recommendation 9 from the inquiry into the State Fire Commission, House of Assembly Standing Committee on Community Development says:

I am coming up on 30 years' service. I have never seen the TFS so bad except in the early 1990s when we amalgamated the urban retained and country side of the service.

Brigade Chief, East Coast District.

That is a pretty harsh quote.

The report also referred to the overall lack of preparedness for volunteers, especially in the use of PPE. It said:

Increasingly, TFS volunteer members are feeling disenfranchised as issues are not addressed in timely manners, sometimes not for years. Budgets have been cut, although fire levies haven't. Capital works are minimal. Roll-out processes of equipment, particularly PPE, is taking in some cases over a decade. There is a constant flow of career staff through the districts and training is of an increasingly low standard. An identified challenge for the TFS to face is the evolving internal culture of exclusion.

That is a direct quote from that report, a witness statement.

Boots on the ground are what puts fires out. Preventative measures and a proactive approach to fuel reduction loads is the best course of practice. Fuel loads are high. At the moment 60 tonnes per hectare of fuel is sitting on Mt Wellington itself. Did you know that, minister? That is from an expert.

Mr Shelton - There has never been more work put into Mt Wellington than in the last five years.

Ms BUTLER - The Government has done nothing to meet the demand for remote firefighters, with only 18 full-time remote firefighters for the whole state. They excel in preventative measures and that is what makes the difference. With their expertise and being able to be dropped into remote areas with a conservation style of bush management, they prevent bushfires from happening and there are only 18 full-time members for the whole state.

The 2018-19 fires cost Tasmania \$60 million, and that is excluding wages. Fuel is the only aspect of a bushfire that you can control. Volunteer fire fighters are really where it is at, at the moment. People on the ground and resourcing is an issue. Brigades are being excluded from rosters on campaign fires, according to the brigades. This is information provided by the brigades. It is not me being cynical. This is what they have told me.

Courses and other applications are not being processed over preferences at many levels to using the same brigades and personnel for high-end jobs, such as mainland deployment, and there is inequity in safety standards and issuing of vehicles, equipment and PPE. That is all contributing to the disenfranchisement of a lot of our volunteers. There is a decline in numbers of volunteers for a range of reasons - this is from volunteers themselves. The quote is that there are 5000 even though there is no accurate data to prove that number. It is disputed by the volunteers that there are actually 5000 active volunteers to fight fires.

There has been no increase in numbers of career staff for many years. That is impacting on the district support level, which is vital to support volunteer brigades. There is a need for volunteering career representative bodies to work with the TFS and the government on a future workforce plan. Volunteer brigades are frustrated to the point of fundraising for capital works and buying their own PPE, saying, 'We cannot even get our heat pump fixed'. 'There is a constant pushback about budget, yet the residents in our community are still paying the same fire levy, this is not good enough.'. That was from the brigade chief, east coast district. They also say that -

We have an excellent response mobilisation times, callout numbers and a strong support towards the campaign and strike team deployments. Our trucks have not missed a callout for 14 years. We are the ones putting in 110 per cent, yet there is never any recognition from the TFS or the Government. It really makes me wonder why we bother sometimes.

That is from the brigade chief of the northern district. You have a real problem with the volunteers and they are not feeling engaged. If you are talking about being prepared for the fire season you really need to look after those people. That is all through the recommendations as well. This does not sound to me like a group who are looked after and feeling supported by the Government. The Government have sacked volunteer trainers and career TFS staff have had to step in. They are happy to do it; these are brilliant firefighters. They are some of the best career staff in Australia. They are stepping in outside their normal working hours to train volunteers. They are happy to do that and the volunteers are really pleased.

Time expired.

[11.52 a.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the volunteers and the fire service for all the effort they put in every year with the training and the selflessness they put in. It is a marvellous service they give the community and we all thank them very much for that service.

Since human habitation, our landscape has been shaped by fire. This means we must always be alert to the risk of fire in the landscape and how this might impact our homes, towns, infrastructure, businesses, environment and heritage values. Community safety is paramount. Tasmania's fire service, as it does every year, is preparing for the oncoming fire season along with the partner agencies, the Parks and Wildlife Service and Sustainable Timber Tasmania. We have a core capability of paid fire experts in each agency. Our full fire response capability would not exist without our magnificent volunteer firefighters or the national arrangements. Australian states and New Zealand help each other out when needed. This framework is the most cost-effective way of responding to fires, which may be minor in one year but the other, such as last summer, may be exceptional in size and duration.

In regard to our remote firefighting capability within the Tasmania Fire Service, I am assured by the chief officer that the pins will be resolved and the capability reinstated in advance of the fire season. In terms of the numbers of Parks and Wildlife Service, we have contracted additional 19 firefighters for the upcoming bushfire season to complement the core of permanent firelighters within the Parks and Wildlife Service, with approximately 80 staff trained in firefighting in remote areas. The Parks and Wildlife Service continues to support the Tasmania Fire Service to deliver the remote-area capability across the state.

The Government's \$55 million nation-leading fuel reduction program has reduced fire risk across Tasmania. Preparation does not stop there, as every one of us has a role to play in preparing for each fire season. I urge everyone to heed the expert advice from the Tasmania Fire Service to prepare and practice bushfire survival plans and to prepare properties by removing flammable materials from yards, gutters and know how to access bushfire information. It has taken a Hodgman majority Liberal Government to implement the statewide fuel reduction program that is helping councils and landowners to keep Tasmanians safe. Since we came to Government, there have been more 600 fuel reduction burns in targeted areas around Tasmania backed up by research and modelling.

In the Hobart area, strategic burns have resulted in large, relative risk reduction between 50 per cent and 75 per cent in suburbs to the north, west and south. Other significant risk reductions include between 50 per cent to 75 per cent risk reduction in the Orford and Spring Bay area, 47 per cent on Flinders Island, and 65 per cent around Conara. We have seen real-world examples of the effectiveness of the fuel reduction program. The communities of Rossarden, St Marys, Scamander, Beaumaris and Zeehan have been spared disaster due to the fuel reduction burns that allowed firefighters to successfully tackle fires started by lightning. Our strong action thus far has led to the reduction in risk with relative risk statewide falling from 283.3 per cent, on track to achieve our fuel reduction target of 80 per cent. This is the lowest it has been in 15 years. However, we must avoid complacency and we must approach every fire season calmly and with resolve.

Make no mistakes, the biggest bushfire risk to Tasmania is another Labor-Greens government. Unlike those opposite, we have a \$55 million investment in protecting Tasmania. If you had an alternative budget we would know whether you were committing any funds. The AFAC Review makes nine recommendations with varying implementation time frames. We have tasked our fire agency with progressing the work required to implement the recommendations contained in the AFAC Review. Work has already commenced on all recommendations noting that some of the recommendations, such as the construction of the purpose-built state control centre, will need to be incorporated in future strategic planning processes. The Tasmania Fire Service has established the statewide air desk for this season, delivering on recommendation 6. We have already started the contracting process for helicopters and planes.

Tasmania is better prepared under this Government to respond to events in this nature, unlike the previous Labor-Greens government that had no comprehensive fuel reduction program funded despite reports telling Tasmania it was needed. That is why the statewide relative risk is going down under us, whereas it was skyrocketing under you lot. Rather than scaremongering for shameful political gains, the Greens need to act like responsible adults, get on board with the great work Tasmania Fire Service is doing to prepare for this bushfire season, and engage positively with the community. The Government will continue to back our fire agencies to do a great job, to keep doing a great job for Tasmanians and to keep Tasmanians safe.

The Greens, in their alternative budget, do put some small funding in for bushfire reduction, but they are johnny-come-latelies to the bushfire fuel reduction program. They have only now come on board. In my part of the world, for the last 40 years, from the Central Highlands, the old-timers -

Time expired.

[11.59 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt that our firefighters do a magnificent job. Our volunteers, our career firefighters, along with firefighters in our Parks and Wildlife Service and Sustainable Timber Tasmania, are amazing.

Mr Ferguson - Why did you criticise them in the middle of the campaign last summer? You called for an inquiry while they were fighting the fires.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair, please.

Mr Ferguson - You criticised them. Why did you do that?

Dr BROAD - Why would you do this. You are being clearly disorderly. I cannot believe you would do that. Here I am, praising firefighters, I am a couple of seconds into my speech and I have the former minister cracking on about some ridiculous point. Talk about politics.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - I ask the minister to let the member make his contribution in silence, please.

Mr Ferguson - It destroys morale.

Dr BROAD - Madam Deputy Speaker, 'destroys morale'? Absolute rubbish. We know that the firefighters are an amazing community and they do a magnificent job with their dedication, the efforts that they take in their own time, their training: they give up their own time. There is no doubt that when a fire breaks out they put in every effort possible to control the fire and reduce harm to the community and to infrastructure and structures. When a fire gets going the SES, police and community also play a role, whether that be in abiding by directions of police, for example, or helping out at evacuation centres to help feed and house people who are displaced because of the fires. They do a magnificent job.

We have to say that there have been a number of reports done by AFAC and the report after the Dunalley fire made a number of recommendations that have not been adopted. Those recommendations are also repeated in the latest AFAC report after last season's bushfires. I would be interested in hearing much more clarification from the minister about his efforts to make sure that all of those recommendations are adopted, because it is very important. Fire is a major hazard in Tasmania.

Mainlanders looking at Tasmania might think that Tasmania is cold and wet, but it is not. We are one the most fire-prone regions in the world. That is because we have large numbers of eucalypt forests, sclerophyll forests, both wet and dry. Sclerophyll forests are eucalypt forests which do a number of things to encourage fire. They have lots of pungent, volatile oils in their leaves and the trees drop the leaves all the time. In fact, they drop branches as well. They are evolved to not only tolerate fire, but to actually encourage fire. The reason a lot of these eucalypt forests dominate

Tasmanian landscapes is because the first Tasmanians used firestick farming, which was farming in every sense apart from - probably was not recognised by the colonists as we arrived in Tasmania. Firestick farming is the reason that we have eucalypt forests all throughout Tasmania and, indeed, all throughout Australia. The whole point of that is that our landscape has evolved not only tolerate, but actually require, constant burning. Early stories from the colonists who came to Tasmania talk of the Aboriginal people constantly burning. In spring and summer there were fires and smoke on the horizons at all times.

We know that we need constant burning and we need fuel reduction, because it is mega fires, fires that when there is a huge fuel load will kill even these fire tolerant species. That is what we have to avoid. We know with a drier climate that we will have an even greater risk. We know that if fuel loads are not controlled then we will also be at greater risk.

We know that fires need fuel, oxygen, temperature and ignition. In our changing climate, we are seeing a higher incidence - not only predicted, but actual - of dry lightning strikes. Dry lightning strikes are particularly deadly because they can occur a number of times in one event and start small fires all around the state on one night or on one day, as we saw in the last fire season. Those fires eventually joined up to create huge fires that burnt out thousands and thousands of hectares of Tasmanian wilderness and put communities like Geeveston in significant danger.

We need remote area teams to be able to handle these. The minister is giving assurances that the blockages preventing our RATs teams from operating, our career firefighter remote area firefighters, will be solved when the fire season starts. We are already getting to a situation now where fire permits are going to be required on the east coast.

We know that the east coast is a tinderbox, it is very dry and some areas have not been burnt for a number of years. It is a fire waiting to happen. Hopefully, we will not have a situation where we have idiot arsonists, or indeed lightning strikes that get a fire going. We know that last year even though the east coast was predicted to be the most at risk it was not the east coast where the whole issues were.

The risk is always constant and that is why we need to learn the lessons of the past. We know that it can lead to significant loss of life, as it did in the 1967 bushfires. The state was fortunate that in Dunalley no lives were lost, because that was a horrendous fire.

I have spoken in this place of how I went to Dunalley not long after the fire. Where that fire got to and how it behaved was incredible. It created its own little micro climate and when that fire came over the hill people had only seconds to get away. We heard stories from the sawmillers there that they were on a motorbike and the fire was chasing their tail, literally. They lost everything. The fire crossed at least a kilometre and a half of bare paddock to burn out all the oyster farmers out that way too. It was an incredible bushfire with things like fireballs rolling across the water and striking the Forestier Peninsula. These are the things we do not want in this state. That is why we need adequately-funded remote area teams and firefighters.

Time expired.

[12.06 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, we simply cannot take what the Greens say seriously. We see on 20 September the member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, puts up '22 000

demanding climate action attending the street protests'. Then we have Ms O'Connor on 24 September saying 15 000. I ask the member, which is it?

I have lived in the Bay of Fires area all my life. I have experienced a lot of fires through my life and my father was a fire warden. He gave me a lot of knowledge on fires. It is dismaying to listen to some of the comments made around this room about fires and fuel reduction burns. To reduce the risks of bushfires this fire season the Tasmania Fire Service is declaring an early start to the fire permit period. It is this Saturday in my area of Break O'Day and also in Glamorgan Spring Bay and the Sorell municipalities. The Parks and Wildlife Service will also be implementing campfire restrictions in designated areas on the east coast and areas of the north east. These restrictions will remain in place until the end of the fire season or until the fire risks in those areas is reduced.

Tasmanians living in bushfire-prone areas should know and practise their bushfire survival plans and prepare their properties by removing flammable material from the yards and gutters. While the statewide relative bushfire risk is now the lowest it has been in 15 years, the Australian seasonal bushfire forecast predicts normal bushfire activity across much of the state and potentially above normal activity on the east coast. At all times, Tasmanians need to remain vigilant and heed advice from the Tasmanian Fire Service, with our best bushfire defence always being preparedness.

Last summer the community witnessed the devastating impact fires can have in our state. Ahead of the coming season we thank our dedicated firefighters and emergency service personnel for the duty they perform to keep our community safe.

Let me talk a little more about the Government's fuel reduction program. We know from recent bushfire events how quickly wildfires can spread and that fuel reduction burns can significantly slow down advancing fires and give our professional and volunteer brigades the best chance of controlling them. The fuel reduction program currently has 70 burns on its books across the state which are implemented in a prioritised way as fuel and weather conditions allow. With Tasmania's fire season outlook flagging an above normal fire potential in the eastern part of Tasmania, priority is being given to those and fuel reduction burns are planned for the east coast.

The approach under the Hodgman majority Liberal Government stands in stark contrast to when Labor and the Greens were last in government together. Under Labor and the Greens, fuel loads spiralled out of control, all while they negotiated and agreed how best to shut down businesses and drive people in regional communities on to the unemployment queue with their job-destroying Forest Peace deal. They put communities at risk and they put our response workers and volunteers at greater risk. You cannot trust Rebecca White and Labor. Given half a chance they will do another deal with the Greens. Only the Hodgman majority Liberal Government can be trusted to deliver safer communities through a priority-resourced fuel reduction program.

Regarding aerial preparedness, let us be very clear, we take advice from the experts in the Tasmania Fire Service on whether to call in additional resources such as large air tankers. Tasmania Fire Service makes these decisions based on their expert knowledge, current experience and their operational judgments at the time. We will back their expertise any day.

Each year the Tasmania Fire Service puts in place National Aerial Firefighting Centre aircraft contracts for each fire season. For Tasmania this provides two fixed-wing and five rotary assets along with additional resources under call-on-demand conditions regarding large air tankers. Aircraft are used to slow the progress of a fire until it can be attacked with ground crews. This

improves the probability of first-attack success by up to 50 per cent or more. While the historic use of LATs is relatively low in Tasmania's context, we know the cost per use is high. At this time there is no practical justification to have a standing LAT resource in the state, especially as we retain on-demand access through the National Aerial Firefighting Centre.

In the Tasmanian context, the Tasmania Fire Service has already advised that a state air desk will be in place for the coming season. Tasmanians can be assured that in the lead-up to the coming season our firefighting agencies will undertake a range of activities to further mitigate the risk to our communities. That is especially so in the Break O'Day municipality.

Ms Butler - Is your air desk going to be permanently staffed? That is what the recommendation said.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms Butler, you have made your contribution. Contributions through the Chair, please.

Mr TUCKER - I will come back to some of the Greens' comments about retaining trees and the climate change issue here with this. I would like to say if one truly believes that the Australian landscape is to become more fire-prone as the result of climate change, would it not be better to store this carbon in a non-burnable form in the soil?

Time expired.

Matter noted.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 33)

Second Reading

Resumed from 25 September 2019 (page 46)

[12.13 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I will recap what I was saying yesterday because I was nearly at the end of my speech.

This bill on genetically modified organisms is about Tasmania's premium export brand and provenance. I believe this bill backs conventional agriculture and takes Tasmania to a new level because of the excellence in conventional agriculture not seen anywhere else in the world. Tasmania's GMO-free status remains an important component of the Tasmanian brand and will ensure our agricultural products have open access and premium prices in markets that prohibit GMO products. Many international markets such as Europe and Japan demand GMO-free products. Tasmania is well placed to enhance and expand our footprint in these large, lucrative markets with this announcement.

The Hodgman Liberal Government and the ministers are to be commended for providing surety to the sector, for recognising the benefits in maintaining the moratorium, and at the same time committing to regular reviews of developments in this area. I commend the minister and his agency for the significant work and leadership behind this bill.

[12.15 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I stand here today as a no-hat member, but all-cattle. Yes, I come from the bush and I am a proud Tasmanian beef producer. We have a world-leading product that is strongly supported by the Tasmanian brand. We produce a clean, green, grass-fed, hormone growth promotant, genetically modified organisms and antibiotic-free beef, exporting to the world. We take animal welfare very seriously and also carbon sequestration. Agriculture, including specifically the natural relationship between herbivores and grasslands, has the potential to create a massive carbon sink. Photosynthesis and controlled grazing is key to this.

Agriculture, including the livestock industry, can create this carbon sink in a more permanent form than commonly advocated solutions such as forests in above-ground carbon sequestration strategies. More and more trees, more and more thick undergrowth and more and more dry, dead fall on our forest floors. This cannot be a practical action in the long-term storage of carbon. The trees, the dense undergrowth and the dead dry fall are just waiting for the next fire to take place. They all oxidise straight back to atmospheric carbon dioxide as soon as they are burned. Burning is inevitable in most terrains in Australia if carbon is stored above ground in the open. Worse still is the fact that from the point of view of global warming gas emissions, and depending on the amount of smouldering that takes place during the burn, the organic matter being burned may release a significant amount of methane.

The carbon sequestered by managing the natural relationship between herbivores and grassland is stored in a way that it makes the landscape less susceptible to fire. Carbon sequestration by managing herbivores and grasslands also aims in boosting agricultural productivity and enhancing environmental values. It helps make farming landscapes more resilient to any of the stresses that may come with global warming.

Importantly, managing herbivores and grasslands to store carbon underground is a low-carbon input technology that basically relies on the solar energy that arrives in our fields and paddocks every day. It relies on natural and organic cycles, such as the atmospheric water cycle and the atmospheric carbon cycle. The energy source for it is direct solar energy in the form of photosynthesis in plants. The plants provide the food and energy for the livestock to walk around, graze and continue growing. At the paddock level there is very low fossil fuel input into a grazing operation. Underground storage of carbon in a non-burnable form makes more sense than trying to store the same carbon in an above-ground form in the highly burnable environment of Australia. It makes more sense if one truly believes that the Australian landscape is to become more fire-prone as a result of climate change.

Where does carbon in plants in animals come from? This is a scientific point of enormous misunderstanding in the community and needs to be cleared up. Most people think that the carbon in a plant comes from the ground. It seems intuitively true. They think that the function of the roots is to gather carbon from the ground and form into trunks, branches, twigs and leaves. This is a common misconception but utterly false, that then leads to a series of flawed conclusions to alarm about the emissions of livestock. The reverse position is the case. None of the carbon in a tree or blade of grass comes from the ground. It all comes from the atmosphere by the process of photosynthesis. The roots bring moisture and nutrients from the ground, but no carbon. In fact, the carbon at the deepest tip of the deepest root all comes from the carbon dioxide the plant leaves access from the atmosphere and photosynthesis.

When an animal, including grazing herbivores eats any food, it is taking in carbon, carbohydrates, which originated in the atmosphere. When any animal emits carbon, either as carbon

dioxide or as methane, it is returning the same carbon atoms to the atmosphere that were originally drawn down by the plant in photosynthesis. In other words, there are no additional carbon atoms given out to the atmosphere, that were not already there before photosynthesis took place.

