



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 31 July 2024

REVISED EDITION

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Wednesday 31 July 2024

The Speaker, **Ms O'Byrne**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Aboriginal Embassy Encampment

The SPEAKER - Before I call the Premier on indulgence, I have been asked by members about the Aboriginal embassy encampment taking place on the lawns. I am advised that they will hold their embassy until they can meet with the Premier. We will monitor it from a safety perspective for both the participants in the protest and people using the lawns into the future. I will update the House if there is anything to add to that.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Rex Airlines - Voluntary Administration

[10.02 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the House for their indulgence.

I rise to provide a statement on the unfolding situation with Rex Airlines. Our government is committed to ensuring our regional and rural communities continue to grow and prosper and that our visitor economy remains strong.

A critical part of this is maintaining aviation capacity in our state. Many of our regional and remote communities and Tasmanian businesses rely on our airlines to deliver essential products and services, connect them to other areas of Tasmania and the mainland, and provide freight, mail and logistics. These aviation services are also important to our tourism and hospitality industries, which inject about \$3.5 billion in visitor spending into the Tasmanian economy. I have spoken to Amy Hills, CEO of the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania.

I am very concerned about Rex Airline's announcement that it has entered voluntary administration. Rex plays an important role in our regional communities, particularly King Island. We stand ready to work with the Commonwealth Government on a pathway forward. This morning, I contacted the Prime Minister to stress how important Rex's regional services are to Tasmania, particularly the north-west coast and King Island. I welcomed the Prime Minister's openness to exploring options to support regional routes, which is much appreciated. I made it clear that we cannot afford for our regional services to stop, as the social and economic impact would be significant. The Minister for Transport, Mr Abetz, has also written to his federal counterpart, Catherine King, to highlight the situation in Tasmania.

The Department of State Growth is working with the King Island Council and shipping and freight companies to ensure that the island has adequate supplies and services. I spoke to the Mayor of King Island, Marcus Blackie, the Mayor of Burnie, Teeny Brumby, and the Mayor

of Devonport, Alison Jarman, and will continue to do so as the situation unfolds. I will also keep in regular contact with key stakeholders in Devonport and Burnie.

I am advised that regional services, including to King Island, have currently not been impacted. However, flights to Hobart have been cancelled. I will continue to be briefed on the situation and will update the community as new information becomes available.

I remain hopeful, as I am sure all in the House do, of a positive outcome for our regional communities. I will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government on a pathway forward.

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE GREENS

Rex Airlines - Voluntary Administration

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, on indulgence, I will make a comment from the Greens. We have been contacted about this and my heart goes out to people who are personally affected, and to people who are wondering about the impact, especially islanders around Tasmania, and how that might affect them.

I thank the Premier. It is very important to make sure that our island communities are not cut off. Rex's flights to Melbourne will have a serious impact for those people. Helen Burnet is our transport spokesperson and she will be making a further statement about the impacts of Rex's loss from Tasmania this evening.

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Rex Airlines - Voluntary Administration

The SPEAKER - I remind members that it is still very difficult to hear, so if people could do their best to project and speak slowly.

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, on indulgence, just briefly. I thank the Premier for the update. Our thoughts are with the 2000 workers at Rex whose jobs are in serious jeopardy at the moment. We send our thoughts to them, whether they are Tasmanian or Australian workers.

QUESTIONS

UTAS Sandy Bay Campus - Development of Housing

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

When you took over as Premier, Tasmania's economy had been ranked by CommSec as the best in the country for more than two years. Since you became Premier, Tasmania's

economic ranking has crashed to sixth in the country. We are barely ahead of the Northern Territory, and it was your predecessor who called that territory's economy 'a basket case'.

One of the reasons for this, as CommSec explains, is that new housing builds are down by more than 30 per cent on the 10-year average. Insolvencies amongst building companies are rising and building approvals are amongst the lowest they have been in eight years. Given the serious economic impact of the building slowdown, why are you opposing the development of 2000 new homes at the UTAS campus at Sandy Bay?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - First, do not invite interjections. Second, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are a persistent interjector. Unless you wish to join Mr Willie on the list of shame, I remind you of that now.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, the question is laced with irony, given that the member who asked the question did his best to block the Huntingfield development as mayor of Kingborough. We would have seen much more progress in that housing development if it was not for the mayor at the time. The mayor at the time is the current leader of the Labor Party. The question is laced with irony and, as we have become accustomed to with Mr Winter, laced with negativity and talking Tasmania down.

I look forward to ongoing engagement with the University of Tasmania, as we have had, and legislation we committed to, about which you were very silent during the election. At least we nailed our colours to the mast. We wait until the Labor Party starts sniffing the breeze then decides to make a commitment. As evidenced in the election campaign, Mr Winter was very proud of the policies they took to the last election, including \$2 billion worth of cuts across government. We nailed our colours to the mast. We have listened to the community and are providing those checks and balances which, as I understand it, are in other -

Mr Winter - Premier, do you support the 2000 new homes or not?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I support 10,000 new homes, and that is exactly what we are going to deliver. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data has revealed a national downward trend in dwelling approvals. Tasmania is not immune to national pressures of rising interest rates, and rising labour and construction costs impacting building. This is a national trend. However, we will continue to deliver on our 10,000 homes commitment. We will be further increasing housing supply, driving the Tasmanian economy and activating the critical, valuable and rewarding jobs in our construction sector.

We are also looking at measures we can take to relieve cost pressures where we can and looking forward -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WINTER - Do you support the university's plans to build 2000 new homes at the Sandy Bay campus?

The SPEAKER - I will touch on supplementary questions for a moment, if I can stop the clock. The rules for supplementary questions are that they must be actually and accurately related to the original question, and must relate to, or arise from, the answer. It can be a little difficult to determine the line between, 'I didn't get the answer I want' and the actual question.

In this case, I draw the Premier to the 2000 builds, because he did speak about the 10,000 builds.

Ms Finlay - He just needs to say yes or no.

The SPEAKER - And you, Ms Finlay, need to think about whether you wish to spend some time outside of the House.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, 10 000 new homes, I did say that, and we are proud of that commitment and of delivering at least 3600 homes since 2019. I have answered the question through the intent of the legislation, which is about those checks and balances, which is not unlike the legislation, as I understand, in other states of Australia.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Ms Dow, I am assuming you are having a conversation with your colleagues and not interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have mentioned -

Mr Willie - Anita is back in the party.

The SPEAKER - Mr Willie, props apply to everyone. You will put it down, thank you very much.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Willie. No props in this place. I also -

The SPEAKER - Just song quotes, Premier.

Mr Willie - You are changing language. That is what it is about.

The SPEAKER - Order, I remind members that we will progress to people being evicted today if this continues. I am sure, Dr Broad, that you are just reading that document and not waving it around as a prop.

Dr Broad - No, I am reading it.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I was going to comprehensively answer the question, but I have unfortunately run out of time because of Mr Willie. Never mind, I am sure I will get another one.

UTAS - STEM Facility

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.12 a.m.]

Your leadership has sent Tasmania tumbling down the national economic leader board. Thousands of jobs have been lost since your government went into minority. CommSec says that another reason for Tasmania's economic decline is the record number of young people leaving for the mainland. This has not been as bad since the 1990s. Your anti-development opposition to building 2000 new homes at Sandy Bay also means the university's plan for a \$500 million new STEM facility cannot go ahead. Will your ongoing attacks on Tasmania's only university push even more young people away from Tasmania and to the mainland?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He fails to mention the 3.8 per cent unemployment rate - lowest ever unemployment. If I recall -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The Deputy Premier is under the same rules as everybody else and people on my left will hear the answer in silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - in about 2012 - and I stand to be corrected on the date - the then minister for finance, Mr Bacon, issued a media release with an unemployment rate that had an eight in front of it. With more than half that unemployment rate now, that means more people are getting out of bed every day, going to work and providing for their families. This is what we need to continue to do with our support across industry sectors, whether that be tourism, agriculture, mining, forestry, aquaculture, or housing and construction.

That pipeline of work is there, which is very encouraging. The increase in interest rates is putting a lot of pressure on Tasmanians, as they are across the nation. It is not long before the Reserve Bank will release another interest rate; I hope and pray it has stabilised. That will add further pressure as a result of federal government monetary policy.

We have key areas of focus on stamp duty relief, support for industry for medium-density builds within the CBD - which is very important and part of our housing strategy - and our Draft Land Use Planning and Approvals tax legislation -

Mr Winter - Where is that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - and our development assessment. What is your view on it?

Mr Winter - You announced that one about 12 months ago.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Do not talk to us about where the legislation is: what is your view on it? Once again, the Leader of the Opposition -

Mr Winter - We support development. I do not know about you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you support development, you will support this, Mr Winter. When you go out today, bumping your gums in front of the cameras, you might want to tell the media exactly where you stand on the DAP legislation we are looking forward to tabling.

What is also important is our population strategy, which we released earlier this month. It is pleasing that, as a result of the economic policies of this government - our population strategy - we have seen a net increase of 25- to 30-year-olds since 2015, with more young people and families choosing to make Tasmania their home. We are proud of that, but there is more work to do. We need to attract more younger residents of Tasmania so we can continue to provide high-quality services and increase productivity.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time has expired.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Community - Treaty

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.16 a.m.]

Your government's failure to progress truth-telling and treaty, despite the promises of Peter Gutwein, has meant that we have a delegation of the Aboriginal community camped on our doorstep, desperate for action. It has been three years and there has been no progress. Words are hollow without action. The Tasmanian Aboriginal community sent the minister, Mr Jaensch, a draft treaty bill they prepared 18 months ago, and still, nothing. What will you say to the Aboriginal community camped outside about where truth-telling and treaty is up to in lutruwita/Tasmania under your leadership?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I have put my willingness to engage with Tasmanian Aboriginal people on record many times and my views are well known. Regarding meeting with the people outside, we have reached out and I am willing to engage. I have been willing to engage with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, irrespective of their communities, over the last few years.

It is important that the pathway forward is uniting and stops the divisiveness. I want to see Tasmanian Aboriginal communities working together. We have an advisory board group, set up under Mr Jaensch's leadership, progressing these matters that you speak of, appointed to work together with government to design a process for truth telling. It is important that it is led by Aboriginal people. It is also important that -

Dr Woodruff - It has been three years and he is not listening to them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is also important that we bring the entire Tasmanian community with us.

Dr Woodruff - There needs to be a legislative process.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, Dr Woodruff, we will hear the Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is important that we bring the entire Tasmanian community with us. It is important that Tasmanian Aboriginal communities work together on a pathway forward, and then moving forward with the Tasmanian community with truth telling, as we have spoken for in the past.

What concerns me most, and I expressed this many times leading up to the referendum on 14 October last year, was that irrespective of one's view of the Voice referendum, we could all agree and unite about needing to do better at reducing incarceration rates amongst Tasmanian Aboriginal people, ensuring life expectancy is greater for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and focusing on educational attainment and economic opportunity for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

We can all unite on that. That is my focus going forward regarding supporting Tasmanian Aboriginal communities and ensuring that we close the gap, literally, on all that unfortunate data.

Members - Hear, hear.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Supplementary question to that, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary.

Dr WOODRUFF - To the question that I asked the Premier, what will you say outside to the Aboriginal community about where the process is up to? Where is it up to? There is nothing happening.

The SPEAKER - If the Premier is comfortable, I will call him to that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have answered that question on where the focus of our government lies. We are working on setting up a discussion with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community outside and we look forward to that. I will speak of the importance of closing the gap, the importance of all Tasmanian Aboriginal communities working together in unity about this very important pathway forward, and also of our focus on the vital matters - more pressing matters than legislation and treaty - and those are closing the gap on those important issues of educational attainment and life expectancy.

The SPEAKER - Premier, the time for answering the supplementary has expired.

Community Housing - Maintenance

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr ELLIS

[10.21 a.m.]

One of the number one issues constituents bring to my office is maintenance on social housing properties managed by community housing providers. It is no surprise, as the report on government services data clearly shows, that Tasmanian community housing properties are the worst maintained in the country. More than one fifth of community housing properties have less than four working facilities or more than two major structural problems.

Time and time again, I have written to your office, to Homes Tasmania and to these community housing providers to raise individual cases of basic maintenance not being done. I have also had significant difficulty obtaining information from community housing providers on what they spend on maintenance. It is impossible to determine whether these housing providers are complying with the maintenance obligations they have with Homes Tasmania.

Do you accept that there is not only a complete lack of transparency in the management of community housing properties, but also that providers are failing social housing tenants?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question and advocacy on behalf of his constituents. I know he works hard to ensure that those Tasmanians doing it tough have the respect and dignity that they deserve by making sure that their properties are well maintained and fit for their families. I genuinely thank him for that.

I will say two things. First, a big thank you to our community housing providers. They are wonderful people, motivated by a desire to see a better future for Tasmanians doing it tough who rely on social housing. These groups are part of civil society. They provide social housing for almost half the Tasmanians who receive those services, with Homes Tasmania providing the other half. I know that they are motivated by extraordinary goodwill for their fellow Tasmanians, and we pay tribute to them.

Second, it is really important that community housing providers are held accountable for their work regarding the services that they provide to their community members. It has not been lost on me as a new minister that when you examine satisfaction rates for state-provided housing compared to social housing, in other states they have a higher rate of satisfaction among their social housing and a lower rate of satisfaction among their state-provided housing, which is our Homes Tasmania equivalent.

In Tasmania, that is reversed. It is an area that I have been asking some questions about because we should be doing better. Our people in social housing are telling us that they want to receive a better service from their community housing provider. It is, as you say, at a lower rate of satisfaction than other places, and we need to do better. Continuous improvement asks us that tomorrow is better than today. I am working closely with community housing providers - a key partner in our delivery and provision of social housing in this state - to see what more we can do together in a productive partnership that has served Tasmanians so well, motivated by community housing providers' goodwill to Tasmania and other structural advantages that they have: for example, the fact that they can receive Commonwealth rent

assistance payments that leverage more money from the federal government to support community housing in Tasmania.

I commit to the member that we will continue our work together in this important space. Thank you for your persistent advocacy on behalf of individuals, but also more broadly on behalf of communities. I thank our Community Housing providers, but also acknowledge that more needs to be done so we can continue to improve services for Tasmanians doing it tough.

Supplementary Question

Mr O'BYRNE - A supplementary question, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary.

Mr O'BYRNE - It was a superficial answer. The question was about the transparency of the obligations of social housing providers with the contracts they have with the state government to provide maintenance. You did not refer to transparency or that issue specifically. It would be good if the minister could answer that.

The SPEAKER - I call the minister for the supplementary.

Mr ELLIS - That is a matter that we are currently working through. Obviously, there are potentially legal matters that we need to take into consideration. If there are opportunities to provide more data and statistical information to the community about how we are going in relation to maintenance for social housing and other data more broadly, then it is something that we will be looking at closely.

UTAS Sandy Bay Campus - Development of Housing

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.26 a.m.]

Do you support the university's plans to build 2000 new homes on its vacant land at the Sandy Bay campus?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank Mr Winter for the question. I support 10,000 new homes over the next 10 years. I am also interested that residential completions are up some 2774, and to March, they are well above the ten-year average of 2374. They are far above where we were when the former Labor-Greens government were in power when the place went into recession.

Members interjecting.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - Sorry, Premier, I am hearing a point of order.

Mr WINTER - Standing Order 45, relevance.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, can I stop you? The Premier needs to stop speaking so I can hear the point of order. So does Mr Willie. I would like to hear the Leader of the Opposition in silence.

Mr WINTER - Standing Order 45, relevance. There was no preamble to the question. It was a simple question about whether the Premier supports 2000 new homes at Sandy Bay. I wonder if you could bring him back to the question.

The SPEAKER - There has been a history of rulings, and I look to former Speakers as I say this, where if there is a large preamble, the latitude that is given to that which is outside the Standing Orders is also granted to the answers. I will stop the clock. The Premier was speaking for less than a minute. He has addressed the 10,000 new homes and residential completions, and I draw him to the specific question about UTAS.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, honourable Speaker. The question at hand ignores the fact that we have tabled legislation. We will continue to engage with the University of Tasmania and other key stakeholders concerned about this matter about the checks and balances regarding the university and their plans for the build. We are committed to our 10,000 new homes.

You are up and about yapping now. Where were you in the campaign when you had microphones in front of your faces asking your opinion?

Mr Winter - I called the policy a fraud.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Nowhere, absolutely nowhere, like you are at the moment regarding the development assessment panels -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Member for Clark and member for Lyons, order. The member for Clark on my right, in case you are wondering.

Mr ROCKLIFF - which you are once again refusing to say to the community whether you support that.

If you want to improve the number of homes being built and the number of people who have that deserved right of having a roof over their heads and safety, then we need to ensure that we have a better planning pathway for those builds. Part of that and our plan is the Draft Land Use Planning and Approvals (DAPs) process. I look forward to you nailing your colours on the mast on that one rather than, as you always do, sniff the breeze.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question, but the point of order did draw him to it.

Mr WINTER - It is to restate the question, which was not answered. Do you support the university's plans to build 2000 new homes on vacant land at Sandy Bay? I still do not know the answer.

The SPEAKER - I will call the Premier. I remind members that sometimes we do not get the answer we want. Premier, I draw you to what was really a very specific question.

Mr Winter - It is a 'yes' or 'no' from you, really.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What I support is the university building infrastructure to educate people.

Election Promises - Finances

Mrs PENTLAND question to TREASURER, Mr FERGUSON

[10.30 a.m.]

During the last election campaign, Tasmanians witnessed both major parties making hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of new commitments in a bid to buy votes. This was despite February's Revised Estimates Report revealing a deficit of more than half a billion dollars, not to mention the net debt heading towards \$6 billion. You must be nervous about where things are heading. Are you now reconsidering your election promises in the best interests of the state?

The SPEAKER - I remind members that questions cannot have imputations about motivations in the way that was done then, for further reference.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank my colleague, member for Bass, Mrs Pentland, for her question. I want to congratulate Mrs Pentland on her outstanding speech yesterday to this House. I found it really heartwarming. It was great to meet the person and the story behind you, Mrs Pentland.

The government intends to keep all of our election promises. We made them in careful consideration. We took a really good look at what the Budget needed. We made a rock-solid commitment to the commission of inquiry responses. That is expensive. We acknowledge that there will be a high price financially to keep our children safe, as is our obligation. We intend to meet that responsibility. The Budget will show significant additional expenditure on 12 September to meet those obligations that not just the government, but we as MPs in this House of Assembly, have to the most precious and most vulnerable Tasmanians, our children.

We also carefully considered the stimulus in the community, supporting community organisations, supporting our housing aspirations and stamping out stamp duty. We carefully considered the cost as a responsible mainstream party in Tasmanian politics ought to do, and we were not able to keep up with the marathon of chasing Labor on their spending promises. We did not try. It was not possible. We could only see them off in the distance. There they were. They got up to \$4 billion. To be fair, it was more like \$3.6 billion of spending from the Labor Party. Mrs Pentland, you will be reassured that we made the considered decision that we

were not going to match Labor with their excessive, irresponsible and reckless spending promises.

Labor out spent the Liberal Party by about three to one. We intend to keep all of our election commitments. We carefully considered them. We know that they are part of the plan that Tasmanians voted for; the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future.

One thing as well, Mrs Pentland, we acknowledge the Budget is challenging. It is a hard time for states and we are not getting the support from Canberra that we deserve. We do not have that GST exemption for Macquarie Point that we deserve and we are not seeing -

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - They spent \$3.6 billion. They are in no position to be jeering.

The SPEAKER - I call the House to order. I do believe the Treasurer may have led with his chin, but we can all be quiet and listen to the rest of the answer.

Mr FERGUSON - We intend to prudently manage the Budget very carefully. I welcome the advocacy and the role that the JLN members have brought to this House. They have sought and been granted in their agreement the independent review into the state's finances. That is on track to be delivered by Mr Eslake in August. That is a good contribution to the economic debate, and we ought to have one. We need to have sensible decisions as we go forward. What we do not need is \$3.6 billion extra election spending from the Labor Party and their \$2 billion in cuts.

The SPEAKER - The Treasurer's time has expired.

Aboriginal Affairs Portfolio

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.34 a.m.]

Theresa Sainty is a respected palawa woman and inaugural member of Mr Jaensch's Treaty Advisory Committee. Two weeks ago, Ms Sainty resigned from the committee in disgust. In a letter to the minister, she said:

It was not surprising to hear that some of your right-wing Liberal Party colleagues are not supportive of the Truth-Telling and Treaty agenda. This explains your seeming disinterest in Aboriginal affairs across the board.

Particularly shocking to Ms Sainty was Mr Jaensch's suggestion that the Aboriginal community might need to change the narrative on Truth-Telling and Treaty. Clearly, things have reached breaking point under this minister. Will you take back the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio, make good on your government's promise and put lutruwita/Tasmania back on the path to Truth-Telling and Treaty?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank Dr Woodruff for her question. I repeat the importance of unity of purpose in these important matters: unity amongst Tasmanian Aboriginal people and unity amongst Tasmanians; in other words, bringing all Tasmanians along the very important journey, acknowledging our very dark past, and advocating for and acknowledging the importance of the matters regarding Closing the Gap.

You are correct about Ms Sainty's resignation from the Aboriginal advisory group on 16 July. Ms Sainty's reasons are a matter for her. Our minister has reached out and extended an invitation for Theresa to meet with him to discuss the issues of concern. I am sure the minister has thanked, and I also thank, Theresa for her knowledge and valuable contribution towards a process for Truth-Telling and Treaty in Tasmania.

Dr Woodruff - You need to intervene. This is broken.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Greens, I would rather you did not interject through this. I draw the Premier to the specific part of your question to avoid further interjections.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank minister Jaensch for his contribution to the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio, as challenging as that is. Minister Jaensch would attest to it being very rewarding as well. Mrs Petrusma is a former Aboriginal Affairs minister as well. The portfolio also has its challenges, particularly with the data about those key areas. What is important moving forward is that the Tasmanian community unite. If there is one thing that I was very disappointed with over the last 12 months, it is the disunity in discussion about matters pertaining to Aboriginal people nation- and Tasmania-wide.

What unites us is the need to more urgently focus on those areas that really matter. A priority over treaty legislation are those matters about closing the gap.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - I did not hear your answer to my question. Will you take back the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio and make good your government's promise? It was a promise.

The SPEAKER - It is the original question. The Premier's commentary about the minister was indicating his answer, but does the Premier wish to add to that answer at all?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have confidence in minister Jaensch on these matters. I hasten to add that we have worked very closely together on these important areas of responsibility. We will continue to work together, as we will continue to work together with all Aboriginal communities across Tasmania.

Tasmania's Economy

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.39 a.m.]

It is not just CommSec saying Tasmania's economy is flatlining. Deloitte Access Economics says so too. When you took over as Premier, those groups were saying our economy was outperforming the rest of the nation. Today, after two-and-a-half years of your leadership, they are instead forecasting that Tasmania will record another 1000 job losses over the coming year. They expect Tasmania's economic growth to be the weakest of any state this year and the weakest in the entire country over the next five years.

Are policies like blocking 2000 houses, a science education facility and development that you supported for a decade not part of the problem?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my right will also be quiet. I am quite happy to warn them as well. I am looking at Ms Ogilvie and the Leader of Government Business at the moment.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Are you not a bundle of joy? Out there, people are working hard, tradies are building, people who want to invest in Tasmania and have some skin in the game are employing people and providing for their families. All you do is talk the place down. I will be interested in your alternative budget.

Regarding the Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook, according to the latest outlook, Tasmania's economy is expected to have grown by 1.4 per cent in 2023/24. I also repeat the 3.8 per cent record unemployment, underpinned by growth in household consumption, business investment and international exports, for which I thank our hardworking industry. This is a pleasing result, given that Deloitte was previously forecasting a negative result. I remember the glee on the faces of those opposite when they were forecasting a negative result. You must be disappointed that we continue to grow.

This outcome is very close to the Treasury forecast in the 2023/24 budget of 1.5 per cent. Perhaps you could be a little bit more positive moving forward.

Mr Willie - You do not like being held to account. You are happy to take responsibility when it is all going well, but not when it is going bad.

The SPEAKER - That interjection went on for a very long time.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I look forward to detailing our Budget, which the Treasurer will outline on 12 September. There are 43 days to go. You will see not only investment in essential services, but also investment in areas where we can grow the economy - supporting our businesses and our first home buyers into their first home. That is what we are all about with the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. 43 days, and if I count Friday, Saturday, Sunday,

Monday, Tuesday, 48 days until the alternative budget is produced, maybe. Maybe we will see an alternative budget in 48 days. Will that not be a joyous occasion for you?

Mr Willie - Desperate to take the focus off you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I look forward to that. Maybe the honourable member has been listening to the media doyen, Mr Killick, who said maybe they will be a bit scared to put down an alternative budget in case they get their numbers wrong again. Dr Broad is very quiet over there about his numbers.

State Coastal Policy - Transparency of Advice Received

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

[10.43 a.m.]

To provide retrospective approval for a development that would otherwise be refused because it contravenes the State Coastal Policy, you have released a draft bill for consultation before tabling it in this place. In opening, the website promoting that consultation says:

The State Coastal Policy 1996 is a critically important part of the state's resource management and planning system and has served the state well in protecting the coast and providing for sustainable development.

Despite serving the state well, in May, you announced the need to change the coastal policy based on advice you had received. The community has repeatedly called for this advice, or a summary, to be released. People have until 5.00 p.m. this Thursday to comment on your plan to retrospectively approve a development that will benefit a multinational company, but they have not seen the legal or planning justification.

Who gave you the advice that an internationally owned development should receive special, legislated, retrospective approval? Will you release it so the public is informed?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The Tasmanian government supports a balanced and a sensible approach to developments that benefit Tasmania, while protecting our coastlines and our very important environmental values. As we have previously said, a recent legal view has brought into question the way planning authorities have applied the State Coastal Policy to developments.

That is why the government has acted. It is entirely appropriate for the government to sort this and bring some clarity to this position. The draft legislation released recently for consultation will remove uncertainties in existing and approved coastal infrastructure. It simply seeks to validate previous decisions made by planning authorities and the civil and administrative tribunals which may offend -

Mr Bayley - We know what it will do, minister. We are asking for the advice.

Ms Finlay - You know that it is not about a single project.

The SPEAKER - I remind Ms Finlay that she was not asked the question. The minister was. I am very happy for this to be a substantive debate for another part of the day, but both Mr Bayley and Ms Finlay will allow the minister to answer. Yelling across the Chamber at each other is not okay.

Mr DUIGAN - As I say, this is to seek to provide some clarity about things which may offend the State Coastal Policy in development on actively mobile landforms. This is to avoid legal challenges and remove any doubt concerning the validity of those permits. It is ensuring that planning permits for existing coastal infrastructure, such as boardwalks, fencings, lookouts, boat-launching facilities, bridges, jetties, golf courses - you name it - remain valid. This is incredibly important to protect our Tasmanian way of life, and it does not change coastal policy itself.

I point you to comments made by University of Tasmania senior law lecturer, Dr Rachel Baird, who has been reported widely in the ABC this week as saying the government's legislation was, 'A pretty well-measured response to provide certainty to the Tasmanian economy'. Dr Baird's comments also support the government saying that it is not changing the assessment process by any means. With all projects -

The SPEAKER - Minister, I draw you to the question in the 30 seconds you have left.

Mr Bayley - Will you release the advice?

The SPEAKER - Members of the Greens will stop interjecting. I have called the minister to the question.

Mr DUIGAN - Thank you, Speaker. Regarding the advice, I understand that is legal advice and, as you would understand, that advice remains privileged.

Supplementary Question

Mr BAYLEY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr BAYLEY - I heard the minister say in his answers that it is a recent legal view and that is why they are taking this action. He mentioned that the legal advice is privileged, but it is entirely up to the Attorney-General to approve that. Again, will he release that advice? It is within your government's power to do that. Will he release the advice?

The SPEAKER - That went far over the 30 seconds allowed for a supplementary question, but I will ask the minister to address that because it did relate to the answer the minister gave. He may wish to send it to the Attorney-General. That is a matter for him. Actually, sorry, you cannot. You have to answer it. Apologies, it is the new rule. I call the minister.

Mr DUIGAN - Honourable Speaker, I reiterate the appropriateness of the government's actions in this space to remove doubt that exists in this important area. In regard to the advice, my information is that it is privileged.

Dr Woodruff - You are wrong.

The SPEAKER - The minister is quite rightly resuming his seat. The Leader of the Greens will not yell out, 'You're wrong'. Out of interest, the words of interruption that, if used in moderation, are not unparliamentary are: 'Question', 'Order, order', 'Hear, hear' or 'Divide'. 'You're wrong' is not one of them.

UTAS Sandy Bay Campus - Development of Housing

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKCLIFF

[10.49 a.m.]

When you were elected in 2014, Tasmania had zero net debt. Your Budget mismanagement means you have posted the biggest deficit in Tasmania's history, not just by a little bit: you have obliterated the record. The Budget is now in record debt and Tasmanian taxpayers will be forced to pay nearly \$1 billion in interest over the next four years. You have now decided to cut jobs of health workers, emergency service workers and education department staff. Given those circumstances, why is your priority blocking 2000 new homes in a housing crisis?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Perhaps we could allow the Premier to make it all the way to the lectern in silence. Both sides.

A member - Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER - Do not 'hear, hear'. Both sides, thank you.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, the member might like to go outside when he is doing interviewing today, if he is allowed to after this performance, and detail exactly where you would not have invested.

Would you not have invested in record amounts of infrastructure? Would you not have invested during COVID to keep people in work, alive and well? Would you not invest in ensuring that we keep our children and young people safe? Would you not invest in the 2500 additional health professionals? Would you not invest in our schools across Tasmania?

I see new schools, first in generations. Right now, we are building two under our government: Brighton High School and Legana. If you throw in Penguin at \$20 million, you can add significant sums to those key infrastructure investments. I will tell you why we are investing in infrastructure, which is intergenerational infrastructure, and the importance of managing debt. Considering the infrastructure spend over the last 10 years and the infrastructure expenditure 10 years prior, frankly, the neglect in infrastructure -

Mr Ferguson - Four to one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Four to one, thank you, Treasurer. The neglect of the previous government investing in infrastructure meant we were picking up the ruins of a Labor-Greens legacy for our hospitals, schools and roads.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Honourable Speaker. My question was very specific. It was about 2000 houses in the middle of a housing crisis. I ask you to get the Premier to address the question, please.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Thank you. Before I rule on that, I remind Mr Ellis and whichever other minister thought they would helpfully assist me: I will decide about whether the answer is relevant.

There was a bit of a preamble in relation to the zero net debt in 2014 and the current budget deficit and its role in history. The Premier has been addressing most of that. I ask him to be conscious in the last 20 seconds of answering that question. Otherwise, I am sure we will get a supplementary.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, our decision to borrow to build has been vindicated when you see new schools, new classrooms, new roads, the Midland Highway, and the investments in ambulance stations and police stations across Tasmania -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - My question was about why the Premier is blocking 2000 homes in the middle of a housing crisis this year.

The SPEAKER - I ask the Premier to address that. He has up to a minute if he would like.

Mr ROCKLIFF - First, we are not blocking anything. We are putting checks and balances -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Mr Willie will probably put that down, or he can read it himself, but do not wave it around the Chamber.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank Mr Ellis as well. Always sharp as a tack. He has reminded me that the 3620 homes I referred to before, I mentioned 2019, but it was since 2020. An even better performance. Thank you very much.

Renewable Energy Zone - Proposal

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[10.54 a.m.]

At the Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT) community consultation on the proposed renewable energy zone at UTAS in Burnie on 27 June, the community was quite clear in asking for the Minister for Energy and Renewables to provide answers to their questions and a more suitable timeframe for consultation to occur in a room that the community can fit in. On 4 July, I extended an invitation for you to come to the north west and meet with the community. I have yet to receive confirmation that you are willing to do this.

Thank you for your letter yesterday, and I agree with you that there should be a forum in which matters can be discussed openly from both sides to identify common ground and a pathway forward. On 1 September, there will be a conversation about energy at the Burnie Town Hall, and constituents in Braddon would value your participation. Will you attend and speak at this important event in Burnie to provide the community with the information they need to understand the renewable energy zone (REZ) proposed in Braddon?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question and his continued interest in renewable energy, particularly in the north-west region. He understands that the government has long committed to the establishment of our first renewable energy zone, and has identified the north-west part of Tasmania, south of Burnie, as being the most prospective and our first declared zone. Consultation on the area and boundaries of that zone is ongoing and may go on for some time.