It is impossible for a herbivore to create carbon or give out more carbon than it ever took in from eating a plant.

The emissions of herbivores are part of a natural organic solar powered and self-completing cycle of carbon in the atmosphere. Thus, when the detractors of livestock cite the carbon emissions, they are only measuring the emissions at one point in the cycle. If they tried to give the emissions of the full cycle, their emissions would be zero: zero net emissions in the full life cycle of a grazing animal.

Dr Woodruff - You are missing the point that they come out as methane.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair.

Mr TUCKER - Where does the carbon gain from? Explain that one.

Dr Woodruff - Methane.

Mr TUCKER - We will get to methane. Much is made of the emissions of livestock including the emissions of methane. Whenever these emissions are cited, the unstated and misleading implication is that the carbon in these emissions is somehow a new load of carbon. As pointed out in the paragraph above, the net emissions of an individual herbivore or an entire national herd of herbivores, is zero. In fact, as long as the herd exists, it actually forms a carbon sink in the same way as trees of a forest form a carbon sink.

The carbon story in the roots of plants goes one step further than the simple fact that the roots are formed from carbon originally sourced as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. There is no complicated relationship between the roots of plants and the minute bacteria in the soil. Not only do the roots use the carbon they got from the atmosphere to build themselves, they are extruded into the surrounding soil in a complicated exchange with minute life forms, bacteria and microbes, to access nutrients. The roots of a plant cannot be everywhere, so their ability to access nutrients is limited. Bacteria and microbes are mobile and are the agents which mine nutrients in the soil close to the roots, bringing them to the roots in a remarkable form of a swap. In effect, the plant swaps carbon from its roots to provide an energy source for the microbes. It is a symbiotic relationship which results in plants naturally fertilising the soil with extra carbon from the atmosphere.

Nature mimicking grazing stimulates grass growth. The natural cycle of grass growth and the grazing that happens with herbivores on the great grasslands of the world is one in which herds move in dense formation, but rapidly over great stretches of terrain. With this natural situation, much of the grass on these great grasslands only gets grazed once a year. For the rest of the year, the grass is left to grow to its full maturity. Much of this traditional grazing pattern in Australia did not mimic this natural cycle. We adopted a set stocking arrangement where a herd of herbivores was placed in a large paddock and left there all year. This pattern has resulted in over-stocking, bare earth, ground compaction and stunted grass growth. Most of the criticism of livestock in recent years has taken at its paradigm the concept of set stocking.

Large numbers of livestock owners are now adopting new farming methods that truly mimic what happens in nature. The consequences of adopting these new grazing techniques in which there is far more control over when livestock graze and where and for how long the grass grows, including avoidance of overstocking, is negation of bare earth and its replacement with more ground cover, reversal of ground compaction and abundant grass growth.

One of the huge benefits of the new technique is that it leads to an increase in soil carbon levels. This is a technique that takes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and stores it as a carbon substance in the ground. With this form of grazing, the farmer's field becomes a carbon sink.

Methane is not rare in nature. When detractors of livestock cite methane as a powerful global warming gas emitted by ruminant herbivores, it is usually with some implication that methane is a rare, obscure and totally dangerous gas. The truth is that methane is produced in nature in vast quantities, day in, day out; year in, year out. For example, the CSIRO has calculated that most of Australia's methane is produced by termites. Methane production is one of the inevitable consequences of plant growth, particularly growth of tough cellulose grasses.

Methane is a natural organic gas which is driven ultimately by the fact that the sun shines on the earth every day. The sun shining on the earth kicks off the carbon cycle and the water cycle and methane is one of the inevitable consequences of these cycles. Methane is a molecule which is produced in an oxygen-starved environment, such as in the rumen of a herbivore or in the smouldering of a fire. When in the atmosphere for a period of time, the methane molecule oxidises to form carbon dioxide and water. In other words, the carbon atom in the methane molecule reverts to exactly the same form it was in before the plant drew it down from the atmosphere by photosynthesis.

The other thing that happens with methane is that it is consumed by certain bacteria, methanotrophic bacteria, as a food and energy source. These bugs oxidise the carbon in the methane back to carbon dioxide, the same molecular form in which it was prior to photosynthesis, way back in the cycle.

We farmers are always looking for ways to market our product to its maximum value. GMO free is another one of these marketing tools that work. This bill proposes to extend Tasmania's moratorium on genetically modified organisms for another 10 years. It is a significant boost for local producers and exporters. Since 2001, Tasmania has regulated a moratorium on GMOs for marketing purposes.

Other aspects of gene technology are regulated by the Commonwealth, including human health, safety and environmental impacts. Tasmania's GMO-free status is an important part of the Tasmanian brand, offering a marketing advantage for our high quality, high value primary industries. It is a key component in our goal to grow the annual value of our agricultural sector to \$10 billion by 2050. When the act commenced in 2004 it had an expiration period of five years. This duration was intended to allow farmers, agribusinesses and food businesses, to confidently invest in their own marketing and market development activities, whilst simultaneously allowing advances in research and changing market trends to be taken into account.

Over the past 15 years, the act, and hence the moratorium, has been extended for a further five years on two occasions - in 2009 and 2014 - on the basis that it differentiates and provides an advantage for Tasmanian products in the marketplace. In accordance with the act, the current moratorium is due to automatically expire on 16 November 2019. Extending the moratorium for a

further 10 years provides certainty for producers and businesses that rely on the state's GMO-free status to continue to invest, employ staff, and further develop markets.

Given the clear benefits of the moratorium for marketing purposes, the longer extension period will provide businesses with the confidence to invest in marketing strategies that take full advantage of Tasmania's GMO-free status.

It will also strengthen the Tasmanian brand, providing our trading partners with assurances in the ongoing stability of Tasmania's GMO-free provenance. The Tasmanian Gene Technology Policy and associated Gene Technology Guidelines, which provide the necessary detail on how the moratorium will be implemented, have also been updated and are publicly available. There will be regular reviews of developments in gene technology, markets and consumer sentiment, which can trigger a review of the policy earlier should developments warrant it.

The decision to extend the moratorium follows a comprehensive review carried out by the Department of Primary Industries. The review examines the potential marketing impacts of extending or amending the moratorium or allowing it to expire under the following terms of reference: the potential market advantages and disadvantages of allowing the use of gene technology in Tasmania; Tasmanian primary industries, including food and non-food sectors; domestic and international gene technology policy relevant to primary industries; research and development relevant to the use of gene technology in primary industries; and any other relevant matters raised during the review.

The focus of the review centred on the trade and marketing considerations associated with the GMO moratorium and the experience in other jurisdictions in any gene technology developments that may warrant a reconsideration of the moratorium now or in the future. Matters relating to human health, safety, and environmental impacts of GMOs, which are the responsibility of national regulatory agencies, were identified as being outside the scope of the review. The recent decision not to regulate the gene edited technique SDN-1 under the National Gene Technology Scheme, in which Tasmania participates, is outside the scope of this review. It does not affect the Tasmanian Government's ability to impose a moratorium for marketing purposes.

Following a five-week advertised consultation period that concluded on 26 April 2019, 76 submissions were received. Of the submissions, 63 per cent, or 83 per cent, indicated clear support for continuation of the moratorium. These included submissions from community, businesses and peak industry bodies and the beef, wine, honey, fruit, organics and salmonid industries. Some of these submissions proposed changes that could impose additional restrictions on the handling of GM products in Tasmania, including removal of the option to apply for exemptions for certain non-food GM crops, removal of the exemption of imported animal feed containing non-viable GM material or application of a blanket moratorium, which would wind back the ability to apply for a permit to deal with GMOs in Tasmania.

Six submissions, many from businesses or organisations with an interest in the canola industry, called for a discontinuation of the moratorium. Six other submissions expressed concerns with the restrictions of the present moratorium, noting the potential benefits of GMO cultivation in Tasmania or proposing specific amendments to the moratorium that would relax restrictions on handling GMOs, such as lower the adventitious presence threshold limit. One submission did not recommend a specific policy position on the moratorium.

This report has been developed by the Government working group led by DPIPWE, with representation from the Departments of State Growth, Treasury and Finance, Premier and Cabinet, Health and Human Services, and Brand Tasmania. The positions of Brand Tasmania partners were also taken into account. A list of partners is provided. To inform the review, the Department of State Growth commissioned surveys of attitudes toward GMOs in the domestic market and in Tasmania's key export markets of Japan, China and South Korea. This report outlines the findings and recommendations of the review, concentrating on the major themes associated with the advantages and disadvantages of the moratorium to the state's markets, marketing and brand. This is because, under the national scheme for regulated GMOs, states can only regulate for marketing purposes. Findings are made on the key issues that are most relevant to determining the future policy position on the GMO moratorium at this time.

Our valuable export markets actively seek to purchase products certified as GMO-free, with some of these products commanding a price premium. While it is important to acknowledge that there is a diversity of opinion across businesses within each agricultural industry, representatives of the beef, honey, salmon, fruit, wine and organics industries showed overwhelming support for the continuation of the moratorium in their submissions to the latest GMO review.

Major producers in the \$337 million beef industry, such as Greenham Tasmania and the Tasmanian Feedlot have provided tangible evidence on the marketing benefits of the GMO moratorium. For example, some Tasmanian beef producers who supply Greenham are estimated to receive an additional \$125 per animal over and above conventional market prices, with our GMO-free status being a significant factor in achieving this. Members of the \$8 million honey industry actively promote the GMO-free provenance of Tasmanian honey in both domestic and international markets. Only two weeks ago, Lindsay Bourke won a silver medal in Canada for the best GMO-free clover honey.

Dr Woodruff - Did he? That's cool.

Mr TUCKER - He did. Lindsay prides himself on being GMO-free for high quality, bringing high prices and awards.

The Organic Dairy Farmers of Australia cooperative and Tasmania's largest milk processor, Fonterra Australia, both advocated an extension of the moratorium for marketing reasons. Organic Dairy Farmers of Australia is a proud cooperative that is owned and operated by the farmers who produce remarkable organic milk, supplying organic milk to companies in Australia and overseas as well as manufacturing their very own range of specialty dairy products. The Organic Dairy Farmers of Australia are certified organic and produce dairy products in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible way through soil regeneration, water conservation and animal welfare. The health and wellbeing of their cows is a key priority and is paramount to their complete organic farming code.

Being certified organic means promoting biodiversity by growing a variety of crops, preventing soil erosion and improving soil quality, conserving energy, protecting wildlife, streambanks and watersheds. Our farmers are certified organic and they comply with a strict set of standards. They do not use synthetic or artificially-produced pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers or GMOs. As more Tasmanian dairy farmers transition to organic certification and processors develop branded Tasmanian organic dairy-free lines, extension of the GMO moratorium will help to provide an environment in which these high-value industries can expand and thrive.

A key target of the Hodgman Liberal Government is to grow our agricultural sector to \$10 billion by 2050. The most recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show a 9 per cent increase in the annual value of agricultural production. This indicates that we are on track to meet this target. Tasmania's GMO-free status is a key part of our brand and reputation. In order to maintain this status and continue growth it is essential to keep producing premium products that are safe, hygienic and dependable. Our brand is one of Tasmania's greatest assets. We need to protect Tasmania's widely-recognised brand. Therefore, by extending the moratorium on GMOs for a further 10 years, we shall enable continued recognition and dependability.

Section 36 of the act specifies that the act will expire 15 years from commencement, which will be in November 2019. Our GMO-free status is a key attribute of our brand, along with attributes like clean and green, safe food, hormone growth promotant-free, biosecurity and antibiotic-free. Growing trade is a fundamental driver for long-term economic growth in all regions of Tasmania.

The Government developed the first whole-of-government trade strategy which was launched earlier this year. Our plans to increase exports is supported by an annual action plan which will be responsive to industry needs and maximise opportunities for Tasmanian businesses. Tasmania has what the world wants. In 2018-19 our exports hit a new high of 3.8 billion. The review found the benefits of maintaining the GMO moratorium in Tasmania still greatly outweighed the risks of any benefits of a moratorium.

Tasmania's agricultural production was worth \$1.604 billion in 2017-18, an increase of 9.1 per cent over the previous 12 months. Overseas food exports were worth \$740 million in 2017-18, a record high for the state, beating the previous high of \$686 million in 2015-16. Dairy was once again Tasmania's highest value commodity in 2017-18, with the ABS reporting an agricultural production value of \$429 million, an increase of 32 per cent or \$103 million over 2016-17, driven by higher farmgate prices. The next most valuable commodities were beef, potatoes and wool. Beef production increased in value by \$42 million, or 14 per cent, to be worth \$337 million as the volume of meat processed in Tasmania increased.

Tasmania's food and agriculture sector relies on our hard-won clean and green image of Tasmanian produce. Unregulated GMOs are a threat to the good reputation of Tasmanian food and agriculture. Unless the act is amended, the current moratorium on GMOs in Tasmania will automatically expire on 16 November 2019. Therefore the first decision point is whether to lift or maintain the moratorium. A decision to allow the GMO moratorium to expire would mean that Tasmania would continue to operate under the national regulatory scheme with no additional restrictions in industry self-regulation. If a decision is made to extend the moratorium it may even be extended without amendment, in which case the status quo is maintained or extended with amendment.

There is nothing but positive benefits for farmers, agribusiness and food businesses, enabling them continued growth to meet our \$10 billion target by 2050 under our GMO-free status. Be mindful that the GMO-free status can easily be restored if lost. A very simple amendment to the bill extending the expiration period from 15 years to 25 years will see the Genetically Modified Organism Control Act 2004 extend to November 2029, hence protecting our recognition of being GMO-free. I am confident that these amendments are viable to Tasmania's agricultural sector. The Government will continue to work with exporters and industry stakeholders to address any implications that may arise. There is also a commitment to undertake a full review of the policy

before the moratorium expires in November 2029. Also remember that the minister is able to direct a full review of the policy at any stage during the period of the moratorium.

[12.44 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to make a very short contribution that adds to the principal bill. I support the bill. I understand that there is an amendment to be proposed when the House moves into Committee; however, I want to speak very briefly on the principal bill and lend my support to what I think is a good business move. We have heard a lot from the farming community, the scientists and the people who produce our wonderful goods and services, but I come from a business background and I think the RP side of this is something the House also perhaps needs to turn its mind to.

We have seen in the news today in particular that there is currently a debate going on within the beekeeping communities across nations around the ownership of particular names from a trademark perspective. Trademarks are about names and places, about provenance. When we talk about Brand Tasmania we are talking about provenance and that we are able, over both sides of the House, to develop this amazing brand and the carriage of that very valuable asset now sits with the current Government. I support the extension of this important move.

Having a niche in this market is important, but I also wonder whether we have done everything we can do from a protection perspective around provenance and whether our smaller industries and businesses that might not have access to enough support and advice or might not be able to afford it, are on top of what they need to do to protect their goods and services as they reach those global markets. That is an issue I raise in the context of this bill because it is so important to our goods and services, particularly the food, wine, fish and agricultural products that we produce.

We are in the business of creating, protecting and enlivening good business in this state. A GMO-free status is a very significant piece of that puzzle, particularly for our farming community. I look at the beautiful apples, juices and things that are produced in the Huon. I know there is a lot of northern farming business that goes on and I am very supportive of that but in the south we have aquaculture, apples, beekeeping and great small industries and businesses as well and it matters to them too.

The other brief issue I will raise, and I sure this will be covered in Committee, is to make sure that we do everything we can to know what is coming into the state from a GMO perspective, particularly when it comes to new technologies, gene-splitting and those sorts of things. We do not know what will come down the pipeline. I remember many years ago when gene technology took that great leap forward and we started to see patents around genes emerge in a really big way, but the patenting of those things which creates monopoly rights as well is something we need to get our heads around as a state, also helping our small businesses.

I support the extension. I also support what we do around biosecurity but I want to make sure in the context of this bill that we have looked at how we manage the information flow about what is coming into the state. We have had a few issues in the past, but making sure that is fully funded, that the right people are in the right place, that information has been disclosed at the right time and that the appropriate penalties are in place would be a very good thing for the state.

I will leave it at that because we are going into Committee and I want to leave time for a wrap-up. I wanted very much to be on the record in support of our wonderful, amazing agriculture sector in particular and also my friends in the beekeeping industry.

[12.48 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I pass on my sincere gratitude to all members in this Chamber who contributed very positively in the debate on the Genetically Modified Organisms Control Amendment Bill. I offer my sincere thanks because there is broad support for where we are going in Tasmania with our GMO-free status. We have achieved a great deal in the past and our best times are ahead of us.

I particularly refer to the contribution from the Premier, who referred to the importance of Tasmania in terms of our trade strategy and the Tasmanian brand. He made a very thoughtful and cogent argument that this is exactly where we should be going as a state with the Hodgman Liberal Government with the broad support of the Opposition, and I acknowledge the Greens and the new member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, and her excellent contribution.

I will pick on that point with respect to the honey industry because I know of your special interest. I wrote to the federal minister, Bridget McKenzie, some months ago, had contact with her last week and in the last 24 hours with respect to the Tasmanian honey industry, which is worth about \$8 million a year. I have been in touch with the Beekeepers Association in the last 24 hours, as I am very concerned about New Zealand and their efforts to monopolise the name 'manuka honey'. It is a very valuable honey in Tasmania and I give credit to our honey producers for winning an international award in recent days and weeks, a fantastic credit to them; gold and silver medals in an international environment. We have what the rest of the country and the world really want and they really support our GMO-free status. In terms of the honey industry and the Beekeepers Association, I will continue to advocate on behalf of our Government and our state, and we will keep at it.

I would like to respond to the contributions, questions and queries that have been shared. I will say first that, yes, this is all about Tasmania's brand. It is about our primary industries, agriculture, seafood and it is about our environment, our community, businesses, small businesses and creating jobs. In terms of agriculture, we want to grow that sector to \$10 billion by 2050. We are on target and we are very determined. We had a 9 per cent increase in the last 12 months and that is very encouraging in terms of that growth of production. Primary industries are our natural assets in Tasmania, specifically agriculture because we have access to that water; 1 per cent of Australia's land mass and 13 per cent of Australia's water. We want to make the most of it, we are and we have plans to continue to do so. That GMO-free status is part of a Tassie brand. It is our reputation, offering marketing advantages where we can get the premium price and that high-value product across the board.

I am pleased we have had the review. We have been very thorough in that regard and there was overwhelming support in the review for the continuation of the GMO-free status. We have had wonderful engagement and strong support from the different sectors and stakeholders. In terms of the beef industry, the honey industry, the fruit industry, many in the farming communities, we have achieved great support. All of this is on the back of Tasmania being the best that it can be with our biosecurity legislation. We have passed that legislation, building the foundation for the next 30 years. We have what the rest of the nation wants and needs and we are on the right track.

The member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, presented a very strong argument in support of the continuation of the GMO moratorium and has foreshadowed an amendment in committee to extend that indefinitely. There is broad support for a continuation of the GMO moratorium and we believe we have the balance right. You have to strike the right balance, so we have doubled that moratorium period from five years to 10 years, with reviews on the way through and a full review at the end of

that period. With ministerial discretion on the way through, depending on the evidence, depending on the research and what comes forward, a full review can happen at any time.

One of the questions was, what is Tasmania doing to address the impending deregulation of SDN-1, in terms of gene editing and what has been happening at the national level? That national decision does not prevent Tasmania from having a moratorium on GMOs. We are mindful that the decision may create issues for businesses that export to markets where SDN-1-modified organisms continue to be regulated or considered as GMOs. The Government will regulate SDN-1 dealings and modified organisms for agrifood and marketing purposes in Tasmania under the Tasmanian Biosecurity Act 2019. That is achieving the same ends but using a slightly different approach under the Biosecurity legislation, which has recently been passed and we are very confident about that. Under the Biosecurity Act, the commercial release of SDN-1 modified organisms into the Tasmanian environment can be controlled to preserve the trading partner confidence in the GMO-free identity of Tasmanian agriculture and food products in the marketplace, and retain the ability to trade Tasmanian products and produce in markets that are sensitive to SDN-1 organisms.

Consultation will be undertaken with industry stakeholders and the Australian Government to ensure that these organisms are regulated in the most practical and efficient way in Tasmania. We will also ensure that regulating SDN-1 organisms for agrifood and marketing purposes in Tasmania through the Biosecurity Act does not provide a barrier to the use of SDN-1 modified organisms for research, including human health and pharmaceutical applications. That is an important point. We have to be flexible and adaptable but we believe and we know, based on the advice that have, that this can occur.

I hope that is helpful. The regulation will also maintain the status quo for Tasmanian businesses and industries that rely on Tasmania's GMO-free status. We will also continue to work with industry stakeholders to address any other potential market or brand implications from this decision as they arise. We need to be adaptable, flexible, and I have every confidence in my department and I thank them for their terrific support for the review process, taking feedback, taking it on board and providing advice to me. It has been greatly appreciated. That advice will continue. We have experts in our field, in our department, in Biosecurity Tasmania, and we will take the best advice so that we can make the best decisions possible for Tasmania.

I have been asked by the member for Clark how SDN-1 and organisms will be regulated under the Biosecurity Act and others may have had similar questions. It will be proposed that the regulation for SDN-1-modified organisms under the Biosecurity Act will be undertaken in two main ways. The first, dealings with SDN-1-modified organisms can be prescribed via regulations made under the act to be a regulated dealing as defined under the act. This means that any person or entity intending to use or create SDN-1-modified organisms in any commercial scientific research or other activity will need to be registered with Biosecurity Tasmania.

Second, SDN-1-modified organisms can be regulated in Tasmania by the minister declaring such organisms to be restricted matter under the Biosecurity Act. Restricted matter cannot be imported into Tasmania from another part of Australia without a permit, which can be subject to conditions. The advantage of regulating SDN-1-modified organisms under the Biosecurity Act is they will be regulated under the same system that regulates other activities that pose a biosecurity risk, like the import of raw honeycomb, sale and movement of livestock and commercial beekeeping. Regulating dealings with SDN-1-modified organism for agrifood and marketing purposes will ensure there is no unintended or unauthorised release of SDN-1-modified organisms in the Tasmanian environment.

There was a question about how the declaration scheme will operate. Dr Broad raised that and it is a fair question. Importers will be required to complete a declaration that the product they are importing is free from SDN-1-modified organisms. The scheme will be enforced at the border by Biosecurity Tasmania. The details of the declaration scheme are being worked through by the department with industry stakeholders and the Australian Government. There will be more information to be made available. I am happy to continue to liaise with Dr Broad, other members of this House and anybody else about these processes. That is our objective; to work with the key stakeholders and the community. There will be a declaration scheme. We need to do what we planned to do, and that is to extend the GMO-free status here in Tasmania.

Another question was put by the member for Clark; could Tasmanian businesses maintain GMO-free if SDN-1-modified agrifood organisms are not regulated? The Government's view is that some of our key markets, such as Japan, China, Korea, and the EU may expect may expect SDN-1-modified organisms to be regulated to meet that country's expectation of Tasmania's GMO-free status and branding. That is why the Government intends to regulate. It is a sensible precautionary measure on marketing grounds. It is a prudent measure and this government wants to be responsible on behalf of our primary industries and our community; our businesses in Tasmania. That is the intent behind that.

There was a question asking what government is doing to support GMO-free marketing opportunities. There are many things we are doing. I would like to begin outlining some of those important things we are doing as a government.

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

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 33)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Speaker, as I was summing up and responding to the queries and questions raised by other members, I was able to thank the other members for their contributions and broad support for the bill. This is really appreciated, and a very positive development for Tasmania.

Regarding what the Government is doing to support GMO-free marketing opportunities - and the member for Clark asked about that - and I was making the point that the Government is committed to promoting an operating environment and policy settings that support our primary industries to grow. This includes protecting Tasmania's widely recognised brand attributes, our unique biosecurity status, having passed the bill in recent weeks. Extending the moratorium on GMOs for a further 10 years enables the farmers, agribusinesses, food businesses and others in our community to confidently invest and help create jobs; invest in their own marketing and market development activities, to sell their products and to demonstrate the value of Tasmania's GMO-free status.

The Government will work with agrifood sectors to identify how our competitive advantages can play a greater role in Tasmania's premium brand attributes. This may include taking appropriate action to support Tasmanian industry and exporters with branding, market access and supply chain assurance to segregate and differentiate our GMO-free products in the marketplace.

The role of Brand Tasmania and the Premier has made this point very well in his very positive contribution, a wonderful support for Brand Tasmania. Brand Tasmania will have a strategic role in brand positioning and communication with key markets, such as the proposed brand toolkit will have material to support being GMO free. The website and brand book will include references to the GMO moratorium and the marketing tools to maximise the benefits.

Branding workshops could be undertaken to develop messaging around GMO free, and I personally talked to and communicated with Todd Babiak, the CEO of Brand Tasmania. I know how keen he is to promote Brand Tasmania and the GMO-free status that is part of the Tasmania brand.

Trade missions and delegations will have material that supports a moratorium. The Premier made clear in his presentation the feedback from Japan when he was there this time last year, or thereabouts, and the positive feedback on the GMO-free status of Tasmania. We want to make the most of that in Asia and the United States, wherever our markets are, and there will certainly be other options such as the inward buyer trips, trade missions, delegations and any of those materials.

In summing up, I am fully aware of Ms O'Connor and the Greens' amendment which would effectively extend the moratorium indefinitely. I want to speak to that. To remove section 36 and make it an indefinite moratorium is a big step forward. I wanted to recognise first a very positive intent for the Greens. I must say, the member for Clark did commend me and on behalf of the Government, when she first spoke, and sometimes -

Dr Woodruff - You have to take those when you get them don't you, minister?

Mr BARNETT - That is a little bit of a concern to me from time to time to hear that, being up front, and I have shared that with the member. In this case, isn't it good that we are broadly on the same page and heading in the right direction for and on behalf of Tasmania?

I want to recognise the very positive intent and constructive approach from the member and all members in this House. We are largely in agreement in support of the benefits of the moratorium for Tasmanian producers, for our exporters, brand, economy and our market access.

We do not support the amendment to remove section 36. We believe in maintaining in legislation the 10-year moratorium. It doubles the previous five-year moratorium and, in my view, it strikes that right balance. It also ensures that Tasmanian producers, exporters and industry can take advantage of the moratorium for 10-years. At the same time, we have not closed our mind entirely to potential opportunities that are presented by gene technology down the track, should it be warranted and should it not put at risk our brand and market access.

Having section 36 in the act, in itself, acts like an automatic trigger. In 10-years' time, there will be a major review. In accordance with the legislation, prior to that time period, there will be a major review of the policy to ensure that the moratorium remains in the public interest, to support the public and to achieve the benefits that we are seeking. That is our objective; that is why it is in the act. It is well placed and for considerable benefit. It also recognises that technology changes

and consumer sentiment can change over time. Who knows exactly where we will be this time in 10-years' time? That clause is important.

The potential automatic expiry of the act provides a reason and a formal opportunity to assess developments in gene technology and listen to the latest industry and community views. This approach has served us well for many years and in my view and the view of the Government, it remains appropriate.

Given the clear benefits of the moratorium for marketing purposes, the longer extension period will provide businesses with the confidence to invest in marketing strategies that take full advantage of Tasmania's GMO-free status.

Since we have started debate on this many weeks ago, I have been able to talk to many in the primary industries, agriculture, farmers, beef producers, beef processors, those in the salmon industry and the honey producers. We talked about the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association earlier today and their wonderful marketing efforts to be GMO-free, and how important that is to their market. I congratulate them again and Lindsay Bourke, in particular, for his leadership as president of the beekeepers association. They have won those international awards, gold and silver medals and we can be justly proud. One of the reasons for that: GMO-free status for our honey here in Tasmania.

There are clear benefits to the moratorium for marketing purposes and the longer extension period will provide businesses with the confidence to invest in marketing strategies that take full advantage of Tasmania's GMO-free status.

The decision to extend a moratorium by 10 years will provide certainty to industry around decisions such as investment and market access. The 10-year extension will also strengthen the Tasmanian brand and will provide our trading partners with assurance and the ongoing stability of Tasmania's GMO-free provenance.

I was speaking with the new member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, about the importance of GMO-free provenance, not only here, but around the world, including in Europe. The monitoring and review provisions of the Gene Technology Policy 2019-29 will ensure that Tasmanian industries can capitalise on opportunities presented by gene technology should it be warranted and justified in the future.

DPIPWE will implement evidence-based GMO monitoring and review to continuously assess developments in gene technology during the period of the moratorium, including emerging technologies, policy changes, consumer sentiment and market and branding implications.

At least every three years, the department will provide a report to the minister on developments in gene technology and market changes. Specific matters in the report include consumer sentiment in important current and potential and future markets; new gene technologies that provide positive benefits to primary industry sectors and Tasmania as a whole; and the development of new generation GMOs that provide health or other benefits.

The department will advise the minister if, based on the evidence, there are significant developments in these areas that warrant triggering an earlier review of this policy before the maximum 10-year period is up. The Tasmanian Government will strive to ensure that measures to safeguard Tasmania's GMO-free status remain appropriate to a changing risk environment,

particularly as more GMOs are adopted in international and national jurisdictions and in markets that supply products to Tasmanian primary industries. These provisions provide a sensible balance between capturing the brand, market access and marketing opportunities and keeping pace with potential gene technology developments in future.

We have the balance and the principles right that underpin the legislation and our plans to grow our economy, create more jobs and protect the Tasmanian way of life are all critical to where we want to go and what we want to do in this wonderful state of Tasmania. There is an amendment that will be moved during the committee stage.

Bill read the second time.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 33)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed.

Clause 4 -

Section 36 amended (Expiry)

Dr WOODRUFF - On behalf of the Greens, I have circulated the amendment we want to speak to in relation to this clause. Mr Deputy Chair, I move -

That clause 4 be amended by leaving out all the words after 'Principal Act is' and insert instead 'repealed'.

Thank you, minister, for your comments. I know that you do not support this amendment and I respect your arguments for it. We still believe it is important to make the point that we do not think the reasons you have presented are sufficient not to go ahead with making this amendment. The review that was undertaken did find a range of views as to how we should proceed and there were 16 submissions other than our own, which did move to indefinitely extend the moratorium to provide certainty for the industry. The view is that the automatic expiry of the moratorium would be consistent with the findings of DPIPWE's report. It is not finding against one of the findings of the review. We feel that the automatic expiry provisions should be removed entirely on two grounds; one, they are unnecessary; and two, they demonstrate poor governance.

In relation to the claim that they are unnecessary, our position is that, as a state, we need to be making a very confident statement about our GMO-free status for all of the reasons that were presented in the review. The non-GMO status that we have in this state provides us a particularly important market niche that we exploit and take good advantage of internationally in terms of marketing and the extra price we get for the goods that are marked non-GMO. It is a choice that some consumers want to take and there are very few places on the planet providing products that are non-GMO certified. That is certainly the advantage we want to retain.

Previous reviews and the environmental scans undertaken on an ongoing basis have not identified any significant changes that ought to be made since the act was first introduced. It is the case that if we were to accept this amendment, environmental scans would still continue under the

act and could still trigger a review, if required, if a case was made that one was needed. That would be under section 30.

Repealing this section in the act would result in something that is dear to the minister's heart, which is a reduction in red tape. It would be unnecessary to undertake a review, which would have been an extensive process and it is good work that is being done but we could put our energies into doing good work in other places. Unless a strong case was made that the circumstances have changed there is, conversely to the minister's argument, no real reason to think that the situation will change in 10 years. It might change next week or it might change in 20 years. The amendment here today would seek to put this matter to bed once and for all until such time when, as is the power of any government, this could be reviewed at a future date.

The most important reason we think it should be permanently, indefinitely extended is for governance reasons. The usual mechanism to repeal an act would be a repeal bill and that requires the support of both Houses of parliament. In this case, as it is, an amendment bill is required to prevent the expiration of the act. This has to pass through both Houses of parliament and it could, effectively, be repealed by the will of a single House. Ms O'Connor has made this point previously. That would mean that the Legislative Council, without the support of the Executive, could, as this is written, unilaterally initiate a significant policy shift.

It would be empowered to bring on an amendment bill for debate, which could be done in a relatively short time, conceivably without any notice or preparation for industries and government. It would be difficult and concerning if that were to happen because industries would be left with the spectre of the possibility of that putting their products at risk. It would leave a cloud over the state, which might be cleared up and it might not be supported, but would be an unpleasant, difficult place for our state to be in. It would leave us with a regulatory black hole. It is by no means ideal in any respect.

The common law does not give us a framework for dealing with either genetically modified or non-genetically modified around disputes around coexistence. As such, the sudden blocking of an amendment bill by the Legislative Council could leave Tasmania in a regulatory vacuum that could be very difficult and potentially disastrous in the short term for organic and non-GMO producers. It is about making a very clear statement that this is the intent of the Tasmanian Government on the basis of the review we have had to have an indefinite moratorium, rather than the one with the sunset clause of 10 years. It would give certainty to industry and mean that the products we market to consumers who want to select organic or non-GMO produce, for a range of reasons, can do so with Tasmanian products and not just products from other countries in the world.

I think the basis for a market advantage rests on some still controversial scientific issues about whether there are health or physical effects on humans from consuming GMO products, and there is recognisably disputed evidence in this area. Nonetheless, that is all irrelevant because people vote with their pocket when it comes to what they put in their bodies and enough people are concerned to make it something which is a valuable product and definitely fits in with our clean, green image in Tasmania.

I know that Ms O'Connor also made reference to this very recent research which was only published last month about the transgenically modified *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and how it has transferred across. There have been releases of genetically adapted *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and it was found that the transgenic strain genome passed to the population of non-transgenically affected mosquito. There has been viable hybrid offspring that have been born and it is not clear, the authors

say, how that may affect disease transmission or other efforts to control that mosquito. Their conclusion is that it is important to have genetic monitoring programs during such releases to detect these unanticipated outcomes, and I suppose what we are looking for is confidence on this issue.

Time expired.

[2.53 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, Labor will not be supporting this amendment. Part of the issue here, despite the reasonings from the member who moved this motion, is that having a 10-year time frame ensures that we have to have a debate at least in 10 years' time about where things are at with GMOs. Is there a product which is available that disadvantages Tasmania if we do not use it? Is there any change? What happens if we strike it out? There is the potential for people to be seeking a repeal bill at any time, because there is no time frame, whereas from the Government's point of view it is probably a safer argument to say we have a 10-year moratorium and that gives people a time frame to consider their actions because they know we have 10 years. It may have the perverse outcome of people wanting to make those changes in a shorter time frame than 10 years.

When it comes to red tape, et cetera, in 10 years' time, if we get to the point of having to produce a similar bill in order to extend the time frame for another period of time, it is simply a matter of going back to the bill that stands before us and changing the name of the bill by changing 2019 to 2029 or whatever it happens to be, and then flipping over to section 4 and instead of substituting 15 years with 25 years, substituting 25 years with however many years we need to extend. It is such a simple bill. This is by far the simplest bill that I have seen in my time.

Dr Woodruff - But a review is required too, Dr Broad.

Dr BROAD - It is required to go through both Houses of parliament but that means in 10 years' time we have to, as a parliament, consider where things are at with genetic modification and technologies and so on around the world. I do not see that as bad thing, whereas having no time frame could have a perverse outcome because people might want to come to government in three or four years and say we should repeal the whole bill. The amendment as presented is not the best option. The bill as it stands is the best option.

I will talk briefly about some of the issues raised about genetic modification regarding mosquitoes. I hear there is some gene transfer between the genetically modified mosquitoes and the ones in the wild population. That may be the case but I have not heard the argument about what the negative outcome is from that. We know that the gene transfer itself may not have resulted in any extra resistance. I am not familiar with that case but maybe with the release of the mosquito, the risk of a negative outcome was assessed as being minimal. We also have to remember that sometimes scientists get things wrong. We know that in the United States, for example, there was an experiment crossing honey bees with African bees. They have these so-called Africanised bees, better known in colloquial terms as killer bees. That was a mistake, in hindsight an idiotic thing to do and has created no end of trouble in the United States with these so-called killer bees.

We know in Australia in the past we have made huge mistakes with introducing pest species. One that is front of mind is the cane toad. Scientists obviously got that one very wrong, as they did by introducing cactus and things like that, but scientists got it right when they introduced the cactoblastis to control it. We always have to consider the pros and cons of things and the risks.

Genetically modified technology, as I have said previously, is more about the regulation of the technology rather than the technology itself because any technology can have pros and cons. A rocket can put a satellite into space or it can launch a nuclear missile. Labor will not be supporting this amendment because we think the bill as it stands strikes the right balance.

Mr BARNETT - I thank members for their contributions and the member for Franklin who has put forward the amendment and, likewise, my shadow, who has responded and indicated Labor's non-support for the amendment. As I have said earlier, I am pleased that we have had broad support for the direction we want to go in Tasmania because we are unique. We are an island state and the only state of Australia which is GMO-free and will continue to be for a further 10 years, all being well and subject to this legislation passing through both Houses of parliament.

That underpins our brand, our marketing efforts, and provides certainty and confidence to industry, business, the farming sector, the sea fishing sector and primary industry across the board, because it is backed up by common sense. It is backed up by a comprehensive review we have had to do under the current legislation, with more than 80 submissions, the overwhelming majority which supported an extension of our GMO-free status here in Tasmania. The Government has taken that on board. Yes, we have made a bold decision, in my view, to double the number of years going forward from five to 10, but we have not gone to the extent the Greens would like of an indefinite ban.

Technology and community sentiment can change and that is why we have those reviews by the department on the way through and the full review at the end. That is compulsory. It will happen. It has to happen under this legislation. As my shadow has indicated, there will be a major review before the 10 years is up. That is part of the law.

I believe we have the balance right. We know of the benefits of GMO-free status and the premium products that benefit, whether it be honey or beef. The member for Braddon noted, as did Mrs Rylah and Mr Tucker, the member for Lyons, in their contributions that it is important in the rural and regional parts of Tasmania. I acknowledge those positive contributions. I have mentioned honey, fruit and salmon. We should not forget that Fonterra, a major dairy producer and processor in Tasmania is also supportive.

New Zealand has GMO-free status. Tasmania has something to offer and we are backing it 100 per cent. The member and my counterpart noted how simple the legislation is, which is true but that is backed with the Gene Technology Policy and the guidelines and they are available on the public record. They have been and will be updated with this legislation. If members of the public, stakeholders in the primary industry sector and the business community, tourism or wherever, want to know more they can go to that Gene Technology Policy, a government policy and guidelines to get a clear understanding of the Government's position.

We will not be supporting that amendment but I thank you for that support. I was a bit anxious when the member for Clark, the Leader of the Greens was commending me because that does not happen very often. In this case it does give rise to a level of anxiety within myself. On this occasion we are definitely on the same page in the direction we want to go. I am pleased and gratified that the Government has achieved a great deal with the process. Our sincere thanks to Biosecurity Tasmania and the department, DPIPWE, for their huge efforts, particularly during the review process in recent months, pulling together the report and bringing their recommendations back to myself as the minister, working with me and other key stakeholders in providing that advice and

information. I appreciate the contributions and the manner and sincerity in which they have been made.

[3.04 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - I will respond to something Dr Broad said. It is clear from your comments, Dr Broad, that you must have misunderstood my description of the scientific paper I was talking about, the *Aedes aegypti* paper. It was not at all my intention to make a dig at scientists, very far from it, but the tone of your comments suggest I was doing that. That was definitely not the case. The point was that the scientific paper that I specifically referred to was actively testing the question of whether it was possible. It was not a dig at scientists letting something go free.

Dr Broad - I didn't say it was.

Dr WOODRUFF - It did sound like that from your comments.

Dr Broad - No, well that was not my intention.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, it did sound like that from your comments. The findings from the study were that the release of the genetically modified strain of *Aedes aegypti* did lead to a significant transfer from the population that was genetically modified to the original population. It was not a trivial amount found. Between 10 per cent and 60 per cent of all individuals they sampled in the main population had been affected. That is, they had been interbreeding in 10 per cent to 60 per cent. The point they made is that it is not known what impacts that transmission, or the technical term, introgression, from a transgenic strain of *Aedes aegypti* would have on the disease control and transmission of two very serious diseases, dengue fever and the zika virus.