However, our REZ legislation is out in the community and being consulted on. It is an important piece of legislation for Tasmania, bringing a strategic and well-considered, well-planned renewable energy plan for Tasmania. This ensures we do not build more transmission than we need and that we put our renewable energy assets in areas where there is less contested land use so that communities that host assets derive benefits from hosting those assets. This is critical to your point about the consultation.

I wrote a letter back to you yesterday about an invitation to attend. In truth, we have seen some of those efforts about large-scale consultations in the north west be conflated into a bit of a slanging match on a range of issues. That is not necessarily serving the purpose of providing a two-way flow of information. I will ask my department to look at the way it is doing those consultations and scale those things back to people contained within that REZ who are impacted directly or have a perception that they are directly impacted. We will be seeking to have one-on-one conversations with those people.

I was in Burnie a week or so ago and I spoke to a wide range of community members about our hopes and dreams and how important that north-west part of the region is. It is not like I am not out there talking to the community. I will continue to do that, but walking into a big town hall meeting, where I am not so comfortable, will it be a genuine two-way flow of

information? I do not know if that necessarily carries a long way forward. We will continue to do targeted consultation and sell our message that this is very good and important for Tasmania.

Supplementary Question

Mr GARLAND - A supplementary question, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - Mr Garland on a supplementary.

Mr GARLAND - Considering that the community feels like they have been thrown under a bus by this REZ, should it not be incumbent on the minister responsible to address those community members? It is absolutely essential that if you are going to put the community in this space, you come and stand before them and answer their questions.

The SPEAKER - The first part of your commentary was a question on the obligation of the minister to attend such events. Minister, would you please address that? You probably have.

Mr Bayley - What if you do not get unanimous support?

The SPEAKER - And you can do it without Mr Bayley giving him any lines.

Mr DUIGAN - Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. What was the question? Am I going to the meeting? I go to the meetings. I am going to the meetings and am constantly talking to people about this. This is what I do. I talk to people ad nauseam about our plans to build more renewable energy in Tasmania.

What is really important for people who live in our proposed REZ - noting the boundary is not finalised - is that there is a piece of transmission that goes through that. It is existing infrastructure, but it is looking for an augmentation, an upgrade. There has been two years of consultation with those five or six people who are impacted by that transmission upgrade. To say that there has not been consultation with those people who are directly impacted is absolutely and utterly false.

Hobart Cenotaph - Impact of Stadium

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.00 a.m.]

With great fanfare earlier this month, your government and Macquarie Point Development Corporation released visualisations of the Stadium 1.0 design. Notably, in all visualisations released, none showed how the planned stadium would appear from the Cenotaph or how it would impact the sight lines. The CEO of RSL Tasmania wrote to you on 18 July expressing on no uncertain terms their concern about the impact of Stadium 1.0 plans on the Cenotaph. Mr Hardy wrote, 'At 54 metres tall, when only 96 metres from the Cenotaph, the stadium would dwarf the Cenotaph'. He further wrote:

The very essence of the Cenotaph is its sight lines. To destroy these sight lines is to desecrate, humiliate and pay little more than lip service to our sacred place.

Will you come clean with the RSL and Tasmanians and release visualisations which honestly show the impact of your stadium on the Cenotaph?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I acknowledge the importance of the Cenotaph as a place of remembrance. Tasmanians have a proud and distinguished history of military service, with over 17,500 veterans, ex-service and serving personnel living in this state. Our government and our Minister for Veterans Affairs certainly respect our veterans, as I do, and the sacrifices they made for the freedoms that we have to enjoy, including the freedoms that we have in this place for asking questions and holding governments to account.

I thank our minister for meeting with the RSL President, Mr Barry Quinn, and the CEO, Mr. John Hardy, last Friday. I understand that they were productive discussions. As I have said all along the way, we will have very productive discussions with the RSL, very good consultation, and understand and respect their views to ensure that any visual impacts can be mitigated as we work with them on a Macquarie Point precinct redevelopment that we can all be very proud of.

Supplementary Question

Ms JOHNSTON - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I am hearing a supplementary from the member for Clark.

Ms JOHNSTON - From the Premier's answer, I infer that he will not be releasing any visualisations. Premier, please confirm if that is because you do not have any visualisations for the Cenotaph or because you do not want to release the ones that you do have?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Further to my answer, I understand that we have scheduled a meeting with the RSL in early August where we can talk about these matters and the concerns they have in a full and transparent way.

UTAS Sandy Bay Campus - Development of Housing

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.03 a.m.]

The business community strongly opposes your anti-development attack on the University of Tasmania. Your coalition colleagues, the Jacqui Lambie Network, appear to have joined that call as well. Even members of the Liberal Party do not appear to support your stance either. Do not worry, Mr Behrakis, I am not getting to you to say. When Kerry Vincent, the new member for Prosser, was mayor of Sorell, he said, 'Education is an inherent right and a higher level of education leads to a better quality of life'. He went on to say:

The reduction of travel time for people living in Sorell, the southern beaches, Tasmania, Tasman Peninsula and the east coast, as a result of moving the uni to the CBD, will have a significant positive impact on educational outcomes.

It is pretty much only the Greens who are still backing your anti-development, anti-housing, anti-education policies on UTAS. Should that not alone tell you that you have got this horribly wrong?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - I remind the Leader of Government Business not to interject, as well as other members who are interjecting from the moment that question started, and other members on my left who have interjected before the Premier has even reached the lectern.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Seriously? Leader of Government Business, I only just said do not interject.

ANSWER

Thank you, honourable Speaker. The member speaks of anti-this and anti-that. All your questions today have been anti-Tasmanian, particularly from the shadow treasurer talking Tasmania down. You talk about good process. You say you support accountability and transparency, but not for UTAS, it would seem. That is what our legislation is all about.

I empathise with Mr Vincent's commitment towards accessibility and education. I have a lot of respect for the new member in the other place and his passion for education, as I have for accessibility. I have great interest in the university's plans for building infrastructure where people learn.

Residential Tenancy Amendment Regulations 2024 - Draft

Ms BADGER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.06 a.m.]

Your government's draft Residential Tenancy Amendment Regulations 2024 advance your election policy for on-farm tenancy made available for an employment contract that are not subject to provisions that regulate end-of-lease termination agreements. This would create significant housing insecurity for our critical primary production workers and has been opposed by Tasmanian groups who care about the wellbeing and human rights of on-farm workers. No submissions were made in the consultation process that proposed or endorsed this approach. Who requested these regulatory changes? Where did they come from? Do you think that the empathetic Tasmanian groups opposing the regulation amendments and standing for housing stability for our critical on-farm workers are the people that your party director referred to as 'dangerous activists' in his submission to the Greens electoral bill?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons. There is a fair bit packed into that question, but I will answer as best as I possibly can.

Our focus is firmly on delivering our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future and our 100 days' commitment of 78 actions. We look forward to further actions over the next 100 days.

We recognise that a major barrier for farmers is having the workforce they need and appropriate on-site housing. We are committed to providing farmers with greater flexibility under the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* to offer on-farm residence as part of an employment contract. As such, we will address barriers through regulations which have been released in draft form for consultation. I am advised they will commence in September to allow the appropriate educational materials to be prepared ahead of time.

As the honourable member would appreciate, many agricultural businesses in Tasmania provide on-farm accommodation to employees. If the accommodation provided is covered by the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*, there can be uncertainty and confusion for all parties if an employment contract ends while a residential tenancy contract remains in place.

Unlike in a number of other Australian jurisdictions, Tasmania's *Residential Tenancy Act* lacks specific provisions to address the unique circumstances of agricultural businesses providing on-site accommodation to employees. These regulatory changes will allow primary production agreements that form part of an employment agreement to tie the termination of or expiry of the agreement to the person's employment. This means that when a person's employment ceases, the link to residential tenancy agreement will also cease.

Importantly, the National Employment Standards apply to notice periods for the termination of employment, and other provisions of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* will continue to apply to residential tenancy agreements. This means that tenants with primary production residential tenancy agreements linked to their employment will continue to have the relevant protections for quiet enjoyment, right of entry, requirements for smoke alarms, and the like.

Supplementary Question

Ms BADGER - A supplementary question, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms BADGER - Where did the regulations come from? They were not suggested by anyone in any submission.

The SPEAKER - The Premier gave a comprehensive answer about the impact of the reforms. The only outstanding question is for the Premier to advise where the impetus for the reforms are.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can provide an answer for you. I will take that on notice, if that is all right, Ms Badger. The honourable member who was shadow minister for agriculture at the time -

Ms Butler - She knows her stuff.

The SPEAKER - Thank you. If the two of you would like to go outside and praise each other, please do so. At this stage, Ms Badger is waiting for an answer to the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is all right - it is 1-1. I said that minister Ellis was sharp as a tack this morning. I guess we are complimenting each other's team members.

The SPEAKER - I do not think we believe that, though, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will take that on notice. As you would appreciate, with a lot of the commitments we make, on all sides, it is the advocacy on behalf of Tasmanians wearing various hats, including Primary Employers Tasmania.

UTAS Sandy Bay Campus - Development of Housing

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for the ARTS, Ms OGILVIE

[11.12 a.m.]

My question is to the Minister for the Arts, who somehow seems to be in charge of UTAS policy. During the election, you promised the people of Clark you would keep the UTAS campus in Sandy Bay. Ten days ago, you denied that you will prevent the sale of the campus. Earlier today, the Premier seemed to be saying he was not blocking anything. What is it? Will you return the university to Sandy Bay or will you allow the campus to be used for much-needed housing?

The SPEAKER - I remind members that questions are normally to those who are responsible or officially connected to the subject. In the public interest and the commentary, if Ms Ogilvie is happy to answer the question, I will allow her to do so.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Yes, I was wondering that, but I am happy to answer the question. It is interesting because this is the party that refused to say anything during the election about their position. They are being deceptive and misleading and they continue on with this. It is very good that you are laughing so hard because it is a very serious issue.

The SPEAKER - Ms Ogilvie is answering a question outside of her portfolio. That is as much latitude as I am giving on this.

Ms OGILVIE - The university is an iconic Tasmanian institution that has educated generations of Tasmanians. For full disclosure, I am a third-generation graduate of the university. I care very much about it and what it does for the economic development of our state by educating everybody here. The Sandy Bay campus is an integral part of the university's appeal and offering, and there has been a concerted effort by the community to ensure the site's future is secure. We have listened and introduced legislation within our 100 days, effectively keeping the UTAS campus at Sandy Bay.

We are also working with the university on a STEM-led plan for the Sandy Bay campus. It is our view that this arrangement strikes the right balance between protecting the public interest and allowing the university to get on with their core business. Our government understands that our important science and technology sectors offer great potential for

economic growth together with global work opportunities, and that leadership is required. We want all students to have access to this.

I acknowledge that the university has made its views and concerns clear and parliament, with the proposal that we have with our legislation, is the right place to have this dialogue. It is a mere check and balance in the same way that other jurisdictions have. I am quite surprised at the 180-degree manoeuvre that you have done. You had the opportunity during the election to come clear with your policies and to tell the people of Tasmania what you thought and proposed. You were not elected, and I wonder why.

Members - Hear, hear.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WINTER - I was really keen to hear the answer to the question I asked, which was: will you return the university to Sandy Bay or will you allow the campus to be used for much-needed housing?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - It is the original question. My apologies. Having accepted the original question, I will ask you to do the supplementary, but it might be a matter to reflect on your side as to appropriate places for questions.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I reiterate what I have already said. We have our legislation in place. I am looking forward to hearing you in the debate.

Budget - Long-Term Challenges

Mrs BESWICK question to TREASURER, Mr FERGUSON

[11.15 a.m.]

Saul Eslake has been investigating the budget and has been shocked to discover that Treasury does not have 10-year projections of the broad outline of the budget. The ones it does have were done in June 2021 and Treasury is not proposing to update those until June 2026. During the election campaign, you made expensive promises seemingly outside of any budget strategy. When will you start to address the long-term budget challenges facing the state so that we do not lumber the next generation with skyrocketing debt and deficit? Can you explain why these projections are not maintained?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank Mrs Beswick, the member for Braddon, for her question. I look forward, as every member of the House ought to look forward, to Mr Eslake's report. You have obviously been speaking to Mr Eslake. It is an independent review, so I have not

been seeking to engage with Mr Eslake. I have allowed that process to occur with the proper access to my department, and I am unaware of what Mr Eslake may or may not have said to you. I am unaware of that commentary. It is an independent review. We have given significant access to our Treasury officials to allow a thorough examination to take place.

To the broader point, the Budget is challenged. We have made that very clear. I will say this once - I will not repeat it nor give further insights into the Budget on 12 September - I can indicate we will be allocating hundreds of millions of dollars to respond to the commission of inquiry.

We are making a big financial commitment to keep children safe. We are able to meet our election commitments. We need to further strengthen Budget provision over the coming years, and that is what the fiscal strategy is all about. It is about longer-term goal setting to rebuild our fiscal buffers. They have been walloped through the COVID pandemic. We gave so much money and financial support, particularly to businesses, but also to supercharge our infrastructure program. That element of our workforce was not only part of the protected workforce, at that time called essential workers, but also built the aggregate demand right around the state in every town, city and suburb. It was an important part of our economic strength that we came through COVID.

We are building assets, as the Premier indicated earlier. It is not just borrowing; it is borrowing to build. We have been building assets which will be there for our generation and future generations for decades to come, in many ways catching up on legacy underinvestment, and in many examples, building assets that a growing state requires. A growing population needs stronger infrastructure.

The Budget on 12 September will illustrate how the government intends to manage our finances going forward, how we are meeting our commitments - including, and especially, the commission of inquiry response - how we are borrowing and how we are managing our future projections. Treasury's capacity to make those projections is something I will have to take some advice on, but through the five-yearly fiscal sustainability reporting process, I am sure that will be part of the answer.

I really appreciate the question. I welcome the interest and I wish that other members of the House would have the same interest and commitment to our state's finances, because this will be a team effort. It will not be for one side of the House. It will be incumbent on both sides and both Houses.

The SPEAKER - The minister's time has expired.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Bass - Additional Staff in Health Services

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mr BARNETT

[11.20 a.m.]

I note the large-scale ads you announced yesterday regarding what you have called the Tasmanian government's biggest ever healthcare recruitment blitz. On behalf of my constituents, I am particularly interested in the over 500 additional staff you have stated that have been delivered into our health system. While that is positive, many individuals in my electorate of Bass continue to require health care at increasing rates, whether this is acute care through the LGH or in our outpatient healthcare settings. Can you please provide a breakdown of these staff and tell me how many doctors, nurses and allied health professionals have been hired, and what more is being done for recruitment of staff?

Wynard-Circular Head Road Repairs

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr FERGUSON

One of my constituents wrote to me recently about the condition of the new recently completed road surfaces between Wynyard and Circular Head. There are several potholes starting around where the Boat Harbour church is and continuing along that new stretch of road. My constituent advises the potholes cost one local commuter \$1800 for a new rim and tyre for their car. What is the government going to do to address this safety issue and fix the surface and the potholes on this new road?

Landfill Levy and Revenue

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

I am aware of several constituents who say they have heard a lot about the state government's landfill levy but do not know why it is needed and what the money is going to be used for. Can you please provide further details about the levy and how the revenue generated from this is going to be invested into waste and the resource recovery sector?

Surgery Cancellations and Delays

Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, MR BARNETT

One of my constituents recently had their surgery cancelled by the hospital. Could the minister please provide the total number of surgeries postponed by the hospital in the last two financial years and provide a breakdown of the reasons for each cancellation? Could the information please be broken down by each hospital?

Richmond Police Station - Unmanned Station

Mr JENNER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

I have concerned residents who have contacted me over the recent spate of break-ins and burglaries in homes and sheds since the closure, or should I say unmanneding, of the Richmond Police Station. Only this weekend we had two more break-ins plus thefts, including the bakery, which is in sight of the unmanned station. when will the Richmond station be manned again?

The SPEAKER - I remind people to use less gendered language about that. We can staff our stations.

Container Recycling Deposit Scheme - Delay

Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

Tim in the Derwent Valley asks: can the minister finally come clean - puns intended - and explain the delay in Tasmania's long-awaited and much-anticipated container recycling deposit scheme? For months we have been told to expect an announcement soon; all the while our roadsides and natural environment are continuing to be polluted with recyclable containers. What is the hold up? Is it the case that the Tasmanian scheme cannot get a tender?

Bass - Hooning

Mr FAIRS question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

Constituents in my electorate of Bass are sick of hooning behaviour in our local streets. It is unsafe and reckless. Only this week it has been reported that a young man has been arrested and charged with hooning offences at a local park. I am pleased to note that you have announced new legislation to crack down on this type of reckless behaviour, but when can we expect debate on the proposed bill? Can you also provide an update on what else the government is doing to deal with these dangerous activities so I can provide feedback to my Bass community?

Portable Gas Stoves and Heaters - Risk Awareness

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBING, Mr BARNETT

My constituent, a plumber from Bass with 52 years' experience in the industry, has contacted me with serious concerns about an increase he has observed in the indoor use of portable gas stoves and heaters in our community. In 2018 the Department of Health issued a warning about the risks of indoor gas use, including carbon monoxide poisoning, death and the risk of gas explosions. Given the cold weather we have been experiencing in Tasmania, what is the Health department doing this winter season to educate the community of the dangers of

using portable gas stoves and heaters indoors? My constituent also asks whether real estate and public housing lease agreements could include clauses regarding the prohibition of portable gas use indoors as a way of raising awareness and reducing risk.

Time expired.

HISTORIC CULTURAL HERITAGE AMENDMENT BILL 2024 (No. 32)
FARM DEBT MEDIATION BILL 2024 (No. 33)

First Readings

Bills presented by Ms Ogilvie and read the first time.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Personal Offence - Minister Abetz

[11.27 a.m.]

The SPEAKER - We now move to other formal business. I commence with a matter that was raised on the adjournment last night. During the adjournment debate, the Leader of the House requested that I review the *Hansard* of 20 June 2024 in which the following exchange took place. I am comfortable not to read the exchange, unless members would like me to. You all watched the adjournment?

Mr ABETZ - The reality is that plantation timber alone is not sufficient to meet Australia's timber need at this stage. Therefore, to have a sustainable timber industry, which we seek for Australia and Tasmania, these amendments to try to restrict private timber growers even more is not something we support.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. I would like to hear from some other point from minister Abetz about the date of the IPCC advice you keep quoting because I am pretty sure it is out of date. From memory, we have been around the block on this at federal level and the state level. It is just slightly beneath you, minister, that you keep quoting such outdated advice. You have said lots of things in the past. You thought women should not go to work and women should not get the vote, but things have changed. Advice gets updated and if you are watching the science advice -

Mr ABETZ - What? I have never said anything like that.

The exchange goes on.

The provisions of Standing Order 144 apply to offensive or unbecoming words where a member of the House is personally the direct subject of the offending comments. The practice is that if the Speaker is satisfied that personal offence is being caused, they may direct the offending member to withdraw the words without qualification or further comment: Standing

Order 144(22). Whilst it is usually the practice for the member who has taken offence to take objection at the time the comments are made, there are instances in which it is appropriate for the Speaker to review the *Hansard* where the matter is later raised.

I am satisfied that personal offence has been taken by the member and asked the Leader of the Greens to withdraw the words.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, honourable Speaker. I withdraw those words.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Justice for Tasmanian Aboriginal People

[11.29 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Deputy Speaker, the Greens acknowledge and respect the concerns of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that has led to a delegation of those people camped outside on the lawns of Parliament House. Listening to them yesterday, it was clear from the words of Michael Mansell, Nala Mansell, and others who spoke of the failures and desperate situation they think has been reached with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs' mismanagement in progressing a treaty and truth-telling pathway. It has been three years since that report was handed down, in November 2021, by Kate Warner and Tim McCormack. It was an incredible moment in Tasmania and the report was received with a great deal of seriousness by then premier, Peter Gutwein. He made a commitment to progressing the recommendations of the *Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty* report. I will go through the main recommendations that were made.

The reason a group of palawa people of Tasmania are outside Parliament House today is because of the utter failure of the Liberal government to progress any measure within this report despite the commitments made by Peter Gutwein. Here we are, nearly three years later.

Recommendation 1 is that a truth-telling commission be established. That has not occurred. Recommendation 5 is that treaty and truth-telling advancement legislation be prepared. This is a key issue that Aboriginal people are outraged about. Michael Mansell himself delivered a draft bill to the minister 18 months ago to try and move the process along, but there has been no action on that draft bill since then.

Recommendation 11 was that there should be a statutory process developed for Aboriginal Protected Areas, a new land tenure under the *Nature Conservation Act*, so that Aboriginal people can manage our national parks and care for country as they have always done. That has not happened. kooparooka niara, in the Western Tiers, should be an Aboriginal Protected Area but that has not happened. Recommendation 13: To consider creating kunanyi/Mt Wellington as an Aboriginal Protected Area. That has also not happened.

There has been no increase in resources for the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, which is desperately underfunded. There has been no reform of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* which the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs said was woeful, inadequate, and incapable of delivering proper Aboriginal protection.

It is obvious from the people on the Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Council that it is incapable of protecting ancient Aboriginal culture, middens, burial grounds and many other areas that are being trashed by developments today.

Fundamentally, we have had no land returns in Tasmania now since 1996.

It is a dire situation. Into that, Theresa Sainty sent a letter of resignation two weeks ago to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs because of matters I raised in question time this morning. She has been sitting on that advisory committee in good faith for years now and she has reached a point where she explains:

It is not surprising to hear that some of your right-wing Liberal Party colleagues are not supportive of the truth-telling and treaty agenda. This explains your seeming disinterest in Aboriginal affairs across the board, with the exception of your racist proposed amendments to the *Aboriginal Lands Act* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*. It also explains the absence of any mention of protection of irreplaceable Aboriginal heritage and cultural landscapes in the proposed draft bills, including the draft West Coast Off-Road Vehicle Strategy, which caters more for rednecks riding roughshod over Aboriginal heritage than protecting it. That you suggested we need to explain -

Time expired.

[11.34 a.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this item today. I acknowledge the Aboriginal people who are camped out on the Parliament Lawns and their right to make clear their views on matters of public policy and history, as they always have. I always uphold their right to do that.

I acknowledge that the Truth-Telling and Treaty report prepared by professors Warner and McCormack was circulated widely on its publication and, as a government, we sought Aboriginal people to bring us their responses to that. What were the issues that were of most interest, concern or agreement across our broader Aboriginal population in Tasmania?

The issue of truth-telling and treaty was one of the areas with the greatest widespread support across Aboriginal people and Aboriginal groups right across Tasmania. That is why the government entered into discussions with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) and the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance (TRACA), as a peak for many of the smaller regional Aboriginal community organisations, to seek their advice on a process to go forward. On the strength of those discussions, we held a gathering in July 2022 where we invited representatives of all Aboriginal community organisations across Tasmania to send delegates to talk to us about how we would assemble the advisory group that we have spoken about in the report to give us advice from Aboriginal people directly specifically about how we would approach a pathway to truth-telling and treaty in Tasmania. That resulted in a nomination process where we asked for people to be nominated from their organisations and then the selection of a group of Aboriginal people who would be recognised, respected and able, between them, to represent the diversity of Aboriginal views in Tasmania on these important matters.

On the day that we held that gathering, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre held a separate meeting in the same city and nominated from its meeting a group of people with a similar brief, but not drawn from the broader cross-section of views, interests and representations for Aboriginal people, but to work separately under its own steam.

Nevertheless, we engaged in a process and I sat down for very many hours with spokespeople from the tuylupa tunapri group, as it was called, to try and find a way that we could assemble a group of people who, together, could agree and provide advice to the government on these critical matters of how best to pursue truth-telling and treaty in Tasmania and design a process. We kept that door open and we spoke with those people over a number of meetings and many hours, and sought their engagement in that process. We still do. We left the door open. They have refused so far to engage. That is their choice and their right to do that but we would hope for, as the Premier said earlier today, a process that can engage all Aboriginal people in these important discussions.

This process did take a lot of time, but it is important that we strive to hear from and involve all Aboriginal people on matters that affect them, not just self-appointed groups. It is important that we seek to have an Aboriginal-led process for these matters of great importance and sensitivity to Aboriginal people, and that non-Aboriginal people can also see who it is that they are working with and who they are representing as well.

Since then, the advisory group has been working on the complex issues associated with truth-telling and treaty in Tasmania. They have been meeting with and consulting with people who have been involved in similar processes in other jurisdictions around Australia to find out what worked and what did not work in those other states and territories, and they have also invited the TAC group, the tuylupa tunapri group, to meet with them and to discuss the draft bill that was prepared and presented in those first few months, which we have referred back to the Aboriginal Advisory Group to consider in their advice and to engage with its authors.

There was not no response to that bill when it was prepared. There was a letter from the Premier in response to it in the very first week that it was received.

Time expired.

[11.40 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I also acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people on the lawns and understand their frustrations.

I am very new to the Aboriginal affairs portfolio for Labor, despite being in this place for nearly nine years. I have had some engagement with the Aboriginal community, but infrequently, and I have a lot to learn. I have said that to people I have been engaging with. There is no conversation or consultation I will not have at the moment, because I want to better understand the portfolio.

I have been around the state meeting with people and I thank members of the community for so generously welcoming me to country and into their centres, explaining some of the work that they do and what is important to them. I have been as far as Smithton; I have been to Devonport; I have met with people in the south. I have met with the Aboriginal Land Council. I have met with the TAC on a number of occasions. I have spoken with the Chair of the

Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance and I have a meeting scheduled with TRACA soon.

I am interested to hear everyone's views and understand the emotions about a lot of these issues. We are talking about invasion, dispossession, discrimination and oppression, and intergenerational trauma. It is a shocking blight on our history.

I was a bit concerned listening to the Premier this morning that there is a change in tone. The question I have is: If this government - and it appears to be stalled - had no intention of following through on truth-telling and treaty, why raise expectations? It was quite an irresponsible thing to do, to be perfectly honest.

We had *The Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty* report released three years ago by then premier Mr Gutwein, and I remember Aboriginal community members at the time saying the worst thing that could happen is nothing after that expectation had been raised. I know there were mixed reviews about that report, but why do that if you have no intention of following through? It was quite irresponsible. We all come to this place with good intentions, but you have to think very carefully about your actions and the things you say.

In that report, *The Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty*, by Professor Kate Warner and Professor Tim McCormack, the authors outline three essential criteria that constitute a treaty between the state and First Peoples.

One, there is an acknowledgement by the state that the First Peoples were the prior owners and occupiers of the land and recognition of the deep and continuing injustice that results in colonisation. Two, it is concluded by way of negotiation between the state and First Peoples, with representations freely chosen by them through their own representative structures. Three, there are substantive outcomes which must include some level of self-government or decision-making power, and some of those important elements are land rights, water rights, sea rights, reparations and redress for the harm that has been caused and control over Aboriginal heritage.

I completely understand the viewpoint of the people on the lawn this week. Expectations were raised. We have had three years pass and not a lot of action. They are watching on as other states legislate. Victoria has passed legislation to set up an independent indigenous treaty authority and our state is continuing to be stuck in this inertia. We heard the Premier today talk about closing the gap. All of those initiatives are very important, but it should not be either/or. Improving Aboriginal outcomes and corrections is important. He also talked about life expectancy, health outcomes, education and socio-economics, and he said that that was his greatest priority - more of a priority than truth-telling and treaty.

I am concerned that the Premier's language seems to be changing. All that work should be happening alongside the work that has been committed to. I am very concerned, but not surprised, about where this is heading. This government has a track record of promising things across portfolios and not delivering.

Time expired.

[11.45 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for bringing on this matter of public importance, because with Aboriginal people camped on the lawns, it is clearly a significant issue. I spent some time with the folks on the lawn yesterday. I pay my respects to them and their ancestors here in this Chamber and acknowledge that the very land we stand on was never, ever ceded. What was very obvious out there yesterday at both their rally and at the conversations afterwards was the palpable frustration and anger at the lack of action.

I will raise what I am hearing. The change in language of the Premier today is a fundamental double standard. There is an expectation that we heard today from the Premier that every Aboriginal person has to be united and have a collective position going forward, and I heard him say the broader non-Aboriginal community also has to be united behind that position.

Why do we have that expectation for the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal issues when we do not hold that expectation for anything else? Does the government expect there to be unanimity and absolute consensus, whether it is in this House or across the community, on the coastal policy, for example, or on UTAS? Clearly not. Yet they are quite prepared to push through their legislation for better or worse on each of those issues despite those divisions.

The Leader of the Greens was reading in Theresa Sainty's letter, and I will pick up where she ran out of time, because this is a critically important letter. When Theresa says 'you suggested' she means the minister, Roger Jaensch, as this is a letter about Theresa's resignation from the Aboriginal Advisory Group on Truth-telling and Treaty. She writes:

That you suggested we need to explain truth-telling and get support across Parliament is indeed eye-opening. Truth-telling is integral to the next step of treaty and it is a task for colonial-settler descendants. I would ask you what you think it means.

Regarding support, surely it is your responsibility as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to gain support for truth-telling and treaty across the Parliament. I understand that the wider community of lutruwita are concerned about the rising cost of living, housing or lack thereof, and the dreadful state of health services and chaos within the hospital system and so on. I do not, however, accept your excuses regarding a lack of parliamentary support. Your party are hell-bent on pushing through the building of an AFL stadium despite the outcry from the public. It is clear that your commitment to your portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs is lacking significantly.

She goes on. She points out that double standard evident now in the government's language. The frustrations and failures are really clear. A couple of years ago we saw the government completely overlook the opportunity of new land returns and new Aboriginal tenure for an Aboriginal-owned national park at kooparoona niara.

Regarding Aboriginal heritage, it is the very thing that Aboriginal people hold dear because it is a tangible link to their ancestors and ancestral heritage. Three years ago, in July 2021, minister Jaensch tabled a report in this parliament, a government review, that acknowledged that the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* did not provide an effective mechanism for

Aboriginal heritage. What that means is the act does not work. No matter what is assessed, no matter what is proposed, no matter how diligent an assessment is made, it does not work. That was three years ago.

Since then, we have had massive developments on highly significant Aboriginal cultural landscapes such as Robbins Island progress and approved irrespective. It is a massive development on incredibly significant landscape. We have had a kunanyi cable car; admittedly it was rejected, but not on the basis of Aboriginal heritage. In fact, the report that was compiled for Aboriginal heritage did not even meet the government's own guidelines. It was completely lacking.

We have the statutory body, the Aboriginal Land Council, massively underfunded, underfunded so much that it does not even have a chief financial officer. It gets short-term funding. Minister, will you give it a little bit of funding this year?

Mr Jaensch - It has been funded.

Mr BAYLEY - Yes, but will it be next year? Maybe you can ask that. It has been short-term funding for those sort of things, not long term. How can an organisation sustain that kind of funding?

When Will Hodgman won the premiership he took on the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs because he said it was significant for the Leader to take it. That is why Dr Woodruff has the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio and it is absolutely time that the Premier took it on behalf of his government.

Time expired.

[11.50 a.m.]

Mr WOOD (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I also acknowledge the Aboriginal people who are outside of this place today.

The Tasmanian Liberal government is committed to delivering better outcomes for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, more opportunity for them and their families, and to dignify the relationship with Tasmanian and Aboriginal people to achieve a truly reconciled community.

We remain determined to work with all Aboriginal people in Tasmania to close the gap, to hear the truth, to tell the truth and to the best of our ability, provide processes that are fair, respectful and inclusive to ensure Aboriginal people are part of the decision-making on all matters that affect them. A whole-of-government Aboriginal engagement strategy and toolkit, currently under development, will guide all levels of government to undertake appropriate and respectful engagement with all Tasmanian Aboriginal people to deliver better outcomes in genuine partnership.

Importantly, this government will continue to work with Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to build their capacity to deliver services that meets their community's needs. We will continue to work closely with our peak partner and all other Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations on the development of Tasmania's second Closing the Gap Implementation Plan that will be released later this year. We know that only by forming

genuine long-term partnerships with Tasmanian Aboriginal people will we succeed in delivering better outcomes and closing the gap.