The science on this is still open. There is so much to learn. We have landed at a place where we are much more comfortable having a 10-year than a five-year moratorium. We would have liked it to have been indefinite but we will have to agree to differ on that.

The Committee divided -

AYES 2

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 21

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Courtney
Ms Dow
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Mr Hodgman
Ms Houston (Teller)
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff

Mrs Rylah
Mr Shelton
Ms Standen
Mr Tucker
Ms White

Amendment negatived.

Clause 4 agreed to and bill taken through the remainder of the Committee stages.

Bill read the third time.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 32)

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 September 2019 (page 99)

[3.15 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I was well into the wrapping up of the second reading debate when this was adjourned. A couple of matters I had committed to - one was to table the list of projects that was requested, which I will do now. I will table the list of 73 projects.

As I understand the Clerk, we may be moving into Committee on this bill. I make the point that the genesis of the bill before the House today was as a result of the industry forums that were held last year. The wide consultation that occurred regarding what we could do to ensure that we could get projects to market quicker but at the same time taking nothing away from the planning process.

I made the point that the projects in the main that the Public Works Committee would take an interest in - those with a value of more than \$5 million under the current act that in many cases there was concurrently running with the Public Works Committee process of public hearings and providing people with the opportunity to have a say it is also the planning process. In the main, the vast majority of the projects that would go to the Public Works Committee would require a development application and submission to council for the works. I am advised that what generally happens is that once the agency is ready to take the project to market and through the development application process with council, it would be submitted to Public Works and in many cases the two processes would run concurrently.

We believe for the smaller projects, those for building works up to \$8 million, that there should be no requirement to go to Public Works, and for bridges and roads up to \$20 million. The advice I have received from Treasury through this process was that roads and bridges, generally speaking, are of a nature that if the Public Works Committee is looking at the more complex and larger projects, for smaller road projects and smaller bridge projects, they would go through the normal planning process. There is no need for a second set of eyes to be run across them.

I was asked the question about the engagement with local government. Local government was involved in the process of the roundtables that were held. Regarding further consultation with local

government, these are state government projects so there would seem to be no reason to have a second round of consultation with them.

There are many members in this House who have sat around the table in local government and have been members of councils. In the main, councils are building projects all the time as part of their capital works programs and in some cases they are dealing with projects of relatively modest amounts of money but in some cases it is \$5 million, \$10 million or \$15 million worth of expenditure, and in some cases, significantly more. Local government does not run a public works committee process over its projects.

It is important that we have a Public Works Committee and that we do take the time to look at where we will be spending public money. However, it is important that we make a judgment to ensure that the work of the Public Works Committee is focused on those projects that require that additional review and inspection.

We have set the limits in this bill, increasing from \$5 million up to \$8 million for buildings and \$20 million for roads and bridges. As I indicated previously, our original thinking was to increase from \$5 million to \$10 million and from \$5 million to \$30 million for roads and bridges, but after consultation with the Public Works Committee, who I will make the point do not have a formal view on this, they were of the view that \$8 million and \$20 million were the appropriate levels to consider and that is why we have included them in the bill before the House.

Since parliament rose a couple of weeks ago and this bill was adjourned, I took the opportunity to have my office contact a number of stakeholders. I place on the record, as I understand it was flagged during the last debate, that there may be an amendment being proposed to drop the level of \$20 million for roads and bridges back to \$8 million, along with other built structures. We took the opportunity to consult again with the Chamber of Commerce, the Master Builders and the Civil Contractors Federation, and in all cases they supported the thresholds we were bringing forward before parliament in terms of an increase from \$5 million to \$8 million for built structures and from \$5 million to \$20 million for roads and bridges.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will finish there. I believe I have dealt with the matters raised by other members. I thank them and those who were in a position to support the bill last time round and once again commend this bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 32)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 -
Section 2 inserted

Ms WHITE - I will circulate the amendment now. We had this discussion in the second reading debate around the reasons we felt concerned about the threshold for roads and bridges being elevated to \$20 million from its current threshold of \$5 million. The reasons for that related to

interjurisdictional comparisons that demonstrate it would be lifting Tasmania's threshold to the highest in the country. The last times thresholds were lifted were in 2001 and 2009. The Labor Party has not argued for the threshold to remain at \$5 million, as some members of the Government had implied in their contributions, falsely arguing that we were blocking any change. That is not true. We support changing the threshold and lifting it, as proven by the fact that we did that when in government in 2001 and 2009.

We support the civil construction and building industry in this state and we want them to have confidence that they can invest and keep their workforce on year-round. The Government needs to improve its procurement practices. That is obvious and the Government heard that feedback from the roundtables for Health last year, but the problem is not the threshold of the Public Works Committee. The problem is that the department is not resourced to design and engineer projects and tender them quickly enough. They are under the pump and that is holding projects up. You only have to reflect on the budget that was handed down by the Treasurer in 2014-15 when \$688.9 million in cuts were made to State Growth and a number of designers and engineers left State Growth at that time, which limits their capacity now to get projects out the door.

I also note that Mrs Petrusma took offence that we said Government members had failed to show up to meetings of the Public Works Committee which meant it could not form a quorum. Perhaps Mrs Petrusma does her job, but there were other members of the committee before her who did not and did not demonstrate the same commitment she does. The fact remains that if the Government is serious about reducing the time projects are taken to be considered by Government, they would make sure that their own members turn up to meetings.

Ultimately, what we have before us is a bill that will lift the threshold at which projects will be considered by the Public Works Committee to \$8 million for buildings and construction, which Labor supports, and \$20 million for roads and bridges, which we feel is too great an increase. This is based on an assessment of other jurisdictions and an assessment of Tasmania's own history. We do not have to be the same as everywhere else but we do need to have a process that works for Tasmania. We need to ensure there is accountability and that elected members get a say and can represent their constituencies, as they are elected to do.

The Government has said, and the Treasurer just said again, that there is already a planning authority in local government that assesses most of the projects that currently come to the Public Works Committee and that there are ways for elected members to scrutinise projects through the budget Estimates process. I point out that there is never the level of detail in the budget as the Public Works Committee receives when it assesses projects and that the task of extracting details from ministers during budget Estimates process varies depending on the belligerence of the minister at the table. The current Minister for Infrastructure and Transport has been one of the most difficult to get any details from at the Estimates table and that does not bode well for the ability of any elected members in this place to examine projects at the level of detail that the Public Works Committee allows.

The Treasurer pointed out that there is an ability for members to refer members by moving a motion in the parliament under section 17 of the current act. The Government would probably like it if we spent all of our private members' time trying to refer projects to the Public Works Committee, knowing full well that we do not have the numbers to successfully refer any projects. Rather than avoiding scrutiny, this Government should live up to its own rhetoric that it is transparent and accountable.

Therefore I move the amendment that has been circulated. I move -

That clause 4 be amended by leaving out the definition for 'relevant monetary threshold' and inserting instead 'relevant monetary threshold means \$8,000,000'.

I refer again to the work that I had the Parliamentary Library help me collate, which demonstrates that by looking back over the last five years, in 2014, had this new threshold been applied, no roads and bridges projects would have been assessed and only half of the buildings projects would have been. In 2015 there would have been a 70 per cent reduction in the number of roads and bridges projects assessed and a 50 per cent reduction in the number of buildings projects assessed. In 2016 there would have been a one-third reduction, so only two projects would have been assessed for roads and bridges and a two-thirds reduction for buildings, so that is extraordinarily less scrutiny they have made available to parliamentary representatives. In 2017 there would have been a 45 per cent reduction in scrutiny opportunities available to the Public Works Committee for roads and bridges and a 75 per cent reduction of scrutiny available for buildings. In 2018 there would have been a 25 per cent reduction for buildings, and this year, in 2019, there would have been no projects assessed by the Public Works Committee at all if these thresholds proposed in this bill had been adopted.

I respect that over time, with inflation, values increase and the Public Works Committee does need to increase its threshold accordingly. That is why we support the increase to \$8 million. Had that been in place this year there would have been no roads or bridges projects assessed by the Public Works Committee. No scrutiny of any projects would have been made available through this parliament and I am very concerned by that.

We want to ensure that the Public Works Committee maintains the opportunity it has, and for elected members in this place who represent their communities, to examine projects that are paid for with public money. This is taxpayer money we are talking about that is being spent and it is appropriate the Public Works Committee has an opportunity to examine those projects. We accept that the threshold needs to be increased. We increased it twice previously when we were in government. We support the increase to \$8 million but not to \$20 million. The Government can streamline its procurement processes internally. It is not the Public Works Committee that is holding up projects getting out the door. We hope members can support our amendment.

Ms OGILVIE - I will make a brief contribution as I come into this debate partway through the term. I concur with much of what the Leader of the Opposition says. Public Works is not the hold-up by way of preventing projects from getting started, in any sense, that it is a degree of red tape that should be eradicated from our minds. Having been a member of that committee for a number of years, lapped the state and seen the projects and done the work, I can say that a harder-working committee you could not come across. I wore an entire car out driving around the state. It was good to sit with people and have those discussions in person. Things would come up in those conversations you have in person that may not if it were done by email or remotely.

We have a challenge, which is that we want to push for infrastructure projects. We want to land them, get them out of the door and get those jobs going. I agree with the Government that there are economic headwinds ahead and we have to be thinking about that coming down the pipeline. We want to see our young folk having an opportunity to engage in trades. To do that you need to be connected to projects and jobs and the businesses that run those, particularly the engineering, trades and contractors organisations, need certainty of their pipeline. That is essential. I am very taken with the joint statement from the Master Builders' Association and Civil Contractors

Federation. They know their business and I come from a business background, Telstra land, which is infrastructure and engineering. I get the problem.

Mr Gutwein - Telstra land?

Ms OGILVIE - Telstra land. Telecommunications land, that is right. I have never told you this? I talk about this ad nauseum. It is satellites and everything. It is about infrastructure. Working with engineers and pipelines is really important. This allows certainty of planning, of business planning, and how you go about your businesses. I am very taken with what they have said. On behalf of their members of more than 700 building and construction businesses, they urge all members of parliament to support the Public Works Committee Amendment Bill in its current form.

There should be no misapprehension that the Public Works Committee does anything other than a good and hard job and gets those projects through. We are going to see a raft of projects come, an increase in projects and there are a limited number of people. I do not want to go into a discussion here about the size of parliament and our ability to fill committees properly but that is certainly something that has been on my mind as well.

We do have to make the amendment in the format the Government has proposed but I would further propose that a watching brief is kept on what happens, that we provide some monitoring of the progress of projects, particularly social licence issues and people who may feel they have not been heard appropriately if a project is above a certain limit.

Through nobody's fault, we have limited resources on our committees, Public Works in particular. In weighing up the pros and cons and getting the balance right, we have to be for projects, for jobs, and for getting things going, so I am inclined to support the Government's proposal on this.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Greens support this amendment. We had a similar amount in mind. I think \$8 million is a large amount of money for Tasmania. It may not be large for some countries but it is a significant amount of money in Tasmania. It is entirely reasonable that this should be the threshold for building and construction works, which is already in the bill, and for roads and bridges as well. Speaking from the point of view of someone who has been on a council, roads and bridges are incredibly important but there can be lots of reasons why it is very important to have oversight on a project that is more than \$8 million. There are a lot of important details, there is the potential for money not to be spent as efficiently as it needs to be, given the small amount there is to go around.

We believe, for the reasons of efficiency, as well as for insuring proper probity, that \$8 million is the right amount to have as a threshold. We also agree with the member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie's comments that this is not going to hold up the works of construction of roads and bridges, far from it. It will streamline the process because anything that can be identified through the Public Works Committee that can make a project better governed, more efficient and cheaper is money and time well spent. I do not understand if it is going to be anything like a problem in holding projects up, it is something that has to be done.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Deputy Chair, a couple of things, I will deal with the matters that were raised.

First, Ms White's contribution. In her opening comments she said that these thresholds will be the highest in the country. That is manifestly untrue. I believe you have received the same briefings

that I have. The Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory do not have a referral body like the PWC; they do not have a process, nor a cap. We talked about South Australia previously. They have a cap of \$4 million but they have a much broader remit for public works and, as it has been explained to me, it is almost like a stand-alone statutory authority that deals with matters as a body. In Queensland and New South Wales, works are only considered when referred by the parliament itself or self-referred. In New South Wales, only works valued over \$10 million can be referred to the Legislative Council Public Works Committee. We are not the highest in the country. Some four jurisdictions have no limits whatsoever.

Second, if there is a high-risk project that is of concern to any member, they can bring a motion before this House. That is a mechanism that is available and, with the support of this House, it can be referred. If it is not simply bringing a project before the House to slow down a project and to play politics, and there were particular issues, then the processes could be used. In the 18 years that I have been in public life and that mechanism has existed, no member has brought forward and utilised that mechanism, but it is available.

I will not go back through your maths in terms of if we set the thresholds - you were making the point that the Public Works Committee would have looked at fewer projects over the last couple of years. They would have been filled by higher-valued projects. The Public Works Committee would have had higher value projects to look at rather than the ones it got to.

Ms White - It does not have a limit. What are you talking about?

Mr GUTWEIN - What we are talking about here, there are 73 projects in front of the Public Works Committee in the future. There will be 50 at least that will go before the Public Works Committee. It will have plenty of work.

You raise the point again about the public works members, and I do not want to reflect as other members have done on their work ethic or how they have been conducting themselves, but they looked at, I understand, three projects last year. I am getting the nod. We had 73 in front of us for the next three years and that is before we bring down a budget next year which will again have additional projects. There are always times during the course of the year that other projects are brought forward as a matter of urgency. The Public Works Committee will have plenty to do and in terms of roads and bridges, it will focus on those particular projects that are complex and have scale and that is quite appropriate.

Regarding what occurs at the moment, and the Greens member raised the point that this is about the Public Works Committee streamlining things as it currently stands and you said, it removes red tape in terms of the process that it runs. In many cases, it is running concurrently with the current planning process. In some cases, I understand that the planning process can be completed before the Public Works Committee even makes its decision. How the Public Works Committee, in that circumstance, actually streamlines anything, I am not certain.

The House has raised concerns regarding the increase of the threshold to \$20 million. If the House has concerns about a particular project, the mechanism exists for a project of value under \$20 million to be referred. That mechanism is there as a fail-safe mechanism; as a fall-back mechanism.

Regarding the work in front of the Public Works Committee, at least 50 projects will still be referred with the current levels. The member for Clark very sensibly raised the industry view on this. Like her, I once again bring to the parliament's attention that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Master Builders and the Civil Contractors Federation are very supportive of the levels that we have before us today.

I ask that this House supports the bill as it stands, with an increase from \$5 million to \$8 million for built structures and from \$5 million to \$20 million for roads and bridges.

[3.44 p.m.]

Ms WHITE - I get the very strong impression from the Government they are not going to support the amendment that is being proposed, but the response the minister gave does not fill me with confidence.

He continues to repeat that this House can refer matters to the Public Works Committee, knowing full well that members of the Opposition do not have the numbers to achieve such a thing. Using section 17 of the principal act, there does exist a provision where projects can be referred to the Public Works Committee, but you need a majority vote in the House and only the Government has that. If you are going to avoid scrutiny on a project you can vote against such a referral and you know that. The point I am making is if the Government is going to be true to its rhetoric around transparency and openness, that you would enable the scrutiny to occur without having to put it to a vote in the parliament each time.

I understand that the civil construction and building industry in this state want to have confidence so they can have a pipeline of works; they can keep their workers on they can continue to operate, and I support that. That is why I support - and the Labor Party supports - increasing the threshold. That is why we supported increasing the threshold in previous years when we were in government in 2001 and 2009. When you say that other states do not have a limit and therefore our limit is not the highest, you contradict yourself because they do not have a limit which means they do not have to meet a threshold before they can be referred.

In New South Wales it is \$10 million, the Commonwealth is \$15 million, in South Australia it is \$4 million. Tasmania is currently \$5 million and we agree that it needs to increase. I did not think it was unreasonable to ask for there to be consideration to lowering the threshold from \$20 million, understanding the views of the industry, which is a valid view, but it is not the only view.

We are here to represent our electorates and the constituents who live in those electorates and the projects that have come before the committee even this year, the two that would not have been considered by the Public Works Committee are of high public interest - the West Tamar Highway safety improvements, and the Richmond road projects of Cambridge Link Road and Richmond Road. They did elicit a lot of public interest. I look back as well at other projects that would not have been referred to the Public Works Committee.

Last time, I spoke about the Midlands Highway safety upgrades and particularly some of those sections that go past Kempton that did raise a lot of community interest and concern, even from the mayors, deputy mayors and councillors who are the planning authority for those projects, who made submissions and gave evidence to the committee. They would not have been able to do that because those projects would not have met the \$20 million threshold to be referred to the Public Works Committee.

With respect to the industry and their view, I understand the problem they are trying to solve. They want to know that projects are going to come out of the department, the procurement process is going to be streamlined for them so they can get on and build those roads and bridges. We support that and we support the jobs it creates. The problem is not the Public Works Committee, it is the fact that you cut \$68.9 million out of State Growth in your first budget which meant a lot of those people doing the designing and engineering are no longer there. That is where the procurement issues are because those projects are not being designed in a timely fashion and put out the door.

I push back on your claim that we can refer projects under section 17 of the principal act to the Public Works Committee because it is unlikely that would ever be successful given the make-up of the House. I would argue that it is appropriate that as members of our communities elected to do our job here, that when there is expenditure of big sums of public money, that there should be a voice for the people in that. I urge you to reconsider your view and support our amendment.

Mr GUTWEIN - We will not be reconsidering our view. To be frank, I get the sense you are looking to frustrate the passage of a bill that is going to ensure we can get more projects to market more quickly. There is a mechanism if you have a concern about a particular project that is available to any member in this House to bring forward to this House a motion to refer. Importantly, the projects that you refer to would have all gone through a council planning process, as I understand it. Therefore, both the public and the council's views would have been taken into account for those projects. What we want to do is to ensure that the Public Works Committee deals with those projects that are of a scale and are complex. We believe that in setting the thresholds, in increasing to \$8 million, which is long overdue in terms of building and building structures, the last increase occurred some number of years ago.

Ms White - It was 2009.

Mr GUTWEIN - A decade ago. With an increase from \$5 million to \$8 million in terms of built structures, but in terms of roads and bridges, which are generally of a more complex and costly nature, we believe that the \$20 million is appropriate.

The other point I make in terms of those jurisdictions I had mentioned without a limit, is that they do not have a similar body. There is no referral mechanism. My understanding is they do not have a public works committee in the ACT, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. They do not have an equivalent referral body.

Ms White - Do you want to get rid of the Public Works Committee?

Mr GUTWEIN - They get on and do their job. No, I do not want to get rid of it. The bill we have before the House simply increases the thresholds to what is a more sensible and reasonable level.

Ms White - You seem to be questioning its purpose.

Mr GUTWEIN - I was correcting, once again, a mistake you made in asserting in those jurisdictions there was no level and therefore they would refer from dollar one, which is not true.

Madam Deputy Chair, I commend the bill and ask that you put that amendment to a vote.

The Committee divided -

AYES 10

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma (Teller)
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

PAIR

Ms O'Byrne

Mr Hodgman

Amendment negatived.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to and bill taken through the remainder of the Committee stage.

Bill read the third time.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED GOODS BILL 2019 (No. 16)

Second Reading

[3.59 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Building and Construction - 2R) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The Government is always mindful of the regulatory burden that is daily placed on the shoulders of businesses, in particular small business, in complying with the raft of regulations that affect their activities. Outdated or unnecessarily complex rules can be a significant burden for Tasmanian businesses while, conversely, we are also aware of the need to create clear and workable arrangements to protect the interests of consumers.

This bill achieves a fair and practical balance between meeting the needs of businesses in dealing with the disposal of uncollected goods and protecting ordinary customers, who are often unfamiliar with their legal rights and remedies. We have listened to stakeholder concerns regarding

the current arrangements and sought to contemporise the law and bring our requirements into line with other jurisdictions.

The bill introduces a model similar to legislation operating successfully in Victoria, where a simple and cost-effective method of disposal of goods left at business premises is determined by the value of individual goods. This position has been endorsed by the Red Tape Reduction Coordinator, as outlined in the 2017-18 Tasmanian Red Tape Audit Report. The coordinator recommended that the legislation was in need of reform and a model could be adopted where goods are disposed of relative to their value.

Consequently, the bill repeals the outdated Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 and replaces it with modern legislation which provides appropriate and contemporary mechanisms for the way businesses can deal with situations where consumers fail to pay or collect goods that have been left at business premises.

Where contracting parties have not made arrangements for the collection of goods which remain uncollected after specified periods, this bill will make it simpler and more cost-effective for businesses to dispose of those goods and recoup any costs or financial losses associated with repairs, storage or insurance.

Examples of situations where a business has not received payment for their services and then is required to store those uncollected goods include:

- a towing business picking up a damaged car, but is not told by the owner what to do with it and it remains unclaimed;
- clothes left for dry-cleaning that are forgotten and never collected; or
- a motor mechanic who is asked to repair a car, but the owner never returns to pick it up and pay for the work done.

It is for these types of situations why clear and appropriate mechanisms are required, and why we are introducing this bill.

I will now turn to some of the key features and reforms made in the bill.

This bill introduces new provisions to specifically address uncollected motor vehicles and perishable items. Motor vehicles are treated differently from other goods in the bill, as they are larger and often more expensive than other uncollected goods. This means that storage costs are significant for businesses that may not have the available space. While the business may recoup these costs upon selling the vehicle, a vehicle in a deteriorated state may not cover the total cost of storage, sale and work done on the car.

To address these issues, the bill provides for the process that a business must go through before selling or disposing of the vehicle, including:

- conducting a personal property securities search to assess whether there are any secured or registered interests in the vehicle; and

- providing a receipt to the purchaser containing specified details, including the name of the owner of the vehicle and the registration or identification number.

Further, there is a need to treat perishable goods differently to other items due to the nature of the goods having a limited handling and storage time until expiration. Other jurisdictions, including the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales have provisions for perishable goods in their legislation in order to accommodate for the limited lifespan of the goods. We have developed a similar approach in the bill by introducing a new provision specifically dealing with the disposal of perishable goods.

In addition, the bill also introduces simplified procedures for the disposal of all other types of uncollected goods. This includes provisions that where goods have been left uncollected for specified periods of time, they may legally be disposed of by businesses. Before disposal, a clearer and simplified 'goods disposal notice' must be sent to the consumer, which will serve to protect the interests of both parties. There is also no longer a requirement to notify the Commissioner of Police prior to the disposal of goods.

The method of disposal available to businesses has also been amended in the bill. Currently businesses are required to only sell goods at a public auction and they must be retained for a total period of seven months, regardless of whether the goods are of low or high value. The bill amends these provisions by providing the ability for private sales to be used, even for high-value goods, if it is the best method of disposal in the circumstances to achieve a fair market value. The required holding period that businesses must retain the goods has also been shortened.

The exact method of disposal is determined by the procedures in the bill and the individual value of the goods, which is achieved through the introduction of 'value categories' of goods, with different procedures for the disposal of each category. For example, for uncollected goods valued at less than \$200, a business may dispose of the goods after 28 days if the consumer is provided with a goods disposal notice and does not claim them. In the event that the business is unable to locate or communicate with the consumer to give them notice of the intention to dispose, the business needs to wait 60 days from the time they became uncollected. After the holding periods have passed, the goods can be disposed of by the business using any appropriate means.

Importantly, the bill provides legal protections for any party involved in the transaction for the goods to be disposed:

- a purchaser receives 'good legal title' to goods sold under the act, which is free from any claim.
- a business that disposes of uncollected goods is not liable to others by reason of their disposal of those goods.
- any money left over after the business sells uncollected goods and collects their charges and disposal costs, is then 'unclaimed money' to be dealt with under the Unclaimed Money Act 2015.

In order to protect the interests of both the business and the purchaser of the goods, businesses must keep clear and simple records of how uncollected goods were disposed of. For low-value goods, the required record-keeping period has been reduced from six years to two years.

The bill also introduces the ability of the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading to make determinations about certain matters, such as keeping the threshold dollar value of the 'value categories' up to date and deciding what are appropriate methods to determine the value of certain goods. An example of using this approach would be an approval of a recognised motor industry price guide as being a fair means to determine market values of motor vehicles, rather than only relying on the seller's judgement.

To communicate the requirements of the new bill to businesses and consumers, an education campaign will be initiated by Consumer, Building and Occupational Services. It is important to ensure that Tasmanian businesses and consumers alike fully understand their rights and responsibilities when it comes to dealing with uncollected goods.

This bill updates the legislative requirements to make it easier for Tasmanian businesses to dispose of uncollected goods while ensuring there are appropriate protections for consumers. These sensible reforms not only reduce regulatory burdens for business but, importantly, modernise the rules and improves processes.

I commend this bill to the House.

[4.08 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, Labor will not be opposing the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Bill 2019. I want to make a few comments and provide some hypothetical scenarios as to how the act could be used in reality.

The Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 has been largely inappropriate and out of touch for some time. Modernisation of the legislation to match today's changed business environment and demand is warranted. The changes to do with uncollected vehicles are thorough, sensible and overdue. We, as lawmakers and good elected representatives, must ensure that businesses act in a lawful and proper manner when disposing of uncollected goods and we need to work at providing a legislative framework in which customers, bailors and businesses, receivers, are protected.

Under the existing legislation, anecdotal evidence suggests businesses are disposing of goods without complying with the existing act. From the perspective of the bailee, probably one of the largest industry areas of concern is the automotive industry. The Tasmanian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, as the peak body serving retail automotive sectors, employing over 9000 Tasmanians, stated in their submission that -

The automotive industry is probably impacted by the Act more than any other industry because of the value of unpaid repairs, the value of the vehicle and the holding cost of abandoned vehicles. The scenarios we see include:

- A vehicle is delivered to a repairer to either be quoted for repair or is repaired and is abandoned after the cost is more than anticipated, or it is abandoned when they realise the quoted cost of repairs is greater than the value of the vehicle or more than they can afford;
- A vehicle engine or parts are delivered from reconditioning and abandoned when the cost of repair is realised;

- A tow truck is allocated to a vehicle accident by Tasmania Police and removed to a secure holding yard.
- The owner abandons the vehicle because it is uninsured and not economic to repair.

In each case, the repairer makes multiple attempts to have the vehicle removed by the owner and recover funds owing. Usually the owner, if known, ignores any contact, leaving the repairer with only the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act to dispose of the vehicle and civil action to recover money owing. These methods are ineffective and generally not worth pursuing. The Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act is cumbersome and rarely are total funds owed recovered and civil action is not worth pursuing because the time and cost exceeds the benefit.

The TACC regularly advises members of the proper process for disposal of an asset under the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act but, as the discussion paper mentions, it is unfortunate that repairers often move vehicles to the street and it becomes a council issue, or do not comply with the act because of its complexity. It is my understanding that the bill will provide new provisions to specifically address uncollected motor vehicles. There is recognition that motor vehicles are larger and often more expensive than other uncollected goods. This does mean that storage costs are often greater for the associated businesses.

In their submissions, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Small Business Council contend the process described by the act is overly cumbersome and has not kept pace with current social and consumer purchasing trends. In some cases, the crushing of vehicles or moving them onto council land, becoming a council issue, is not appropriate. There must be better solutions than we currently have for that process.

The briefing suggested that the Tasmanian Government Gazette has only published three uncollected goods notices since 2008, indicating that there is a level of non-compliance within the requirement of the current legislation to publish a notice before a business may dispose of a vehicle. The bill repeals the outdated Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 and replaces it with modern legislation dealing with the way businesses can deal with uncollected goods left by consumers.

The bill applies where there is a common law agreement for the bailment of the goods and the parties do not make arrangements for the collection of the goods. It specifically includes new provisions dealing with motor vehicles, perishable goods and the transfer of goods without transfer of ownership. It sets out a legislative framework for the disposal of goods that have not been collected by the owner within the given time frame that are then taken to have been abandoned.

The act is in place to assist businesses to dispose of goods ranging from \$20 watches uncollected after a battery replacement to cars valued over \$5000, which are abandoned because the repairs often cost more than the value of the car. The act establishes the three main categories for the value of goods. This bill provides mechanisms for the way businesses can deal with situations in which consumers fail to pay or collect goods that have been left on business premises. I support the streamlining of those processes to assist businesses to dispose of uncollected items.

I am seeking clarity as to the reasoning behind the high value for goods, being a value equal to or more than \$5000, as opposed to the high-value category being over \$500 in the ACT, \$7000 in

the Northern Territory, \$2000 in South Australia, and \$3500 in Western Australia, I believe. I am seeking reasoning in the minister's response for why we have capped the level at \$5000.

I have also looked in the ACT Uncollected Goods Act 1996 and note the act refers to goods of significant value and personal effects, and I will read it out for the record.

Goods of a significant value and personal effects.

Goods valued at more than \$500 are considered to be of significant value.

Goods of significant value and personal effects (e.g. personal papers, bank books, official records and photographs) must be kept for three months. After this time the goods can be sold at public auction.

I am looking for information about what 'specific additions' are in the Tasmanian Disposal of Uncollected Goods Bill which refers to non-monetary value of people's goods. That seems to leave a bit of a gap but it could be that I overlooked that when I was researching.

Low-value uncollected goods, however, goods that are valued under \$200, are given, in my research, very little consideration. Goods must be disposed of under this section by sale, destruction, appropriation, or any other means. It is also my understanding that there is a 28-day period from when the goods are received by the receiver to provide to notice of disposal of that good.

I am also curious as to the reasonable time frame for collection of goods by the owner from the receiver. If the agreement is for the owner of the property to collect the property from the receiver within 24 hours, can the receiver then write a letter of notice to dispose 24 hours after the negotiation? I would like to run through that process.

Ms Archer - Can you slow down a bit so I can actually get some of these questions down? I am having trouble understanding the questions.

Ms BUTLER - Okay. I just want to confirm that it is a 28-day notice period that must be provided. I am also seeking some more information about what is considered a reasonable time frame for the collection of goods by the owner from the receiver, and also if the agreement is for the owner of the property to collect the property from the receiver within 24 hours. Say for instance they take a watch in to be repaired and they say to come back in 24 hours, and the person does not come back in 24 hours, does that then trigger the receiver to write a notice to dispose within that 24 hours of them leaving the goods with them? I want some clarification about that process and how it would apply in real life.

I have serious concerns about the opportunity for opportunistic intentioned individuals to exploit the new potential provisions within the value of the uncollected goods category. The legislation could encourage and become a vehicle for potentially fraudulent behaviour, and I think in most of these situations there is potential for fraudulent behaviour, but I would like that to be on the record.

I will give an example of all of my questions in practice. A perfect storm of how this legislation, through my research, could be exploited is if a watch worth over \$1000 is left at a jewellers for cleaning - and I am certainly not having a crack at jewellers, I am not singling them out as a

particular profession; I just want to make sure that I am not going to be misinterpreted - and the jeweller advises the owner of the watch to return the next day to collect it. The owner does not return the next day to collect the watch. The receiver sends the provider a goods disposal notice via text in relation to the watch the next day, as per their agreement. The person said they would come back and get it tomorrow but they did not. They did try to contact the person. The jeweller kept a record of these attempts, in accordance with the act. The jeweller reasoned that they provided the owner with a reasonable collection date of the next day to the owner and the owner did not return. They tried to then make contact with them a few times.

My question is, does this then make the 28-day period valid from the next day, as it was negotiated as reasonable and agreed by the watch owner and the jeweller? Can a disposal of uncollected goods notice be sent? How long is the 'reasonable collection time' under the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 2019?

In my reality situation, applying this to real life, after 29 days - four weeks - the jeweller decides to dispose of the uncollected watch, which they claim is a fake and only worth \$20. The Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 2019 does not adequately account for the negative consequences of a bailee grossly undervaluing goods to meet the criteria of the proposed value category of the goods.

It is my understanding that the act allows the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading to establish, by determination, the minimum dollar value of these dollar values. I am seeking information from the minister as to how the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading can adequately control potential fraud. What would trigger them to the potential fraud?

One of the factors reasoned to remove the requirement to notify the Commissioner of Police prior to the disposal of the goods was because it was a cumbersome process and inappropriate for the Commissioner of Police to be involved in such matters. Why would an undervalued, low-value, uncollected good be any different to this process? I am not quite sure if there is enough protection there for fraudulent behaviour.

I also have questions about the Unclaimed Money Act 2015 and whether this act creates a trust fund of sorts for the proceeds of uncollected goods to be deposited after the possessor of the uncollected goods has retained reasonable costs. I would appreciate it if we can run through that.

I am also concerned about the act and the disposal of uncollected items' reliance on communication, noting that 50 per cent of the Tasmanian population apparently has functional illiteracy and whether relying on written communication is the most effective tool. I know we are limited by our legislation but it is something we need to consider when we are discussing the disposal of people's goods.

I also have issues with the reliance on the court system to solve disputes between purchasers and receivers. It is almost impossible for Legal Aid to have the funds to represent clients over small property matters as such, and the bulk of the population cannot afford legal representation. We know that, and the wait in the Magistrates Court for a hearing can be very lengthy.

In the case of perishable items, the inability to settle a dispute can often cause massive problems and I doubt the reality matches the legislation.

If the disposal of the uncollected goods has occurred unlawfully -

Ms Archer - You can go into Committee with all these questions. If you are going to ask so many questions, we should be going into Committee.

Ms BUTLER - I am nearly finished. They are not difficult questions to answer, minister. I just did a lot of research, as we are meant to do when speaking to a bill. I suppose I am probably a bit overzealous as a new member with my detail.

If the disposal of the uncollected goods has occurred unlawfully, what process is required for the bailee to claim compensation? That is another important part as well with this. Also, what mechanisms are in place to prevent a business from disposing of the goods before a determination has been made, and is there a time frame on reviews by the director into disputes about the uncollected goods?

Ms Archer - I am encouraging you to go into Committee with so many questions on clauses.

Ms BUTLER - Are there penalties for parties who do not comply with the act? I understand that the existing act was inappropriate. However, I believe the legislation does have holes but it is a major upgrade from what was there already and if it can streamline the process it is appropriate. I would appreciate answers to some of those questions.

[4.25 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will make a brief contribution for the benefit of those who hopefully might come after and have legal cases to identify a couple of the areas that may be able to be clarified by the minister. I only have a few. The first one is whether you think it might be of benefit to define 'goods', or does that sit in another act? I have not checked but perhaps it is in the Acts Interpretation Act or elsewhere, unless I have missed it.

Ms Archer - Just goods?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, goods. The reason I raise it is, I had a quick look at the Gene Technology Act, which is referenced specifically in clause 4. It excludes goods that are electronic or magnetic in form. I am assuming that is to do with x-rays or other images of DNA. It occurs to me that there are other areas that cross over with the medical sector where we might have some debate about whether a particular thing forms part of goods or not. For example, blood tests or results that are kept, maybe medical samples, or even the most extreme example - though I suspect the relevant act handles it - IVF processes, those sorts of things. You probably looked at that but that would be something that you might be able to clarify.

The other area that is a particular favourite of mine is click and collect, where people are able to go shopping online, you pay up front and then you go into your favourite store and pick up your goods. This goes to the question of contract formation and when deadlines start to run from. If you do a click and collect for the latest Carla Zampatti suit; you spend your \$800 on that -

Ms Archer - Speak for yourself.

Ms OGILVIE - I cannot afford them which is why I raise it. I do love them. Then you fail to turn up. What does the store do with that? We are crossing into other areas. Afterpay does not have the same problem because you have taken the goods with you and you are effectively paying a reverse layby. They are two hairy examples that I could bring to mind fairly quickly.

I will be supporting the bill but I am wondering whether we should clarify the definition of what 'goods' are and it may be something we keep a watching brief on if you have not already gone through it or your staff have not already looked at it. That is it from me at this point. I would be interested to hear the rest of the contributions.

[4.28 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, the Greens support this updated bill. It is important that we update ourselves with the substantial changes that have happened since the original act of 1968, which was light years away in terms of the modes of communication and the modes of retail purchasing and the interactions between businesses and consumers that we have today. Clearly, the form of interactions and picking up of goods, as well as payment of goods, is vastly different now to then. We support the streamlining and the clarification that this bill provides.

It seems as though the safeguards are generally appropriate. Some of the questions that the member for Lyons, Ms Butler, asked were questions that the Greens had, so I will not repeat them because I believe the minister has already heard them. I would like to hear from the minister about one of the requirements that the bill now requires the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading, amongst other things, to keep the threshold dollar value of value categories up-to-date. I believe this bill places a number of new requirements on the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading. I wondered what the resourcing requirements would be in order to enable them to undertake what they are now required to do in the bill, whether that would be onerous, and whether there was some additional resourcing of the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading that the Government is considering providing so that work can be done.

Some examples the minister gave in the second reading speech about motor vehicle guides and so on, clearly, a motor vehicle is a big, solid and fairly easy to value item but there are so many other things that this bill covers, which is every other thing that can be purchased. There is a lot of variation, a lot of change and a lot of churn in consumer items. I wonder how realistic it is, how big those categories are, and how much detail is required for the Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading director to go into. How often would they need to be updated? It sounds like a pretty big job to me, but someone has to do it.

Ms Archer - Do you mean the dollar values?

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, the value categories, a bit more detail about how that is going to happen and what the resourcing costs will be and how long it will take for that to happen.

On behalf not only of business owners but of consumers, this bill provides really important clarity and it is certainly welcome. We support the bill and do not have any real reason to go into committee, subject to the comments that the minister makes to the questions that have already been asked.

[4.33 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I commend the minister and the department for their work on this bill, because this bill will further support our hardworking Tasmanian businesses, the engine room of our economy. I note that the legislation that we are debating today is part of the Hodgman Liberal Government's commitment to reducing unnecessary red tape burdens on our businesses.

I note that this repeal of this 51-year-old Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 will result in faster, simpler and more cost-effective disposal processes for Tasmanian businesses. The fact is that for a long time now, Tasmanian businesses have endured lengthy and costly delays in the disposal of goods that are uncollected by consumers. These costs do fall very heavily on businesses, particularly the retail sector, such as motor vehicle dealers, electrical retailers, drycleaners, jewellers and those selling perishable goods. These outdated and what are really unnecessarily complex rules, can be a significant cost burden on these businesses. For example, this can often be the difference that prevents them from taking on an extra employee.

This bill will replace the current act with more modern legislation that contemporises consumer law in the interests of businesses and consumers and will bring our law into line with those in place in other jurisdictions.

The Government has consulted widely on these reforms, which have received broad support from peak business and industry bodies, including the Tasmanian Automobile Chamber of Commerce. This bill is an excellent example of the Government achieving a fair and practical balance between meeting the needs of businesses and consumers through sensible reforms that modernise the rules and streamline processes. This bill adopts a model similar to the laws used in Victoria, where the method of disposal of uncollected goods is determined by the value of the goods. The bill implements a recommendation of the Red-Tape Reduction Coordinator in the Tasmanian Red Tape Audit Report 2017-18, which identified that the current processes in the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 were costly and cumbersome.

In summary, key features of the bill are that: there will be simpler procedures for the disposal of uncollected goods, goods that have been uncollected for a period of time may legally be disposed of by businesses but that the methods of disposal are determined by the procedures in the bill and the value of the goods; the value categories of goods are introduced with different procedures for their disposal according to each category; a clear and simple goods disposal notice will be sent to the consumer when the business intends to dispose of the goods; there will also be a shortening of the required holding periods that businesses must retain goods before disposal is allowed; there will be a requirement to notify the Commissioner of Police prior to disposal of goods; the requirement to sell goods only at public auction will be removed and private sales may be used instead, even for high-value goods in some circumstances.

A new provision dealing with the disposal of perishable goods will be introduced. There will be clearer and simpler record-keeping of how uncollected goods were disposed of. There will be giving of good title to purchasers of goods disposed of. Businesses that sell goods will be protected against claims from the former owner of goods. The Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading may make determinations about certain matters, such as keeping the threshold dollar value of the value categories up to date and the appropriate methods to determine the value of certain goods.

All these key features of the bill are very important. As the minister stated, this Government is always mindful of the regulatory burden that is placed on the shoulders of businesses each day, particularly our small businesses that make up the majority of the businesses in this state, especially in complying with the raft of regulations that affect their activities. These outdated or unnecessarily complex rules can be a significant burden for Tasmanian businesses and we are also aware of the need to create clear and workable arrangements to protect the interests of consumers.