This government recognises the importance of Tasmania's Aboriginal cultural heritage to Tasmanian Aboriginal people and indeed to all Tasmanians. It deserves to be recognised and protected by effective and modern laws that respect its significance and support Aboriginal people to exercise their role as its custodians. This government completed a review of Tasmania's existing *Aboriginal Heritage Act* in 2021, which concluded with the tabling of a review report in parliament. The overwhelming finding of the review was that the legislation was outdated and in need of replacement. We accepted those findings and committed to developing a new, stronger Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage protection act.

As we have seen in other states and territories, this type of reform is complex. Drafting of the new legislation is being informed by feedback received through consultation rounds to date and conversations with Aboriginal people and interested stakeholders are continuing to ensure their views are properly understood. As well as providing for the protection of Tasmania's irreplaceable Aboriginal cultural heritage, the reforms will provide clear procedures and greater certainty for landowners, land managers and developers that exists under the current system, without introducing unnecessary red tape.

We will continue to work with the Aboriginal Heritage Council, Tasmanian Aboriginal people and other interested stakeholders, including industry, to shape this new legislation. This government's commitment is to listen carefully to all views and to introduce legislation that is effective and balanced, and an exposure draft will be made available for public comment as soon as possible.

Later this year it is our intention to also legislate amendments to the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995* to facilitate the return of more land to Aboriginal people. We recognise that connection to country and the responsibility to care for it is central to Aboriginal culture and identity, and returning more land to Tasmanian Aboriginal people is a priority for this government.

The government has undertaken two rounds of consultation and released an exposure draft of the Aboriginal Lands Amendment Bill for public comment. Feedback from consultation undertaken to date has made it clear current processes to return land do not work for all Tasmanian Aboriginal people and a new approach is necessary if land returns are to play a constructive part of our reconciliation journey.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

MOTION

Construction and Management of Social Housing

[11.55 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - A vote will be required. I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes that responsibility for the construction and management of social housing was put at arm's length from government in 2022 with the establishment of Homes Tasmania.
- (2) Recognises that during debate on the Homes Tasmania Bill 2022, member for Franklin David O'Byrne MP warned that a statutory authority was the wrong answer to Tasmania's housing crisis because it would give the government less control over one of the state's most pressing problems.
- (3) Acknowledges that since Homes Tasmania was established, housing and construction industry stakeholders have become increasingly concerned by the slow pace of social housing construction. This includes just six homes built on land release for urgent affordable housing and vacant blocks for sale being counted in the government's 10,000 homes target. All the while, the public housing waiting list grows longer, with 4709 applications on the housing register as at June 2024.
- (4) Criticises the Homes Tasmania model as a failing experiment which, whilst created with good intentions, is not working as intended and is not delivering the level of housing construction needed to improve the dire lack of affordable housing.
- (5) Calls on the government to urgently review Homes Tasmania, with a view to bringing responsibility for social housing construction back into the heart of government with oversight by Cabinet.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I will flag that at the end of my contribution I will move an amendment to the motion. In discussions with other members of the House over the last 24 hours or so, it was flagged with me that I was not the only one who raised opposition to Homes Tasmania. To accurately reflect that debate and others' contribution - although the Greens have been on a journey on this one - I will be moving an amendment which, in point (2), removes the reference to 'member for Franklin, David O'Byrne MP' and simply refers to 'members'. I will move that at the end of my conclusion.

Members interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - It was reflecting my experience. Parties have had a journey on it. Not everyone was initially against the creation of Homes Tasmania, but during the debate they

articulated that view and voted that way. I agreed to considering that and acknowledge the suggestion that we make it more reflective of the debate, which I am happy to do.

Housing has been a major political issue in Tasmania for many years. People use the word crisis a lot and sometimes people get desensitised to it. There is no embellishment in looking at the situation of public housing and social housing in Tasmania. To describe it as anything other than a crisis in the true essence of the word - and the consequences of that crisis are significant - it has been in crisis now for close to six, seven, arguably eight years under this government.

Sometimes people get lost in the debate about the importance of public housing. There are numbers here, homes here, blocks here, building here: all these targets that are shared by social media and others. We have this goal. However, the actual human consequences are lost in the middle.

Why do we have public housing? Public housing has been a feature of developed countries for 120-odd years. It started at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century in some parts of our community where some public housing was established, but it became acute during the Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s. We saw the deprivation of poverty. We saw bailiffs throwing people out and reclaiming furniture; people living in abject poverty due to the inaction of government to ensure that people could have a safe roof and a safe house to live in.

It became a significant part of social policy in post-World War II First World countries. Look at Truman, Clement Attlee, Ben Chifley in Australia: a massive public housing drive and it was there to resolve a number of issues. Returning servicemen from World War II - in recognition of their service and respect for their contribution and their sacrifice - were encouraged and offered various public housing in our communities across Australia. It was also offered to immigrant workers. When we were industrialising post-World War II - and Tasmania saw that specifically with the building of the Hydro - immigrant workers were afforded housing opportunities. Also, those in need.

There was a social democratic principle that housing is a fundamental human right. It is a right for people in our society to have the dignity to be able to be provided with a house if they were unable to provide a roof over their head. It is a social policy. It is an economic policy because we know the advantages it provides people to reach their full potential, to make better decisions personally and professionally in their lives - if they are to do it from the security of a home, a house they can call their own, where they can build their lives, families and communities. It is fundamentally important for children to learn that if you do not have a house, if you do not have a warm bed, if you do not have that support and that security of housing, how can you learn at school? How can you reach your full potential? How can you achieve outcomes that benefit not only you and your family, but also the broader community? We get lost in the debate about numbers, goals, and targets. We are talking about the human right of people to have a home.

It is unacceptable in a nation as wealthy as Australia that we have so many people sleeping rough. We have too many people in marginal circumstances. We have too many people who cannot have a dignified life because we, as a society, cannot find them a warm and safe place to put their head down at night to prepare for the next day, week, and month of their life. We get lost in numbers and statistics. This is about a human right and a modern society being able to say that regardless of your circumstances, if you find yourself in need, our

community will reach out to you and provide you with that kind of assistance for the moment you need it, enabling you to rebuild or build a life.

It was the former premier, Will Hodgman, who convened a crisis summit straight after the 2018 state election as a response to the tents popping up all over our community. The tents belonged to people unable to access public housing, emergency housing, or other support that they needed. Despite the community outrage about the lack of affordable housing, social housing, facilities and infrastructure to support people in marginal moments in their life, there was a lot of talk and goals but poor delivery.

After four years, in 2022, the response was to create a statutory authority of Homes Tasmania. When we debated that legislation to create Homes Tasmania in August of 2022, I warned against removing the responsibility for public housing from the government and placing it at arm's length in the statutory authority. I will quote myself from that debate:

Why are we here then? I understand why the Government feels like they need to do something. They just clutched at straws on this. I understand why they think they need to do something because this is a major problem facing Tasmania. We have an absolute housing crisis and it has been a crisis for a number of years ...

... it has gotten worse. It has not gotten better so I can understand why the Government feels like they need to do something radical. However, I think they are pulling the wrong rein. This is not the response to resolve such a wicked problem.

... In my view, handing off or creating an authority at arm's length from government is completely the wrong answer, because you are actually losing direct control. You are pushing it away to, yes, a statutory authority.

At the time, there was a significant debate about not getting information from Macquarie Point. I understand all of that. I am not doubting the intentions of those people who put their hand up to be on the authority.

... The minister's office has quite kindly circulated to me the checks and balances -

Et cetera.

... I am not going to doubt the intent of the people who will be involved in this endeavour, but structurally they have misdiagnosed the problem, and this is the wrong answer. It is the wrong answer for this wicked problem.

Having a statutory authority is not the solution:

... Good people will come on, and they will do their best. I have no doubt of their intent. They will try to do their best with this. The only argument that has been given to me is that we need some corporate experience on that board. I am paraphrasing; that is not a direct quote. Surely that can be done under the existing powers the minister has, and the Government has, if that

means we have a contemporary act to respond and create those structures, but still maintain control of not only the assets, but all of the solutions.

If you have a wicked problem that falls within one of the fundamental jobs of the state government, which is to provide housing, education, health - even getting a bus to run on time would be nice - and housing are fundamental to the responsibility of the state government, the answer is not to push it away from the heart of government into a statutory authority. The answer is to bring it back to the centre of the cabinet table so all ministers with influence, have a discussion and laser-like focus on the solutions to the housing problem: not to push it off to a statutory authority which is harder to hold to account, which has less control for a minister. I understand there were criticisms of Housing Tasmania at that stage, and they were legitimate criticisms. However, the answer would not be to push away. In my view, the answer would be to bring closer to government.

When Homes Tasmania was established in December 2022, after the August legislation, there were 4569 applicants on the public housing waiting list and the average time to house priority applicants was 77.9 weeks. As of today, there are 4709 applications on the waiting list and the average time to house priority applicants has increased to 89.7 weeks. These are the people most in need of housing waiting almost two years on average. Ideally, a new authority with new powers and new opportunity would stem the loss, but it has become worse since Homes Tasmania was created in December 2022.

The housing dashboard also reveals that only 341 new long-term social housing properties were delivered in the last 12 months, despite a promise to build 1000 homes a year.

Further, more than one-fifth of all public housing properties in Tasmania have more than two major structural issues or less than four working facilities. Many in public or community housing struggle to get the bare minimum maintenance they need to be comfortable in their homes. I raised this in question time today. I sought, through RTI, to get information because I had seen the contracts the housing providers signed in terms of a minimum investment in maintenance. These are government contracts, these are currently publicly owned, state-owned homes that have been leased or transferred across to housing providers with the express role of providing social housing.

I asked a simple question: could you let us know how much maintenance you spent on Tasmanian homes in social housing? One of the providers said, 'Oh, that is commercial-in-confidence, we cannot tell you.' Seriously? Commercial-in-confidence? I understand that you won a tender for work with the state government, but this is public housing, this is social housing. If you refuse to answer a basic question - I am not asking about how many windows or doors, not that level of detail. Tell us how much you have spent. I was pushed back on that.

Other providers provided a global budget and it was over a period of time, but it was so hard and I still cannot say, year on year, how much maintenance is being spent on social housing for people on the housing list in Tasmania.

During a recent hearing, we were promised by the then minister - and we have had five ministers in six years - that the creation of Homes Tasmania would unleash a building boom, with new houses and new opportunity. However, during a recent hearing as part of the other place's inquiry into Homes Tasmania, it was revealed that just six homes in six years had been

built under the state government's land supply orders, land that we debated. The reason it was legislation was because they said, 'Look, we need to fast-track this, we need to go through a parliamentary process to make this quicker.' Six homes -

Mr Jaensch - Rezoning, which is what it is for.

Mr O'BYRNE - No, it is not for rezoning. It is to build homes. Do not claim it was a success because it rezoned. The reason why you wanted the rezoning was to build new homes and that has not happened.

In one of the blocks I know on the eastern shore, over half the block was going to be sold off to private developers who would land-bank, who would make profit out of it, and only a small proportion was social and affordable housing. I am not saying all of those blocks needed to go to social housing, but social and affordable, and mixed use would have been good. It was only in the last couple of months that we saw a couple of houses start to be built, some framing at least, from 2018. I mean, goodness me.

It was also revealed in that inquiry that blocks of vacant land and crisis accommodation were being counted as part of the government's pledge to build 10,000 homes. That is a betrayal.

Regarding the Homes Tasmania board, I get that we need a diversity of skills, but just two of the seven board members are Tasmanian.

Do not just take it from me, from people sleeping rough, people in short-term accommodation, or community groups who are crying out for assistance; the bell is being rung on this by housing industry stakeholders because they are also increasingly frustrated with the performance of Homes Tasmania.

In the *Mercury* on 20 July, a number of stakeholders vented their frustration about the Homes Tasmania model. Property Council of Australia Tasmanian executive director Rebecca Ellston said Homes Tasmania was not delivering:

Homes Tas has been tasked with delivering 10,000 new homes by 2032 and their inability to deliver is reneging on the commitment to the Tasmanian people. It was set up by the government to be a results-focused organisation, but it's been as ineffective as the department it replaced. Once you get past the smoke and mirrors, the stark record speaks for itself. In its current structure, Homes Tas is not the solution to improving housing incomes.

That is from the Property Council, not some mad lefty, not some community group that is outraged about anything the government does, whatever the colour of the government.

Housing Industry Association executive director Stuart Collins said:

The 10,000 new home target was ambitious and unachievable. The vehicle to achieve this, through the establishment of Homes Tasmania, tasked with providing 10,000 new social and affordable homes, has unfortunately fallen well short and had created just another layer of red tape for industry to navigate. Industry is certainly ready, willing and able, but is hamstrung by

unnecessary complexities and conditions that are getting in the way of increasing social and affordable housing supply which is, in turn, exacerbating social housing lists, impacting first-home buyers and denying industry much-needed projects and maintain jobs.

Master Builders Tasmania CEO David Clerk has said his organisation was:

Forecasting a drop in housing construction of 20 per cent this financial year. Clearly, the government needs to step in and fill that gap to support industry and also build the 10,000 social and affordable houses over the next five years.

Data from the Tenants' Union, also reported in the *Mercury*, shows that the state's social housing waiting list has grown at 10 times the rate in increase in social housing policies, with 70 per cent more people in the queue for the 7 per cent increase in homes made available since 2016-17.

The echo of the words on the second reading speech and the creation of Homes Tasmania has come back to roost. There was a chorus of people in the community calling out for change. Instead of the government reforming Housing Tasmania, keeping it at the Cabinet table, keeping it within the heart of government, having as many levers as you can to lean in on this wicked problem, they pushed it out to an arm's-length authority. Now everyone, from the business community, the not-for-profit sector; those in desperate need of housing and politicians of all colours are calling it out and saying it is not working. Government should not give away the responsibility to an arm's length organisation that lacks transparency and is not getting traction. You should bring it back inside, into the heart of government. Providing housing is a core function of government.

What I am seeking in this motion I have been consistent about from day one. This is not the answer to the problem. You do not give it away to an arm's length authority. You take responsibility, you reform Housing Tasmania within the government envelope and make the changes required to start to bring the housing waiting list down, to get people into secure housing, to deal with emergency accommodation, to respond to critical needs within the community. Therefore, paragraph (5) of the motion calls on the government to urgently review Homes Tasmania, because there are lessons that need to be learnt from this venture into Homes Tasmania. Again, I am not doubting the intent of people who supported it and people who work there, but it is not acceptable that we are still in this circumstance of a crisis in housing and that there is little or no progress being made on bringing those waiting lists down. It is not a personal attack or a reflection on those people, it is the reality that results are important. Outcomes are important and if you are not providing the outcome, if you are not delivering on the results, you have to change what you are doing.

The review would not only encompass the failings of Housing Tasmania, it would also encompass the lessons and the opportunities that Homes Tasmania has created but with a view to bringing it back in closer to government so there is a greater level of responsibility for the state government on providing social and affordable housing and particularly social housing.

This is a wicked problem. This is something that can be fixed. It is not easy and it will not be fixed in six months or a budget cycle, but we need to see change. Homes Tasmania is not working. It was never going to work. The fact that we cannot even get some of the most

basic information from them is an example of the problem that was flagged in this House in the debate on the creation of Homes Tasmania.

I know other members will want to speak. This is a social policy. It is an economic policy. If kids cannot get educated because they do not know where they are going to be sleeping that night, if families and workers cannot guarantee that they have a secure place to sleep so they can catch a bus or get to work or get to school themselves the next day, it has profound impacts on them as individuals, families, the community and the economy. It is fundamental, and this is why this is so important.

I do not do this lightly, because this is massive change that I am seeking, but it is too important. Too many mistakes have been made. We need to bring this back in to the heart of government.

In conclusion, as I foreshadowed at the beginning of my contribution, I will move an amendment. I move -

In paragraph (2) remove the words 'Member for Franklin Mr David O'Byrne MP' and insert instead 'Members'.

I implore members to support the substantive motion.

[12.21 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Housing and Planning) - Deputy Speaker, I thank Mr O'Byrne for the motion and thank him for his work advocating on behalf of his constituents in the housing space. We have appreciated the opportunity to work with him and colleagues more broadly in this parliament.

Many people in our community will not see a lot of the work their local members of parliament do advocating on behalf of people doing it tough, particularly in the housing space, but I can say that the letters I get each and every day from members of parliament advocating on behalf of their constituents should give people some encouragement about the depth of feeling and the broad support people have in this place to help people doing it tough.

This is an important topic for Tasmanians. It has become one of the key issues for the Tasmanian community and indeed at the last election the priorities that we saw - health, housing, cost of living - really put this front and centre of their focus.

First, we cannot support the content of the motion for reasons I will outline, but I will also outline some of the substantive areas where we do agree in terms of acting in this space and I am happy to discuss that further.

We acknowledge that the new model for Homes Tasmania is an historic change to how we have managed social housing delivery in Tasmania and the member did raise those concerns about the proposal during that important debate. He outlined those previously in his contribution. As I mentioned, though, to the latter points of the motion, we cannot agree.

I understand that the building and construction sector has raised concerns with this new model. However, with further briefing and information, they are now seeing our significant delivery of over 3600 homes since 2020, with many more in the pipeline, so those stakeholders

are supportive of our approach to leverage the Tasmanian building and construction industry to deliver on our significant commitment of 10,000 additional social and affordable homes by 2032. We also disagree that Homes Tasmania is a failing experiment, particularly in light of that significant delivery of homes, and I will set that out in further detail shortly.

To the final element of the motion, our government will never take a 'set and forget' approach to reforms, particularly when they are so significant and meaningful to the Tasmanian community, as is the case with social housing and Homes Tasmania.

I will speak to this in more detail in a moment, but I can say to the House that since taking on this important portfolio I have been making enquiries with my department and Homes Tasmania to ensure that this model is working as it should, because I can also acknowledge that it is not yet working perfectly. It is a promising model but more needs to be done so that it can fulfil that promise to the Tasmanian people. I can also indicate that I am currently working on reviewing the ministerial statement of expectations to ensure that they remain current, fit for purpose and delivering for the Tasmanian people.

Our government recognises that every Tasmanian deserves a roof over their head, which is precisely why our 20-year Tasmanian Housing Strategy and our Housing Action Plan 2023-27 sets out our plan for safe, affordable and appropriate housing for our state. Our government committed to establishing the dedicated housing body Homes Tasmania in 2022, which has now become recognised by the sector and our colleagues interstate as a nation-leading framework. Our Homes Tasmania framework marked an historic change in our approach to delivering homes for Tasmanians in this state in recognition of the fact that more needed to be done and different thinking was required.

While delivering these homes, we must not forget who we are building these homes for and what they need. We must continue to work closely with our community service providers and sector partners in ensuring a cohesive and integrated approach to homelessness and housing services right across Tasmania. This means working across all our communities, both in the cities and the regions, understanding and meeting their unique and different needs. We are doing just that and our Homes Tasmania model is in its infancy, having just commenced 18 months ago. Since that time, we have been getting on with delivering on our substantial targets and funding for delivery.

In 2023-24 our government provided \$50.3 million in grant funding to support the delivery of housing and homelessness services across Tasmania. Over \$25.5 million of this funding was allocated to statewide services, which includes \$16 million for Housing Connect, the critical front door to housing assistance which provides a consistent and personalised approach to provide for Tasmanians who require housing support anywhere across the state; \$5.3 million for the Youth2Independence program, which provides supported accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness. This program supports 46 Y2I dwellings in the south and a further 90 dwellings in the north and north-west and I had the pleasure of meeting some of the people at Eveline House and the amazing young people who are there and the amazing work that the staff do. There is also \$3.2 million for the Private Rental Incentives program which provides homes from the private market at subsidised rent for up to two years.

The remaining \$24.8 million in funding is allocated to support the operation of shelters and accommodation, with \$10 million allocated to the south and \$14.8 million to the north. We have also committed significant funding, including as part of the election commitment, for

additional public housing maintenance. I know that this is a topic of great interest for members and for their constituents, and we are committed to doing better in that space.

It is not just unprecedented funding for housing and homelessness services for our state, which demonstrates the heart that we have on this side of the House, supported by others in this place. We are also getting more social and affordable homes delivered through the new model. We have seen a significant rate of new social and affordable housing delivery since October 2020, which, for members' reference, is when we started our counting towards the 10,000 social and affordable homes by 2032. We have seen a substantial 3620 affordable and social homes delivered as of June 2024.

It is important to reiterate for members that this is a third of our target in a third of the time. It means we are on track. It means construction activity, and importantly, more homes for Tasmanians who are in need.

Recent data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has shown that from 30 June 2022 to 30 June 2023, 15.5 per cent of all social housing across Australia could be attributed to Tasmanian social housing buildings. This is even more significant when you compare that with Tasmania's population size, which is about two per cent of the country's population. Over that period of time, we have far exceeded our national share and that has been under the period of time in which Homes Tasmania has been operating.

We will continue to deliver on our commitment to build 10,000 more social and affordable homes by 2032, further increasing housing supply, driving the Tasmanian economy and activating the critical, valuable and rewarding jobs in our construction sector.

Our election commitments are also significant in this space in supporting and enabling Homes Tasmania and the broader housing and homelessness sector to deliver for the Tasmanian people. During the recent election, we set out our housing priorities as part of our 2030 Strong Plan. Importantly, we have set clear and ambitious housing supply targets for, as we know, an increase of 10,000 social and affordable homes by 30 June 2030.

We have made substantial gains on the delivery of this homes goal and we are looking to grow even further. As part of our plan, we have stamped out stamp duty with 100 per cent discount for houses up to \$750,000 for first home buyers. That is a big saving for those people. We have cut stamp duty in half for Tasmanians who buy an apartment off the plan or under construction up to the value of \$750,000 for two years.

We are looking to immediately unlock more affordable rentals by boosting our private rental incentive scheme with an additional 200 homes. It means backing more Tasmanians to invest in property and more support for renting families with the cost of living.

Our government is also boosting a highly successful My Home Shared Equity program, expanding the scheme to support more Tasmanians to buy or build their own home. About 1000 Tasmanians have already been supported into home ownership. The latest data is now 1200. We are backing everyday Tasmanians to take that crucial first step on the property ladder.

We are adding a \$10,000 per unit incentive for developers of up to 50 units to get more infill, medium-density units and high-density units built in key development areas. In addition

to these significant incentives, we will also provide short-term, interest-free loans of up to \$1 million for medium-density units and apartments to assist with early headworks charges.

Why am I talking about these things? It is because we enable those commitments through Homes Tasmania. One of the key areas that we have identified through Tasmania is that in the past when we had a much narrower focus only on social homes, it did not enable us to take real and meaningful action in the way that we wished to across the housing spectrum. Importantly, action that is taken in the area of affordable housing also supports Tasmanians who are doing it tough. Action taken in the area of first home ownership enables those people to move to a different home, which frees up housing stock for other areas. Just the other day I was at Punchbowl in Launceston where, through Homes Tasmania, we have been able to deliver anew initiative as part of our Key Worker Accommodation program, unlocking 24 units for the amazing healthcare workers of the Launceston General Hospital.

What that has meant is that 19 private rentals that are in the market around Launceston will now be freed up for long-term rentals for Tasmanians in the general public. Where we are able to leverage Homes Tasmania and its balance sheet, its capability and its intent to support Tasmanians with their housing needs, we are able to take more meaningful action.

The old focus of just social housing does not enable us to fully act on the priorities that the Tasmanian people have across the housing spectrum, whether you are someone who is going into public housing, disability housing, key workers' housing, affordable housing or first home ownership. The developer incentives, too, enable Homes Tasmania to build more homes in areas where Tasmanians need them, which frees up rental stock and home ownership stock for more Tasmanians.

We are proud of the government's significant commitments to ensure more housing options for this state and ensure Tasmanians have more opportunities to access the housing they deserve. We recognise that more needs to be done. Our Development Assessment Panel legislation will take the politics out of planning, which is too often a roadblock for new housing initiatives. We have seen in recent months the shameful refusal of accommodation for homeless women. Importantly, our Development Assessment Panel legislation will provide the Homes Tasmania developments with access to this new independent pathway.

The government's *Housing Land Supply Act* provides a direct process for the rezoning of suitable government land for residential housing and facilitates the provision of social and affordable housing. To date, our government's made 12 housing land supply orders across all three regions of the state.

I recognise that more needs to be done in this space and we see big opportunities to continue to take the politics out of planning for housing land supply orders, as I mentioned previously. We cannot also forget that more than 61 hectares of land has been rezoned for residential development under that process, creating the potential for more than 1000 new housing lots. In relation to the time frames for housing land supply orders, I have sought opportunities to improve this model.

Our Homes Tasmania model was never meant to be a set-and-forget approach to housing in our state. We will be open to improvements and keen to work with members in this place, recognising that this new model is only 18 months old and it is just getting started. This includes how Tasmania works with our key building and construction sector.

Mr O'Byrne mentioned previously some commentary that is being made by some of those construction sector members, including the Housing Industry Association (HIA). I have here some correspondence from Stuart Collins, Executive Director of the Housing Industry Association in Tasmania from today, which Mr O'Byrne has quoted that says:

The HIA has expressed concerns more recently in the public domain on the performance of Homes Tasmania and its progress against targets. In particular, HIA has requested better reporting, leading to appropriate levels of transparency and accountability, and the inclusion of the private sector as part of the solution. HIA met with Homes Tasmania yesterday to discuss its concerns and while HIA maintains its position, the meeting has resulted in an improved understanding of Homes Tasmania's current delivery and its future pipeline of work, the challenges around the startup of an independent body and the external factors -

Mr O'Byrne - Yes, so it took them going to the media to get -

Mr ELLIS - I am trying to be helpful, Mr O'Byrne -

... such as planning approvals, investment and finance, and federal government funding contributions.

There has also been a commitment by Homes Tasmania to increase engagement with peak bodies that includes quarterly meetings and the broader industry, provide more opportunity for all operators in the private sector, issue progress reports and communications, consider ways to encourage diversity and new housing forms, and drive reforms that fast-track social and affordable housing development.

Homes Tasmania abides by this commitment and genuinely works with the industry. Homes Tasmania has a clear ability to deliver on the government's objectives. HIA is ready, willing, and able to work with Homes Tasmania to deliver on the social and affordable housing targets, but we will be continuing to monitor its performance closely and ensuring the commitments to industry are met.

I thank Mr Collins for those comments. It shows that the industry recognises that this model is in its infancy and has potential to build on our track record of delivery. Improved reporting and tracking is certainly something I support and we are currently working on an improved dashboard to better communicate our delivery and other measures, and members of this place will be able to see that new dashboard by the end of the month.

Homes Tasmania has also published an anticipated future opportunity notice on the Tasmanian Government Tenders web portal to establish a panel of qualified builders to undertake the design and construction of new dwellings on Tasmanian lands. I will quickly note that I am currently reviewing the ministerial statement of expectations under the *Homes Tasmania Act* to ensure that the government's expectations and indeed the community's of Homes Tasmania are contemporary, fit for purpose and effective and we will continue to work with that.

We cannot support the motion as it stands, but we can certainly agree that we need to continue doing this work. We already have a significant body of work underway to review the way that Homes Tasmania is operating and we are committed to continuing to work with the construction sector as we deliver on our target of 10,000 social and affordable homes by 2032.

[12.37 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I know that time is short, unfortunately, for these types of debates, but I am glad the independent member for Franklin has brought this on, and can say from the outset we will be supporting this motion.

I am also glad that he made the amendment because I might also add that Labor raised significant concerns about Homes Tasmania. I will read from *Hansard* a section from my colleague, Ms Haddad's, second reading contribution where she outlined the following:

As I said before, we are in the grips of a serious housing crisis but the conditions that are contained in this bill, the intentions that are contained in this bill, will not increase the powers of this new statutory authority, over and above what is currently able to be delivered, and is being delivered within the bureaucracy. I agree that we need to find ways to act like the minister said, in a more innovative way, in a more agile way, more responsibly, and to allow for faster development but setting up a new statutory authority, particularly with those commercial interest that I talked about will not automatically allow for that to happen.

In fact, it could have a counter-effect of putting in place more roadblocks and more red tape, and more delays, particularly when it comes to dealing with other State Service agencies because Homes Tasmania will not be part of a State Service agency anymore. They would be a statutory authority at arm's length.

It might do some things that the government will feel good about, such as moving the housing costs off the government balance sheet and out of the budget papers, but that does not remove the fact that the government remains fundamentally responsible for the delivery of housing services for people who need it. It does not remove the fact that they need to find ways that actually fix the housing crisis that they have had a great hand in creating, including the planning system.

I fear that the creation of a statutory authority will, in fact, put more distance between the delivery of housing and the other parts of the State Service that are fundamental to that, including the planning system. I conclude my comments there and look forward to asking the minister some more detailed questions in the committee stage.

This debate went on for 17 hours. Ms Haddad quite neatly summarised some of the issues that have no doubt been raised, not only by the independent member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, but also industry, the HIA for example, talked about red tape, which was exactly what Ms Haddad flagged in her second reading contribution.

We all know in this place that supply is the answer to the housing and homelessness crisis that many people are feeling. Supply is absolutely the answer, yet what we hear from the minister, Mr Ellis, is that he just imagines everything is going swimmingly well, everything is fine, that the government are delivering. If that is the case, then why are the wait lists growing and why are the wait times getting longer?

Obviously, the 3000 houses the minister talks about is basically an accounting fudge. We know already that the minister and the system are basically trying to claim absolutely everything they can, including vacant land and beds in shelters.

What we also know is Homes Tasmania has gone around buying up everything they could find - units, complexes and properties that are already developed. There was an instance we raised in parliament a while ago about a set of units in Deloraine where there were existing low-income households residing in those units, so what was going to happen to those low-income people living in those units that were purchased by Homes Tasmania? Was that going to reduce the waitlist if those people were kicked out and had no alternative but to go on the other end of the waitlist? This is not solving the problem because supply is not being increased.

It is pretty clear that Homes Tasmania is not delivering. The government talks about it being results focused, but if it was results-focused you would imagine the waitlist would be shrinking and the wait times would be getting shorter and that is definitely not happening. We have seen the issues that have been raised by the HIA and people like Master Builders, but there is not enough action. Homes Tasmania is not working and that is why we believe it should be reviewed. I believe it has been in place for 18 months.

We see the difficulty in scrutinising Homes Tasmania as part of the budget process because they sit outside of the budget itself, so we have to get agreement from the government to bring Homes Tas to the table to find out what is going on. When we do scratch the surface and find out, for example, how they are assessing the number of houses, like the minister talks about 3000, we find out that they are counting vacant land and beds in shelters. You just have to look at the housing supply orders and the so-called fast track. Six homes in six years is not fast-tracked by anyone's means. We have seen lots stagnating, like the Devonport Bowls Club. What is happening with that? It has been subdivided. I do not see any action. Hopefully there will be action very soon.

We agree that it is not just about social housing. It is about social and affordable housing and in general across the state, increasing supply. If the public sector is increasing supply, that puts downward pressure on the other people at the bottom end of the market, and we are seeing building approvals go down, so this is not seeing the situation in general across the state getting better; we see it getting worse.

I believe some of the results of that are young people being forced to leave Tasmania when there is a lack of housing across the board. Just imagine you are a young person and you want to leave home right now. Where would you go? Is a rental available? Maybe just, but is the rent affordable? More than likely not. What we are seeing at the moment is the reaction from the young people of Tasmania to once again, like in the middle of the 90s, get on a plane and go to places like Melbourne to further their education or their careers.

That is obviously not the situation we want. Supply of social and affordable housing is a key part of the economic question. It is an economic pressure point and the government needs

to fix it. We heard the minister say over 3000 houses have been delivered but that is not impacting the housing crisis because we are not seeing the waitlist and the wait times go down. We think the government needs to be responsible and the best way for that is to bring it back into the heart of government with the oversight of Cabinet as paragraph (5) highlights, and I urge the parliament to support this motion.

[12.46 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this motion forward. I am going to be quick because, by my read, we have less than 10 minutes left. I know Mrs Beswick wants to have a say as well.

I will say upfront that we will support both the substantive motion and the amendment, and thank the member for bringing on the amendment. The Greens did not support the Homes Tasmania bill when it went through this parliament. They wanted it to work. We were not convinced about the corporatised structure. We were concerned about Homes Tasmania being increasingly loaded with debt, which is an issue that is increasingly coming to pass, and we ultimately voted against the bill even though some amendments were made along the way.