I commend the minister on this bill. It achieves a fair and practical balance between meeting the needs of businesses in dealing with the disposal of uncollected goods, while at the same time

protecting our consumers who are often unfamiliar with their legal rights and remedies. This is important because the Hodgman Liberal Government makes no apologies for wanting to ensure that we have a fair, safe and equitable marketplace that is maintained for all Tasmanians. This means, where possible, that we will continue to streamline regulatory processes and reduce red tape for Tasmanian businesses as well as the broader community by promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and enforcement of consumer regulations. This bill further supports the strong commitment this Government has made by reducing unnecessary complexities and regulatory burdens for Tasmanian businesses.

Tasmanian businesses currently experience lengthy and costly delays. We want to make sure that this disposal of uncollected goods process does not result in the disposal of the goods outweighing the value of the goods. This Government passionately wants to see our businesses survive and thrive. We want to make sure this unfair burden on businesses is not present and that is why we want to bring it into this law, make it a contemporary law and bring it into line with other states and jurisdictions. We will have a faster, simpler and more cost-effective disposal processes for Tasmanian businesses.

I acknowledge that this is not the only action the minister's department has been undertaking to support and progress significant red-tape reductions for small businesses and provide better transparency measures for consumers. Some of the other key reforms we have progressed to support our commitment to red-tape reduction include enacting legislative amendments to allow Tasmanian retailers to conduct bag checks under a Tasmanian code of practice, to deter shoplifting, especially as the cost of shoplifting is estimated to cost a whopping \$200 million or more per year. All of us in this room would agree this is a very important reform because retail theft puts a significant financial burden on Tasmanian businesses and on the consumers. It is the consumers who pay for higher prices of goods and increased cost of living pressures through the cost of this shoplifting being passed on to the consumer. Prior to the bag check amendments, retailers were required to employ a licensed security guard if they wished to search a customer's bag while inside their business premises. The cost of doing so, particularly to small businesses, was prohibitive. The changes to this legislation now allows retailers, large and small, to remove the requirement for staff carrying out bag checks to hold a security licence and makes it a condition of entry that customer bags can be physically inspected when complying with the Tasmanian Bag Check Code of Conduct.

My children, nephews and nieces all work in the retail industry. They have noticed, and I am sure all of us in this place have, too, that when you go to places like Bunnings, Big W or K-Mart, it has become the norm. Everyone knows that they open up their bags for inspection and 99 per cent of people are very happy with it and it is part of what is done. A close relative of mine said that it has now become a more enjoyable experience. People know that this is the expectation and is not there to make them feel they are an offender. I commend this initiative because it is a great deterrent.

We are working hard to see greater consumer protections in the regulation and use of gift cards by supporting the national Treasury Laws Amendment (Gift Cards) Bill 2018. I am sure all of us have either bought or received gift cards. My children have received gift cards, especially as different prizes in end-of-year school assemblies. Time has gone on and suddenly they remember, probably when they are cleaning up their room, that they have a gift card and the gift card has expired. They cannot use the card anymore because time has marched on. The fact that they will now have up to three years is fantastic. One of my children found a few, so that was a few hundred dollars that could have been spent but the gift cards had expired. This is wonderful because they

are so easy to lose. They have a longer expiry date and consumers have more rights. It is a wonderful initiative.

I commend the fact that it was Tasmania, as the 2018 Chair of the Legislative and Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs, that facilitated an out-of-session vote in September 2018 to enable the Consumer Affairs ministers to vote on the reforms. The great thing is that these reforms now ensure that gift cards are not valid for at least three years to reduce the losses that consumers suffer from shorter expiry periods. Stores are now required to have prominent and clear display of expiry dates. The great thing is that these important consumer protections come into effect soon, on 1 November 2019, about five weeks from now, so it will be just in time for Christmas, which is fantastic for consumers.

I also want to commend the fact that Tasmania led the nation when the dangers of the Takata airbags became apparent. Tasmania was the first state or territory to commence the suspension of registrations of vehicles on our roads that were still fitted with the highly dangerous Takata alpha-type airbags in August 2018, despite the fact that owners had been receiving clear warnings of the imminent and critical safety risk. Takata airbags have been the subject of a worldwide recall since it was realised there was a 50 per cent chance that the airbags could misdeploy, even when the vehicle was in a minor crash, resulting in pieces of metal exploding into the faces of drivers, with serious or even deadly consequences.

While a majority of people who own cars with the recalled Takata airbags acted very quickly to have them replaced, a small number of Tasmanians sadly failed to respond to warnings as well as the suspension notices issued by transport and safety investigation officers. The Tasmanian Government's decisive and immediate action led to all other jurisdictions, with the exception of Victoria, implementing their own methods of registration suspensions or preventing renewals. We acted quickly on these Takata alpha airbags because they posed a great danger to drivers. Since then, the ACCC has also added critical beta-type airbags which also pose an immediate danger to the priority list for replacement. I am pleased to say that this will continue to be reviewed.

I am also pleased that as a result of this Government's action, there are now no vehicles remaining on our roads if they have an alpha airbag installed, making Tasmania Takata alpha airbag-free. There are now only three identified vehicles with the very critical beta-type airbags and the Registrar of Motor Vehicles advises that two of these vehicles fitted with the critical beta airbags have already had their registration suspended, and the third has a bar on registration renewal to ensure that the owner replaces these critical airbags immediately. This is a great action for drivers and passengers that this Government has acted so quickly in this regard. I encourage all Australians to check whether their vehicle is subject to any recall and to arrange to have the defective airbags replaced as soon as possible. I note that all the Takata airbags subject to recall must be replaced by 31 December 2020.

I also note that the Government has rolled out a number of industry development and assistance programs, including funding \$869 000 for the development of a new online rental bond management system which went live on 1 May 2019, with a predicted return on this investment within three years. The new bond management system for residential tenants, MyBond, is an online bond management system for residential tenancies or leases to replace the current paper-based process, which is very time-consuming and onerous for all concerned. This red tape reduction initiative will reduce the administrative costs and burdens of the Rental Deposit Authority, as well as improve the bond lodgement and claim processes for tenants, property owners and property

agents. This platform is also available through Service Tasmania to assist those requiring additional help to access or navigate online rental services.

We are also providing \$204 000 over four years for the ongoing development of nation-leading condensation research in partnership with the University of Tasmania for the improvement of building standards under the National Construction Code. I am sure we are all aware that Tasmania can have a big issue with condensation in our houses. Condensation occurs when water vapour within the building's envelope is retained within its structure or fabric. There is a lot of evidence of this problem in cooler parts of Australia and a failure to correct the problem through adequate design and construction techniques can lead to excessive fungal growth and building structural deterioration, as well as serious occupant health and amenity problems.

This research has commenced and is being extended through to 2020 through Consumer, Building and Occupational Services, or CBOS, with them allocating funding of a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania. This new research will build on and continue from earlier research and is intended to further develop the original recommendations and gain insight from international literature and simulation tests. This research will provide nationally leading guidance for design and construction practices for limiting condensation risk in new and renovated Tasmanian homes.

Another initiative is the allocation of over \$500 000 over five years to assist in the rollout of continuing professional development, or CPD, for plumbers, electricians and gas fitters to improve the skills and capabilities of our licensed occupations and trades. Everyone here would appreciate that the building and construction industry is a major key contributor to Tasmania's economy. CPD assists building practitioners and occupational licence holders to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute towards this important industry. As well, continuing to practice professional development also provides greater protections for consumers through increased capacity and capability of the industry by ensuring our licenced tradespeople and practitioners keep their skills up to date and are working to today's standards. A continuing professional development, education and training officer has been appointed to develop and implement education resources, attend workplaces and deliver training over a three-year period. This person is the dedicated resources point of contact within CBOS for all continuing professional development enquiries.

All of these initiatives are in addition to Tasmania's participation with other Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand in progressing a suite of improvements to the Australian Consumer Law to benefit both consumers and businesses. For example, the Treasury Laws Amendment (Australian Consumer Law Review) Bill 2018 that came into effect on 26 October 2018 has implemented a number of the review proposals to clarify and strengthen consumer protections relating to consumer guarantees, unsolicited consumer agreements, product safety, false billing, unconscionable conduct, pricing and unfair contract terms. This is on top of further work that continues to be done at the national level. These improvement will further see consumer protections strengthened through enhanced price transparency for online shopping, making voluntary product recall requirements stronger, and increased penalties for those caught doing the wrong thing.

This bill is about more red tape reduction for our Tasmanian businesses. We want to see Tasmanian businesses go from strength to strength. Under the Hodgman majority Liberal Government Tasmania has seen a dramatic turnaround in economic performance. For the first time in almost 15 years our economy is the strongest growing in the nation. Today there are more than 13 500 additional Tasmanians in work than when we came to office in 2014. Compared to where we were five and a half years ago, today Tasmania is almost unrecognisable. There is a buzz in the

air, confidence is contagious and people are excited about what the future will bring. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government is passionate and understands that private sector businesses are the heartbeat of the Tasmanian economy, which is why since we came to government five-and-a-half years ago we have been putting in place business-friendly policies.

Our hard work has been endorsed by the results of a raft of business surveys and confidence indices, which all confirm that the Hodgman Government's policies are working and that Tasmania is the best place in Australia in which to do business.

Our Business Growth Strategy implemented earlier this year - and I commend all involved in developing this strategy - is another example of the Government working for business. This strategy outlines how together, the private sector and the Government can build on the high levels of confidence, currently reported on by the Tasmanian business community. Also, how the private sector and the Government can take advantage of emerging opportunities in our economy, including population growth, increasing tourism and exports, plus increased investment in enabling public infrastructure. As well, how the private sector and the Government can all ensure that government policies are aligned with business and industry goals and targets.

We are also investing in other key areas such as information and communication technology, which provides businesses with the capacity to raise their profiles, to market products statewide, as well as nationally and globally and to operate more efficiently. In short, to grow their businesses and to create more jobs.

The Hodgman majority Liberal Government understands that, in most instances, the best that we can do as a Government is to get out of the way of business and to let businesses do what they do best without unnecessary red tape. We are also cognisant of the need to provide support to the business community to better participate in the digital economy and to take their business to the next level, which is why we have already committed \$250 000 each year to support the hugely successful Digital Ready program through to 2021. I am delighted to say that this program is ensuring that small businesses receive innovative, informative and relevant information to help them to seize the opportunities presented by the changing digital technology via a comprehensive range of online support materials, online bookings, as well as seminars and workshop components. It now has over 4500 Tasmanian businesses in cities and towns throughout the state.

I note the recent release of the digital check-up tool, which is a further mechanism that provides Tasmanian businesses with a quick and comprehensive diagnosis of their online presence, as well as suggestions for improvement. On top of this, we have our record infrastructure investment, which is building roads, including in my own electorate of Franklin, but also right across the state. It is building bridges, hospitals, schools and homes. It is, and will continue to be, a boon for contractors and subcontractors, many of whom are small to medium businesses.

We also have our Buy Local policy, which includes the local benefit test aimed at growing businesses and jobs by ensuring that local businesses have every chance of winning government tenders. This policy is doing what it is intended to do. Local small businesses, I am delighted to say, are winning government work in record numbers. Also, last year we strengthened the policy by doubling the mandatory minimum weighting assigned to the local small and medium enterprise, or SME benefits test. This has resulted in Tasmanian-based businesses now being successful in winning 90 per cent of all government contracts, meeting our target three years early, which is wonderful. Importantly our Buy Local policy is ensuring that taxpayers receive value for money.

That is not all we are doing for small business. We are also providing \$7.5 million over three years for targeted small business grants for apprentices and trainees worth up to \$5000 for each new trainee or apprentice. We have also appointed a small business advocate for Tasmania whose job it is to create a more level playing field and to assist small businesses by ensuring that small businesses have every opportunity to grow and prosper. We have also extended funding for the enterprise hubs in Launceston and Hobart by a further year, at a cost of \$287 000.

We provided a number of successful loan schemes including that agrigrowth, heritage renewal and tourism accommodation refurbishment loan schemes, plus we have announced the regional tourism attraction loan scheme to grow our businesses, to boost local economies and to support local jobs.

A website I highly recommend - and I have said this to endless numbers of people who want to know how to do business or start up a business in Tasmania - is our Business Tasmania website. I go on it quite often and it is fantastic; it is like a one-stop shop. It provides access to all the information and services that enterprising Tasmanians need to start, run, and grow a business in Tasmania. The services that are available on the website include resources on how to start a business; resources on how to grow and improve your business; to manage customers and suppliers; finances; tax and insurance; employing and managing people; occupational health and safety; how to be an online business and to have an online presence. It also provides access to free small business advice; newsletters; a hotline; access to events; information on accessing grants and other financial and funding assistance, plus lots of other relevant information for existing and potential business owners.

Every year thousands of Tasmanians use the Business Tasmania services. I am certain that access to such high-quality information is what is contributing to our nation-leading business survival rate.

There are 37 300 small businesses in Tasmania, employing about 110 000 Tasmanians which is why the Hodgman Liberal Government is continuing to deliver on our plan to help these businesses prosper and to further expand and create more jobs for Tasmanians. This includes our business growth strategy, which is a great document. As the Treasurer stated in his foreword, we are living and conducting business in an exciting time in Tasmania. Confidence is high, our economy is strong and opportunities abound. To keep this going, we are laying down strong foundations to give small businesses every opportunity to thrive, because businesses thrive on certainty.

Businesses succeed when confidence is high and this grows when the economy is strong and importantly, it creates and sustains real jobs for Tasmanians. We have been working to help our economy grow. That trend has been ongoing for the last five years and this helps create that confidence. Our 37 300 small businesses are key to getting and keeping Tasmanians in work and driving grassroots investment which underpins our economy and helps our communities prosper.

Time expired.

[5.03 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I support the introduction and passage of this bill. Tasmanian businesses currently endure lengthy and costly delays in the disposal of goods. The Hodgman Liberal Government is delivering on its commitment to reduce unnecessary red tape and

cost burdens on business. This unfair burden on business is being removed and will contemporise our law and bring our requirements into line with other jurisdictions.

These reforms will result in faster, simpler and more cost-effective disposal processes for Tasmanian retail businesses. This is in addition to, and supports, the other business packages we have put out. We are delivering. We have reduced payroll tax; we have introduced the small business grants to employ apprentices and trainees. We are aligning our policies with the goals and the objectives of Tasmanian businesses.

We have listened to stakeholder concerns regarding the current act. By repealing the outdated Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968, we will achieve a fair and practical balance between meeting the needs of businesses in dealing with the disposal of uncollected goods, be it by lay-bys or reverse lay-bys or any other of the various contractual arrangements that are available to businesses today, and at the same time, protecting ordinary consumers who are often unfamiliar with their legal rights and remedies.

The current act is costly and cumbersome. In my electorate of Braddon, I know of dry-cleaning businesses that are regularly left with uncollected bedding and clothing. Under the current bill, this results in these types of small businesses being burdened with extra costs of storage, legal liabilities, time-eating processes and lengthy delays in recouping any costs if they ever decide to follow anachronistic current procedures.

There are motor vehicle repairers, electrical retailers, jewellers and those selling perishable goods who are currently burdened with outdated, complex and unnecessary rules that can often mean the difference between employing an extra employee or not, so significant is the unpaid and uncollected goods liability in some businesses.

I have spoken with several other businesses in Braddon who all lament the complexity and outdated process still in Tasmanian law. A lawnmower repairer, a small machinery servicing business and even an engineering works which repairs machinery all want to see simplification and less red tape. In chatting with the owner of the engineering works, he showed me his shame board. It is prominent, I can tell you. As you walk into the work area where goods are collected, this big board with that title is up on the wall. On it he writes people's names who refuse to pick up and pay for repaired goods, as well as debtors. He says this board has a marvellous effect on some and he does not back away from his naming and shaming strategy. However, he does want a simpler, more timely process and less red tape. Uncollected goods hurt business. They cost him time, they are costly in administration and cost money. It is a significant burden.

The Hodgman Liberal Government recognises that small businesses are the powerhouse of the Tasmanian economy and we will continue to strongly support small businesses to thrive in Tasmania. We want to do all we can to improve operational arrangements and reduce regulatory burdens, but on the other hand also protect consumers. Unlike Labor, we understand the crucial importance of the private sector when it comes to generating economic growth and creating real jobs for more Tasmanians. Support for our majority Liberal Government's policies amongst Tasmania's small and medium businesses remains the highest in the country according to the Sensis Business Index and I believe one of the reasons we have such strong support is because we tackle these regulatory burdens affecting business.

The Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 provided for a process in a time when the disposal of goods that were not collected by consumers was very different from what it is today. The recent

review found that this 50-year-old act is overly and unnecessarily complex, cumbersome and costly to administer. Furthermore, it has not kept pace with current social and consumer purchasing trends.

Disposing of uncollected goods should not be a complex legal area. I have read the Legal Aid fact sheet on this matter and reading the current process for disposing of uncollected goods, which I will do in a moment, is enough to turn a retailer grey. I have it here. It says :

If you have possession of goods that were given to you in the course of a business agreement to repair or provide a service upon, you may be entitled to sell the goods if the owner:

- has not paid for the service or repair
- has not collected the goods
- has failed to provide instructions for delivery after paying for the service or repair.

The conditions are:

You can only exercise this right to sell if the following conditions have been satisfied:

- A notice is served on the owner and every other person you know who has a claim or interest in the goods at the time you gave notice;
- The notice must state that the goods are ready for collection;
- A copy of the notice must be served on the Commissioner of Police - you can do this by sending it by registered post to The Commissioner ...

and it gives his address. It continues:

- If the item is a motor vehicle, the notice must be published in the **Gazette**...

Madam Speaker, we know how many people do not read the *Gazette* these days.

... at least 6 months before the notice of intention to sell is given.

Notice Goods Ready for Collection

When issuing a notice advising that goods are ready for collection, the notice must:

- Be in writing;
- Describe the goods;

- State that the goods are ready for collection and specify where the goods are to be collected from;
- If payment for the service is still owing, a statement must also be included which outlines the amount owing and how this has been calculated;
- State that if the owner fails to pay any amount owing and fails to either collect the goods or arrange for collection of the goods within 6 months of the notice then they will be sold in accordance with the *Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968* (TAS).

It says:

To serve the notice, the notice must be served:

- (a) By delivering it to the owner; or
- (b) by leaving it for him/her at their last known home address or place of business with a person at that address who is aged 16 years or older; or
- (c) By sending it registered post to their last known home address or business.

I can see a few complications there.

If the goods remain uncollected and six months has passed from serving the notice advising them the goods are ready for collection, you may then serve a notice of intention to sell the goods. The notice of intention to sell the goods must be in writing; describe the goods; state the date the notice of collection was served on the owner; if there was a dispute between you and the owner, state the date the dispute was resolved; and state that if the owner fails to pay any amount outstanding and either collect or arrange for delivery of the goods within one month of the date of giving notice, the goods will be sold in accordance with the old act.

For the sale of the goods, if one month has passed - and that totals the seven months mentioned by the minister - and the goods remained uncollected and any moneys remain unpaid, you may exercise your right to sell the goods. The goods may only be sold by public auction. You may request a court bailiff to conduct the auction on your behalf. It is not over yet for the poor business owner.

After the sale, within seven days of the sale of uncollected goods, you must prepare a record, and it goes on and on. For a small business owner from my experience you would just say, 'I don't think I'm going to go down this path.' Serious change needed to happen to this act.

I believe a repairer, for example, should be able to understand the rules and requirements without necessarily resorting to a lawyer's expertise or to the Police Commissioner. We know that businesses can often be confused by the rules, frustrated and have significant out-of-pocket expenses when it comes to how they legally dispose of these goods. This is why the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Bill 2019 has been drafted to repeal the unwieldy 1968 act and replace it with modern legislation similar to laws operating successfully in other jurisdictions.

When comparing Tasmania's legislation with some of the more recent equivalent acts in the other states and territories, there are glaringly significant differences. Newer and recently reformed

acts from Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT, for example, are simpler, shorter and easier to understand. Other jurisdictions also separate the scope of uncollected items into categories, with different remedies and requirements allocated according to the category.