I could talk about the fails that have been flagged already in relation to Homes Tasmania. We have raised significantly over the last number of months and years the budget and the budget allocation for Homes Tasmania. We have heard already in this debate the fudged figures regarding the six houses, the vacant land and the crisis accommodation, and the dashboard figures - 4700 applications on the list. That is not people. We have to times that by x amount because some of these are families and couples and the like - 90 weeks waiting. They are well understood.

I put on the record some concerns we are hearing about Homes Tasmania regarding Aboriginal housing, and some deep concerns from the Aboriginal Tenancy Advisory Panels about Aboriginal housing about how housing is being allocated. There has been a shift from the Housing Tasmania model; Homes Tasmania is seemingly shifting responsibility for tenancy to organisations such as the Aboriginal Community Housing Limited. It is Victorian-based, and it is seen as taking the power and some of the autonomy out of the hands of the community.

We support the motion substantially. We do note that there is an independent review of Homes Tasmania in 2026. That is absolutely appropriate, but given we are halfway through the period until then and there are these significant issues, we absolutely support the call on the government to urgently review Homes Tasmania.

We do not necessarily want that review to have a predetermined outcome, but we certainly also do not want that to be an internal review by government departments. It needs to have input from Treasury and others.

Our policy is for a public works department to be established so that the construction of social housing is brought back into the fold of government. We know that when Stainforth Court was redeveloped into Queens Walk there were propositions about demolishing that completely. It was built in the 1950s by the public works department, so government-managed contractors and employees, and the quality of that build was such that the decision was made not to completely flatten it and rebuild it.

We are supportive of bringing the functions of Homes Tasmania back into the fold of government and within the purview of Cabinet. We note also that the Legislative Council, Government Administration Committee B is looking at the viability and function of Homes Tasmania as well.

We support and welcome this motion and the amendment.

[12.50 p.m.]

Mrs PENTLAND (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I confirm that JLN support this motion and the amendment. It is important that ministers maintain the responsibilities that they are called to, and we need our ministers to have good oversight and the ability to keep our state service accountable. Whether this is to make sure that a board or a department secretary are meeting their KPIs, Cabinet and ministers should not be able to shrug their shoulders, wash their hands and say, 'I could not control this'.

We need to make sure our housing list is being managed efficiently. Perhaps this means some integration in software or the creation of systems to support the management of accountability.

Tasmania is often considered backward, and too often our systems are to be updated to be best practice and nation leading. We should never be complacent and never be comfortable with less. There are many arguments for services to be provided by government or by private organisations. Which is more efficient and which is more connected to the community?

A review has the capacity to deliver insights into the effectiveness of the current model by making a comparison with options and other previous activities - whether we bring it back into the state or whether it is working alright as it is.

I note the member for Franklin's call for greater transparency about maintenance completed on social housing properties. It is critical that repairs are done in a timely manner. You only have to feel this morning's frost to get an understanding of what it might be like for Tasmanians living with inadequate heating, and safety is paramount in all situations.

We need to have a social housing framework that is equitable and responsive to meet the needs of Tasmanians. The JLN is committed to not only providing more affordable homes for Tasmania, but to improving the standards of properties currently available for social housing tenants. Secure housing is a fundamental human right, and Tasmanians should not have to wait months for basic upgrades and to ensure their families are safe and warm. I am not concerned about the details that the minister has detailed. If Housing Tasmania is doing a good job, and he said there has some definite improvements to be made, he should confirm this and we should have confidence in the Tasmanian people.

We support the member for Franklin's call to review Homes Tasmania, and any review should put everything on the table for discussion so we get the best outcome possible.

Amendment agreed to.

The SPEAKER - We are back to the substantive motion and summing up.

[12.53 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I thank members for their contributions and take on face value the contribution by the minister and his intent to make a difference in this portfolio. I reflected on the fact that he is the fifth minister in six years, so there is a lot of pressure on the minister to deliver. I will take him at face value that his intent is to make a difference.

Essentially, this motion being passed in this House today will send a clear message that business as usual, as the minister referred to it, is not acceptable. Homes Tasmania has been an experiment and an attempt to make a difference. It is clearly not making a difference. The review will be important to ensure we can inform a new approach to social housing in Tasmania. I personally look forward to working with the minister on that review and how best we achieve that.

It is crucially important that we make a difference. There are too many Tasmanians in marginal circumstances who are not being afforded the dignity of a home. It is our job to do this. We cannot continue just to have media announcements and ribbon-cutting on goals and achievements and having figures that are confused or deliberately misleading in terms of outcomes. This is an important motion. I thank all members who supported this motion for their contributions. This is important work. I thank the House.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Budget - Efficiency Dividend Impact on Frontline Staff - Motion Negatived

[12.57 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark) - I move -

That the House:

- (1) Notes the Tasmanian government plans to implement a \$300 million efficiency dividend in the upcoming Budget.
- (2) Acknowledges the significant concerns about the impact of the efficiency dividend on frontline health, education, police and other services.
- (3) Expresses its view that the Tasmanian community and public sector workers deserve full transparency over the proposed Budget cuts.
- (4) Orders the Premier, the Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP, to table unredacted copies of all Agency Savings Strategies, including supporting information, by 7.30 pm on 31 July 2024.

The SPEAKER - Is a vote required, Mr Willie?

Mr WILLIE - Yes, honourable Speaker.

This is an important transparency measure. As discussed in Question Time today, the state is in record debt. Last financial year saw the biggest deficit in the state's history and we do not have a lot to show for it apart from public services at breaking point. There are now cuts being proposed by this government. We have an economy that is flatlining and, unfortunately, there are too many working-age people who are leaving for better opportunities elsewhere. That is what we have to show record debt and deficit.

We have been asking questions of ministers in this government about the efficiency dividends and they have been refusing to answer. Yesterday, the Health minister refused to even acknowledge the dollar figure that the health department will have to contribute to the efficiency dividend. We can work it out on a percentage of the overall dividend, but he will not even say it. That shows the lack of transparency from this government.

As members of parliament, we should not have to resort to right to information laws to get information. This is important information because we cannot trust ministers in this government. They say it will not impact frontline services but we know, through documents that have been leaked to us and documents provided under right to information, that internally, departments are talking about impacts to frontline services.

For example, frontline officers in the police force will have to be redirected to other positions that are being cut, which will impact service. In the Health department, there are recommendations about a reduction in service, where possible. Why does this matter? It impacts Tasmanians. Tasmanians are paying the price for the budget mismanagement. It is now impacting public services they rely on, whether it is health, education or police, in keeping the community safe.

The government can either provide the information today, if this motion passes in this House, or we will inevitably get the information through right to information. As members of parliament, we should not have to rely on that. We should be able to ask for information such as this that is in the public interest, that is about full transparency and disclosure about how the efficiency dividend being imposed by this government will impact the services Tasmanians rely on.

I implore members of this House to think about that. The information will probably make the public domain through right to information. You can vote against this today, but you will be effectively voting against transparency and accountability. There are members in this place who stood on those things. They might not have had a whole lot of policies, but they said that restoring integrity in government was important and that they stood for transparency.

Some of the transparency measures we would like to see would help in understanding the impacts these cuts will have. We know that in health, this government has refused to rule out cuts to pharmacists, neurologists, catering staff, radiologists, child psychologists -

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

MOTION

Budget - Efficiency Dividend Impact on Frontline Staff - Motion Negatived

Resumed from above.

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark) - Prior to the lunch break, I was talking about a number of health positions that the government failed to rule out being exposed to the job cuts. I was thinking over the lunch break, there was a really good process that took place in the upper House that I participated in that is relevant to today's debate, and it was an inquiry into the production of documents. It is great reading for any new members of parliament about some of the principles of Westminster. There are some great explanations in there about responsible government. That does not mean the government being responsible with the budget or whatever else. It means that they are responsible to the parliament - to other members of parliament. The executive sits within the Houses and there are some great explanations in there about the powers that individual members of parliament have in their role scrutinising the executive and holding the executive to account.

You can find it on the parliament website. It is about 300 pages or so. There is some great evidence in there. There are some landmark law cases; Egan versus Chadwick was one of them. I cannot remember all of the titles, but New South Wales and Victoria have been a lot further down this path than we have and ended up in the courts, and some of the powers of parliament were confirmed in the courts. We were fortunate to interview Michael Egan, who was the leader of government in the New South Wales Upper House who found himself in court testing some of the powers of parliament and I think he came off second best.

I thought I would read some of the executive summary by the Chair, Ruth Forrest, the member for Murchison in the other place and very experienced member of parliament. It says:

According to the Australian Senate Guide to Senate Procedure No. 12 Orders for the Production of Documents, the power to require the production of information is one of the most significant powers available to the legislature to enable it to carry out its functions of scrutinising legislation and the performance of the executive arm of government. The Tasmanian Houses of Parliament and Committees established by them have an inherent and unequivocal power to order members and witnesses to produce documents and the authority to treat refusal to produce documents as a contempt of the House. This reflects a fundamental principle of parliamentary democracy, that is, the people who elect representatives - members of parliament - to advocate and inquire on their behalf without impediment. This is especially important in the upper House, which is seen as a house of review.

The Committee notes appropriate and reasonable claims of immunity relating to the production of documents may arise in limited circumstances. However, the failure to produce documents has negatively impacted the upper House as this was an upper House inquiry. Its key scrutiny and oversight functions related to actions, decisions, and workings of government in circumstances where a resolution could not be reached.

That has occurred under Liberal and Labor governments in that place. I acknowledge that the government has a right to claim immunity as part of our responsible government and collective decision-making that the Cabinet makes. We would not want the parliament to breach Cabinet confidentiality about Cabinet deliberations, and quite rightly, that would attract immunity.

I mention that because I was talking about right to information laws earlier. I will be upfront. There are right to information requests that are currently in train. It is my view that we will get some of this information through that process, but we should not have to rely on it. That production of documents report talks about right to information and how members of parliament have greater powers than right to information. We should be able to request documents from the government. Even documents that may be commercial in confidence can be provided to members of parliament in Canberra and that has occurred in committees that I have been on. In any of the committees I have served on there has not been a breach in that confidence.

There is a two-way street with that sort of information. The Committee is going to carry out its important work. It needs to be trusted by the government if the government gives it sensitive material, and the government needs to earn trust from the other members of parliament that they are not deliberately being obstructive.

That is what we are seeing with these 'efficiency dividends', as the government calls them. It is a cut. As *The Advocate* and *The Examiner* said the other day in their editorials, they described it as a lazy political tactic to impose a savings measure rather than doing some of the hard work that was required.

This is at the heart of this motion, Deputy Speaker. This is a transparency measure. I do believe that the Labor Party will get this information through Right to Information. Members of parliament could vote against it today, and that is up to you. You will be voting against transparency and it will probably end up in the public domain anyway.

As I said before the break, this is important to Tasmanians. These are services that Tasmanians rely on. It is impacting on our public sector, we know that. The Labor Party is the party of workers. We talk to workers all the time. We know how these cuts are going to impact the public service, the morale, and the people who are trying their best in desperate circumstances to deliver great services for Tasmanians.

Prior to the break, I was talking about some of the jobs in the health service that the government refused to rule out cutting pharmacists, neurologists, catering staff, radiologists, child psychologists, allied health, dental and other mental health positions. The confirmed cuts include two nurses in the eating disorder clinic at the Royal Hobart Hospital and two specialist infection disease cleaners. This means that the remaining staff will have to take on this work, and beds will close because being an infectious disease cleaning specialist involves exposure to serious diseases and other risks, and there is training they need to be aware of. These are some of the positions that have been confirmed as cut which is concerning.

It represents a false economy. Cutting child psychologists means that there are children in the state who are not receiving the preventative mental health care they deserve. These children may grow into teenagers with more acute issues, and where will they end up? In the emergency department, either here, Launceston, or north-west Regional Hospital, which is

a completely inappropriate environment for someone suffering from acute mental health issues. It is also very expensive for the government to provide that care which could have been nipped in the butt at an earlier stage through preventative work.

We have a government that is not being completely honest about the impacts of the efficiency dividend across public services. My colleague, the member for Clark, Ms Haddad, has been working very hard to understand how this will impact the health service, the biggest department. She has managed to uncover some information today and we will eventually receive the savings strategy; it is a matter of when. However, she has managed to uncover some of the devastating consequences of the budget cuts. A program of vacancy control is now in place across the health department which will see frontline and allied health critical administrative support positions going unfilled. The cuts will inevitably have consequences for patient care and safety.

A leaked internal memo from the Community Mental Health and Well-Being Division highlights that frontline health jobs are in the sights of this program. The memo asks several questions: whether service reductions are possible, whether vacancies that put patient safety at risk can be managed in other ways, whether full-time jobs can be reduced to part-time, whether shifts could be left unstaffed, and whether service reductions such as theatre closures could mean that some jobs do not need to be filled. The vacancy control committee set up by this government comprises senior staff from HR and finance. This begs the question, what clinical oversight will be in place regarding these job cuts? We could ask the Health minister about this, but he will not answer. He will not even provide us with the overall dollar figure that the health department is contributing to this.

This is a workforce that is already at a breaking point. We have some of the worst health outcomes in the country. At a time when patients have been waiting more than 11 years for specialist appointments - 11 years - I know that when the Premier was the shadow minister for Health, he used to talk about the silent list of people who were not receiving healthcare. He spent his entire time in government discussing this issue, yet some of those people have remained on that list throughout. He spoke a lot about this while in opposition but has not said much about it while in government, or lived up to his own expectations.

At a time when patients are waiting seventy times longer than clinically recommended to access the health services they need, these cuts are taking place when ambulances are routinely taking longer than 10 hours to reach patients. 10 hours. I am sure we have all heard horror stories in our electorates of people lying on their kitchen floors or out in the community.

Ms White - Old lady in the rain.

Mr WINTER - Yes, I have even heard of football games being called off because someone was hurt and they could not get an ambulance there. How embarrassing and how unfortunate for that young person who broke a limb.

Ms Finlay - An old lady in Bass the other day, in the rain, was not able to be moved. Her carer got hypothermia caring for her while waiting for the ambulance.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. Yet we have a government that is cutting services. Staff morale is the lowest it has ever been and the health system is under extraordinary pressure. We also have the Premier and the Health minister refusing to rule out a redundancy program in health.

When we go to education, we have not quite got to the bottom of some of the savings strategies there. That is why this motion is important. In recent times the government initially refused an inquiry into education. In the election, the Labor Party committed to an inquiry because we acknowledged that our education system is not performing the way Tasmanians need it to. It is hurting our young people. Not enough of them are retaining the education outcomes they deserve. Some of these kids are being red-flagged all the way through the education system. From being a teacher in that system, I know that we are not providing the intensive intervention when it counts. The government has finally conceded that an inquiry is necessary. We do not know the terms of reference, but they have accepted that an inquiry is necessary.

You cannot cut funding from the Education department. We have the new Minister for Education saying it will not come from schools. However, with a centralised department, who do you think is supporting the schools? Supporting schools in curriculum work; principal support is also very important. We know that is one of the hardest jobs going in our communities. Every year a survey by the Australian Catholic University comes out and shows the mental health concerns, the issues the principals are dealing with, and the burnout. If you are going to strip support from them at a departmental level, it will impact frontline services because it will make their job harder. We have been paying educators on time through payroll.

It is important that this government is upfront about how these efficiency dividends will impact frontline services. They can say all they like that it will not, but I know from being a teacher in the system that it will. I remember in 2014, when this government came to power and cut two teachers out of every school, four teachers out of every college, and that had a significant impact on the learning program. It took some time for school morale and learning programs to recover from that time. Just crazy stuff.

Education is very important for all of us and it is the biggest lever, and I have said this in the past, that a state government of any colour can pull to improve the lives of all Tasmanians, socially and economically. Young people in our school system now are going to be - some of them are already - leaders in our communities. They are going to be leaders in business, community organisations, in our aged care service, and they are going to work in our health service. It is vitally important that we are helping them reach their potential.

It is important we understand the savings strategy in the education department, how it is going to impact schools and how it is going to impact child safety. We know Child Safety is at breaking point, particularly on the north-west coast; the caseloads are enormous and unfortunate circumstances are occurring.

Moving to the police department, this is an example of where we do have a lot of information through right to information and a fair understanding of the savings strategy of that agency. We have some internal documents which I will read in a minute, but an RTI document we obtained showed that the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management will be forced to axe at least 78 jobs because of the budget cuts. According to those documents, positions in areas like radio dispatch, which handles calls to the 000 line, will be cut, along with jobs in information services, workshop maintenance, forensic science and prosecutions. The documents also raise the prospect that some bushfire reduction programs might cease.

These positions facing the axe under the cuts are vital to our emergency services' ability to keep Tasmanians safe. As the RTI outlines, cutting these jobs will simply necessitate transfer

of frontline resources into support roles. The government can claim all it likes that these cuts will not impact frontline services, but we have internal departmental information that completely contradicts that and calls out the government's lack of transparency.

In a stunning assessment, the department has also acknowledged the dangerous impacts of the cuts, including psychosocial hazards brought about by increased workloads and reduced availability of emergency services, with first responders redeployed to fill the gaps.

Deputy Speaker, our already stretched Police, Fire and Emergency Management personnel do an incredible job in difficult circumstances. Why should they be the ones to pay for the Liberal government's cuts with their morale, and not being able to deliver the services that Tasmanians need? We would not be doing our jobs in this place if we were not holding the government to account and trying to understand fully the impact of this across the whole government sector.

The police commissioner may have been responding to the right to information request, knowing that it was going to be public, but she was obviously concerned about staff morale and wanted to provide some extra information. She sent a memo to all staff and she has been quite transparent with her workforce. It is an example of what the government should be doing with parliament.

In the memo, she said:

As you may be aware from last year's state Budget, all government departments are set a Budget efficiency dividend over four financial years as part of enabling the state government to meet its budget targets. The total budget efficiency dividend across all departments is \$300 million over four years. Our agency has a total savings requirement of \$35 million over four years. This will require us to save \$3.9 million in 2024-25; \$7.8 million in 2025-26, and \$11.7 million in 2026-27 and 2027-28.

We cannot even get that global figure out of our Health minister in this parliament, let alone a year-by-year breakdown on how that is going to impact government services.

Over coming weeks, we are expecting some further political, media and public commentary around the budget efficiency dividend, including on our agency's budget and how we intend to meet these savings required. I understand this can cause concern, so I wanted to let you know how the challenge is being managed.

I commend the police commissioner for getting on the front foot and providing information to her workforce.

Firstly, it is important to be aware that whilst we have been working on this issue with the Department of Treasury and Finance, our overall savings strategy will take a period of time to finalise. Communicating with staff will be a key piece of work once the agreed strategy is settled. Our executive is working through the department of budget strategy to provide a governance model and clear approach to managing the efficiency targets while

continuing to deliver on our key services and commitments, including the wellbeing of our staff.

We have a strategy that includes an agency executive group, budget oversight committee and vacancy management committee. She goes on to say:

I also expect there will be immediate constraint on discretionary non-salary expenditure and I ask that you all exercise due diligence to all areas of discretionary expenses. There is no doubt that meeting the targets will mean change. Eighty per cent of our agency costs relate to employee salary costs and we acknowledge this will need to be the primary focus in order to achieve savings. However, we will seek to minimise the impacts of change through the development of clear strategies and direct communication with our staff and unions.

In the last part, she says:

I recognise the change and discussion of budget savings can cause people uncertainty and concern, but we will be ensuring our task is approached in a strategic way that recognises the value of our work and our people. We will keep you informed.

That is a great approach from a leader in our public service, making sure that staff are informed. Staff in other departments are just hearing things through the media, which reflects this government and the lack of transparency. They should be more upfront and they could make a choice today to provide this information to the parliament without a fight to show that they are taking responsibility and providing the important information to Tasmanians that will impact the services and the quality of services they access.

We have some information that is being provided. I believe we will get the information in the public domain. Members of parliament have an explicit right to ask the government for information. This is a pretty simple request. If I go back to the motion, it orders Premier Jeremy Rockliff to table unredacted copies of all agency savings strategies, including supporting information, which is important, by 7.30 p.m. on 31 July 2024.

We have a right to do this. It will end up in the public domain through right to information anyway. Members of parliament have a choice to vote for transparency, for integrity in government decision-making, to uphold our role holding executive government responsible in this parliament for decisions that are being made by the Treasurer and the Cabinet, the executives across their departments they are managing and to provide Tasmanians the information they deserve.

I will be interested in the Treasurer's contribution and whether he is going to act in a transparent way and support this motion, or whether he is going to be obstructive and continue on a trend of the Health minister in recent days when he has been asked questions about his own department being less than transparent. Tasmanians want a different approach. We are in a minority government situation. It is what the Tasmanian people have sent to this parliament and that was, as the Premier said, a kick up the bum for this government and the way that they have been operating. Now that they do not have a majority, it will be interesting to see if they change approach in terms of integrity, government transparency, and being upfront.

The last thing I will add before my time runs out, Deputy Speaker, is this is really valuable information to have before we go into the Budget sessions. All members of parliament want this sort of information when they are sitting across the table from ministers asking about operations and decisions that are being made within their departments.

Time expired.

[2.56 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Treasurer) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to this motion and say from the outset that the government members will not be supporting this motion. I will explain why in some detail and I will respond to a range of comments and statements made by the shadow treasurer, the member for Clark, Mr Willie, in bringing this motion forward today.

I will be kind and say this is a stunt and an intended trap from the Labor Party, knowing perfectly well the Budget is currently being developed. It is a trap. It is a stunt. It is the sort of thing an opposition would do if they did not believe that we are here to be constructive and work in the interests of Tasmanians. It is what an opposition would do if they were ignoring what Tasmanians said on 23 March, election day, this year. They clearly said, 'Get back to work and be constructive and make this parliament work'. This is what the opposition would do if they intended to just continually defy and ignore what the Tasmanian people have clearly said.

Mr Willie, in his contribution, has frequently tried to use terms to endear himself to the parliament and to the crossbench in particular, which is very clear to me his intended audience, by using words like 'transparency.' I will respond and say there is no problem with the principle that Mr Willie has articulated. The problem is he is trying to be a wrecker. He is trying to be a disruptor to the Budget development process which is currently being carefully considered by the Budget Committee of Cabinet and by the Cabinet itself, knowing full well that we have a range of opportunities and challenges to deal with as we carefully work through those opportunities and challenges and deal with them as competently and as wisely as we are able.

I hasten to add, that is on the best possible advice of the Department of Treasury and Finance: a finer group of people you will not find; so committed to financial security for our state. They do a fine job, but we do not do it just on the advice of that department. We also do it on the advice of each other agency and through their minister, representations are made to that process.

I look across and say without disrespect that I do not see anybody in the Chamber on the other side of the House who has sat in a Cabinet and I am indicating to those members who are here that that is how the budget development process works. It takes a long time, tens of hours just to get a paper to that process. It is good that in his earlier comments Mr Willie referred to the sanctity of Cabinet, the importance of that process, not being interrogated or overruled by a production of documents demand by a House of parliament, but Mr Willie did not go so far as to point out that that is exactly what this motion would be seeking to do; to interfere with that Cabinet process.

Mr Willie - What's your immunity claim?

Mr FERGUSON - I am not making any claims here today.

Mr Willie - We will get this information anyway, so it is a false argument.

Mr FERGUSON - I am not making any claims here today, I have just started, but Mr Willie, who has an unfortunate habit of interjecting, invites me to respond in that way. I am not making any claims on Cabinet, I do not run Cabinet, the Premier runs Cabinet, but I am indicating process and there is a very clear process.

Mr Willie - You were talking about immunity claims.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Willie, the Treasurer and Deputy Premier was silent during your contribution. I ask the same courtesy of you, please.

Mr FERGUSON - I thought the shadow treasurer had a fairly good go there, but it is my turn to respond. That process is a recognised process, it is not new, we did not invent it here in Tasmania, it is in every Commonwealth country and Westminster parliament. We did not create this rule, it is longstanding practice that the executive are expected, indeed, demanded to go and do their work and report to parliament as required, and we report to parliament when we ask parliament to approve appropriation bills.

On the day when those bills are presented - in this case it will be 12 September - a large and comprehensive range of documents will accompany them. Mr Willie poorly tried to make a claim in this regard, but an obvious omission was that what follows after budget day, five days later, is the Opposition's response, the day for their alternative budget. The Opposition Leader and his team all get that opportunity to speak, as do our members, to the Budget. They can say what they like about it, they can say what they do not like about it and usually, at the end of the leader's contribution - it is convention - you would seek leave to table your alternative response.

That is exactly what the Greens do every single year because the Greens imagine that they are the real Opposition. In Budget week, it is fair to say they are. On that one occasion they are, because they are the only other group that table an alternative. That is a fact. Cassy O'Connor did it religiously, and Dr Woodruff did it last year.

Mr Willie - What about Peter Dutton and Angus Fowler? Are they doing it?

Ms Finlay - Yes, why does Peter Dutton not do it?

Mr FERGUSON - In opposition, the Liberal opposition did it religiously and observed that convention -

Ms Finlay - Federal or state?

Mr FERGUSON - I am happy to talk federal with you at another time. I am talking about how our parliament works.

Ms Finlay - You did it religiously in opposition?

Mr FERGUSON - I would appreciate if you did not do that, Ms Finlay. What Mr Willie did not talk about was what follows from Budget day. There is the alternative budget

opportunity. There is the debate that takes a full week before we even get to an Estimates committee hearing.

In the following week, we have the Estimates hearings. Both houses of parliament and every single MP, as is proper, has the opportunity to question, challenge, interrogate, and do the sort of scrutiny and seek the transparency that Mr Willie spoke about. That is how we structure our Budget debate. I did not invent this. It was like this before I came here. I make no claims on it, but it does work and it works very well. I have been in opposition.

Quite frankly, Mr Willie, I am informing the House that in the time that we are in right now, between now and 12 September, the Budget is under development. What the motion seeks to do is to deliberately disrupt and insert itself into that process. As one person said to me this morning in what I thought were quite fair and wise words, what the opposition are trying to do with this motion is trying to govern from opposition. They are trying to govern from over there, having given up the opportunity to govern on 23 March. They are now seeking to govern from the opposition bench. That was what somebody said to me this morning. I thought it was fair. I thought it was wise.

I state from the outset that in relation to this motion, as I have said countless times, the government is about investing additional funds into essential services. I talk often about strengthening our essential public services and stronger public services. Those plans have been revealed in significant detail. We call it the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania. Tasmanians backed it at the election, together with our costings, which have been provided.

We have been investing over our ten years since coming to office and we will continue to do so. As part of our plan, we are continuing to take clear and meaningful action to ensure that the state can provide essential public services and job-creating infrastructure on a sustainable basis now and into the future. People in my team who know me and the way I go about my work will say, if asked, 'Michael really makes us work for our Budget requests', because I believe very much in responsible management of public finances.

The Budget is challenged. It is not news; it is known to all of us. Every state Budget in the Commonwealth is very challenged at the moment, because as governments have had to respond to cost-of-living pressures and inflation, and have had to provide more support to public services which are under pressure around the country, all states - and I exempt from this Western Australia - are facing major fiscal challenges. All states, and I say this with authority, are challenging the federal government to do more, and to work in partnership with them on those essential public services - essential services that Tasmanians rely on. The states do not believe that we are getting the attention that we deserve and that our communities deserve, and I say that on an informed basis.

Importantly, as well, filling vacancies in the public sector in an efficient and effective manner is what Tasmanians would expect from us. The community expects government departments to use their resources effectively and within budget, and to make decisions conscious of where to use our precious resources most wisely.

We have a strong record of responsible financial management, including through difficult times. Our fiscal strategy has served us well. It was presented with an update in the last budget. That fiscal strategy, not just from last year but going back to 2014, has served us well. It has

been a cornerstone and a guiding light for our strong, responsible fiscal management in the past.

During the COVID years, it also provided this House - government, opposition, and crossbench - the budget flexibility to respond to that pandemic. It cost a huge amount of money through that time and there was very little disagreement about the need for government to do that and it is estimated about \$2 billion went out of the Treasury to support the Tasmanian community. We had a lot of support from the Commonwealth, it has to be said, but that was the net cost to us. The net cost of responding to that killer virus, as it was in the earlier days, and the uncertainty about those public health controls, was a lot of money. There are other challenges that our budget faces that will also cost a lot of money.

I mentioned this morning our response to the commission of inquiry. The fact that we had that flexibility to respond was a good thing. It allowed us to provide an unprecedented level of social and economic support, and it reached all parts of the community. As ever with anything that any government ever does, it is never perfect, but what we did in Tasmania was considered nation leading in Australia.

Many people should take a bow, including the opposition, who supported the government through those years - not uniformly, I might add. At times there were breakouts and political opportunities taken. Racing occurs to me, and another one was the 'open the border' narrative but they are the only two exceptions I can think of. In the main, there was a lot of solidarity across this Chamber through those pandemic years.

Let us also not forget that these supports had significant revenue and expenditure impacts on the budget, but we did not hesitate. We needed to do what was done to shield our economy and support the community, knowing that when we came out of the pandemic, we wanted to have that strong economy for our community and our kids. We wanted to ride it out in a way that allowed us to continue and pick up where we left off.

By the way, the fiscal strategy released last year - the updated fiscal strategy actions - was praised by ratings agencies. It was a real endorsement of the improvements that I believe we needed to make in these times to the fiscal strategy. I encourage the opposition to read it, certainly the shadow treasurer. The opinion expressed by the ratings agencies was, by the way, very different from the one we received from the opposition at the time, from the then shadow treasurer Dr Broad and the then finance shadow, Mr Winter. They were very negative about our fiscal strategy, but it was endorsed with strongly positive commentary by the ratings agencies because they recognised that we also needed to change the guidelines about where we needed to head towards 2032.

I really am committed to rebuilding our fiscal buffers. It seemed to me during the election campaign, which was only a few months ago, that the opposition got it as well, and I say this advisably. I am not sure if Mr Willie knows the truth of what I am about to say to the House, but the Labor Party endorsed the Budget efficiency dividend in the run up to the election. The Labor Party endorsed it. We heard a lot about it earlier. We have heard a lot of talk through the week. Is it an embarrassing fact, or just a fact? The Labor Party endorsed it.

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Genuinely, I did not hear what you said, Mr O'Byrne. If we line up, that is good; if not, fine but that is a fact. The Labor Party, in its alternative financials - and I suspect, Mr Willie, talking about documents that you can find on the parliament website, that is all very well and good, but what you cannot find on any website is the Labor Party's plan for Budget repair. It is gone, but I have one of the few copies left on earth.

Mr O'Byrne - Put that on Facebook marketplace. People will go crazy.

Mr FERGUSON - I am not sure what it would go for, but I have one of the few remaining copies before those websites were scorched. 'Labor's plan for budget repair'. There is a lot of red on the front, it has to be said, but that is the Labor brand. There is a photo here of Dr Broad with Ms White, the then shadow treasurer and then leader of the opposition. It is fine. Then there is a story and a narrative, but I want to come to the very important point.

The copy I am holding is the one after the 11 mistakes were identified and fixed. It was the death knell for the shadow treasurer, to be fair. Then we turn to the headline numbers. In the headline numbers there are two rows - two line items - that deal with savings measures.

We did not hear a lot about this, but I informed the House that Labor's savings measures add up to nearly \$2.1 billion, and when you go to the detail, such as it is, \$172 million of that was for health.

Labor presented this with four financial years, but they kept the budget year 2023-24, the outgoing year. They skipped a whole year, 2027-28, where those health savings rose to \$75 million in the final year, having risen from lower numbers earlier. It added up to \$2.1 billion, of which at least \$172 million was earmarked for health. No detail, by the way, just euphemistic headings: 'Health policy offsets - reduce demand over time and locum spending'; and the second one, 'Health policy offsets - federal funding'. Interesting claims on savings measures.

If we turn to a page earlier, we see the new operating spending decisions from the Labor Party, and I will not go through them but they are all there. By the way, they do not add up to \$3.6 billion as they should, because Labor artificially left out so many of their operating spending decisions. That is a fact. Mr Willie, there is one thing that is not included in this table of new operating spending decisions, and that is the elimination of the BED, the Budget Efficiency Dividend. If you were going, you supported the BED. You factored it in. You assumed that. The 2.1 becomes 2.4, to be fair, otherwise you would have wound it out. This is the disappointing hypocrisy of this debate.

Some would say this debate is a complete waste of time because it is just a stunt. By the way, for any member who might have been tempted to vote for this motion, apart from the fact that it is all about ordering the Premier to do something by 7.30 p.m. - within four hours - if anybody thought that there was a scrap of bona fide here, it is dashed at that moment when you realise that what this really is about is sanctioning and holding the Premier in contempt.

Mr Willie - You can give it to us now. We will get it in the public domain anyway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Willie, you have made your contribution.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Willie said as much because I wrote it down. Mr Willie talked about the powers of the parliament and he used the words 'the minister coming off second best' and then dealt with the word 'contempt'. This is a planned step-by-step process to put the Premier in a trap. It is exactly what this is.

It is an abuse, in many ways, of the bona fides of people in this House who recognise that we have been sent here by Tasmanians.

Mr Willie - You are not claiming any immunity to it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Willie, if you keep on making interjections, you will have to go out so please lower.

Mr FERGUSON - We have been sent here by Tasmanians to get on with the job, not these stunt motions. For new members, I will say this is precisely what happened in the last parliament, where the minister, Mr Barnett, was ordered to do something very similar - almost the same words - and when he was unable to comply with it in the eyes of the opposition, they then took him to contempt proceedings.

It is exactly the same approach that they are seeking to do here today and we will not have a bar of it.

The hypocrisy makes it worse when you recognise that Labor adopted that savings measure of the budget efficiency dividend of \$300 million. They adopted it and then added another \$2.1 billion. I cannot imagine what they had in mind when they created that \$2.1 billion but I do know one thing: it was designed to artificially present a Budget positive outcome compared to the Liberal government. That is exactly what it was artificially intended to allow them to claim that our numbers will be better under Labor. It was quite dishonest. I do not believe Tasmanians bought it, but that is what I observed. That is what I saw happen.

I refute the argument made by the member who said that if you vote no to this motion, you are voting against transparency. That is neither fair nor correct. However, someone might vote no, as I intend to, because they can see exactly what the substance of this motion is. It is a political game that the opposition is playing, attempting to govern from the opposition and trying to set up the Premier to be sent off to the privileges committee to be reprimanded and accused of contempt.

The evidence shows that we are employing more frontline staff right now. It is happening. I hope members saw that there is a new advertising campaign interstate to encourage health professionals to come live in Tasmania and work in our health system.

Under our plan, we are recruiting 60 more police officers in Tasmania. I heard references earlier to police. We are recruiting 60 more officers, which includes 20 for a new police strike force to target serial criminals and crime hotspots around the state, and 40 officers for a relief pool to maintain safe staffing levels at police stations. I am advised that this recruitment would take our total to 1521 officers by 2030. This would represent the largest ever contingent of police in the state; however, that is already the case today. We have the largest contingent of police. Since 2014, we have added 359 full-time police officers. That is an increase of more than 30 per cent.

I argue this point with the member, and I intend to do so at the scrutiny Budget Estimates. I expect criticism from the Opposition during Estimates week. I expect plenty of criticism on the Budget efficiency dividend. I must make a note to remind Mr Willie that they backed it in the election. That being said, it is not a false economy. It is something that has been used as a tool in the past. It was something that the previous Labor government had introduced previously.

For colleagues to be aware, we intended to have a Budget efficiency dividend in the 2019-20 financial year. However, when the COVID pandemic began in March, we abandoned that plan. We recognised that it was not possible to proceed with it so we removed it. It is a reasonable approach. It will not be easy, no one is saying that. It does give the head of the agency the responsibility to carefully work through what strategies will work for us. As a government, we have made it clear that we will be keeping a watchful eye on those savings measures and we are committed to protecting the frontline.

These matters will be dealt with in the Budget papers. They will be in the Budget, followed by a week of debate, during which members can make their own contributions. There will also be the Budget Estimates committees, which offer approximately 63 hours of scrutiny of the budget.

Those are my points. I could make a lot more, but all I have to go on is what people have put forward in good faith. In good faith at the election, we put forward our financial policy, the alternative a copy of which I still have - one of the rare few copies left. No sarcasm intended at all, but Labor told us what they would cut. It is hypocrisy that a citizen of Tasmania cannot even locate that document online anymore. It is shameful. Earlier in the week, your leader said you are proud of all the policies you took to the election. Well, one of them was to stop a stadium. I do not know how proud you are of that one because you backflipped on it. What about your financial policy? Are you proud of that?

Mr Winter - Talking about backflips, what about UTAS?

Mr FERGUSON - As fellow school teachers, Mr Willie, I know exactly what you are doing right now. It is called a secondary behaviour. You are trying to take me off course. You are trying to distract me. I will not take that bait, but your Leader said you are proud of all your policies. Well, are you proud of this one, because that is what you said and the voters who did vote Labor voted on the basis of what you said you would do.

Mr Willie - We are not in government to deliver it. We are the opposition, we are holding you to account, and you do not like it.

Mr FERGUSON - I do like it. I love being held to account; it is a reasonable expectation for a minister that members of the opposition do that. I accept and agree it is your role to do that. I endorse that and I have been in your seat before as well. I get it. I wrote this down because I thought it was interesting. You said, 'We wouldn't be doing our jobs if we didn't hold the government to account'. Agreed, but you also are not doing your job by not publishing genuine budget alternatives and you have missed it for 10 years. You have deliberately avoided your role. You have surrendered it to the Greens to be the alternative government.

Mr Willie - I know you are desperate to take the focus off you and your budget management but I will not do it.

Mr FERGUSON - The Labor Party are not doing their job, but what they are doing today is pretty obvious to me. I have been around a while and members around the room who have been here for a while can see this for what it is. It is a standard trap. I do not support it and I certainly do not support these manoeuvres to set up ministers and the Premier for future debates, accusing them of contempt and dragging them through what they wish to be a humiliating process through the Privileges Committee. We do not support it. That is my contribution as to why we do not support this motion.

[3.24 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for bringing this motion on and the contributions from both members so far. It is fascinating to see you slug it out across the Chamber and even more fascinating to get some level of endorsement from the Treasurer in relation to our crack at an alternative budget and putting together different figures.

We share the concerns of the Opposition and the broader community about the \$300 million of efficiency dividends that were forecast in the 2023-24 budget. They ring alarm bells across the community, a community that is already seeing significant pressure on our frontline and other services at the moment.

There are already large areas of critical services under pressure. We have out-of-home care positions, certainly in the north-west, that remain completely and utterly unfilled. We have heard recently that nurses are being trained to do security work. We have the Integrity Commission taking the absolutely unprecedented step of putting in writing its concerns about its budget and the capacity to do the work that every Tasmanian expects it to do, which is implement and follow the recommendations of the Weiss review and, frankly, it is simply not good enough.

The efficiency dividends are going to manifest in a whole raft of different ways. That is very clear, but one thing that is also very clear is that they are going to manifest across the government sector. They are going to manifest in just about every single aspect of all government departments and there are a lot of people concerned about what that is going to look like going forward.

Vacancy control has occupied a significant amount of airtime in this Chamber so far, as it should, because it is a measure that concerns not only us but many people outside of this Chamber. We have the government on one hand trumpeting the recruitment blitz for frontline workers, whether it be police that we just heard the Treasurer talk about or health workers. On the other hand, we have the government cutting jobs, taking jobs and not filling jobs when they become vacant via these vacancy control measures.

It is hard for people outside of this place to dissect the spin and understand exactly what is happening and that is why we support this motion. It is an important opportunity for the government to come clean on what departments are planning savings strategies they have already clearly developed, as evidenced by the Police, Fire and Emergency Services department, with their \$35 million savings and the strategies about how they are going to deliver that.

They are the ones we know about. We know about vacancy control, we know about the \$35 million in the department of Police, but clearly there are ones that we do not know about and that is what this motion is seeking to achieve. Workers deserve transparency, we absolutely agree with that, as do the Tasmanian people and Tasmanian taxpayers. At the end of the day, Tasmanian taxpayers are assisting the government with the money it allocates in the budget context and they deserve transparency as well. Whether it is frontline health workers, education workers, police and emergency services, as are explicitly listed in this motion, they deserve transparency.

The other people who deserve transparency, not that they are going to get it in terms of their budget allocations until budget day, are those in the community services industry itself. The community services sector, whether through its peak body or whether it is individually with those groups themselves, have been crying out for many years for additional funding because they cannot keep up.

It is not only the Tasmanian government's frontline services that are delivering critically important services to Tasmanian people. We have the community services industry delivering as well and facilitating and we absolutely cannot do without that industry, but they have concerns about indexation, as has been loudly and proudly put in the election context. There has been some movement there, which is welcome, but it is nowhere near what those organisations are looking for.

We have them looking for increased project funding, looking for the money so they can deliver the services via projects that their clients - our community, our constituents - expect and deserve. Not only do they want increased funding for those projects, they want longer-term contracts so they can plan for the delivery of those contracts and have the ability to employ staff for more than one-year contracts, for more than short-term contracts, so that they can deliver those services over time.

There are a lot of people across our community looking for transparency in this Budget. Yes, all will be revealed on Budget day, but we know what Budget day looks like. It looks like a number of strategic leaks in the lead-up to it, it involves a lockdown and it involves thousands and thousands of pages for people to work through. The agency savings strategies, what they are working up about how they expect to meet the \$300 million efficiency dividends, are a fair expectation to be put on the public record.

The Treasurer does not agree. I accept that; we would expect him to accept that, but he talked about the Cabinet process in terms of developing the Budget. We are not necessarily talking about the Budget here. We are talking about agencies' response to already foreshadowed efficiency dividends. This is a \$300 million efficiency dividend that has already been foreshadowed in the last budget and that departments are expected to respond to, so it is not unfair that this kind of information is put on the table. The one thing we do need to look out for in this next Budget is whether it ends at \$300 million in terms of the savings these departments are expected to make.

We are hearing horror stories from friends and constituents who work in the public service about what it looks like in there and what is being asked of departments. No specific details and no specific documents, but it is clear that the Budget is going to be under significant pressure. I am not 100 per cent sure that the efficiency dividends and the expected savings

across the departments is going to end at \$300 million and I wonder what happens in the outward years as well.

The Treasurer mentioned investing additionally into essential public services in the 2030 Strong Plan. Let us be frank, the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future was cobbled together during an election campaign, nothing more, nothing less. It was a range of different election announcements put together by a PR firm at the end of the day, called a 'Strong Plan' and trickled out across the election campaign, packaged up, and stapled at the end of the campaign and put on a table as a strong plan. That is what it is. It is nothing more, nothing less than that.

Mr Willie - A strong plan with a 12 per cent swing against it.

Mr BAYLEY - That is right. We will take that with a grain of salt, Treasurer, that you talk about investing in those essential public services via the 2030 Strong Plan because we are yet to see it.

Regarding a trap and bona fides of this parliament - and I am not here to speak for the opposition - but from the Greens perspective, if these agency-saving strategies exist in the department, as is evidenced by the police and emergency services strategy, it is entirely reasonable that they be put on the table. We could argue about whether three or four hours is enough time for it to be delivered, but this motion has been on the books for a while. It should not be too hard for each head of agency to pull this information together and get it on the table. If this House got it tomorrow, I do not know that anyone would get much traction on a no-confidence or a referral motion to the Privileges and Conduct Committee. They exist. It is not a set up. We should ensure that this information is delivered and there is nothing to fear here unless this information is not delivered at the end of the day.

We support this motion - and I feel like a broken record in this place because we talk finances, we talk budgets and we talk money a lot - but the elephant in the room in this space is a billion-dollar stadium at Macquarie Point. A billion dollars or more can buy a hell-of-a-lot of essential and frontline services going forward. We know that \$715 million is not where this stadium is going to start and finish. The Premier knows that is not the case as well. That is why he came out on day one in the election campaign earlier in the year and effectively admitted that it is going to blow out significantly. Effectively admitted that there was a major political and practical problem about it blowing out, and tried to convince us that he could somehow cap government expenditure at \$375 million and allow the private sector to take up the rest.

I am yet to understand how the private sector is going to step up and invest in a development such as the stadium, a development that on the government's own figures demonstrates that it is going to lose \$320 million over the coming 20 years. By the AFL agreement, we all know the one thing that has been transparently put on the table - which is very welcome - is that the Tasmanian taxpayer is on the hook for every single dollar that the stadium blows out over and above its forecast figures. Every single dollar that it blows out we are going to be on the hook for and that is why people are utterly opposed to it. That is why whenever there are these money conversations, whenever there is media coverage about cutting services, whenever there are job losses, whenever there are tightening budget issues, the level of angst, the level of concern, the level of feedback is always anchored back to a billion dollar stadium at Macquarie Point.

People do not want it. People realise that we cannot afford it, and people realise that we are going to lumber our future generations with a significant amount of debt. We have already got a forecast of more than \$6 billion in debt from 2027. There is a lot of fear out in the community about what a billion-dollar stadium would look like.

The government has consistently said that it can walk and chew gum at the same time regarding a stadium and managing the budget, but it is very clear from this information and the \$300 million efficiency dividends that it is both tripping and choking at the same time regarding these kinds of investments and this approach.

The pre-election 2024 financial outlook report earlier this year identified the challenges about the Macquarie Point urban renewal project and it says:

The 2023-24 RER (Revised Estimates Report) includes \$410 million in funding over the Budget forward Estimates to support this project. This funding was included in the 2023-24 RER as purchases of non-financial asset, capital expenditure undertaken by the general government sector through the Department of State Growth. This approach assumes that the asset will be developed and owned by the general government sector.

Any change in the current assumptions in relation to asset ownership, development, responsibility or funding arrangements that necessitate a change in the nature of funding to a grants payment or equity contribution will materially impact key fiscal measures, such as the general government sector net operating balance and the fiscal balance.

The stadium is the elephant in the room regarding these budgetary conversations and it is going to get bigger and bigger and louder and louder as we stomp closer to the Budget in the middle of September.

I heard a conversation there about the Labor Party savings measures and the one and only document from the election about the Labor Party's strategies.

While I have this opportunity, I put on the record that the Greens do not necessarily want to pay for our commitments and the requirements of the public sector going forward by additional savings, apart from not investing in Macquarie Point. However, there are additional earnings that can be made across the board, such as aligning mining royalties and rents to the national average; restoring casino taxes to pre-2022 levels; charging a royalty on salmon; a 75 per cent tax on property speculators; and a 1 per cent vacant property levy. We can reform the residential land tax. We can phase in full-cost recovery for water licences and we can end taxpayer subsidies to those industries that many Tasmanians have significant concerns about because of either their cruelty or their environmental impacts, such as racing and logging.

We are all for transparency, so we will support this motion. It will be interesting for the Labor Party in the debate coming up in half-an-hour or so, because our next motion is going to be talking about transparency as well: transparency about the coastal policy. We, as a House, are being asked to pass retrospective approval legislation based on a claim of government that it is going to have a significant impact. The government has failed to substantiate its claim that the sky is going to fall in and a whole range of infrastructure assets, and that the Tasmanian way of life is going to be threatened unless this happens. We look forward to that debate.

The Greens are willing to support this motion. There should not be anything to fear for government if they comply. With this information undoubtedly at the fingertips of departmental heads, it should be possible for this information to be delivered.

[3.40 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion. Leading into a state budget, the attention of the state is attuned not only to the economic and political climate, but the circumstances of the Budget. With all the noise about an efficiency dividend, with the data clearly out there in terms of the state of the state budget and the challenges the state government has to face, this is a Budget of great concern to the Tasmanian community. In some respects, I welcome the focus on measures that will be adopted by government and the processes the government is undertaking.

It is fair to say that the motivation behind this motion, in part, is to either allay some of the community fears or to find some greater level of information about the formulation, construction and delivery of the Budget. Having said that, I have been at the Cabinet table and on a budget committee for four state Budgets as a minister. Those with a cursory understanding of political history over the last decade or so in Tasmania would remember the 2011-12 state budget I was a minister of. The decisions we took in that budget had a significant impact on government services and significant ramifications not only for the State Service and the state's economy, but also for the state political scene. I understand the difficult process, particularly when you have to meet the challenges in service delivery, community expectation, economic development, let alone the complications of a hangover debt from the COVID response and the significant response required of the commission of inquiry. These are weighty matters you need to consider.

Having gone through a Budget process where we were, essentially, tasked by the premier of the day and the treasurer to find significant savings, that is a process which is delicate, complex, difficult and partly political in nature. You do have to balance a range of things. I can only talk about the approach I took as minister, sitting with various public servants, public sector workers who clearly took their job very seriously and understood the gravity of what was presented to us, the gravity of the Budget circumstances back then, which is in no way comparable to what the budget is at the minute. A range of ideas were pushed forward and pursued by various departments. With the greatest respect for some of those ideas, 70 per cent of them would never see the light of day. The vast majority of them were, in isolation, a quirky idea but completely unacceptable in terms of the consequence for the community, completely unacceptable for me as a minister to sign up to.

Conversely, there were a number of ideas that were unique, unusual and a really creative way to either make a service delivery more efficient and more deliverable, but also something that improved the standard of government service delivery. Those things were very important in our deliberations as a Cabinet, particularly for me as a minister who presented to the budget committee, which is not an attractive thing to do when you have to cut a lot.

If that process and those ideas, and some of the briefs - and, let us face it, some departments threw things up that they knew we would never agree to so that they could focus on the stuff they wanted to do. There is politics in this on both sides. Departments have strong views but, ultimately, the executive government makes the decision. The advice you receive from departments is clearly important and substantial, but it is advice. Sometimes that advice

is loaded. I am not reflecting on any individual, but that is the nature of departments wanting to do things. They have their views and the politicians and others have their views.

If people knew that that process would be put into the public domain, that creativity, the good ideas for better services, more efficiencies, a greater and a more creative response to a significant problem with debt, would never get to the minister's desk. They would not get out of the department.

Conversely, the crazy ideas, or the ideas that were clearly never going to be accepted, there is no way a minister or a government would sign their name to them, if you push those ideas -

Mr Willie - That is not what we are asking.

Mr O'BYRNE - No, that is exactly what you are asking for. If you are saying that is not what you are asking for, you do not know how it works. If the minister asks for advice on ideas on budget savings, that will come from the department.

Mr Willie - We are asking for the savings strategy.

Mr O'BYRNE - The savings strategy?

Mr Willie - Yes.

Mr O'BYRNE - Well, that is it. That is exactly what you are asking for. It is the same thing.

Mr Willie - No. We are not asking for all the things that go into that.

Mr O'BYRNE - Anyway, I am not going to respond to that any more. I will focus on my contribution. The other interpretation of the motivation behind this motion is essentially to get a day-by-day war list of ideas that will never be supported by this government, by any opposing government, any crossbench, that may see the light of day and it will be out every day to be front page on matters that would never be considered seriously, never be implemented. That would be unconscionable because the nature of the advice from departments when they are looking for a dividend - and I really do not like the word 'dividend' because it is not a dividend. It is a cut.

Any advice on budget cuts, particularly in this environment, are serious and are in depth and you have to get the full range. You are not going to get a department saying, 'We need to save some money. Come up with ideas but pull punches, please'. You will get a range of ideas from the outrageous to low-level. That is easy and something we can accept and the department can accept and it will minimise the impact on the community, but there will be significant ideas, as there should be, in a matter of rigour that departments and governments need to consider which are context to the other decisions you make that will never see the light of day, that no-one would accept, but that is the context within which you are.

I believe it is important that government decisions need to be transparent, government outcomes need to be transparent, budget decisions need to be transparent, but having been in government and going through that process, having that kind of deliberation where you want

to be creative, where you want people to be free to say, 'Look, you may not like this, but here are our thoughts behind it'. If that becomes a political weapon, you can do significant damage. I am not saying the government will make the right decisions, I am not defending them, but I am just talking from being a minister in the departmental process. You minimise the impact to be creative and to come up with circumstances or situations or ideas which save money and make government more efficient but do not have a damaging impact on the community.

There are a lot of regrets from that 2011 and 2012 debate, I can tell you. A lot of regrets about some of the decisions that were taken, collective responsibility, yada yada, all of that stuff, but I applaud on the face of it the request for more information about government decisions; that I do support. This, in my view, if you look at it in a more negative way, is just a fishing exercise for ideas to give the government a whack. If you ever get to government -

Mr Willie - We are going to get this information anyway through RTI. There is no immunity claim from the government.

Mr O'BYRNE - Then do the RTI process.

Mr Willie - We should not have to as members of parliament.

Mr O'BYRNE - It is not right. Do not argue with me. Cabinet deliberations -that is what your motion is effectively trying to elicit. That is exactly what you are doing. If I am ever part of a government in future, if anyone is part of a government in future, you want to have the ability to have frank debates and discussions with your department, even on ideas that you think are absolute garbage and rubbish. You need to hear them and they need to know that when they put up something potentially controversial it is not going to be on the front page of the paper. You have to respect the public servants and the public processes that occur. I am not defending government decisions. I am not defending the government Budget. I will criticise and critique, but this motion is a little bit too clever by half. I cannot support it.

[3.51 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this motion. We will not be supporting the motion. I back the Treasurer. I back responsible government. I back the strong plans to grow our economy and to manage our government. A budget efficiency dividend is not unusual. It is used all around Australia at a national level and I have been involved in the Senate for nine-and-a-half years. This is not unusual; 0.6 per cent of total annual expenditure is 60 cents out of every \$100.

We need to be responsible and we are. We are not forgetting those on the frontline. That is why in Health we are putting on more doctors, nurses, paramedics, allied health professionals: those supporting those on the frontline. It is happening each and every day. We now have 500 extra on the front line, 150 of those nurses and midwives. It is really good progress and we have record funding into Health. We are still being responsible.

I acknowledge the member for Franklin and his remarks. David O'Byrne has that experience, he knows and understands and has spoken cogently and coherently with respect to this motion, which is typical Labor grubby politics and it will not be supported. It is grubby and you know it is wrong. In your heart, you know it is wrong. It does not happen anywhere else in Australia. You are just using this for your own political base purposes, being negative and relentlessly so.

For the Royal Hobart Hospital, we have just put on and secured 44 new doctors. I announced it last week with Simon Behrakis. There are also 25 new nurses. It is happening, it is progressing. We are investing on the front line. We are delivering the incentives - \$100,000 for our GPs, \$15,000 for our nurses and midwives, \$10,000 for our graduates, \$25,000 scholarships for allied health professionals. Yes, we are advertising in mainland papers and we are proud of it and, yes, it does cost money, but that is all right.

I was shocked in here yesterday when the shadow minister for health asked whether the mental health precinct had moved from the Anne O'Byrne site to the Franklin Street site, yet it was on the public record on 23 February last year, and secondly, in the budget last year, where the Premier made it very clear about the mental health precinct.

Let us see what *The Examiner* said about it today.

The Government will today submit a development application to demolish vacant buildings next to the Launceston General Hospital to start its planned \$80 million mental health precinct.

I am pleased about that; I am proud of that. This is initiative and a plan and I thank the Premier and former minister for Health for the leadership in that regard, but it is progressing positively, consistent with the public announcement of February last year. On budget day last year, everybody knew that it was at the Franklin Street site adjacent to the LGH. *The Examiner* article continues:

The facility is part of stage 2 of the hospital's redevelopment. Labor and the Health and Community Services Union earlier this week claimed that a health department secretary told the union in a meeting that plans for the facility had been abandoned due to budgetary constraints.

That is a disgrace and I am calling on the Labor shadow minister to come into this place and apologise for that misrepresentation and unfair characterisation of that meeting to the deputy secretary of my department.

I have received a briefing from the deputy secretary and it is not as you have characterised. You are dead wrong and it is not fair that you pull into the public arena accusations that are false and misleading with respect to my deputy secretary, and I am speaking here for and on his behalf and on behalf of the government to say it is not on. Apologise. Do it today.

Time expired.

The SPEAKER - The question is -

That the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES - 14

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Burnet
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay (Teller)
Ms Johnston
Ms Rosol
Ms White
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Dr Woodruff

NOES - 18

Mr Abetz
Mr Barnett
Mr Behrakis
Mrs Beswick
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Mr Garland
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr Jenner
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Pentland (Teller)
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Wood

PAIRS

Ms Haddad

Mr Rockliff

Motion negatived.

MOTION

State Coastal Policy - Motion Negatived

[4.04 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes the Government's view, expressed in the opening paragraph on its consultation webpage that 'The State Coastal Policy 1996 (SCP) is a critically important part of the State's Resource Management and Planning System (RMS) and has served the State well in protecting the coast and providing for sustainable development ...'
- (2) Further notes that during the appeal process for the Robbins Island wind farm development the Government has decided to legislate to retrospectively validate approval of developments that were

approved despite contravening the State Coastal Policy, including the Robbins Island development.

- (3) Understands the Government has justified this legislation on the basis of 'advice' received in March 2024
- (4) Acknowledges:
 - (a) that this advice, or a detailed summary of this advice, has not been publicly released - despite its significant nature and obvious public interest; and
 - (b) that the Government's claim that existing coastal infrastructure will be at risk of legal challenge due to the implications of this advice has not been supported with evidence or examples.
- (5) Orders the Premier, Hon. Jeremy Rockliff, MP to table, at least 24 hours before the consultation on the 'Validation (State Coastal Policy) Bill 2024' expires:
 - (a) A copy of the advice being relied upon to justify retrospectively validating the approvals of development, and subsequently amending the Tasmanian State Coastal Policy 1996; and
 - (b) a list of coastal infrastructure assets that have been identified as being at risk according to this advice.

The SPEAKER - Mr Bayley, do you to require a vote?

Mr BAYLEY - We require a vote. Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Let me begin by quoting from a submission from the Aboriginal Land Council about the 40,000 years of Aboriginal occupation of pilitika, which is an ancient Aboriginal landscape:

Parpertloihener people, with their own dialect and history, their warriors and major events carved over centuries into the petroglyphs at Preminghana to where they travelled for cultural and social exchanges. In return the Tarkiner came to Robbins Island for dogwood spears when the three stars come. Great ceremonies were held among the two peoples on these occasions.

Robbins Island has a shared history. George Augustus Robinson visited numerous times as a staging point on his so-called friendly missions, where remnant groups of tribal Aboriginal people were rounded up and shifted to offshore detention, ultimately languishing at Wybalenna. This is a 40,000-year history.

The island and its surrounds also have significant environmental values. There are disease-free devils, there are wedge-tail and sea eagles. There is a plethora of migratory bird species that travel from the other ends of the earth to feed there. It is a very important place in a Tasmanian cultural, historical, environmental and indeed coastal context.

This is important background in the context of what is quite an extraordinary step that is going to be presented to this parliament: to retrospectively validate the approval of a major internationally owned industrial development on Robbins Island. This involves private land that was never ceded to by its original owners: Crown land below the high tide mark and coastal waters. It is unprecedented also because it is currently subject to a live Supreme Court case being brought by the government's own Environment Protection Agency (EPA). The proposed legislation to be brought before this House will pull the rug out from under the EPA.

Taking a couple of steps back to recap a bit, Robbins Island has, for many years, been proposed for a wind farm of up to 122 wind towers of 270 m in height, new and upgraded roads, underground cables and three substations. There are going to be quarries, water storage and a bridge to mainland Tasmania, as well as a proposed wharf. It is being proposed by a Philippines-owned company.

It is the wharf that is of significance to today's debate and the advice this motion is seeking, and in the context of the validation bill that will be presented to this House, because the wharf is 509 m long. It goes off Back Banks beach on the north-east coast of the island. It is proposed for the transport of turbine parts and construction materials to the island and it is a constructed wharf landing through sand-dune country that is hundreds of metres long and up to 80 m wide in places. It is this wharf, and the scale of development in this particular location, a mobile dune system, that has been identified as being non-compliant with the state coastal policy. Therefore, it should not be approved, and the entire development should not be approved.

That is the issue currently being tested before the Supreme Court. Despite the fact that it is a live court case, the government is proposing to bring forward validation legislation. Instead of allowing that court case to proceed and react depending on the outcome of the case, the government wants to pre-empt the court case, strip the grounds in that case out from underneath the Environmental Protection Authority and invalidate its appeal.

Let me touch on the State Coastal Policy. The State Coastal Policy is one of only three state policies. We have the protection of agricultural land policy from 2009; the water quality management policy from 1997; and the coastal policy from 1996. The coastal policy, which is the pertinent one in this context, was the first state policy.

State policies are really important instruments. To quote from the website, they are:

... to articulate the Tasmanian government's strategic policy direction on matters of state significance related to sustainable development of natural and physical resources, land use planning, land management, environmental management and environmental protection.

There should be more state policies. In 2014, the Liberal government promised to bring in a whole range of new state policies because state policies are really important. They are important parts of the planning scheme; they are overarching and they have an impact on all aspects of government decision-making. At the end of the day, they give effect to government policy and must be adhered to.

However, the government has not brought those policies forward as promised. Instead, it is legislating a whole raft of lesser Tasmanian planning policies with less impact, which only

relate to the planning scheme and are less significant in terms of a planning instrument. That is somewhat of a digression.

The State Coastal Policy is a really important one. As an island state, I am sure we can all appreciate how important our coasts are. They are cherished by people across the state, they are integral to our clean, green brand, they pop up just about ubiquitously in tourism and other promotions, and they are incredibly sensitive. Every single coastal environment, including on our islands, is covered by the coastal policy, except for Macquarie Island, which has its own.

The policy deals with Aboriginal heritage. Aboriginal heritage, as many people would know, is writ large across the coastal strip, whether it be the living places, the petroglyphs or ancestral burial sites. Our coastal areas are important to Aboriginal people and heritage protection. As has been discussed in this place previously, including today, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* was acknowledged by this government in this place three years ago as utterly failing to protect Aboriginal heritage. The State Coastal Policy is an important backstop for Aboriginal heritage.

The coastal environment is really sensitive. There are a number of different threatened species, a number of different fragile ecosystems. It is an important and sensitive area.

The coastal policy has three key principles, explicitly to be read together and not listed in any priority order: the natural and cultural values of the coast need to be protected; the coast should be used and developed in a sustainable manner; and the integrated management and protection of the coastal zone is a shared responsibility. These three principles have served us well, which the government acknowledges.

Let me read the part of the coastal policy that deals with coastal hazards, which is important stuff given climate change and the like:

1.4. COASTAL HAZARDS

- 1.4.1. Areas subject to significant risk from natural coastal processes and hazards such as flooding, storms, erosion, landslip, littoral drift, dune mobility and sea-level rise will be identified and managed to minimise the need for engineering or remediation works to protect land, property and human life.

Specifically, and more importantly:

- 1.4.2. Development on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes will not be permitted except for works consistent with Outcome 1.4.1.

That, 1.4.1, is the one I read out earlier. Development on these landforms will not be permitted except in those specific instances.

Regarding the coastal policy, government repeatedly talks up the success of it, whether on the website or in the minister's communication to stakeholders. For example, the website, which is currently inviting comment on the State Coastal Policy, starts by saying:

The State Coastal Policy is a critically important part of the state's resource management and planning system and has served the state well in protecting the coast and providing for sustainable development.

It has served the state well in protecting the environment and providing for sustainable development. I hear that so often in this place - the need to balance the environmental risks and protections with development. The government claims that this policy has served us well in that regard. This is the crux of the question and the motion. If the State Coastal Policy has served the state well, if it is about protecting values and providing for sustainable development, if the policy is working, as all indicators point to, why do we need to change it? We do not know because no justification has been given.

The thrust of this motion is to release the advice that states there is a problem and to list the infrastructure that is affected. It is a simple, straightforward motion. We have taken all the politics out of this in terms of the development at Robbins Island itself. It does not criticise the Robbins Island development: it does not make any comment about that. It is simply a raft of statements of fact in (1), (2), (3) and (4). They are all statements of fact that cannot be argued with. The crux of it is to order the Premier to release a copy of the advice he is relying on for the legislative validation that is going to come before this House and to list the coastal infrastructure he claims is going to be impacted unless that action is taken.

I believe this government is asking this House to take a very extreme measure. To retrospectively approve development - including a major destructive development on a sensitive coastline - on the basis that it has not received, it has not summarised, it has not even extracted, the key legal reasons and provided them for us.