Tasmania is one of only two jurisdictions without a categorisation by value at the present time. For example, in other jurisdictions it is only for the highest value goods, such as motor vehicles valued at over \$5000, where a court order or other independent authority is required before the goods may be sold or disposed of. The addition of separate categories, according to type and value, is a sensible solution and will provide a more appropriate regulatory structure and assist businesses in understanding their obligations and responsibilities.

The change has also modernised this area of law in line with business practices and consumer expectations, particularly in relation to the communication and notification requirements of businesses. Small business owners and consumers will benefit from this bill, which will simplify the procedure and reduce costs for businesses needing to dispose of the inexpensive goods that have been abandoned by customers. These sensible reforms reduce regulatory burdens on business, modernise the rules and streamline processes. This bill is an excellent example of our Government achieving a fair and practical balance between meeting the needs of businesses and consumers.

The current Tasmanian requirement that the Commissioner of Police must be notified before any goods can be sold at public auction, whether it is the low-value, perishable goods - we can imagine a lettuce here - an expensive coat or car, is costly and time consuming for businesses. The addition of value categories in the bill is a more appropriate way of dealing with these different types of uncollected goods. This requirement to notify the commissioner of police also places a burden on the administrative resources of Tasmania Police. Processing notifications is not a productive use of Tasmania Police's resources and has the potential impact of detracting from their primary role in keeping Tasmanians safe.

I will now turn to the key changes. The bill adopts a model similar to legislation in operation in Victoria. The Victorian act is based on determining the method of disposal of uncollected goods by the value of the goods. Some key matters the bill addresses are: goods that have been left uncollected for a period may legally be disposed of by businesses, with varying methods of disposal determined by the procedures in the bill and the value of the goods; to improve the current processes that are time consuming and no longer appropriate, with the required holding periods that the business must retain these goods for disposal being shortened - this will receive a big tick from the businesses that I spoke with - and removing the requirement to notify the commissioner of police of part of the disposal of goods, which is another big tick. The bill introduces a new provision dealing with the disposal of perishable goods to take into account the wide variety of goods that are often abandoned by consumers and are not currently catered for in the act, and treats motor vehicles differently from other goods to reflect that they are often larger and of higher value.

Whilst also being larger, cars also take up a lot more space, meaning they pose a much greater expense to business if they are uncollected by the owners. While the business may recoup these costs upon selling the vehicle, a value of a vehicle in a deteriorated state may not cover the total cost of storage, sale and work done on the car, removing the requirement to sell goods only at a public auction or through a court bailiff. Instead, private sales may be used, even for high-value goods in some circumstances. It will be clearer and simpler record-keeping on how uncollected goods were disposed of. The bill will also give good title to purchasers of goods, protecting businesses that sell goods against claims from former owner of the goods. We have also strengthened consumer protections in the bill, including clarifying that consumers who purchase

goods receives good legal title, free from any claim, and that the business disposing of the goods must attempt to contact and notify the owner before disposing of the goods. To ensure all parties are aware of the new streamlined requirements, the regulator will deliver an education and awareness campaign.

The Government has consulted widely on these reforms. A discussion paper was put out to the public for four weeks in February 2019, seeking input on a range of options for reform. Business peak bodies, including the Tasmanian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Small Business Council have all indicated their strong support for the reforms. The amendments have also been endorsed by the Red Tape Reduction Coordinator, as outlined in the 2017-18 Tasmanian Red Tape Audit Report.

Through our small Business Growth Strategy, which I mentioned earlier, we are aligning our policies with the goals and targets of our small and medium businesses. These reforms are one more step in ensuring that small business owners can feel confident about their future and not be burdened with unfair and unnecessary extra costs due to impractical regulations for the disposal of uncollected goods.

[5.20 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, the Hodgman Government's number one priority is jobs. Under our long-term plan, 12 500 more Tasmanians are employed in trend terms since March 2014. The plan is working but there is more work to be done. The Hodgman Government is always on the lookout for opportunities to reduce the burden of unnecessary regulation on small business because we know that small businesses are the powerhouse of Tasmania's economy and employ more than 110 000 people across the state.

The Government is helping to grow the economy and create jobs by supporting businesses to develop a skilled workforce, assisting with market access, unlocking investment opportunities in Tasmania, cutting red tape and delivering the infrastructure our community and businesses need. Our Business Growth Strategy, implemented earlier this year, is another example of the government working for business. The strategy outlines how together the private sector and the government can build on the high levels of confidence currently reported on by the Tasmanian business community, and take advantage of the emerging opportunities in our economy, including population growth, increasing tourism and exports, increased investment in neighbouring public infrastructure, and ensure government policies are aligned with business and industry goals and targets.

As the Treasurer stated in his foreword, we are living and conducting business in an exciting time in Tasmania. Confidence is high, our economy is strong and opportunities abound. To keep this going, we are laying down strong foundations to give small business every opportunity to thrive. Business thrives on certainty. It succeeds when confidence is high. It grows when the economy is strong and it creates and sustains real jobs for Tasmanians. We have been working to help our economy grow. That trend has been ongoing for the last five years and this helps create that confidence.

Our 37 300 small businesses are key to getting and keeping Tasmanians in work and driving grassroots investment, which underpins our economy and helps our communities prosper. Tasmania's small businesses have already shown that they are more resilient than those in other states and territories, maintaining the highest long-term survival rate in the country. Our businesses growth partnership between businesses and government has brought together the best ideas from across the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tasmanian Small Business

Council as well as individual businesses and community leaders. It outlines a bold vision to create a competitive environment strengthened by services, market information and a skilled workforce that supports innovation growth and creates jobs.

The Tasmanian Business Growth Strategy 2019-2023 is built on three key pillars: high levels of business confidence; taking advantage of emerging opportunities in our economy; and ensuring government policies are aligned with business and industry goals and targets. These support five action areas: programs and services for growth; fostering a business growth environment; red tape reduction and dispute resolution; capitalising on market expansion opportunities; and skilled development and support. This strategy outlines that, of the 38 300 businesses in Tasmania, small enterprises make up 97 per cent of Tasmania's business community. Of the 97 per cent of small businesses in Tasmania, two thirds are self-employed. In addition, 64 per cent of small businesses operate in six major industries, employing almost half of Tasmania's total private sector workforce.

Tasmania has the highest business survival rate. Of the 37 300 Tasmanian businesses operating in June 2014, 68 per cent were still in business in 2018. Our small businesses make a big contribution to our economy. From 2014-15 to 2017-18, Tasmania's small business sector grew by 4.6 per cent - an additional 1643 businesses.

In developing the strategy in 2018, the Tasmanian Government listened to the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Tasmanian Small Business Council and over 180 businesses across urban, rural and remote areas of Tasmania. Small businesses shared their views; a vision for a Tasmania that best supports small business, increased infrastructure employing locals in Tasmanian-based businesses where business can trade with support but without interference and competition from government.

A Tasmania that best supports small business would minimise regulation to that which is absolutely necessary and have a public service that helps and assists small business navigate through the necessary red tape, just to name a couple of things that they have said. The strategy outlines how it is building on our robust foundations. Through 2018, the Tasmanian Government continued to build a solid track record of investing in and growing the small business sector.

The Business Tasmania service supported Tasmanians to start, run or grow a business, delivering through a range of traditional and online channels. The Enterprise Centres Tasmania program offered access to a statewide network of business advisers providing free business guidance and information. Businesses benefit from payroll tax reduction. Tasmania continued to have the most competitive payroll tax system in the country for payrolls up to \$4 million. From 1 July 2018, payroll tax reduced from 6.1 per cent to 4 per cent on payrolls between \$1.25 million and \$2 million.

Market expansion opportunities were delivered across different sectors to assist businesses to increase their capability and grow their markets, both interstate and overseas. Training and workforce development was supported by the Tasmanian Government, investing more than \$100 million annually in training and workforce development through Skills Tasmania, including programs that support small businesses in attracting apprentices and trainees.

Access to finance assisted businesses to achieve growth under various loans schemes, grants such as the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme, the No Interest Loan Scheme and support the sectors, such as the screen industry and primary producers. The strategy developed processes,

including the development of the Business Growth Strategy, which commenced with the Tasmanian Government and industry engaging in roundtable conversations across the state.

Over 70 Tasmanian businesses participated by sharing their ideas in identifying the key issues, challenges and opportunities to develop a way forward. Businesses and the community were also encouraged to make public submissions and more than 110 submissions were received. The outcome of the business and community consultations were then validated at an industry business summit.

The strategy also discussed how it has an action plan for government and industry. There is an opportunity to enhance Tasmania's small business landscape by helping people bring their ideas forward and turn them into businesses, helping early stage businesses with high-growth aspirations to be sustainable and achieve that growth, supporting those businesses facing tough challenges to increase their resilience and likelihood of success.

Tasmania's small business community can thrive in an environment that supports getting the best start possible, helps get businesses through the first four years and facilitates high growth and employment. This will result in a higher survival rate, more high growth businesses, increased employment and higher productivity.

The global business landscape will evolve and continue to change by 2023 and beyond. By working smarter and together, we can ensure Tasmania's small business economy will be in a strong position to respond to competition and grow into globally competitive businesses. The Business Growth Strategy will focus on enabling a vibrant business community by carrying out the initiatives detailed in the strategy. By developing initiatives in partnership with industry we ensure that the Tasmanian Government provides services only where the businesses themselves are not well placed to do so.

The action area now is providing supportive programs and services to enable growth and increased productivity. Affordable, independent, professional business advice and access to information is critical for small businesses at all stages of growth. The Tasmanian Government and industry will partner to build upon successful programs to ensure small business support is relevant and delivered to the highest standard and available when and where businesses need it.

The Business Tasmania service supports Tasmanians to start, run and grow their businesses by offering a personalised, consultative and first contact resolution service and referral to relevant government agencies. Consultation with business has identified that there is a need for services such as Business Tasmania, the Enterprise Centre Tasmania program and an independent mentoring program to continue undertaking strategic review of these programs to maximise the value, relevance and accessibility. This was a common theme.

The Winning Government Business program provides Tasmanian businesses with advice on how to be competitive in bidding on government tenders. This successful program is underpinned by the Tasmanian Government's Buy Local policy, which increases awareness of the requirements for, and the benefits of, buying locally and improving access to government contracts for small business. The following actions have been taken to enhance the Winning Government Business program: a review was undertaken of the Tasmanian Government's Buy Local policy for procurements valued at \$50 000 or more the mandatory minimum percentage to be attributed to the local benefits test, local impact evaluation criterion was increased from 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

The Tasmanian Government's Digital Ready for business initiative provides targeted assistance and advice to ensure Tasmanian small businesses are digitally literate and competitive in the digital economy. The following actions will be undertaken to enhance Digital Ready for business, including, continuing to update the Digital Ready website content and service offering; hosting business workshops in partnership with industry bodies; developing a new digital check-up assessment tool, which will identify specific areas small business can improve their digital presence.

As a Liberal Government, we can actually understand the crucial importance of the private sector when it comes to generating economic growth and creating real jobs for more Tasmanians. The Government is helping to grow the economy and create jobs by supporting businesses to develop a skilled workforce. The evidence is found in the latest Sensis Business Index. It is official: Tasmanian businesses are now the most confident in the nation and again, Tasmanian businesses were the most supportive of the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's policies compared to all other state and territory governments. This sentiment is backed up by a number of other sources, including the July 2019 CommSec State of the States Report, which confirmed that Tasmania's annual economic growth rate was the second highest in the nation and we are now solidly maintaining our third position overall.

Tasmania leads the nation on equipment investment, relative population growth, housing finance, housing starts and retail sales. Under the Labor-Greens government, Tasmania was ranked dead last on key economic measures.

Our record expects our strong economy to grow further, noting that Tasmania is now solely in third position. In fact the strength of relative population growth, home purchasing and construction could see the Apple Isle battling with New South Wales and Victoria for top position in the year ahead. Likewise, the National Australia Bank monthly business survey for June 2019 showed that Tasmanian businesses continue to enjoy the strongest business conditions in the nation for the sixth consecutive month in a row. This is in stark contrast to the Labor-Greens government when two out of three businesses felt that the government was working against them.

The Deloitte Access Economics report and ANZ Stateometer for the March 2019 quarter pointed towards strong economy supported by good population growth, household consumption and public and private investment. The September edition of the *Tasmanian Business Reporter*, the TCCI publication, stated recent building and business statistics show a thriving and overwhelming positive economy. All of the above surveys and endorsements prove that the Hodgman Liberal government knows what business need to grow and prosper.

As a government, we are always listening to the feedback we receive from businesses and are looking to improve the operating environment. This is why we are investing in our small business growth strategy. Through this document we are aligning our policies with goals and targets of our small and medium businesses. The small business growth strategy contains five key priorities agreed for action and is designed to allow government and industry to work together to deliver supportive programs and services to enable growth and increase productivity and enabling an operating environment for business growth through reduction of compliance burden and dispute resolution. The small business growth strategy markets expansion opportunities for business and growth, and business growth through skill development and support mechanisms.

This bill supports the strategy and key priorities by reducing the regulatory burden placed on small businesses as the receivers of goods while maintaining appropriate levels of protection for owners of goods. These reforms are cutting red tape for small businesses that have to deal with

uncollected goods by simplifying the process of disposing of abandoned items. We know that outdated and unnecessarily complex rules can be a significant burden on businesses.

As part of the majority Hodgman Liberal Government's 2017-18 red tape reduction audit report, the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act 1968 was identified as requiring reform and modernisation. Since this act came into force in 1968 there have been major changes to business practices and the way in which businesses and consumers interact. However, there have been no updates made to the legislative framework to keep pace with these changes. This means that Tasmanian businesses have not benefited from improvements to the way in which they may legally dispose of uncollected goods, as has been the case in other jurisdictions.

Many businesses have been left holding goods and have experienced difficulties in legally disposing of them due to strict and complex rules governing the sale or disposal of uncollected goods. The cost of uncollected goods falls heavily on businesses, particularly the retail sector such as motor vehicle dealers, dry cleaners, jewellers and those selling perishable goods. There are many examples where this has occurred, such as towing businesses when owners do not get in contact after a damaged car has been picked up, or clothes that are left at a dry cleaner and never picked up and items left at accommodation providers.

Under the current requirements, the business is left facing the cost of lengthy storage periods, advertising and then sale by public auction in order to comply with the complex requirements currently in place. The communication and advertising requirements are outdated and do not allow for the use of less expensive and more effective digital means of communication. Anecdotal evidence received during the review firmly suggests that businesses are finding this process too onerous and may not be complying with the outdated requirements. This exposes them to legal risk and compliance action by the regulator.

Tasmanian businesses are the most resilient in Australia, with Tasmania having the highest business survival rate. We want this trend to continue, which is why we are introducing amendments such as this amendment to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens which make it harder for our small businesses to thrive.

I am pleased to support this bill which replaces the outdated act with modern legislation which contemporises consumer law in the interests of both business and consumers and brings our laws into line with those in place in other jurisdictions.

[5.40 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Building and Construction) - Madam Speaker, as I was attempting to say through Ms Butler's contribution, we had some difficulty taking down a lot of her questions, even with three advisers in the box and me trying to scribble them down. I considered whether we would adjourn so we had the benefit of the *Hansard* but maybe it might be a lesson now for Ms Butler for next time. We have a fair bit of collegiality in this House and most other members would slow down -

Ms Butler - I don't agree with you and I think you're being quite rude.

Ms ARCHER - There is no need to take an antagonistic approach on a bill where you are not opposing it.

Ms Butler - Don't scold me.

Ms ARCHER - Dr Woodruff and Ms Ogilvie took the approach that -

Ms Butler - Why do you have to be so nasty all the time with everything? You can't be professional -

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler.

Ms ARCHER - I am making the point for the benefit of my hardworking department as well -

Ms Butler - You are being patronising.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler. I urge you not to chat across the Chamber.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is difficult when we are genuinely trying to answer legitimate questions that the member has in this House to take all the questions down, so my apologies if we have missed some. We managed to get 10 down. There are probably more than that but between all of us we will attempt to answer them.

I thank members for their contributions and largely for taking the approach they have in supporting this bill, because it is a priority of our Government to reduce regulatory burden, which we refer to often as red tape. It is important for us to do that, particularly for small businesses, as I said in my second reading speech. As we saw from Mrs Rylah's contribution, a bit of compare and contrast from what the old provisions required of a person to do show it was fairly onerous at times, particularly in relation to having to go right up to the Commissioner for Police to get approval for disposal. Streamlining the process, making it easier, categorising the value of goods and ensuring that there is that easier notification process will make it easier for businesses to deal with this difficult issue.

From feedback from small business it came back how difficult it has been for them when they are left with goods, particularly large, sizeable goods, and they simply do not have the storage space. Some of the feedback we got was that they had held items for decades because it was so difficult for them to not only locate the original owner of the goods but to settle the issue and/or dispose of the goods. This will make that process easier for them. What the bill has attempted to do is take a balanced approach so that consumers have their rights protected but also owners and proprietors of businesses have the ability to dispose of these goods.

I had a bit of a chuckle during my speech in relation to the dry-cleaning example but it is one of the best-known examples. As I was talking to some colleagues, some of us have been guilty of getting things altered and accidentally leaving them with the dressmakers or alterations person. It is probably what we call them today but I still call them dressmakers.

Ms Butler - Many of my constituents would never have any understanding of what that is about.

Madam SPEAKER - I do not think we have discussions through the Chamber. We know the rules.

Ms ARCHER - It was a rather odd contribution from Ms Butler.

Ms Butler - It is a very upper-class thing to say, isn't it?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Butler, warning number one.

Ms ARCHER - I am using an example that I think a lot of people will identify with but it is not the only example. I was using an example that I had a discussion with my colleagues about. There are many other examples I could give in relation to these scenarios.

I will deal with some of these questions in the order I have them. The first question I have is the clarification as to why the \$5000 threshold was set. The high-value threshold being set at more than \$5000 recognises the potential financial impacts on consumers in this situation. The act does not prevent disposal in this circumstance but it requires more time before goods can be disposed. It also requires a public auction or private sale in an attempt to ensure the best price is obtained. The approach adopted and the threshold set has been based on the Victorian model and this was considered to be the most appropriate model for the Tasmanian market. We often do that. Members are well aware in this House that we look to other jurisdictions and how something has worked in those jurisdictions.

Another question was, is non-monetary value considered in the value of the goods? It will be up to the business whether to consider non-market or sentimental values. As to who decides the value of the goods, the receiver of the goods, that is the business, determines that as they are in certain businesses and dealing with similar goods on a daily basis and they are in the best position to make an estimate of what the market might pay for those goods. Common examples are jewellers with their expertise or car repairers. They can make that decision based on their experience or after referral to any guides the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading may have determined are helpful in making these decisions.

The next question was whether I could confirm what is meant by a 28-day notice period, and what is meant by reasonable time frame, which I will deal with together. When consumers leave goods, good business practice is that an arrangement is made about the collection of the goods. Ms Butler gave an example of picking something up the next day. This arrangement may be oral or in writing. An example of being in writing would be a dry-cleaning docket or some other similar docket, or a prominent sign may be displayed in the store similar to the following. There may be a sign that says, 'Under the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Act, this business is able to dispose of goods that remain uncollected after a period of time'. They may even specify the period of time.

If a consumer does not return, they become uncollected goods and the business then has to contact the consumer. They should send them the goods disposal notice with a specified date by which they must be collected. As to reasonableness, if the goods are not collected within the specified time - for example, seven days after the notice is sent - they may be disposed of after the statutory period is gone. For example, for low-value goods it is 28 days passing since the notice was given. If no collection arrangements were made, the same procedures still apply. The business is to send the consumer the goods disposal notice with the specified date by which they are to collect the goods; for example, within seven days of the date of the goods disposal notice. If the goods are not collected within the specified date, they may be disposed of after the statutory period has also gone. Again, low-value goods to be 28 days passing since the notice was given.

The same notice procedure applies but the statutory time period for waiting is longer when a consumer cannot be contacted or located after having given the goods disposal notice, which is 60 days for low-value goods. A business can get in touch with the consumer by a number of different means. It could be a phone call, including text messages, it could be by facsimile - a lot of people do not use faxes anymore but they do still exist for some - by email, by post, a copy of

the disposal notice left at the provider's last known address, and personal communication face-to-face, which depends on the type of business. Whether they know someone or know of someone, there are going to be different situations that apply across our state. In rural and regional areas, it may well be that the person is known to the business and they may choose to call around because they know them. Someone may genuinely have forgotten to pick something up, so we encourage that to occur. It is not always going to be a situation that needs to be adversarial. Someone can genuinely forget. I would encourage businesses to take up every option before taking the step of disposing of goods.