It is simply not good enough, in my view and the Greens view, to say 'Trust us, there is a problem and help pass this fix'. It is simply not good enough. We do not trust the government with these kinds of developments. We just had a long and lengthy debate about transparency, about releasing information, about putting information on the table so that we can see issues, and that is without this House even having to act on that information. This is a situation where this House is being asked to act to fix a problem and we have not been given the justification that there is a problem at all.

But this is the fix. This is why the fix is in. Pass this legislation so a destructive development, that would otherwise be refused, can be approved. Pass legislation that the government's own Environment Protection Authority is challenging in the court and would probably be successful, because it is demonstrably non-compliant with the policy so that it can be approved. Pass this legislation that is championed by the Minister for Energy and Renewables. Perversely, also so that the Minister for Parks and Environment's own Environment Protection Authority has its Supreme Court challenge killed off. It is simply not good enough to ask this House to do that without giving us the information and the justification that is needed.

How did we get here? A quick recap. The Circular Head Council and the Environment Protection Authority approved the Robbins Island wind farm. Civil society groups and individuals appealed the council approval to TASCAT, and the proponent itself appealed the EPA's approval and the conditions that the EPA put on it. Both of these appeals were for TASCAT.

TASCAT upholds the council decision and rejects the EPA's, effectively upholding the developer's appeal and rejecting the EPA's conditions. A civil society exercises its right to further appeal to the Supreme Court, as is entirely legitimate, and then the EPA - on advice that the state coastal policy has not been properly applied - joins that appeal.

On May 6 this year, Mr Duigan, Minister for Parks and Environment, flags March 2024 advice regarding the application of the *Tasmanian State Coastal Policy*. He says in the media release:

Minister for Parks and Environment, Nick Duigan, said that the government received advice in March regarding the application of the state coastal policy. This advice is different to the way the policy has been applied to developments in coastal areas since being introduced, Minister Duigan said. This could potentially impact on the use of all coastal infrastructure, including community infrastructure such as jetties and boat ramps.

This interpretation also led the Environmental Protection Authority joining an appeal against Robbins Island Wind Farm in March 2024, which has been approved by the council, with the decision upheld by TASCAT.

On 17 May, the EPA released a media release - that was not even released to the public until it was asked for by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust - that acknowledges that it erred in law and therefore had joined the appeal so that it could challenge, because the development in its view ran counter to the state coastal policy and it had erred in law by not properly applying the state coastal policy.

Then on 16 July, the minister released draft legislation that will be before the House stating again that:

The changes follow advice in March regarding the application of the Tasmanian coastal policy. The interpretation of the policy could potentially impact on existing coastal infrastructure including boardwalks through the dunes, fencing, lookouts, boat-launching facilities, bridges, and jetties, Minister Duigan said. It has also impacted on the approval given to the Robbins Island wind farm which needs clarification.

There it is, honourable Speaker. It is very clear that in our mind, and certainly without releasing the justification and the advice, that this is all about getting about the complications for the Robbins Island wind farm and the EPA's Supreme Court challenge of the Robbins Island wind farm because of its contravention of the state coastal policy. To be clear, we are not seeking the EPA's advice that it is relying on to inform its decision to join the Supreme Court and to prosecute it. Clearly, the EPA believes that the State Coastal Policy has not been applied and thus it is compelled to appeal. What we are seeking is the advice that the government itself received, and that is explicit in those media release statements from Mr Duigan. We are seeking advice the government has received and is relying on to justify retrospective approval of the wind farm and a subsequent change to the State Coastal Policy.

This is a two-part process to approve the wind farm and water down the State Coastal Policy. The retrospective validation legislation will approve the wind farm and annul or do away with the EPA's appeal of the wind farm in the Supreme Court, and then subsequently it

looks like we are going to have a discussion paper about the State Coastal Policy and they perhaps will go through the proper process - who knows? Let us wait and see but maybe they will go through the proper process about changing the State Coastal Policy.

The minister's media release on 6 May said:

Minister for Parks and the Environment Nick Duigan said that the government received advice in March regarding the application of the State Coastal Policy.

This is entirely the government's advice and it is to release to the public, to release to all those hundreds of people who are emailing us with their submissions, the advice and clear it up and give it to this House so we can have an informed debate about the validation bill when it comes before this House.

Before the minister gets up and claims that they cannot release this information, it is really important that we understand what can happen with legal privilege and this kind of advice, because there is some very clear information that was published by the Attorney-General about guidelines for the disclosure of communications protected by legal privilege. The Crown is entitled to claim legal privilege and keep things confidential. The privilege resides in the Crown and not an agency. We are not asking information from an agency or officer to whom it is given.

The custodian of the privilege is the Attorney-General. The privilege can only be waived with the express written permission of the Attorney-General, so before anyone gets up and says this is privileged information and cannot be released, no-one can see this because it is legal and has client-lawyer privilege, the Attorney-General, Mr Barnett, can absolutely release this information. If this government is asking this House to take such unprecedented action as to retrospectively validate a whole raft of approvals, including one of the most destructive and largest industrial developments on the table at the moment, the very least they can do is put this information on the table. They can at least give this information to the parliament so that we can see exactly what the advice entails and what the implications of it are.

Unless that happens you are really just asking us to trust you. 'Trust us, pass this legislation so that this great big internationally owned wind farm can be approved and don't worry about a thing. Don't you worry about that.' That has hallmarks of an attitude that we do not want to see in this parliament and that was evidenced also by the previous debate.

Civil society has been clear since day one. They have been running to the minister requesting this kind of information and if not the advice, they have at least been asking for a summary of the reasons. The Australian Coastal Society was one such civil society group that has been writing to the minister asking for this information. Dr Eric Woehler and Chris Rees are both eminent coastal experts. Eric has an OAM and a PhD and Chris Rees was a government official who oversaw the drafting and management of the coastal policy. They write:

We continue to rely on your media statement of 6 May and subsequent media articles as our principal sources of information on this questionable course of action that the government appears to have chosen. With the limited quantum of information in the public domain, you will no doubt be aware that a

number of interested stakeholders, including ourselves, have submitted multiple right to information applications to ensure that adequate information is available to both the broader community and parliamentary decision-makers. I am not aware of any right to information applications bearing any fruit. I am not aware of any of this information being released.

It is very clear that we still have a situation where the community remains in the dark and we, as parliamentarians, are also in the dark. We are all having to rely on a 'trust us' commitment from this government that the extreme and unprecedented action that is going to be taken is required. I will quote from the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania in a media release from a week or so ago, dated 25 July:

While the government claims there is coastal infrastructure requiring retrospective approval through these amendments; not one example of the Robins Island Wind Farm has been offered to the public. Ms Digney stated that the Tasmanian coastal policy currently prevents any development that would impact our mobile sand dunes. The Tasmanian Aboriginal community has a special interest in coastal dune systems because it is widely known that such dune systems often contain Aboriginal burial sites and other significant Aboriginal heritage values.

These requests have been made publicly and have been studiously ignored. Similarly, we have come into this place and asked the minister directly, as we did this morning, whether he would release the advice. He has dodged it and evaded it. Similarly, in the other place, Cassy O'Connor MLC, has had direct access to the minister, asked these questions, and had them dodged and evaded answers.

I point out something that many people may have noticed while walking around Parliament House over the last couple of days. There are a range of new signs promoting the values of Parliament; respect, treating people with dignity and courtesy, integrity and honesty, transparency, empowerment, enabling people to take ownership of work, and collaboration, valuing each other and working together. I find this situation remarkable: that this House is being asked to pass legislation simply based on the say-so of this government. It flies in the face of all of those values: respect, integrity, empowerment, and collaboration. It is an insult to the broader community that is currently being consulted over this legislation, who have no justification or evidence from the government presented to comment on regarding the validation bill that has been put on the table.

The government is coming into this place asking us to take extreme action, such as granting retrospective approval for development that, at face value, should be rejected. That is what they are asking us to do. At face value, this development should be rejected, yet we are being asked to validate it. This legislation would completely remove the grounds for appeal against the minister's own Environmental Protection Authority, one of the few times the EPA has stood up and done its job, and now the government is going to pull the rug out from under it. There is no justification for the motion.

On dot point six there might be some complaints about the timing of this. We want this information delivered at least 24 hours before the consultation period for this bill expires. That expires at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow. However, we have written this motion in such a way that if it takes some time to get this information, there is capacity, as would be appropriate, to extend

the consultation period. This would allow the public to have access to this information and have at least a day to update or amend their submissions based on the information. There is no evidence to support the claim that this is a threat to the way of life in Tasmania and coastal infrastructure. This is hyperbole from the government regarding this legislation and the move they are taking. It is very clear that this action is being taken at the behest of an international corporation for the benefit of development on a sensitive landscape. It is not politically crafted; it is drafted so that all members, irrespective of their position on Robbins Island, can support it if they support transparency. It is deliberately written in that way. It is a very straight-back motion and it is eminently supportable by all members.

I conclude in the minute or so that I have left and acknowledge the work of a whole raft of different community groups who have been encouraging submissions and holding public meetings: the Planning Matters Alliance of Tasmania; Environment Tasmania; the Australian Coastal Society which I mentioned earlier; the Tasmanian Conservation Trust; the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania; and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. They have all had an important role in promoting the issue and supporting our coastal policy that, in the minister's own words, has served us well, and encouraging people to engage in their democratic process.

To finish off, I will read out one submission from a Flinders Island resident because this could have implications for coastal communities all around the state, and if people care about their coasts, they should be deeply concerned about this legislation that is coming up.

My name is Jude Cazaly. I am writing this from Flinders Island where I have lived for 23 years and had land since 1997 when I would come and stay every year. The essential feature of the Furneaux Group of islands is its coastline. The coast is one of the defining features of Tasmania/lutruwita. I support the concerns expressed in the many planning submissions you are receiving. These are listed below.

These are people who deeply love their coastline and who have seen it protected for many years. That coastal policy that has served us well has protected the coast and given us the asset that we have today, and all that could be undermined for Robbins Island in this legislation, but undermined across the board if the coastal policy is changed.

Time expired.

[4.33 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, this is way bigger than just one development. What we have seen from the Greens, and we will probably see from other members such as Mr Garland, member for Braddon, is a very narrow frame and that is all about Robbins Island and the wind farm development. To a certain extent, the issue has arisen, or come to a head - I think is probably a better way of expressing it - due to that development, but this is far bigger than that development. I will outline my case and reasonings for saying that this is much bigger than one particular project. This is not just about Robbins Island.

A legal review of the State Coastal Policy appears to have raised serious legal questions with widespread ramifications. I have not been briefed by the government so I am not aware of what their legal advice is, but I can make some assumptions, just as the Greens have made a number of assumptions by the member who has just resumed his seat. It is open to debate but the risks are very large.

This all boils down to the following sections of the State Coastal Policy 1996, as the member for Clark outlined. It goes to 1.4.1., which says:

Areas subject to significant risk from natural coastal processes and hazards such as flooding, storms, erosion, landslip, littoral drift, dune mobility and sea-level rise will be identified and managed to minimise the need for engineering or remediation works to protect land, property and human life.

The next dot point in the coastal policy is by far the most important in this debate and that is 1.4.2, which says:

Development on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes will not be permitted except for works consistent with Outcome 1.4.1.

A literal interpretation of 1.4.2 could expose to legal challenge any development one kilometre from the high-water mark approved since 1996. They could be open to legal challenge if - and this is a big 'if' - it could be argued that the development sits on an actively mobile landform and the development is not required to minimise the need for engineering remediation works to protect land, property and human life.

This is where the real problem comes: the term 'actively mobile landform' has not been defined in the existing coastal policy. I do not believe it has been interpreted in law either, and I cannot find any academic papers or any definition for what constitutes an 'actively mobile landform'. As it has not been defined in the coastal policy, it could be interpreted to include any area subject to movement created by water, wind or gravity such as riverbanks, sand dunes, or even potential landslip areas, and the time scale also of what constitutes 'actively mobile' is also not defined in the existing coastal policy.

Given this uncertainty and the potential impacts of a reinterpretation of numerous proposed and existing developments, Tasmanian Labor supports reform of the coastal policy and therefore validating previous approvals.

Legal advice has suggested that there are wide-ranging impacts, and you have discussed some of them. Talking about the Tasmanian way of life is a stretch, but the issue is that 'actively mobile landforms' has not been defined.

Now, there is a hint to what they are talking about. Section 1.4.2 says -

Development on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes ...

There has been a lot of debate about frontal dunes because it says those words 'such as'. It is not limited to frontal dunes. It says, 'such as frontal dunes'. A lot of the interpretation that has happened across developments has focused on frontal dunes, but it does not exclude anything else that could be possibly classified as an actively mobile landform.

The problem with actively mobile landforms is there is no definition. It is a question better put to a geomorphologist who might be able to define it. I have looked for a definition of an actively mobile landform, and I cannot find one.

The best I can come up with is this definition:

An actively mobile landform is a natural feature of the Earth's surface that undergoes frequent or continuous movement and change due to various dynamic processes. These processes can include wind, water flow, volcanic activity, tectonic activity and gravity. Examples of actively mobile landforms include sand dunes shaped by and moved by wind; river channels altered by flowing water; landslides driven by gravity and lava flows created by volcanic activity, and these landforms characterised by their tendency to shift position, change shape or transform over relatively short geological time scales.

Dr Woodruff - There is a lot of research about this, Dr Broad.

Dr BROAD - We are not just talking about frontal sand dunes. This is my whole point. This needs to be clarified. Without that clarification there is massive legal uncertainty.

The Greens via interjection said that there is a lot of discussion about this. If you want to search for the term 'actively mobile landform', the only thing that comes up is the Tasmanian coastal policy.

Dr Woodruff - *Coastal Geomorphology*, 2002. *Coastal Sand Dunes*, 2012. There is a lot of research that has been done on this.

Dr BROAD - You were heard in complete silence.

The SPEAKER - Could I ask you to stop helping, please?

Dr BROAD - In the past I have seen the way that the coastal policy has been interpreted. What has changed? I am not subject to the legal advice, because of the significant ramifications. I have tried to investigate how it has been interpreted in the past.

One time it was interpreted by Resource and Planning Stream (TASCAT) (RMPAT), and this was to do with the Cambria Green Development. That interpretation states:

The State Coastal Policy 1996 applies to the site of Cambria Green as it is within one kilometre of the high watermark. The SCP's three main guiding principles are:

- (a) natural and cultural values of the coast shall be protected.
- (b) the coast shall be used and developed in a sustainable manner.
- (c) integrated management and protection of the coastal zone is a shared responsibility.

That is the frame that RMPAT judged in this particular case. On the Cambria Green development, it said:

There are considered sufficient controls in the amendment and the Planning Schemes Code to ensure that these values are appropriately considered and protected.

That tells me that the way RMPAT looked at the state coastal policy was those three key principles. It did not go 'reference 1.4.2.'. It did not say 'all development on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes will not be permitted except for works consistent with Outcome 1.4.1.'. It did not go to that part of it. It went to the guiding principles as highlighted by the member for Clark in his contribution.

This is an issue that has arisen before. This has been skirted around for a number of years, and I will give you an example of that. This is the *Vegetation, fauna habitat and geomorphology coastal values information for the Northern Tasmania NRM Region: Interpretation Manual*, 2007. On page 43 it says:

Planning timeframes are defined in the Australian and international standard to be the order of 50 to 100 years. Given that all landforms may change (be mobile) to some degree over some period of time, the time scales over which mobility should be considered must be defined.

They are not defined in the coastal policy. That is what they are pointing out. Thus, in determining the framework of what constitutes an actively mobile landform under the State Coastal Policy, paragraph 1.4.2. - the big issue that I am highlighting - both temporal and spatial dimensions need to be established. Obviously, they are not. It goes on to say on the following page, page 44:

The State Coastal Policy clause 1.4.2. states that 'Development on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes will not be permitted.'

It stops there, so I am wondering if this particular point has not been amended to include the previous point, which is 1.4.2. The next bit is quite important. It says:

Most local government councils have incorporated the essence of the clause 1.4.2. in their planning schemes.

For example, Glamorgan Spring Bay Council in their section S6.5.5 of their planning scheme, 1994, states that, and it is in quotes:

In order to minimise sand dune erosion and maintain the natural functions of dunes, use or development shall be prohibited on mobile sand dunes.

They have trimmed that particular dot point down just to 'mobile sand dunes.' They saw the issue with, 'Mum, what is an actively mobile landform?' and they drilled that down and narrowed that just to be talking about mobile sand dunes. They have trimmed that right down. The problem we have before us is that that particular point - what constitutes an actively mobile landform - has not been defined and has not been defined in law.

We wind back and we start talking now about the Robbins Island development. Everybody knows that the Robbins Island development, although that wind farm is a contentious development - that every line of that development application is going to be subject to a legal challenge. We know that there are groups going line-by-line through that document trying to find a legal avenue to knock off Robbins Island, because we know that they do not want Robbins Island and that is fair enough. They have expressed that opinion. That is a very well-held opinion amongst all those people who have been sending us emails.

Members interjecting.

Dr Woodruff - Get rid of the EPA. That will do the job.

Dr BROAD - You were heard in silence, so I ask for your respect. I am trying to outline quite a complicated case that you do not care about. Your frame is very narrow, and that is, 'We hate the Robbins Island wind farm development; we will do whatever we can to knock it off'. What I am trying to argue, and it is quite a complex argument, is that this is much bigger than that one development, but what it says is everybody knows that it is going to be held up to a massive level of scrutiny that has not been seen for a long time. I suppose government and departments have gone through and looked for every possible way that this development could be challenged.

When I read the State Coastal Policy, I was going to speak with Malcolm Ryan. Malcolm Ryan rang me up and said, 'I want to talk to you about this. It is a disgrace; it is all about Robbins Island'. I read through the coastal policy and I got to that page where it talked about 1.4.2. I read that and as soon as I read that I thought, 'Oh, that is the problem.' We have seen in some of the communication from the minister, Mr Duigan, that he has belled the cat and pointed to that one particular dot point as being the problem. What has happened, I believe, is that the lawyers have gone over everything to do with this development with a fine-tooth comb and they have spotted this potential problem.

I highlighted the way that I believe RMPAT has looked at coastal developments in the past and has judged them on those three guiding principles. They have seen this particular dot point that says, 'Development on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes will not be permitted'. That is a blanket ban, unless you can argue that it is needed to minimise the need for engineering remediation works, et cetera. They have looked at that and have gone, this has created uncertainty and could be challenged. This could be an avenue for the court to determine what is an actively mobile landform. We get to that point and the legal advice is that particular issue could create a problem.

I am not sure what the legal advice is. The legal advice might not say that this is absolutely a problem or it may say something along the lines that this will create uncertainty or this needs to be tested or this could be challenged. I do not know what the language is. No doubt lawyers would have pages of interpretation of this particular point, but let us, for one second, consider that a court could define what an 'actively mobile landform' is and, therefore, all those developments that have occurred under the previous policy could subsequently be challenged. The court makes a ruling and determines what an actively mobile landforms is, and as a result there is a whole bunch of development applications of developments that are now subject to legal challenge.

What happens if we get to that point? That is the real crux of this situation and that is why we need this to be clarified. Let us say that an actively mobile landform is determined to be not just frontal sand dunes but to be riverbanks because they are actively mobile. If you want to stretch it further, a court may determine that an actively mobile landform is a landslip area or an area subject to erosion. Then you can see the implications stretching and stretching and stretching. It is not in the best interests of Tasmania for that to be defined as broadly as it possibly could be, because it is not defined in the coastal policy and that particular set of words 'actively mobile landform' is not defined anywhere, so it would be up to the court to define and the court could define that in an unknown way. It might be narrow. It might just say that the

coastal policy was only referring to frontal dunes, but what happens if it does not? What happens if it says any actively mobile landform?

Getting to the crux of the matter, what the Greens have asked for in their motion is a list of infrastructure assets that have been identified as being at risk according to this advice. What happens if that advice is general? It says that there is a problem here. If the advice says this only impacts frontal dunes, that particular dot point would be relatively easy to list, but it is unknown. I believe it is unknown because it has not been defined in law. Therefore, it is unknown and is subject to a legal definition.

What happens then? What happens if this is defined as a mobile landform as I have attempted to define it to the best of my ability? That would mean anything on a riverbank is actively mobile. If we go for the low-hanging fruit, sand dunes and riverbanks, what has happened since? They have changed the validation period from 1996 to February 2009 and I can only assume that is because the coastal policy itself was updated in February 2009. I do not think that is a coincidence. The clock was reset in 2009. What developments can you think of that were on a riverbank or a sand dune since 2009? That is a big list and I can give you some examples. There are golf courses, the wharf redevelopment in Wynyard, the wharf development in Ulverstone, the new boat ramp at Ulverstone, the new boat ramp at Swansea, the new boat ramp at Eddystone Point. Imagine if the government agrees and the parliament agrees that this list has to be produced, so there is a list of developments. A development is anything from a chook shed to a massive piece of infrastructure. I do not know why the government has only talked about infrastructure, because the coastal policy talks about 'development', which could be anything.

Let us imagine there is suddenly a list of developments that are problematic from the point of view of the coastal policy. You imagine that list. If you produce that list, there is some person or group in the community - we know what Tasmania is like; they wake up and they are eating their corn flakes tomorrow morning and there is a list of developments that are subject to this uncertainty, and there is something there they do not like.

I know that there are people who do not like coastal pathways. There are people who do not like developments on the waterfront. There are so many things that people do not like. They could put in an injunction or some sort of legal process because you have forced the government to flag every development that is potentially illegal. Can you imagine the minefield that creates? That is why this is much bigger than Robbins Island.

We know you do not want Robbins Island. Okay, fair enough, but just think for a second about the legal uncertainty that this could create. It would have much bigger ripples than just the ocean there washing up onto Robbins Island. That is why we do not support the motion from Mr Bayley, the member for Clark, because there is a massive issue.

Demanding the legal advice is an issue in itself because that legal advice could create the same problem that I am talking about. People could make their own assumptions. I am not sure what that legal advice is. Hopefully, the legal advice only says there is uncertainty that needs to be cleared up, but maybe that legal advice is very specific and says that this type of development is unlawful.

Members interjecting.

Dr BROAD - I hear the interjections saying that I do not want to know what the legal advice says. Does the parliament want the legal advice out there in the open if there are massive implications? You keep talking about Robbins Island, but what about everything else? That is the big question. That is why, when we come to issues like this, we have to be adults. We have to look at the bigger picture. I believe that the bigger picture is of such importance that we need all those previous developments to be validated.

The Validation (State Coastal Policy) Bill 2024 has not been tabled. Maybe the government will change. I agree that the policy and the validation bill have to be done at the same time. If they are not done at the same time, there will be a gap between the validation, and then other things could be approved in between the grandfathering and the coastal policy.

Dr Woodruff - Without any consultation - just rush it through.

Dr BROAD - What happens if 'actively mobile landforms' is defined in the broadest possible sense? That is the thing that you will not even bother considering.

There was a development that has recently been approved at Seven Mile Beach for a golf course. That absolutely would be open to legal challenge if we let this go. Is that a good outcome? Maybe it is. Maybe you do not like that particular outcome, but maybe there is somebody who would put their hand up and say, 'I want to challenge this golf course because I do not like it - because I want to walk my dog there', or whatever it is. There can be any reason, and those sorts of developments are suddenly brought into question. That is why this is much bigger than one particular policy.

The government could clear this up very quickly. The State Coastal Policy could be changed. That 1.4.2 could be changed very minutely to clear up this whole problem. Instead of saying 'this refers to specifically actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes', if it becomes specific and says 'development on actively mobile landforms only', it narrows it down to frontal dunes or the areas that you are concerned about, instead of being an undefined term, which can be brought into everything. The lack of definition for actively mobile landforms has been raised by other people and you have seen it. I bet you have read it. The sort of information that comes up when you search for this term is the criticism of having such an undefined and potentially wide-ranging set of words in a policy which is so important.

This could be narrowed by saying something like, 'Development on frontal dunes will not be permitted except for works consistent with 1.4.1'. That is how you could fix the coastal policy, just by knocking out 'actively mobile landforms' from the policy. That could be a simple fix. Then the policy would still refer to the outcomes and everything that the member for Clark talked about - about the outcomes and what RMPAT talked about - was those three guiding principles. All this stuff still stays in place, but it is that definition that is problematic.

The three main guiding principles remain: natural and cultural values of the coast shall be protected; the coast shall be used and developed in a sustainable manner; and integrated management and protection of the coastal zone is a shared responsibility. That still remains, but this particular issue needs to be narrowed down and the government could do that simply by saying 'development on frontal dunes will not be permitted except for works consistent with Outcome 1.4.2.'.

Finally, I did have some communication discussing that all these areas had been mapped and indeed, some things have been mapped. I had a look at LISTmap and you can see the coastal erosion map and the present dune mobility map. These two items have been mapped, but what do they bring in? For example, the coastal erosion map brings in huge areas of the coastline, including large portions of Turners Beach, of Shearwater, of Ulverstone, and that is what I have looked at.

The same with the present dune mobility layer. The data behind the present dune mobility layer is very vague. It was obviously done a long time ago and you cannot determine what each specific bit means in the short term - without talking to the person who created the map - but present dune mobility is something that you would imagine would be relevant: that an area mapped as being in the present dune mobility map would be subject to this 1.4.2 because it is an actively mobile landform.

Imagine, on the present dune mobility map, what does that bring in? That brings in all of Shearwater, pretty much, all the flat areas of Devonport, all of Turners Beach, all of the flat areas of Ulverstone, and that is just in a very cursory look. Just about all of Circular Head is mapped in the present dune mobility layer.

This is why this issue is so fraught, because 'actively mobile landform' has not been defined and if it is defined in the broadest sense, it would have massive implications and pull in a bunch of developments that the coastal policy was not intended to impinge. That would be subject to a legal challenge and it would have to be defined in law. It creates such massive uncertainty and because it is, the coastal policy applies to one kilometre from the high-water mark.

The risk is that if this is defined in the broadest possible sense to include erosion, riverbanks, sand dunes one kilometre from the high tide mark, think about - off the top of your head - what potential developments that could bring in. That is a very scary prospect and that is why we need to reform and clarify.

The SPEAKER - Mr Garland, you jumped first. Neither of you said anything, so I went for the first mover. Bearing in mind, Mr Garland, that the debate finishes at 5.33 p.m. and it would be good to hear from the minister as well.

[5.01 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I thank Mr Bayley and the Greens for bringing this forward today. I acknowledge and support points 1, 2 and 3.

On point 4: the advice that underpins the reasons behind current legal proceedings related to the Robbins Island wind farm, the reason why the minister has flagged changes to the State Coastal Policy, the reason why the Validation (State Coastal Policy) Bill has been released for public consultation but, conveniently, the position paper on the State Coastal Policy is lagging and yet to be released. The reason why the bill will be rushed through parliament is to satisfy the Supreme Court proceedings that are still underway.

Before members of parliament are expected to vote on this bill, they should be informed on the matter. The government secrecy is not surprising but it is concerning. This is a trust issue, as Mr Bayley discussed. I have asked the minister questions: which infrastructure is built on coastal dunes and which ones are at risk? The government will not tell the parliament.

Mr Bayley has asked the government to release the advice but it is yet to do so. Members will soon be expected to debate the bill without knowing why the bill is justified and why the urgency. To help inform members of parliament, we should see the advice and maybe then all members will be on an equal footing to assess the merits of the proposed bill if it comes to us.

As Dr Woodruff, member for Franklin, alluded to earlier today, legal privilege does not prevent the government from releasing advice if requested to do so. The question is who has the authority: is it the government or the parliament? The parliament has the power to instruct and, on this occasion, the motion from Mr Bayley has given us a chance to direct the government to do what it will not do during question time or in person. Simply, parliament can decide to direct the minister to release the advice. It is possible.

One argument used in a conversation with the minister was the Swansea boat ramp. Other arguments that have been used are golf courses and boardwalks, boat ramps, jetties, wharfs; all are somehow now at risk. However, if you look at mapping around the state of mobile dune areas, forward dunes, and other various dune types, there are minimal developments on coastal dune areas. No one has been able to definitively demonstrate where coastal developments are on moving foredunes. Presumably, they have developed in line with the coastal policy, or it is just a bad idea.

Regarding ambiguity of actively mobile landforms, part of the argument to change the coastal policy is about the legal uncertainty of the term 'actively mobile landforms'. However, this is not some new problem the government realised this year. The limitations and uncertainties of the State Coastal Policy have existed for almost its entire life. The most recent consultation about the State Coastal Policy occurred in 2013. This looked at the State Coastal Policy statement in the lead-up to the Coastal Protection and Planning Framework. A report was prepared by the government in November 2013 but after that, limited action was taken in this area.

Conveniently, some of the feedback received talks about blunt instruments and ambiguity of terms in the policy, language that the government is now running with to push an agenda to protect the wind farm developer from having to go back through the approvals process. If the approval for the Robbins Island wind farm was based on mistakes, covering over them without a proper assessment is not the right way to go. The draft bill, in its current form, is a bailout for a developer that did not do the due diligence. The developer should not have government assistance to breach state policies. This sets a bad precedent. As people who make the law, it does not sit well that we are encouraging developers and foreign corporations to develop in Tasmania contrary to existing laws and planning requirements. What a joke. Is this how bad it must get before we open our eyes?

Point (4)(b) of the motion says:

that the Government's claim that existing coastal infrastructure will be at risk of legal challenge due to the implications of this advice has not been supported with evidence or examples.

This motion seeks to discover what, if any, infrastructure is at risk and where. Without knowing the legal advice, there is no guarantee that there is infrastructure at risk or if the government is

simply making it up. Sure, anyone could assume there is, based on the assertion by the minister, but claims without evidence do not become true because of belief.

One should assume that if the planning system is doing its job, all developments on coastal areas have either, (a), met the requirements of the State Coastal Policy and avoided being developed on coastal dunes or, (b), had this issue raised during the approval process where there were issues. That recent legal challenges are going to come to areas under the coastal hazards section of the State Coastal Policy is not the point, in my view. There should be no developments on actively mobile landforms such as frontal dunes, more commonly referred to as foredunes.

The term 'foredunes' is well defined. However, even with terms like this, experts might still have differing view on types or nature. Language is not always perfect and sometimes even the best laws cannot fix that. Coastal dunes are well-known phenomena. A foredune runs parallel to the high tide mark and foredunes can vary in terms of height. If the act does not contain good definitions, parliament has a process to strengthen definitions and the courts have the ability to make rulings as they see fit. The sky will not fall because we do not know what words mean or because developments can be challenged in court.

A reasonable legal system would be unlikely to consider such matters, let alone rule in favour of anyone challenging community infrastructure. I am not a judge, but on the whole, they are well-considered and well-reasoned individuals who would consider the fact that community infrastructure that already exists on any areas of question will be given ongoing permission to be maintained for community use.

I will respond to some points from earlier comments I have received. In a letter from the Minister for Parks and Environment, he stated:

We need to make sure these community assets are not at risk because of a new legal interpretation by TASCAT and associated unintended consequences.

However, the draft validation bill, as released for consultation, does not only cover community assets. It also captures proposed developments. What is the reasoning for including proposed developments? The advice could paint a better picture. A proposed development is not a community asset. It is not built.

The legal risk to one particular proposed development, namely Robbins Island Wind Farm, has already been realised. The bogeyman is out of the closet. This project is already subject to a number of legal challenges. This is part of the planning process for developers, and the community, over any proposed development.

The Minister for Parks and Environment's letter goes on:

As I'm sure you would appreciate, it is not possible nor would it be appropriate to identify individual developments along our coastlines which could be subject to legal action where someone might consider that the land is potentially, or was at the time of approval, actively mobile. Anything built on dunes around the state's coastlines, and I'm sure you may easily be able to recall developments that fit this category, could be subject to legal risk on the

basis that the approval did not overtly consider whether actively mobile land was involved.

The minister stated that it is not possible to identify individual developments along the coastline that could be subject to legal action. It is possible to identify them. The Minister for Parks and Environment has just demonstrated that he is unwilling to do so. Is it appropriate? The Validation (State Coastal Policy) Bill, as currently drafted, expects members to consider developments, existing or proposed, that have been issued permits under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act* without knowing if infrastructure was appropriately assessed or approved and what types of developments they are. Would you sign a contract without knowing the details? As members, we have the responsibility to be informed and to be accountable for our actions. Providing blanket retrospective approval to infrastructure that might not pass the pub test might be practical, but it is not necessarily wise. This motion just seeks to have the information to assess this decision and the bill in advance.

The government is committed to releasing a separate position paper on the State Coastal Policy in coming weeks, but will this come and will it go anywhere? Past attempts to review and reform the State Coastal Policy and coastal planning has fallen short.

The coastal policy states that it must be reviewed every five years. Section 4.5 says:

The Minister responsible for the administration of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* shall review the State Coastal Policy at the end of three years after this policy has come into operation and thereafter no less than every five years.

When was the last review? It was not held recently.

The validation bill needs to come holistically with a commitment to a proper review or inquiry into the State Coastal Policy, not just as a standalone bill that sweeps the problems under the rug and hopes that the problems will not occur again.

To bring together the points clearly, members of the parliament have the right to understand the rationale behind changes that could potentially undermine the State Coastal Policy. Without access to this advice, stakeholders cannot effectively evaluate the proposed changes or their potential impact. Transparency is important for the decision-making process. Providing a clear list of these assets and the associated risks will ensure that decisions are made based on evidence rather than unsubstantiated claims. The integrity of our legislative process relies on maintaining public trust, and that is a big thing today in this government. By ensuring that all relevant documents and evidence are disclosed, the government demonstrates its commitment to openness and accountability. To conclude, if the government had been more open and honest from the beginning, then we might not be in this position. The part of the motion that orders the government to release the advice and infrastructure at risk, which has been asked about during question time, is a step parliament must take to access to this information. This motion is important, and I will be supporting it.

The SPEAKER - Minister, you were not the first, but I know that we do want to hear from you. I will call the member from the jail, the member for Braddon, but if you could please make sure. We are just a fraction first, but it is always good to hear from ministers responsible for areas in these debates, if I could.

[5.13 p.m.]

Mrs BESWICK (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I will keep it short and sweet. I am generally supportive of this motion as the other member for Braddon has been quite clear about what those reasons could be. Dr Broad mentioned that some of these shifting areas could be things like landslips and erosive areas. I am pretty sure we do not build on them.

Dr Broad - They do.

Mrs BESWICK - It is quite dangerous -

The SPEAKER - Address your remarks through the Chair.

Mrs BESWICK - Yes, we do, but we do it carefully and considerately. We do take into consideration all the rules and regulations about that. It does seem a strange attitude to promote a precedent to set to say that we can just blanketly change - assume that all of these places that have been built on and this policy has not been considered against them. We would be in a world of pain if we just let all these things go through. We need to consider the appeals process that is in place. It is concerning to bring this State Validation Bill at this time. I am in consideration of whether we think this is the right place to be.

We do support this motion and there are many concerns about this.

[5.14 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) Honourable Speaker, I rise to give the contribution for the government on behalf of the Minister for Parks and the Environment.

The topic of the motion is a very important matter on which the government is taking decisive action to remove uncertainty about existing and approved coastal infrastructure. The Tasmanian Government supports a balanced and sensible approach to developments that benefit Tasmanians while also protecting our coastlines and their environmental values. The member is indeed correct when he quotes that the State Coastal Policy 1996 is a critically important part of the State's resource management and planning system and has served the state well in protecting the coast and providing for sustainable developments. It is designed to safeguard the natural and cultural resources of the coastal zone, including ecosystems, historic sites, and cultural heritage. It promotes responsible coastal development, covering areas such as marine farming, tourism, urban development, transportation, public access, and safety.

However, when the policy was introduced in 1996, the planning system was a mess, characterised by over 100 planning schemes dating back to the 1960s with little or no recognition of coastal values and certainly no appropriate controls to allocate areas for development or assess proposals to protect the coast's values. Since the coastal policy's introduction, the interim statewide planning scheme has come into place, which has been used as the guiding planning document for decisions in coastal areas for council and planning tribunals since the introduction of the scheme.

In recent months, the way the State Coastal Policy has been interpreted and applied with respect to development on actively mobile landforms has come under question. This specifically relates to development on actively mobile landforms, which has been discussed extensively today. Unfortunately, there is currently no definitive description of an actively

mobile landform or accepted map of their location, making planning decisions on when this policy applies highly subjective. Tasmania has a lot of development that could be considered to be built on actively mobile landforms, including boardwalks through the dunes, fencing, lookouts, boat launching facilities, bridges, jetties, and even golf courses. Without the validation of the State Coastal Policy Bill 2024, which has been out for consultation, the current state policy could make this infrastructure unlawful, including its ongoing use. It would also be unlawful to remove any of this infrastructure if it was deemed unlawful, creating an impractical legal impasse. This is why the government is moving to address the issue. Over the years, planning approval bodies have made determinations on whether to apply the coastal policy to developments. This means that their determination on the application of the policy could now be questioned even without a definitive description in place.

The government believes this lack of certainty on how the coastal policy should be applied must be clarified. Uncertainty in these processes places unreasonable responsibility on planning authorities and developers to navigate this.

The draft validation bill simply seeks to validate previous decisions made by planning authorities and the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal that may offend the state coastal policy in relation to the developments on actively mobile landforms. This is to avoid legal challenge and to remove any doubt concerning the validity of those permits. It is important that existing infrastructure can continue to be used as intended and there is no unintended liability arising as a result of the new interpretation of the policy.

To ensure existing developments and their use continue to remain appropriate, previous decisions need to be validated by the government. It is ensuring that planning permits for existing coastal infrastructure such as boardwalks through the dunes, fencing, lookouts, boat-launching facilities, bridges and jetties remain valid. This is incredibly important to protect our Tasmanian way of life and to ensure previous developments can continue to be used and are deemed legal.

It does not change the State Coastal Policy itself. I point you to comments made by University Tasmania senior law lecturer Dr Rachel Baird, who has been reported by ABC this week as saying the government's legislation was 'a pretty well measured response to provide certainty to the Tasmanian economy'. Dr Baird's comments also support the government saying that this is not 'changing the assessment process by any means, with all projects still having to align with the coastal policy's objectives, principles and outcomes'.

It is important to note that the way the coastal policy has been applied to date has not given rise to any concerns. Existing and already approved coastal infrastructure developments have been rigorously assessed by planning authorities and we believe how the coastal policy has been previously applied is appropriate. This issue has come from a recent decision by TASCAT connected to the Robbins Island development approval that called into question their interpretation of the policy.

The government received advice in March regarding the application of the Tasmanian State Coastal Policy. This advice is different from the way the policy has been applied to developments in coastal areas since it was introduced in 1996. This also created uncertainty in the planning process for the Robbins Island wind farm, which our government believes should be addressed.

This could potentially impact the legality of all existing coastal developments, including community infrastructure such as jetties and boat ramps, training walls and breakwaters. This means that the development and use could be legally questioned, despite meeting all requirements and being approved at the time of their development. We believe parliament should clarify this so that already approved developments are not at risk of legal challenge. This new interpretation also led to the Environmental Protection Agency joining an appeal against Robbins Island wind farm in March 2024, which has been approved by the council, with the decision upheld by TASCAT.

If passed, the legislation will not validate the permit for the Robbins Island wind farm. It will only ensure that the wharf infrastructure associated with the wind farm is not rejected based on the outdated provisions of the State Coastal Policy. The Robbins Island wind farm will need to still stand on its own merits. The government does not shy away from supporting this important project with enormous public benefit.

The Robbins Island wind farm will support our growing economy, power our future industries with clean energy, create jobs and help keep our power prices the lowest in the nation. That is why we support it. The Tasmanian government also acknowledges and supports having robust, efficient and predictable environmental planning approval laws and processes. The proposal on Robbins Island is currently being assessed by the Commonwealth for *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* approvals. We understand the proponent is working with the Australian Government and we encourage the Australian Government to complete this assessment in a timely way.

The government does not release legal advice. Advice provided to government in relation to the application of the coastal policy on a non-related development brought into question the decision of the Tasmanian Civil Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT) in relation to the Robbins Island development, which led to an appeal to the Supreme Court against the decision.

Furthermore, the TASCAT determination is publicly available and clearly talks about the different interpretations. This advice reinforces that the coastal policy should be directly considered in all development applications, regardless of the requirements of the local planning scheme.

This means that all development, regardless of the scale or the merit connected to a coastal dune, is at risk of a claim that the dune is actively mobile and therefore the development or ongoing use is unlawful. This conflicts with the way planning authorities and others have applied the policy over the past 30 years, which has allowed for development on the coast where reasonable.

It is important for this House and for the member to understand that it is possible all coastal infrastructure developments around the state are impacted by this interpretation, including boardwalks across dune systems, boat ramps, jetties, training walls and breakwaters. This means that their development and use could be legally questioned despite meeting all requirements and being approved at the time of their development. It is not appropriate to identify individual developments along our coastlines that could be subject to legal action as a result of how the coastal policy has been previously applied, including during the planning approval process for these developments.

We understand that there is a high degree of public interest in the matter. Further work is being done to look at changes to the state coastal policy to include more contemporary planning controls for actively mobile land on our coasts. This is about updating the State Coastal Policy so it can appropriately deal with coastal values and hazards associated with actively mobile landforms. A separate position paper will be released in coming weeks outlining the proposed changes. Any changes to the cost of policy will follow the normal existing processes for updating state policies through the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

It is important to remember that all proposed legislation will be subject to parliamentary processes. Everyone in this place will have an opportunity to have their say, and I invite the member who has brought this motion on today to have a briefing on the broader issues about the State Coastal Policy and the draft validation bill to ensure he fully understands the context and the reason why this action must be taken.

Unlike the Greens, this government wants to see Tasmania progress with a strong plan for the state's future. This includes providing certainty for developers and investors as well as Tasmanian families and businesses. We support development in Tasmania and support the growth of our economy and living standards of Tasmania.

Projects must still go through rigorous planning and environmental approval processes. The government wants to ensure that Tasmanian communities have the necessary infrastructure to safely enjoy marine recreation, while also providing developers and regulators with confidence in how our state policies are to be interpreted and applied. The government will also ensure that decisions made under the previous interpretations of the State Coastal Policy and Tasmania's planning system are validated to address any unintended liability consequences that may now arise.

This government will always support Tasmania's way of life and will provide confidence in our planning laws for coastal infrastructure. We are acting to remove uncertainty and to support Tasmanians, and the government does not support the member's motion or its demands.

[5.26 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, I rise to say how disappointing and surprising it is that Labor does not want to support this motion to release the advice the government will be using to bring in what would be extraordinary legislation.

There is no doubt that the argument that Dr Broad made does not stack up. There have been many opportunities over the last decade-and-a half for the Labor government, the Labor-Greens government and the Liberal government to address this issue of so-called concerning ambiguity in the term of 'mobile landform'. It has been raised numerous times. It has been raised formally in the government's Coastal Hazards Package in 2016 and also in 2012 by Chris Sharples, the top coastal geomorphologist in Tasmania. It has been aired, and successive governments have decided it was not a concern. Here we are looking at the government fast-tracking some legislation to override the protections of the coastal policy for what are obviously the interests of a major developer.

The fact that the Labor Party is coming on board and not asking the basic questions and helping the government maintain secrecy about its legal advice is very concerning, because that advice may well be likely to make their argument untenable. I thank Mr Garland and Mrs Beswick for their comments, and I will give some time for Mr Bayley to wrap up.

[5.28 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I thank all members for their contributions. I appreciate the debate. I have to say there is nothing I have heard in the Chamber here today that dissuades me from the importance of this motion and the importance of the release of the information.

The minister said that the government does not release its advice, but just to be 100 per cent clear about that, as a minister, that is because you choose not to. There is nothing that precludes you from doing that and, again, you are asking the Tasmanian community and every member in this House to trust you on this issue whereby you are bringing forward legislation that will approve a huge industrial development. There is no evidence on the table whatsoever that it impacts on anyone else or anything else.

The minister also made the comment that the Robbins Island wind farm needs to stand on its own merits. That is demonstrably false, because this legislation will prop it up. It does not stand on its own merits. It gets propped up by this legislation, because the concerns of the EPA and the concerns that the State Coastal Policy had not been properly considered and, therefore, that TASCAT erred in law in its assessment, will not be tested by the court, because your action will pull the rug out from under the feet of that challenge.

I do not accept that this means that the Robbins Island wind farm will stand on its own merits, because you are propping it up artificially by virtue of this validation and this legislation that removes doubt. It is a special deal for what looks like a special mate, given the text messages that were released by the ABC this week whereby the minister is directly texting and directly well-wishing a multinational company the night before the case.

I will seek a briefing. Thank you, minister, for the offer. We will certainly be asking for the reasons. If you cannot release the advice, we will certainly expect that the reasons that are contained within that advice are explained and unpacked. We will certainly do that, but it feels condescending to have the minister tell us that it is important for the member to understand that all infrastructure could be affected.

We do not understand what could and could not be affected, and that is the whole point of this motion. Despite this issue being on the table now for several months, despite repeated requests from civil society and despite repeated requests from multiple members in this place and upstairs, you have refused to release the advice. You have refused to release a summary of the advice. You have refused to release the reasons that are summed up in that advice and that is simply not good enough.

Again, you are asking us - on trust - to pass legislation that has significant implications for one multinational company and significant implications for those members of the Tasmanian community who care significantly about our coastlines and about Robbins Island.

I finish where I started, minister, by flagging that Robbins Island is not just some flat island off the north-west of Tasmania. It is a significant historical, cultural and natural asset for this state, and we are obliged to protect it. The coastal policy is something that has long applied to protect it.

Ms Finlay - It is a piece of private land.

Mr BAYLEY - It is part private land, Ms Finlay, it also has a coastal area.

Regarding this wharf, it is extending 500 metres into a coastal area that the member for Braddon has flagged could be an important Ramsar area.

The SPEAKER - The question before the House is -

That the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 10

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Mrs Beswick
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland
Mr Jenner
Ms Johnston (Teller)
Mrs Pentland
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff

NOES 23

Mr Abetz
Mr Barnett
Mr Behrakis
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler (Teller)
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Ms White
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Mr Wood

Motion negatived.

MOTION

Regional Communities - Motion Negatived

The SPEAKER - If members could leave the Chamber or resume their seats, that will make it easier for Mrs Pentland, whose time commences now.

[5.40 p.m.]

Mrs PENTLAND (Bass) - Thank you, honourable Speaker.

The SPEAKER - Order, I cannot hear Mrs Pentland. Thank you, members.

Mrs PENTLAND - I move -

That the House -

Recognises the need to prioritise Tasmania's regional areas and that current health care, fire, police and emergency services are not meeting the needs of regional and remote communities.

Honourable Speaker, remote areas have significant needs -

The SPEAKER - Sorry, Mrs Pentland, have you already commenced your contribution? You need to call on the number to formally do it.

Mrs PENTLAND - I am sorry. Notice of motion 38.

The SPEAKER - Does the member require a vote to support it?

Mrs PENTLAND - Yes, thank you. I will start over. Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House -

Notes:

- (a) that the Jacqui Lambie Network supports Tasmania's regional residents, economies and businesses and the contribution of these to Tasmania; and
 - (b) the Jacqui Lambie Network is here to fight for our regional areas and strongly encourages the Government to focus on service delivery and policy which delivers in this area.
- (1) Recognises the need to prioritise Tasmania's regional areas and that:
- (a) current healthcare, fire, police and emergency services are not meeting the needs of regional and remote communities;
 - (b) remote areas have a significant need for increased childcare to release the parental workforce to support economic growth and productivity, which means improved wage opportunity as well as access to housing and basic services;
 - (c) visitors to remote communities are a necessary support for economic diversity and sustainability, however they increase pressure on local service delivery and increase costs to Local Councils which do not have the capacity to raise the revenue require to deliver; and

- (d) recent Government policy has given a very Hobart-Centric outlook to Tasmanians, despite over 50% of the population living outside of the Hobart area.

I raise this motion in the House today as it speaks to the core of what my colleagues and I campaigned on, and the drive and passion of the Jacqui Lambie Network. As I have been connecting with the people who reside in my electorate, I have heard again and again the same concerns, the same issues, and we need to start to bring solutions to these, not just empty air.

The SPEAKER - Order. Mrs Pentland is trying to ask to have conversations in the cross-alleyways stop, which is a Standing Order. Thank you. Mrs Pentland, please continue.

Mrs PENTLAND - For some time, local councils have been raising concerns that support from government is becoming more Hobart-centric. Council members and mayors in recent months have raised many issues with me that range from basic infrastructure concerns to not being able to attract appropriate staff to remote locations to sustain day-to-day operations. This is particularly poignant in the Furneaux Group of islands in the Flinders Council area, as well as King Island in Braddon. Residents here have reported the direst versions of the challenges regional Tasmanian communities are experiencing.

The small community of Flinders Island is challenged with sanitation and wastewater issues that have raised concerns with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The main landfill on this island is full. The solution is to continue to use the space and fill up above the height of the original design, which was planned about 40 years ago and does not meet current standards. This has drawn the attention of the EPA. A new landfill will cost the community an estimated \$8 million. The council is investigating alternative technologies to reduce landfill.

This is not the only waste problem affecting the island. Wastewater infrastructure is severely lacking and, in some situations, non-operational. In instances where black-water waste, also known as sewage and septic waste, is not managed under infrastructure, the wastewater is collected by a non-compliant tanker truck and redistributed onto farmland. This is not compliant with any environmental or safety regulation, and has been flagged with the EPA as harmful and dangerous.

Flinders Council Mayor Rachel Summers has been in discussions with TasWater for some time regarding this issue and, thus far, has been offered one solution, which is not economically viable for the community. This solution comes in the form of a static water treatment container that treats water, making it appropriate for use as grey water. This discussed solution does not include infrastructure for the receipt of wastewater and still requires the emptying of septic tanks into a compliant tanker truck for transport and delivery to the processing system.

On top of the wastewater management crisis, the island is facing general accessibility problems, with its airport being the contentious topic. Air travel to the island is the equivalent of highways on the mainland. Maintaining these facilities and infrastructure, and ensuring they have the capacity to support traffic numbers in peak seasons, is crucial, along with ensuring residents have access to health and other essential services.

These micro-communities need to be recognised for the integral part they play. As fascinating as it sounds, an airport that handles modern freight logistics and passengers using

a historic World War II electrical switchboard is every bit as temperamental as one would think. The load on the electrical boards must always be monitored because when it is overloaded, not a single guiding light on the airstrip is operable. To add to the vulnerability of outdated switchboards, the airport's entire electrical grid consists of subterranean wires buried without conduit or shielding of any type. Simply put, the entire electronics infrastructure for the airfield is either outdated or rotting in the ground. It is not a matter of replacing broken or outdated components; the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requires updates to all existing systems to be actioned concurrently to maintain basic standards. This means parts cannot be updated over time to spread the costs across time.

On King Island, the childcare centre - yes, singular, just one childcare centre - reports that it was built to support 20 more children than it currently has as it does not have the staff to manage. They have a successful internal training program and have lost many fully qualified carers to mainland Tasmania once their training has completed. On Flinders Island, there is a current waitlist of 18 children. Given the stretched resources, these children will never make it to a childcare facility.

King Island have identified workforce capacity through the 491-visa process and have successfully supported many workers who have found a home in a close-knit community. This has developed a need for support services to assist with visa applications for employer-sponsored employees. These are very time consuming, and the small business community, short-handed as they are, do not have the time and capacity to manage the details of these applications.

If you decide a sea change is in order and a career on Flinders Island or King Island is a potential option, you might consider moving there, only you cannot, because there is nowhere to live. The housing crisis is so bad they cannot tempt potential new professional residents without offering accommodation packages. About 10 per cent of housing on Flinders Island is short-term accommodation, but it is not appropriate for permanent or even extended residency.

Because of this housing crisis, the communities of Flinders Island experience great difficulty attracting staff to maintain local businesses and even council itself. This is despite the fact that almost every store and business display a 'Help Wanted' sign in the window. Aware of the current housing crisis on the island, the state government promised the Flinders community a parcel of land in which new workers and long-term staff could stay in a similar fashion, albeit on long term similar to FIFO workers. This offer of land has yet to progress from talks to action.

Flinders Council has a population of 956 people going about their lives just like you and me, with the expectation they should have the same access privileges to services and amenities as you and me. Sadly, this is not the case. Services are restricted and many people must travel to mainland Tasmanian providers for things like veterinary care.

Recently council investigated building a state-of-the-art veterinary clinic on the island. However, after going to tender, it was discovered that the project was well outside the budget of the council alone. This is a disappointing outcome for the community when the considerable contribution to primary production sourced from the island is weighed.

Flinders Island produces 20 per cent of the state's cattle, returning \$100 million to our economy. In the case of Flinders Island, and many communities in similar situations, the

collection of council rates is not enough to sustain operations and ensure the longevity of the community concerned. The Furneaux Group of islands generate \$11 million in tourism for Tasmania, yet the management of councils feel they are overlooked in an increasingly high, Hobart-centric distribution of support and finance.

Unfortunately for the Flinders Council, council rates only just cover the cost of staff and operations, with rates totalling \$2.7 million and council running costs eating \$2.6 million, leaving practically nothing for the community to use on capital and additional service delivery. On top of financial support challenges, small communities also feel like they are disadvantaged when going to government and competing for grants.

Flinders Council has no capacity for dedicated grant writing teams like larger councils. Instead, the Flinders Council grant writing team consists of one woman who wears many hats. While the skills and the competency of this individual are spread wide, her team is spread thin, and the mayor admits that their grant applications are often overshadowed by councils that have the time and resources to dedicate to the process.

At the end of the day, communities like Flinders, King, Break O'Day, Circular Head, West Coast, Tasman, and Northern and Southern Midlands contribute to our state in both quantifiable and unquantifiable ways. Quantifiable ways are being questioned today by the fairness and distribution of support and finance for communities like Flinders Island - communities that contribute to the state and that are crying out for support for things that we take for granted, like waste management and adequate modern amenities.

For those who live in metropolitan areas, even services like public transport are taken for granted. However, these services, as they exist in regional and remote areas, are severely disadvantaged. Unfortunately, the solution to address equity in public transport is not as simple as increasing services. As recent public transport reports reveal, an equal number of services does not equate to equal access.

To add to the imbalance of support for these communities is the lack of equity when matters such as patient transport are considered. The Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (PTAS) routinely fails remote families by not adequately covering costs related to transport and accommodation while travelling for access to health and hospitalisation.

There is also a failure to ensure equity in logistics industries, shipping and port infrastructure, as seen in increased costs of freight; passing the cost directly onto the communities in the form of general living expenses. Freight costs have increased 25 per cent over the last couple of years and the CPI increase of 2024 is 6 per cent.

As is evident from the spectrum of challenges faced by regional communities, it is imperative we have our finger on the pulse of the often-forgotten parts and people of our state. Blindly throwing money at a problem and hoping it sticks is not the right place and not the right answer to every solution. Adequate time and consideration must be given to raise the equity of these communities and meet challenges with intelligent solutions.

As far as curators and guardians of heritage and history for the state of Tasmania, regional communities are some of the last authorities and portals to what attracts people to this great island. Although they often have smaller populations and are under-represented, we need to do better to support and lift these communities and ensure equity is restored and maintained.

In summary, the Jacqui Lambie Network supports Tasmania's regional residents, economies and businesses and the contribution of these to Tasmania. The Jacqui Lambie Network is here to fight for our regional areas, and we strongly encourage the government to focus on service delivery and policy.

[5.55 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Jacqui Lambie Network for bringing this motion to us this evening. I agree with the sentiments in the motion, particularly about supporting regional Tasmania. I had a bit of a crack at the government for a Hobart focus, and I understand why the Jacqui Lambie Network might like to do that, trying to differentiate itself from the government.

We saw earlier this evening a differentiation and a breach of the Jacqui Lambie agreement with the government, which is interesting to see. It did not happen earlier today when the heat was really on. The Jacqui Lambie Network feels to me like a party trying to find itself.

The motion wants the parliament to affirm what the Jacqui Lambie Network believes in. This is a party that does not have any policies, has not had any policies and does not have any history in this place. It is trying to get this House to reaffirm what it believes in. The motion stated two points that it believes in: Tasmania's regional residents, economies and businesses, and the contribution of these to Tasmania. It then said that the Jacqui Lambie Network is here to fight for regional areas and strongly encourages the government to focus on service delivery and policy.

I know what the Labor Party believes in. I know what the Liberal Party believes in. I know what the Greens believe in. I do not know what the Jacqui Lambie Network believes in yet, but it does feel like they are coming to this House and asking us to reaffirm, to give them a bit of a boost, and to help them to understand why they are here. I have been wondering why they are here as well.

I understand that you cannot have services without industry, and you cannot just say the word 'economy' without understanding what that means. What that means in regional Tasmania is often traditional industries, like forestry in the north-east and timber mills. It is industries in the electorate of Braddon in mining, aquaculture; Macquarie Harbour - absolutely critical. In Lyons: agriculture, aquaculture on the east coast and places like Okehampton Bay in the Tasman Peninsula. These industries are absolutely critical to regional towns.

In the Tasman, aquaculture is critical on the east coast, increasingly out of Okehampton Bay. Tassal's operations there are supporting regional communities, regional jobs, which then support the regional services that are paid for by the industries.

Labor believes in all of those industries, and we have supported those industries in this place time and time again. In the short history of the Jacqui Lambie Network, they have failed to stand up for those regions. They have failed to stand up for workers at Strahan and Queenstown who rely on the aquaculture industry, and failed to stand up for the massive opportunity in renewable energy that comes from Robbins Island. They have failed to stand up for timberworks, and in fact have talked about their dislike of native forestry. These are issues for the Jacqui Lambie Network as it tries to find itself and figure out why it is here. I am still not sure why, but they have asked us for help today.

I move an amendment to this motion, which I circulated earlier. I move -

That the following subparagraphs be inserted into paragraph (2) following (d):

- (e) they are heavily dependent on traditional industries such as native forestry, aquaculture, mining and renewable energy. These industries must be maintained and encouraged to grow; and
- (f) salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour, wind farm development on Robbins Island and a new tailings dam at Rosebery Mine must be supported.

I have added these because if the intent of the Jacqui Lambie Network is true then they will back those people and those workers who rely on this place to give them certainty, stability and hope that they can continue to work, and continue to have towns that have jobs and schools that are full of kids whose parents are supported by those jobs. The question for the JLN is: are they supporting regional Tasmania and regional economies - as the motion starts - or do they not support them?

That is the core of the question, because in the first test for the Jacqui Lambie Network in this place, they failed. They stood with the Greens to oppose a massive job-creating renewable energy project at Robbins Island. They stood with the Greens to shut down salmon farming at Macquarie Harbour and they stood against native forestry. Those things are really important for regional communities and Labor knows that. We know that at our core, because we have been doing this for 120 years. That is what we stand for. That is what we believe in.

We move this in the hope that we will be supported - as a demonstration for those workers and industries that this parliament supports them. I want to see the Jacqui Lambie Network get on board with this amendment. I challenge them to stand up for regional communities and regional economies because it is high time that they stood up for them.

There is enormous pressure on those workers. I acknowledge the workers on the west coast of Tasmania, out at Strahan and Queenstown in particular, who have massive uncertainty because of the decision at Macquarie Harbour. I desperately want to see a decision made soon, because the uncertainty is really hurting them. They told me that when I visited.

Talking to workers at Rosebery Mine, which I visited during the parliamentary break, about their tailings dam, I heard why it is so important for the future of the mine, for those workers, for the town of Rosebery and all the workers who do not live in Rosebery but all over the north-west coast. They need certainty and they want to know that people in this place support them and back their jobs.

Labor backs their jobs. We continue to support them. I am asking the parliament to support them. This is a good opportunity for the Jacqui Lambie Network to prove that they stand up for regional communities, that they stand up for regional jobs and they stand up for those working people in Braddon, Bass and Lyons who rely on the Jacqui Lambie Network to do the right thing.

The SPEAKER - Ms Badger, this is on the amendment. I understand you also have an amendment you would like to move.

Ms BADGER - Yes, Speaker.

The SPEAKER - There is a very limited time for this debate. I will get some advice from the Clerk.

Ms BADGER - I am happy not to speak to the amendment at this point. My apologies. I jumped late, I thought you said to the motion.

The SPEAKER - I want to clarify: does anyone else want to speak to the amendment to the motion or are we happy to have the vote on the amendment and then return to the substantive debate?

Mr BARNETT - I can speak on the amendment and then I can speak on the substantive motion.

The SPEAKER - Right. Once the amendment has finished you can speak again, bearing in mind that we have a time-limited debate. Thank you. I want to facilitate everyone's desires.

[6.03 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Speaker, I will be brief. On Labor's amendment, as with everybody in this Chamber and across the Tasmanian community, we are very supportive of all our productive industries. They are reflected in the amendment so we have no issues at all and are supportive.

It does highlight Labor's backflipping and the fact that they would not support our workplace protection legislation in full, which was very disappointing. They have the background of being part of a Greens-Labor-Greens government that caused a recession and a loss of jobs in all our productive industries. I am pleased to be able to indicate the government's support for this new found effort to rebrand the Labor Party and we do not have any issues with this amendment.

The SPEAKER (Ms O'Byrne) - The question is - That the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 23

Mr Abetz
Mr Barnett
Mr Behrakis
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs (Teller)
Mr Ferguson

NOES 10

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Mrs Beswick
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland
Mr Jenner (Teller)
Ms Johnston
Mrs Pentland
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff

Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Ms White
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Mr Wood

Amendment agreed to.

The SPEAKER - We are now on the motion as amended. If anyone would like to seek the call? The Leader of the Opposition who moved the amendment still has the call, if he chooses to continue. I remind members we are on a time-limited debate.

[6.10 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the House for supporting the amendment. It is important for those working people in regional Tasmania that they understand that the House has got their back and that members in this place continue to support those traditional industries which desperately need our support with all the pressure that is on them through cost of living, cost of doing business, and some of the problems that are facing those regional industries and the uncertainty that is facing them and their workforce.

It is disappointing, though, that what this has shown us is that the Jacqui Lambie Network talking about supporting regional economies, which is in the motion, is not true because if you do not support the components of regional economies then you do not support regional economies. If you do not support regional economies then you cannot receive regional services.

The services that are delivered in regions are reliant on having a population there that has work and having an economy that is supporting those services. Doctors and nurses are supported by traditional industries in places on the west coast, the north-west coast, the north-east and down the east coast, and also in Lyons. Tasmanians know that Tasmanian Labor stands for jobs. Well-paid, safe and secure jobs will continue to support traditional industries, regional economies. It is very unfortunate that, for the second time, the Jacqui Lambie Network has decided to let down those Tasmanians in regional communities.

[6.12 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the JLN for bringing on this motion. Our regional communities are very important to Tasmania. As the member for Lyons, I am very pleased to speak to this motion supporting regional communities.

We had an amendment but, after what we have just seen from the Labor Party, we will not be moving. I will speak about it, and it was to omit paragraph (1) about the statement of Jacqui Lambie Network to the House. The issue with paragraph (1) is that it is the House

making the statement about the JLN. It is a lovely idea, but that language is probably better for the media or campaign materials, not a motion in the House.

The SPEAKER - Can I clarify, you are choosing not to move the amendment?

Ms BADGER - No, I will move the amendment.

The SPEAKER - You are moving the amendment, and so we will now be debating the amendment. You need to read the amendment into the House.

Ms BADGER - Speaker, I move -

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraph (1).

That is for the reasons that I have just outlined: that it is better in the media or in advertising materials than in a motion for the House.

Amendment agreed to.

The SPEAKER - The motion is amended. Do we have further speakers to the substantive motion as amended?

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion from Rebecca Pentland, member for Bass, for the Jacqui Lambie Network.

First of all, I congratulate Mrs Pentland on her inaugural speech. I have not had the opportunity, in this place, in a formal setting - I have privately - to put on the record and say congratulations, well done. It was certainly very engaging and demonstrated your experience, skills, talents, and your love of family, grabbing hold of those opportunities to make a difference, and quite a powerful lived experience. I wanted to put that on the record and say well done.

I convey congratulations on putting forward this motion. It is a motion that we cannot support as it is written. However, many of the sentiments in the words and in the stories that you have shared in the Chamber today is something that we want to recognise. We support the principles behind the importance of rural and regional communities because that is part of the DNA of our Rockliff Liberal government.