Another question was, what are the protections against fraudulent behaviour by businesses? This bill gives a right to the receiver of the goods to determine the market value of the goods before their sale. However, that right is mitigated by a duty to act fairly and reasonably. In contract law, common law good faith duties apply. Certain conduct may lack good faith if one party acts dishonestly or fails to have regard to the legitimate interests of the other party. Australian courts have found business dealings to be not in good faith when they involve one party acting for some ulterior motive or in a way that undermines or denies the other party the benefits of a contract. A court could overturn the sale if the receiver did not act in good faith in their value and sale: for example, if a business had grossly undervalued goods and kept them.

Under common law, good faith requires parties to an agreement to exercise their powers reasonably and not arbitrarily or for some irrelevant purpose. The bailee in common law, who is the receiver, to use plain English, therefore has a duty to act in good faith and with honest standards of conduct. They must not act unconscionably, capriciously or with some ulterior and unlawful purpose. There are all of those principles at common law that apply in this situation involving that type of behaviour or fraudulent activity.

Another question was, how does the unclaimed monies process work? The unclaimed monies provision ensures that any money left over after an item is disposed, and the relevant charge is retained by the receiver, can be collected by the provider. This is a common process in other Tasmanian laws.

Notice requirements and what are the appropriate methods: the bill sets out requirements for the receiver to give notice to the provider, so the receiver is the business and the provider is the consumer. The receiver is required to give notice in writing to the provider of the receiver's intention to dispose of uncollected goods. That notice must specify the receiver's name, a description of the goods, an address at which the goods may be collected, a statement of the relevant charge payable to the receiver for the goods. Also, if the relevant charge is likely to increase a statement of the current relevant charge and an estimate of further charges that will accrue, a statement to the effect that on or after a specified date the goods will be disposed of unless they are collected and the relevant charge paid. And, if applicable, a statement to the effect that the receiver will retain from the proceeds of sale of the goods an amount not exceeding the sum of the relevant charge and the disposal costs.

For completeness, there is no special form that must be used for this notice, but it should contain all of that information. That is to make it easier for people. They do not have to fill out a specific form or get their hands on a specific form. It can be sent in any manner or form chosen by the business so that the consumer can understand what they need to do to get their goods returned. That process is meant to be as flexible as possible, rather than requiring a set notice like you would a court document. It gives that flexibility to notify someone of all of that information.

Another question: on what basis can compensation be sought? I am not quite sure when you are actually asking compensation might be sought, because there is nothing in the act that prevents a customer or any person from exercising their rights at common law to seek compensation or remedy for the loss or damage to goods, which is a different situation from what this bill is dealing with. The action under this bill will not mean they will be entitled to receive the goods back if they have been disposed of by the business, but it does not remove the right to seek compensation civilly. This is just dealing with the disposal aspect, so they can still pursue the same or similar avenues that they could have before.

Can a business dispose of goods before the court makes a determination? The bill requires that records have to be kept of the sale and the price gained by the sale. Those records could be reviewed by the Director of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading if a complaint from a consumer needed to be investigated. It should be noted that for a dispute over the condition of the goods or the cost of repairs of the goods, if these matters are referred to a court the receiver cannot sell those goods until those issues are resolved as the bill does not allow those goods to be disposed of before these issues are decided. Clause 16 of the bill specifically deals with this in the 'cannot dispose of' provisions. You cannot dispose if there is a dispute over relevant charge and an application has been made to the court. It basically puts that on hold until that is determined.

The tenth question was, what are the penalties for non-compliance? The key ones are failure to conduct a search on disposal of a high-value motor vehicle. You must not dispose of a high-value motor vehicle, which is \$5000 or more, unless you have obtained a written search result of the Commonwealth Personal Properties Securities Register.

Another one is failure to give the purchaser of a vehicle a receipt containing specific information. If you sell an uncollected vehicle without a court order you must provide the purchaser with a receipt containing specific information, including your name and address, the vehicle's last registration number, if available, and vehicle identification number.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate

[6.00 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to read some initial comments to the House about the international panel on climate change special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, which was just tabled less than a day ago in the principality of Monaco.

I have not had time to read this in depth. I am afraid to say that it has the same gravity of news that the recent IPCC reports have brought to us, the one on land use and land use change, and the previous one in October last year on the state of our progress towards meeting the targets that we must meet to hold to the Paris Agreement, which we have committed to, as has a group of countries on the planet. That report in October last year made a very clear statement that we are failing to meet those targets.

Today, we have a special report on the state of the world's frozen ice and snow, glaciers, sea ice, ice in lakes and rivers and in the sea, as well as the warming of the ocean and the acidification of the ocean. It is very difficult reading, even the headlines. I just want to dwell on some of the comments that have been made from that very important report.

More than 100 scientists from more than 30 countries have brought together the best knowledge about where we are and the news is very poor. We are melting ice everywhere around the planet faster than it has ever been recorded and that is changing the circulation of the water on the planet, changing the circulation of the oceans and that in turn is affecting the global weather patterns. It is affecting the heating of the water, the acidification of the sea, which is also affecting the ability of molluscs and other marine animals to create hard shells.

How is this affecting Tasmania? In Tasmania in 2015-16, we had the longest-ever recorded marine heatwave. For 251 days the water off the east coast of Tasmania was three degrees, or more, higher than the long-term average for water. For 251 days, the most intense and the longest-ever recorded marine heatwave on the planet, off our east coast.

We know after that we now have no more kelp forests growing on the east coast of Tasmania. We have a huge number of feral invasive species that are moving into the area, and we have an extension of these spiny sea urchins, *Centrostephanus*. It has been present on the east coast of Tasmania for a while but the evidence of *Centrostephanus*, the sea urchin, is that it has dominated and overtaken the rocky reefs of at least 30 per cent of the east coast of Tasmania. The expectation is that unless dramatic changes are made in how we manage the east coast ocean, the animals in it and our fishing of that place, there will be a 30 per cent loss in a couple of years, and predictions of more than 50 to 70 per cent in the several years after that.

We know from scientists that in the north of the east coast, that up to 50 per cent of rocky reefs have already disappeared. That means dire impacts on all the fish that live in the rocky reefs that require those reefs for their survival. It means with the warming of the waters that is happening there is a real devastation and grave threats for abalone, rock lobster, scallops, finfish and scale fish, not only for the intrinsic values of those fish and their beauty and what they provide to the whole ecosystem of the east coast, but to all the commercial industries that survive from fishing rock lobster, abalone, scallops and finfish, as well as the recreational pleasure that people have in dropping a line and getting abalone, finfish and scallops. We are really at risk of losing the intrinsic value of the rocky reef system on the east coast, our pleasure and enjoyment of that, not just now but before an unknown period into the future.

There is a pathway out of this. In addition to showing real climate leadership, which we have talked about a lot in this House this week, the first very fundamental step must be to create marine protected areas because the scientists tell us that is the way to protect rock lobster so they can grow to a large enough size to be able to predate on the sea urchin. Only a healthy sized rock lobster is an effective way of having any impact on sea urchins. When they are large enough, they can crack them open and get rid of them. We will never be able to keep up by sending scuba divers in to pick them up unless we hold back and stop fishing in marine protected areas so that the whole area can develop a healthy functioning of the ecosystem, which we have the evidence will happen. When we have marine protected areas we have flourishing beautiful marine life like off Ninepin Point on Maria Island.

Time expired.

Mental Health Staff - Recruitment from Overseas

[6.07 p.m.]

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I wish to add to an answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition this morning in relation to the recruitment and appointment of mental health staff. I can advise that on 25 January this year the Chief Psychiatrist and four Tasmanian Health Service staff travelled to the United Kingdom to interview 19 mental health nursing and medical professionals who applied to work in Tasmania. Of those 19, 14 were deemed suitable and offers of employment have been made to 11 people to come and work in Tasmania as mental health nurses. Three of the 14 suitable applicants subsequently chose to take up positions elsewhere but nine of the 11 nurses have accepted their offer of employment and there is one psychiatrist who has accepted a position.

This targeted recruitment approach included advertisements promoted through social media and in the United Kingdom through professional journals. The Department of Health also worked with the Department of State Growth to identify sponsored migration options for successful applicants. All applicants who have accepted positions are in the process of gaining AHPRA registration and visas.

Unfortunately it is not always a simple thing to fill specialised positions. It is recognised that nationally there is a shortage of appropriately skilled staff in this area, but it is pleasing to see good progress being made here.

Climate Emergency - Actions by Government and Opposition

[6.09 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, the good news is that the South Australian parliament has today declared a climate emergency. When I say 'good news', I use those words cautiously because the fact that we are in a climate emergency is not good news. It is the worst possible news, but the truth has now been acknowledged by the South Australian parliament and by more than 1000 local governments and jurisdictions around the world. As I mentioned earlier this week, the Glenorchy City Council will be debating a climate emergency motion brought on by Alderman Kelly Sims on Monday 30 September.

This sits in stark contrast to how this parliament responded to our move to declare a climate emergency or on supporting the climate strike. In this parliament on this issue we regard the major parties as on a unity ticket. After last night uniting to vote against the Greens motion to support the climate strike movement, today our colleagues in here refused to take responsibility.

The Liberals claim to be global leaders, yet are planning to log 356 000 hectares of natural carbon-sink forests. Those forests are a gift to the world and to future generations. In Estimates this year when we asked the then Resources minister, Ms Courtney, what the plan was for that vast carbon bank, the statement from the minister was that there were no plans to log those forests. Now, in parliament this week we hear from the Premier, the Treasurer and of course from the Minister for Resources that these forests are regarded as a wood bank.

If you believe the science, as Dr Woodruff and I do, you will know that they are in fact a carbon bank. We have had a little bit more dishonesty from the Government today on Forest Stewardship Council certification, because we know that the interim report went to Sustainable Timbers

Tasmania. We had that confirmed by SGS Global. The Government's statement to try to obfuscate the fact that STT has failed to achieve FSC certification says the Government has not received the interim report. They probably said, 'Don't give it to us,' and then the next statement is a Sustainable Timber Tasmania spokesperson saying STT has not received the FSC audit report.

You are being tricky with language. We know what you are up to here. The interim report went to STT on 31 May this year, four months ago, and clearly no-one in government asked for the interim report and now STT is stating that it has not got the final audit report. We know that STT has failed FSC certification and the fact that the minister this morning could not deny it tells us everything we need to know.

What did Labor do at their last state conference? They voted for motion 28 on forestry, which says:

Labor also believes Tasmania now has the appropriate balance between timber production and conservation of its forests.

Motion 29 says:

Labor does not support the establishment of any new reserves such as the Tarkine National Park, Tarkine World Heritage Area, nor the transfer of any other timber production forests into reserves.

That is Labor slapping children in the face again. Those 356 000 hectares of high-conservation-value carbon-sink forests which were set aside as a second tranche of reserves under the Tasmanian Forests Agreement were always intended to go into reserves because of their high conservation value and at a time of climate emergency it is even more critical that they be protected. Labor, woeful Labor, could not even get up in this place today and defend themselves on a censure motion. Woeful, pathetic Labor could only last night vote to acknowledge the climate strikers, not support them.

Madam Speaker, we acknowledge that all manner of sins and wicked people exist - Scott Morrison, Donald Trump and the Liberal and Labor coal-loving donor - but we would never support them. That is the difference between supporting and acknowledging something. Hand-wringing and lip service are meaningless. How we vote is why we are here. It is the power of our vote that demonstrates our accountability to Tasmanians.

I hear that the Treasurer, after I got turfed this morning for standing up for young people on climate, had a crack at me and said I was unable to control myself. Well, to coin one of his phrases, I make no apology for being passionate about climate action and the protection of our forests and the future of young people. Young people need a voice in this parliament, not excuses, and we will be that voice. They need leadership and climate champions and it is clear that they will not be found in the Liberals or Labor, regrettably.

For every young person who looks to us for leadership, they will know that Elise Archer, Guy Barnett, Shane Broad, Jenna Butler, Sarah Courtney, Anita Dow, Michael Ferguson, Peter Gutwein, Ella Haddad, Sue Hickey, Will Hodgman, Jennifer Houston, Roger Jaensch, David O'Byrne, Jacquie Petrusma, Jeremy Rockliff, Joan Rylah, Mark Shelton, Alison Standen, John Tucker and Rebecca White voted not to support the climate strike.

They let down thousands of Tasmanians, particularly those who attended the strike, and then they voted, like Ms Standen, to water down our motion to remove the support and hope for young people. A disgraceful performance, Madam Speaker, disgraceful.

Member Suspended
Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am very unimpressed with this behaviour, Ms O'Connor, but this is -

Ms O'Connor - Could you be specific please, Madam Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - Yes, I think it is disgraceful. You are trying to shame people. You are two opinions in the whole parliament. It does not make your opinion correct. I do not believe the people you have named did not vote to support the climate change. In fact, if I could see that motion, the one that was voted on, it actually does recognise the strike. You will not bully and intimidate people in this parliament.

Ms O'Connor - With respect, Madam Speaker. Bully and intimidate?

Madam SPEAKER - You have done nothing but be cranky and rude all day. I ask you now to leave this Chamber because you have finished.

Ms O'Connor - Bully and intimidate. I take offence.

Madam SPEAKER - That is exactly how we feel, is that not the way?

Ms O'Connor - Madam Speaker, your vote speaks for itself.

Madam SPEAKER - Good. Now, leave the room. That is a classic example of bullying and intimidation.

Ms O'Connor - We will send the *Hansard* out to everyone. Do not worry about that.

Madam SPEAKER - That is a classic example of bullying and intimidation. Appalling behaviour.

Ms O'Connor withdrew.

Climate Change
Volunteering Tasmania
Kingston Parkrun
Kingston High School - Popstars

[6.16 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, much as I would like to respond on that, I feel that I have been bathed in self-congratulatory vitriol of grandstanding in the extreme and I remind people in this place to hold their heads up high. In this place we supported a motion that recognised

the young people of Tasmania and their passion for climate change. I remind the Leader of the Greens of the importance of leadership and I, as a person who attended the rally and have a strong passion for climate change action in this place, and as a parent, I take strong offence at the Leader of the Greens' accusations.

All I can say is that if it was not for Labor supporting the Government's amendments on that motion, I do not believe the motion would have gotten up at all within this place, and that would have been a shame.

Politics, I believe, is the art of the possible; it is about finding the middle ground and that is what the people of Tasmania are looking for.

Passionate as I am about that, I want to talk briefly about volunteering in Tasmania, because this is the week that Volunteering Tasmania celebrated 25 years, a monumental milestone for the organisation and the nearly 300 000 Tasmanians, who generously volunteered their time in the past year.

These are people like Edna Pennicott, I would like to say, a friend of mine who has contributed more than 25 years in community service and achieved a lifetime achievement award this year for her work for Kingborough Helping Hands; Di Mason from Melanoma Tasmania, another cause I am very passionate about as a melanoma survivor myself; Caroline Cochrane, whom I have met is an inspiring woman; Lisa Pohl who ran the animal evacuation centre in Huonville, Meals on Wheels people, ambulance and fire brigade volunteers, community organisations like Streets to Home, Loui's Van and the list goes on and on.

The report that was released at the stunning celebration at Government House this week, the State of Volunteering Report Tasmania, shows that 68.6 per cent or over 297 000 Tasmanians over 15 years of age volunteer in Tasmania. The value of that volunteering in the past 12 months alone was estimated at \$4 billion. I congratulate Volunteering Tasmania and all volunteers in this state for the contributions that they make to their communities and to services right across the state.

On that theme, I want to note that last Saturday I participated with my family in the Kingston Parkrun. Parkrun is a global movement, five-kilometre walks, runs, timed events, run within communities by volunteers. This was the inaugural event at Kingston Park and it was thrilling to see the mayor and deputy mayor come out, who ran quite an impressive time, I must say. For my part, I walked. I took my dog, Buddy, which was a lot of fun. As long as you keep animals on a short leash, they are encouraged to go along and you can take prams, but not prams and dogs - just one or the other. I congratulate everybody involved in getting that event off the ground.

On 17 September I had the pleasure of attending the Kingston High School spectacular of *Popstars*, the 1990s musical. There were 70-plus students, a band, staff and production crew involved in the Kingston High School's *Popstars*. It was such infectious fun. I enjoyed the night immensely and I thank Kingston High School for putting on such a spectacular event.

The Pink Run - Launceston

[6.20 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak about a fantastic event that was held in Launceston on the 15 September and that is the Women's 5K held by the Cancer

Council, also known as the Pink Run. Tasmanian Labor entered a team of Michelle O'Byrne, the member for Bass, Rebecca White, the member for Lyons and Leader of the Labor Party, Ella Haddad, the member for Clark, Melissa Lewarn, media advisor for the Labor team and me. Yes, it is not only for women. Men are also encouraged to enter. Much to my own surprise, I finished the 5-kilometre race in 20 minutes and 34 seconds. That had me as the seventh person across the line out of 1708 participants, which is a quite an extraordinary number of participants. I managed to get on the podium, so I was third out of 139 men. That was a massive surprise. I am quite competitive I suppose; I just cannot help myself.

Mrs Rylah - I can't imagine that.

Dr BROAD - No? It was a fantastic event and the course was really interesting because it looped around and you came into contact with the people who were walking or running as you went past. It was an amazing atmosphere of high-fives and everybody raising money for breast cancer and awareness of cancer. It was a fantastic event. It was not only about the competition for me.

I ran for Amanda Butler, my good friend's wife, who died of breast cancer late last year. It goes to show that cancer can strike anybody at any age. Amanda was only in her mid-40s and left behind two small children, the youngest of whom may not remember her mother. That is why I participated, and it was a fantastic event. I encourage everybody to enter because it raises money for an amazing cause and I will do my best to enter again in 2020.

Newstead College - *Little Shop of Horrors*

[6.23 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the Newstead College production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, which played at the Earl Art Centre earlier this month. Newstead College is a relatively small school with around 550 students and approximately 44 full-time equivalent teaching staff. They do an exceptional job to produce performances of this size and quality.

The polished performances delivered on all five nights of the show were testimony to the fact that the cast and crew of 30 committed young people had been diligently rehearsing since the beginning of the school year. This musical theatre performance focused on shop assistant, Seymour, who was played convincingly by Oli Hargrave, right down to the perfected New York accent that he even managed to maintain in song. The main character, Seymour, worked in the florist shop in a struggling community and was in love with his co-worker, Audrey. The florist shop had fallen on hard times and Seymour stumbled across a strange and interesting plant that he successfully grew and named Audrey, too. This was no ordinary plant of course. It brought him success and fame but that came at a price. The plant was bloodthirsty and needed human blood to survive. In the end, it was a cautionary tale. It brought him success and fame but the fame cost Seymour everything. It was a lesson on being careful what one wishes for.

The entire cast gave outstanding performances and their passion shone through and was apparent to all who attended. The cast and crew are to be congratulated on all their hard work, dedication and the outstanding production that resulted from many months of work that had gone into it.

All of the outstanding young people deserve a special mention. Congratulations to Dejha Bainbridge, James Braune, Alyssa Bryan, Jorja Casey, Madison Digney, Cassius Everett, Blake George, Kaileb Goss, Oli Hargrave, Alice Hilliard, Madison Kester, Liam Nicholson, Hannah Reynolds, Saree Salter, Lucy Van Lierop, Laura Wilson, Paige Broere, Riely Burns, Crystelle Dawkins, Rose Emmett, Kamryn Massey, Aaliviah McLean, Toni Prestage, Alysha Richardson, Nikki Seabrook, Riley Waites, Olivia Young, Rory-Lee Clark, Shane Cook, Jemima Kinman, Luke Otten, Ruby Stevenson and Abbie Tregurtha. These fantastic productions would never happen without the hard work of dedicated teaching staff. Thanks and congratulations to Christine Gilmore, Alarna Hingston, Chris Cabalzar, Don Hinds, Eliza White and Sam Braune. Well done to all.

The House adjourned at 6.26 p.m.