I appreciate the motivation behind the motion, and the motivation behind Mrs Pentland's remarks. The members, certainly in the Jacqui Lambie Network, are coming forward in a collaborative way, in a spirit of goodwill. That is what the Tasmanian public expect of us, as members of parliament. The election delivered those results and we are now acting on that. We need to work together in a collaborative way, in a meaningful and caring and thoughtful way, and in a spirit of goodwill. I have shared that before in this place and I am now confirming it on behalf of the government. That is the way we think we should operate. The public expect us to operate in their best interests and that is what drives us.

This motion provides the opportunity to talk about the importance of rural and regional Tasmania, and that is vital for our government. That is why we are dedicated to delivering the essential services that are necessary for rural and regional Tasmania. More than 50 per cent of

the population in Tasmania live in rural and regional areas, and remote areas on our islands. We are the most decentralised state in Australia, and that should be recognised. I believe the sentiments behind the motion from Mrs Pentland demonstrate that.

We are different. We are an island state, the most decentralised in Australia. At the outset, we are committed to our rural and regional communities but, as a government, we represent all Tasmanians. The Premier has made that clear. I make it clear again today: we represent all Tasmanians and we are proud of that.

I am from the Lyons electorate. I was born and raised at Hagley on a farm. I am very proud of the Hagley Farm School background and my farming roots, and the country roots for me and my family. That is demonstrated in more than 90 separate communities and small towns in and around the Lyons electorate, which is slightly more than half of the State of Tasmania. We have a 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future and we delivered that at the election. It is a very strong mandate that is now being rolled out. We are committing to all of our commitments, all of our promises, as the Treasurer said earlier today. We look forward to rolling them out.

We have delivered a full commitment, full tick on every of the 100-day planned commitments and now we are moving into the second hundred day. We have delivered on that. The Premier has made that clear. Congratulations and thank you for the leadership of the Premier Jeremy Rockliff.

I will touch on some of the important initiatives. The motion references health and the importance of delivering essential health services in our rural and regional areas. I cannot think of a government that is stronger and more competent and capable of delivering those healthcare services in the rural and regional communities and how committed we are to delivering in that space. We are committed and you will see from our policies with respect to delivering more GP services, the GP Now guarantee where you are going to have an extra 10 GPs at the ready to support thin and failing markets where the federal Labor Government has let us down. We will do everything we can to provide that support, to provide the \$250,000 GP Practice Grants, to provide sustainable and incentives to support greater infrastructure, and to support more GPs longer hours of service to support an additional Practice Nurse and the like. In addition to that, there is the funding support of \$100,000 to attract 40 GPs to our rural and regional communities. This is what it is about: delivering those essential services that Tasmanians need and deserve.

I have been out on the front line. I have visited just about every rural and regional hospital in Tasmania and every major hospital. I am pleased and proud of our healthcare workers. They are awesome and they do an incredible job. We now have this campaign to deliver more health services on the frontline, some 500 in the last three months. It was great to catch up with Jen last week, for example, a paramedic who has come from Canada. She is highly skilled and well trained, and she wanted to come to Tasmania because of the leadership that we are providing in Tasmania through Ambulance Tasmania and because she really loves the State of Tasmania. That was encouraging. To have someone of Jen's skills and abilities is fantastic, and that enthusiasm and passion to deliver those healthcare services. We are certainly taking a place-based approach to this work and we are getting on with the job, as I have made very clear.

We are very engaged with the local community at Rosebery on the west coast in delivering better healthcare services. We now have improved Wi-Fi services for Tasmanians living in those rural and regional communities, in those Healthcare service facilities.

For the east coast and other parts of regional Tasmania, the RFDS is now delivering better oral healthcare. This is a big issue in those rural and regional areas. We have just extended that contract with the RFDS for the east coast of Tasmania, all the way from St Helens to Nubeena on the Tasman Peninsula. It was great to be with the RFDS a few weeks ago to make that announcement.

Adding to that, existing partnership provides similar services on the west coast and there are plans for central Tasmania and the Huon Valley. As I say, there are many initiatives that we have in place. We have been working closely with Rural Doctors Tasmania and thank them for support of a whole range of our initiatives.

In conclusion, I will make a few remarks about fire and emergency services. The minister made it clear at the election: 60 new police. This time next year there will be more police on our frontline. That is so important in our rural and regional areas. I know the Jacqui Lambie Network members know that - in terms of police, fire and emergency services - and in ensuring those services are made available. It is exciting to stand here as part of a government that is delivering better health care, police, fire and emergency services to Tasmanians who need it.

The regional jobs hubs are so important. There was a reference to that earlier in the debate. Those regional jobs hubs are making a difference. Economies need to be strong in those rural and regional areas. Those regional jobs hubs at Sorell and Brighton and in the north-east, at St Helens, and on the north-west coast are so important.

I acknowledge the great work of Susie Bower, the federal Liberal candidate. She has been working tirelessly, supporting our rural and regional communities and we are proud of her work, and so many other federal members, particularly senators in the Liberal Party. I mention Gavin Pearce and give him a tribute on the way through. I know he is finishing up at the next election, and Bridget Archer, federal member for Bass.

[6.24 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this afternoon to contribute to debate the motion; I suppose it is half a motion by the Jacqui Lambie Network that is left after the amendments. I acknowledge that the intention of the motion was to support regional communities across Tasmania. That is a really valid thing to do. It is important because there is no other part of this House than Tasmanian Labor that really understands, gets out, connects with, meets with, sits down at kitchen tables, and often shares emotion with the families and individuals of our regional communities of Tasmania.

However, it is not possible to stand in a genuine attempt to present yourself and talk about regional communities without understanding regional economies. It is not possible to separate those matters. It is not possible to say that you talk about a regional economy without a regional community but without regional industry. Tasmanian Labor has for decades in this place stood firmly with those hardworking families - often over many generations in the same industry - that have built the communities around them.

If you talk about the history and legacy of Hydro in Tasmania, one of the powerful things that I once heard someone say was that we talk about what Hydro has done for regional economies in Tasmania; what it has done in terms of putting Tasmania on the national and international stage. Hydro built economic opportunity in Tasmania. It built community. It built family. It created and provided opportunities for families to put food on the table, shelter across the top of their families, and to build connections and networks between small towns and small communities by the work that was done, not only by people that had grown up and lived in Tasmania all of their lives, but from the communities that we welcomed from far afield into our Tasmanian community.

We are saying that the House recognises the importance of regional communities. It is not valid to not respect and accept the contributions that our hardworking Tasmanians make.

In my portfolio area of aquaculture, we have already heard our leader talk about the west coast, Macquarie Harbour. There are towns and strings of towns along highways and valleys that would not exist if not for the aquaculture industry in Tasmania - whether they be on the east coast or down in Storm Bay. There are towns that you drive through and all you see is high-vis - whether it be in their cars on the way to work, whether it be at the morning tea break or the lunch break in the local takeaway store; whether it be the family members of the workers in that industry who are operating in the bakeries, operating in the supermarkets, nurses in the medical centre, teachers in the school, or coaches of the footy club. They are full families in communities that benefit from aquaculture in Tasmania.

There are incredible statistics of the number of Tasmanians working in that sector, predominantly in regional Tasmania. Nine out of ten jobs in aquaculture in Tasmania are in regional Tasmania. This is a sector that contributes significantly. It is the largest primary industry in Tasmania and contributes over \$1.3 billion to the Tasmanian economy. It is Tasmanian producers who account for almost the majority, 86 per cent, of the seafood production through aquaculture, and is the largest seafood industry in the country. To say that you do not support aquaculture but you support regional communities is a farce. It demonstrates a lack of understanding and a lack of time spent meeting with and understanding the richness, the innovation, the technology, the skill, and the capacity of that sector and what it means to Tasmania. It is not just about the farmers, it is not just about the people farming the fish, it is also about the people who are doing world-leading research and creating innovation that allows this work to happen in regional Tasmania enable our community across the entire state to flourish.

Aquaculture is essential. To not support aquaculture means you do not support our regional communities. In the renewable energy space that I represent in my portfolio of energy and renewables, not backing a project like Robbins Island is an issue. We are still not very clear about where the Jacqui Lambie Network stands, for instance, on Whaleback Ridge. We have two projects in Tasmania at the moment that if this government had the capacity - one of the things that I like in this motion is the question about the policies, action and delivery of this government, because that is true. There is an understanding of that challenge with this government. However, what Tasmania needs more than anything, particularly our regional community on the north-west coast, is for us to get a renewable energy project across the line. By backing Robbins Island and by backing Whaleback Ridge, it allows projects like Abel Energy and HIF to come about and fully transform Tasmania in our urban centres, but most importantly, in our regional centres.

The flow-on effect from what you see in our productive industries in Tasmania, whether it be salmon, renewable energy, mining, native forestry, or agriculture, they have a front-face impact in our regional communities and all of the flow-on effects. There are very few industries in Tasmania that are not in some way connected to our productive industries. There are very few businesses, many of our businesses that do not get some benefit from activities that happen in our regional communities.

For the Jacqui Lambie Network, and it has been said that part of this intention was about standing up and creating a reputation or understanding of what the Jacqui Lambie Network stands for, and then to say that it is about regional Tasmania but do that at the detriment of the mums, dads and the kids who love their mums and dads and see their mums and dads go to work each and every day, and to hear through the media that the Jacqui Lambie Network in these communities does not support what they do, it is really devastating. It is devastating to the core of a community, to a family, and many of these communities have strong families that for generations have been supported by, enabled by, and have grown because of these industries in Tasmania.

Linton has probably become Tasmania's poster boy of the salmon industry on the west coast. When we had a presentation in this place, and there was a gathering of concern across workers in aquaculture, and they were sharing their personal stories, Linton shared his personal story. He talked about as a young boy growing into a young man and entering the workforce, he did not have confidence in himself. He did not have confidence in where he fitted in the world and what value he would make. He was grateful for not just one company, but a number of companies that supported his personal growth. They supported him to be the best person he could be, that his family could also be in this and now his son is also in the industry. He has grown into a senior part of that industry in Tasmania and it is because of how these companies have developed their way from a very small beginning on a rapid growth, creating a lot of opportunities for many families in Tasmania.

This afternoon, I share with the people of regional Tasmania that Tasmanian Labor does stand with you. We support you. We are the people who are connecting, meeting with, understanding and backing in what you need. We know that we need to get projects across the line. We know we need to protect the current efforts that you are making in Tasmania.

I acknowledge some of the comments about pressure on local government. I acknowledge Mrs Pentland when she spoke about Flinders Island and the challenges there, remembering that Flinders Island is backed off the agricultural productivity of that island. However, there are challenges in these regional communities supported by productive industries. The challenges on Flinders Island, whether it be about childcare or housing, are hamstringing the capacity of those communities to deliver all that they can.

There is truth in that commentary, but if you look at agriculture, aquaculture, mining, renewable energies or native forestry, these are the things that bring together the essential opportunities and the essential reality of what it means to be Tasmanian in a regional and rural community.

[6.33 p.m.]

Mr JENNER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, how long do we have now?

The SPEAKER - Seven minutes.

Mr JENNER - Seven minutes. I will try to make it quick.

Where do we start? Leader of Labor, the reason that the Jacqui Lambie Network is here is because we do not play politics. We do not try to get clickbait. We are not interested in running out to the media to say our words. We are here to try to do our best for Tasmania. It may not be your opinion, but it is ours. When I listened to you, you would have thought you received 90 per cent or 89 per cent of the vote as opposed to 29 per cent, the way you lecture everybody in this place on how to vote.

With that said, we are supporters of traditional industries. Unlike Labor, we are not going to grandstand about it.

Mr Winter - What? You support industries?

Mr JENNER - Do you want me to say that again?

The SPEAKER - Can we direct the commentary through the Chair, please. Otherwise, it sounds like we are having this conversation with me.

Mr JENNER - I will carry on, sorry. We see this side bar to this slagging off of the Jacqui Lambie group when all we are trying to do is bring a motion to highlight the issues in the rural community. It was hijacked by Labor who said how much people are working, and so on and so forth, which is a shame really and pitiful. It is sad.

As the cost-of-living crisis rages on, there are specific communities in our state that are suffering the most. As the gap between the mainland and Tasmania continues to grow, so does the gap between Tasmanian cities and our rural communities. The government has become far too comfortable with prioritising expenditures, luxuries, and projects in this state's capital, but this state is not in a position to have a government that spends for the sake of spending. In other words, we need a strict public interest test to apply to major projects that are involved, and we need a government that prioritises spending in projects that benefit the whole state rather than a select few. It is not hard to understand why many in our state's rural communities are feeling that the government does not prioritise them.

There has been a widening gap between Hobart and the rest of the state, driven by various interconnecting factors, created seamlessly by endless cycles of social economic disadvantage to our rural communities. This is prevalent in my electorate of Lyons. According to respected economist, Saul Eslake, in a June 2024 report, 59 per cent of all Tasmanians are below the two socio-economic quintiles. This is attributed largely to our underperforming education system. Education is crucial for future employment. Evidence shows that people on low levels of education are more likely to be unemployed or if they are employed, they will be unemployed for longer periods.

It is no surprise that secondary qualification rates drop dramatically the further out of the CBD you go. For many young students living in rural communities, the only workable option they have is to leave home in year 11 and 12. However, subject options are often extremely limited, meaning students who want to achieve an ATAR have to leave their communities in pursuit of more subject choice. The lack of subject choice is quite often due to being unable to find teachers qualified to teach certain subjects or simply not having enough teachers to fill them.

Those who are not ready or cannot afford to leave home to complete their secondary education are at a huge disadvantage. The national teacher shortage is hitting rural communities hard. Rural areas suffer from a lack of availability of educational resources such as facilities and staffing. The revolving door of teachers in our state's rural schools is incredibly disruptive and leads to educational instability for many of our students. This instability, especially in high school, often makes or breaks a student's decision as to whether they carry on with education.

Other state governments across Australia have introduced multiple incentives for teachers to work in rural areas such as: retirement bonuses, relocation payments of \$8000, rural teachers' incentives of \$20,000 or rental subsidies. These incentives have proven extremely successful in other states and I see no reason why they would not work here. I implore the government to adopt them. This government is obliged to our younger people to provide an incentive for these teachers to carry on working in rural areas.

The access to healthcare and healthcare facilities is another issue plaguing our rural areas. Access the GPs is crucial for Tasmanians, particularly those in rural communities who do not have easy access to hospitals or specialists. In a study published in 2012 on access to health and services in Australian rural areas, research found that Tasmanians living in rural areas face substantially more health problems than those living in the cities. Although the research is about 10 years old, unfortunately the situation remains largely the same. Significant differences in health status have been reported to exist between rural and urban populations. For example, some of the high-risk factors are high illness levels, higher hospital rates, prevalence and risk factors.

There is a higher death rate from coronary and heart disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, suicide, prostate, rectal and lung cancer. They have all been identified with rural areas and they underpinned the vulnerability -

Time expired.

The SPEAKER - The question is -

That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 8

Dr Broad (Teller)
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Ms White
Mr Willie
Mr Winter

NOES 24

Mr Abetz
Ms Badger
Mr Barnett
Mr Bayley
Mr Behrakis
Mrs Beswick
Ms Burnet
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Mr Garland
Ms Howlett

Mr Jaensch
Mr Jenner
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne (Teller)
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Pentland
Mrs Petrusma
Ms Rosol
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Wood
Dr Woodruff

PAIRS

Ms Haddad

Mr Rockliff

Motion negatived.

WAIVER OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' TIME

[6.47 p.m.]

Mr WOOD (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order -

The SPEAKER - Sorry, but I am going to stop you. Order. You all need to be quiet when you are wandering around the Chamber. The only person's voice we should be hearing now is Mr Wood's, and we cannot.

Mr WOOD - Honourable Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 42(d), I indicate that government private members' business is waived for this day.

JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (COMMISSION OF INQUIRY) BILL 2024 (No. 26)

Second Reading

Continued from 30 July 2024 (page 127).

Ms WHITE (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to continue the contribution I commenced yesterday afternoon on the Justice Miscellaneous (Commission of Inquiry) Bill 2024. I will take the opportunity now to deal with some of the substantive matters contained within the bill.

The Labor Party has been clear in our position that we support the work to implement all 191 recommendations of the commission of inquiry. The recommendations of the commission of inquiry that have been expressly dealt with by this bill include 16.9, 16.13, 16.14, 16.18, 17.4, 17.5 and 18.12. I will speak to each of those now to provide some context; most importantly for people who might be listening to this debate, so they can understand what matters are being amended through this legislation.

First, I will talk about the offences, evidence and procedure changes that are contained within this legislation that come from *Volume 7: The justice system and victim-survivors* of the commission of inquiry report that was completed last year. The first of these is recommendation 16.9. This recommendation says that:

The Tasmanian government should introduce legislation to amend the following provisions in the *Criminal Code Act 1924*:

- a. section 125A to remove all language referring to 'maintaining a sexual relationship with a young person' and replace it with words referring to the 'persistent sexual abuse of a child or young person'
- b. section 124A (the position of authority offence) to cover indecent acts with or directed at a child or young person under the age of 18 by a person in a position of authority in relation to that child or young person. The offence should
 - i. not apply where the person accused of the offending is under the age of 18 at the time of the offence
 - ii. qualify as an unlawful sexual act for the purposes of the offence of 'persistent sexual abuse of a child or young person' under section 125A of the *Criminal Code Act 1924*
- c. section 125E (the offence of failure by a person in authority to protect a child from a sexual offence) to ensure the offence does not apply to a person who was under the age of 18 at the time of the offence.

In this section, the commission of inquiry noted that there have been some really important changes that have happened in Tasmania's law, particularly in relation to how we describe sexual abuse offences. This parliament has dealt with these in the past where we have removed reference to maintaining a relationship with a young person and changed it to be more clearly defined as the abuse that it truly is. This particular amendment has come from some of the evidence that has been shared with the commission of inquiry. I would like to note some of the evidence given by Keelie McMahon, who is a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse perpetrated by James Griffin, telling the commission how she felt when Mr Griffin was granted bail. She said:

Jim lived in the same suburb as me. Prior to him being charged, we would go to the same shopping centre and I would frequently run into him there. After Jim was bailed, I became really anxious and rarely left my house because I was fearful of running into him. My mum told me he wasn't at his house any more but I still had the anxiety of knowing he was out there somewhere.

This section focuses on the areas in which the commission wanted to see improvements to criminal offences, rules of evidence and court procedures, and has made some recommendations in relation to that. They are dealt with in some of these amendments, including the one I am speaking to, in order to provide greater protection for those young people.

There is also the position of authority offence, which was referenced in the commission of inquiry 5.1.2. This is an important change, including the failure to protect offence that has been referenced in the commission of inquiry's evidence and report, based on some of the evidence provided to the commission during its hearings. I will not read all of that because it is available for anyone to see online. However, it is relevant to incorporate it into the debate because people might be hearing that we are making a significant number of changes based on the recommendations from the commission of inquiry, but not know precisely what those changes were in relation to.

Recommendation 16.13:

The Tasmanian Government should introduce legislation to extend the principles of section 13B of the *Family Violence Act 2004* to sexual assault matters, including child sexual abuse. This will ensure that where a person is acquitted in the Magistrates Court because the prosecution has informed the court it will not be offering any evidence in support of the charge, the acquittal does not prevent admitting evidence of relationship, tendency or coincidence evidence in a later related matter.

This came from evidence received by the commission that I will quote from because it is something that has come up - I am sure for many of us as members of parliament previously - where somebody has wanted to make an allegation against somebody and take it to court, but any of their previous behaviours that might have been able to be relied upon to demonstrate a tendency are not able to be used because those matters might have been previously taken to court but there was no prosecution made. This is adjusting that so such evidence can continue to be admitted. The report says:

During our Commission of Inquiry, we heard about restrictions in the way evidence from a case in the Magistrates Court can be used in any later case involving the same victim-survivor.

Ms Collins told us about her experience with the criminal justice system. The trial in her case did not proceed and it appears that the charges were dismissed in the Magistrates Court in 2004, even though no evidence was presented to the Court and the Court did not decide whether sexual abuse had occurred.

The DPP told us that it was not possible to reopen the case, even though there had been changes to the law since 2004 that would make it easier to prosecute the accused person today.

There is no power for a matter to be reopened after charges have been dismissed in the Magistrates Court. The DPP informed us that a similar restriction applies in family violence offences but that this has been overcome by amending the *Family Violence Act 2004*.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) recommended some changes to be made. It is through the evidence provided in this report and the consultation undertaken by the government that those changes are incorporated in the bill before this House today. On the face of this, most of us can understand why that is so important and so critical for victim/survivors who wish to bring their matter to court and seek justice.

The next amendment included in this bill relates to recommendation 16.14, which is:

The Tasmanian Government should, in similar terms to sections 199, 204 and 205 of the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009* (Vic), amend the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (including section 361A) to:

- a. allow pre-trial rulings or orders to be made before the accused person has entered a plea
- b. provide that such pre-trial rulings or orders are binding on a trial judge, even where a different judge made the order, unless the trial judge considers that would not be in the interests of justice
- c. provide that such pre-trial rulings or orders apply at a new trial unless this would be inconsistent with any order or decision made on an appeal or would not be in the interests of justice.

The evidence provided to the commission referenced some of the delays that have been endured in Supreme Court cases. In particular, the DPP told the commissioners that sometimes judges were refusing to make rulings under the provision that existed at the time if they might not be the ultimate trial judge. That was causing scheduling difficulties and delays. The evidence provided to the commission of inquiry at the time pointed out that:

... all judges sit in Hobart, Burnie, and ... Launceston, noting:

If a pre-trial ruling is required [from a list in Burnie] and there is insufficient time for the trial proper to immediately follow the ruling, it may be a matter of months (perhaps over a year) before the judge who made the ruling is sitting in Burnie again. It would be beneficial to amend section 361A to avoid this situation.

Instances like this where you are sometimes dealing with the most traumatic events, having your matter adjourned and potentially not heard for a year or more only adds to the stress. It adds the anxiety of the person who is seeking to bring a perpetrator to justice. Any effort that we can make to better resource the court so that it can deliver justice more swiftly should be supported by this parliament. I note that in their final report the commission of inquiry references that there are now two Supreme Court judges who permanently sit in Launceston and Burnie respectively, and other judges travel on circuit. Since the report, there has been a matter of Geason, which has removed him from being able to hear matters. Also, there are changes occurring later this year with the retirement of Justice Blow.

There needs to be replacement judges provided for to ensure that matters can continue to be seen as quickly as possible so that justice can be served. This amendment that has been recommended in legislation comes from this recommendation from the commission of inquiry's, which at its heart is trying to ensure that victim-survivors can have their cases heard more swiftly. Hopefully, this will lead to matters being dealt with more quickly rather than the delays that many have been experiencing.

The next recommendation dealt with in the bill is section 17.4 - I am sorry, did I miss section 16.8? Forgive me - yes, sections 17.4 and 17.5, these are matters to do with apology.

I will elaborate on this, including in this bill a provision for apology is incredibly powerful. We know from research and from evidence presented to the commission of inquiry that this will have a significant impact on the lives of those victims and survivors who suffered child sexual abuse in government institutions. An apology will be offered as a way of expressing sympathy or regret, or as a general sense of benevolence or compassion in connection with child abuse. This is such an important change, and an apology can mean so much. It is a step to acknowledge that what you say happened to you did indeed happen. It is recognised, it is listened to, it is believed.

For all those victims-survivors who have been let down by the state of Tasmania, we should all be sorry. We should be sorry that they were ever in a position as a child where their innocence was taken advantage of, their vulnerability exploited, and they were not protected. It is shameful. This parliament has apologised and the Premier has apologised, as contained within the report as a reference in this particular chapter as well. In further evidence given to the commission of inquiry, it tells the devastating story of broken trust, broken people, and a broken system. I feel that this amendment to the bill could have the most profound impact on victim-survivors who have unfortunately been let down by a system that should have protected them.

We heard through the evidence in the commission of inquiry how important an apology can be, and I will quote from Alex, which is a pseudonym. Alex stated:

I would have loved to have received an apology. I went to the health service wholly and solely to find out the outcome of that incident and if that perpetrator is still working among children. If I had received the help when I asked for it at the time and when I asked for it four years later, I do not think I would be this broken person.

There is also evidence contained within this section of the commission of inquiry report from Katrina Munting, Azra Beach and lawyer, Ms Adrinus, as well spoke about how an apology can help victim-survivors recover from the abuse.

Azra gave evidence about the absence of any apology from the Tasmanian government about the abuse she experienced in out-of-home care, and she told the commission:

No one should have to chase up their own apology at all. And I think what makes it even worse is that the people that I have spoken with already knew that this was happening long before the commission even came about. I raised it so many times, but I suppose because of who I am, and you know, sometimes how I talk and how I communicate, I felt again completely dismissed.

It breaks my heart to think that people have been let down so badly. The provision within this bill that allows for an apology to be given without a victim-survivor needing to ask for it is so powerful.

Katrina Munting, who in 2018 disclosed alleged abuse by her teacher, which has now been found by a court to be upheld, spoke about the Department of Education's failure to acknowledge what happened to her, even after the teacher had been charged with offences.

The commission of inquiry report includes this:

She wrote to the Minister for Education 16 times in 2020 requesting to meet, and received two, maybe three replies signed by the minister declining her request. After many attempts to arrange a meeting, she was referred to meet with the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education, and Ms Munting said that although the Deputy Secretary listened well to her story and apologised to her, she would have preferred a proper personalised apology from the Department of Education itself and a proper discussion with them so that they could hear me personally.

At our hearings, Ms Munting indicated she needed more than just a generic or sweeping apology. In her own words, she said:

They need to be sorry that I was abused in their institution and they chose to ignore it, and they chose not to follow up, and they chose to ignore me. And, you know, they need to name up exactly what it is they're sorry for, because I don't want a hollow 'I'm sorry'. What are you sorry for? Because not only have I been devastated by the abuse, the fallout that I've had to deal with since has made it so much worse.

These recommendations are 17.4 and 17.5, and I will read them for anyone who is listening. Recommendation 17.4:

The Tasmanian Government should ensure individual victim-survivors of child sexual abuse who request an apology receive one.

Then it talks about 'proactive steps', which is an important part of this recommendation:

Proactive steps should also be taken to offer an apology to victim-survivors who make contact in relation to their abuse. The apology should include:

- a. the opportunity to meet with a senior institutional representative (preferably the Secretary) and receive an acknowledgement of the abuse and its impact
- b. information about the victim-survivor's time in the institution
- c. information about what steps the institution has taken or will take to protect against further sexual abuse of children, if asked.

Recommendation 17.5 says:

The Tasmanian Government should introduce legislation to amend the *Civil Liability Act 2002* to ensure that an apology in relation to child sexual abuse can be made without amounting to an admission of liability.

These are significant reforms that will make a significant improvement to the way that the state operates when it is dealing with cases brought to its attention of alleged abuse, and an ability to provide some semblance of closure by way of an apology to those who have been abused.

There were a number of submissions made throughout the consultation of this bill. I said yesterday, when I commenced my contribution, that the final bill that we are debating now looks quite different from what was tabled as a draft bill. The Attorney-General has explained the reasons for most of those changes. We accept the reasons that have been provided.

We support implementing all 191 recommendations of the commission of inquiry, and think that this is really important work that the government is progressing. I note that in the most part from the submissions that are published on the website, the feedback has been incorporated into the final bill that we are debating now.

I started to express my frustration yesterday, as somebody who was trying to understand all the different elements that went into drafting this bill, that some of those consultation pieces were not published online because they happen face-to-face. They were verbal submissions that were received by the department. I accept there are always going to be instances where that occurs. However, given the fact there was such a short time frame, there was probably a preference for undertaking some of that consultation face-to-face rather than inviting submissions, because originally there was just one week allowed for consultation.

The negative consequence of that is that those views are not available anywhere to read, so we just take on face value the advice from the Attorney-General's department that they have been incorporated in the final drafting. I have no reason to believe they have not been. I am not accusing anybody of not doing a good job. I am pointing out that with something as important as this, it is really important to be as transparent as possible. We should all opt for radical transparency in how we are implementing the commission of inquiry. This includes being upfront with people about what submissions have been received by the government - to explain why changes have been made that are quite drastic, in some instances, from a draft bill to a final bill. We should at least learn from the commission of inquiry that we need to have a far more open government. We should be willing to talk about these difficult things more openly so that bad things cannot lurk in the shadows.

With that, I thank the Attorney-General for the briefing his department provided. I found it incredibly helpful. I reiterate our support for the bill and the work the government is undertaking.

[7.09 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, I indicate that the Greens will be supporting the Justice Miscellaneous (Commission of Inquiry) Bill 2024, which implements recommendations 16.9, 16.13, 16.14, 16.18, 17.4, 17.5 and 18.12 of the commission of inquiry.

By our assessment, this bill appears to be a faithful representation of each of these recommendations. I mention how important this legislation is for securing the safety of children in Tasmania into the future, and for providing some measure of healing and resolution for victim-survivors and whistleblowers who provided evidence to the commission of inquiry.

They opened their souls and their emotions to a very public process and shared their stories with us - stories of abuse and stories of trust that was broken, and stories of the difficulty

that they have living a life in the shadows of the experiences that will remain with them forever - as many of them have shared with me.

They are not experiences that they can park, and the work that we do on restoring the integrity of the governance of Tasmanian institutions is a part of the process of healing that is required for those people who have suffered, and there were so many. The very important court case and compensation that was reached - the redress that was achieved by the court case recently - is an incredibly important milestone. Money can in no way change the experiences that people have had and the trauma that people have suffered and still live with, but it is a social recognition, as well as a legal and institutional recognition, that they were wronged and that they are owed justice by the State of Tasmania and the servants of the State of Tasmania who were responsible, and who are today responsible, for making sure that children in Tasmanian institutions are safe from abuse and the other terrible things that happened to young people.

Although these recommendations are in response to the commission of inquiry's recommendations for the first tranche of work that needs to be done by this government by 1 July this year, they do not represent the entirety of the recommendations that were required to be achieved by 1 July. There are five recommendations still outstanding and not yet completed, and we are at 31 July as I stand to make this speech.

Five of those are listed by the government as 'in progress'. In particular, a great concern was that the Tasmanian government did not provide the substantial injection of one-off funding to help implement the commission of inquiry's recommended out-of-home care reforms and significantly increase a one-off injection of funding for out-of-home care.

That did not happen at the level that was required. In no way was the provided financial and resourcing response commensurate with the great need of the out-of-home care sector for having support for staff and to create the systems that are required to provide the individual face-to-face, one-on-one assessment of children and support for their carers and oversight of their care.

The two major reasons that the commission of inquiry gave for wrapping up their work early was their great concern about the risk to children in state institutions and out-of-home care - they felt that the situation was so bad - and the danger for children in Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

It is a terrible thing that the government did not listen and put as much money as was required into out-of-home care. The other part of that recommendation is that there be a significant increase of ongoing funding to out-of-home care, including out-of-home care services provided by Child Safety Services, such as out-of-home care governance and case management.

We look forward to the Budget and we very much hope that the government will be doing the right thing by the commission of inquiry's recommendations and Tasmanian's children by putting that money there.

The other two recommendations that are relevant today and are still listed in as 'in progress' relate to working with vulnerable people. Recommendation 18.13 is that the Tasmanian government should introduce legislation to amend the *Registration to Work with*

Vulnerable People Act and related statutory instruments to replace the Administrative Appeals Division of the Magistrates Court with the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal as the forum for administrative review of decisions under the act. Also, that the Tasmanian government should introduce legislation or regulations to require the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to support tribunal members to hear administrative reviews of decisions under the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* to have the knowledge, skills, experience and aptitude to deal with each matter, including in relation to child sexual abuse, neglect, and family violence.

The second part was that the government should provide sufficient funding to the tribunal to support members to gain the knowledge, skills, experience and aptitude. Recommendation 18.14 was that the Commission for Children and Young People, the Registrar of the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Scheme, Integrity Commission and Ombudsman should jointly work to develop a user-friendly guide for the general public.

I will not read out the rest of this recommendation, but this goes to assisting agencies with complaints about how organisations can respond to child sexual abuse and supporting them with providing information, and education, and child and youth friendly versions of the guide regarding what they should be concerned about and how to respond.

The part I would love to hear from the minister about - perhaps when you are wrapping up - is 18.13 and 18.14, which are still listed as being in progress. Could the minister please detail where those two pieces of work are from the Department of Justice's point of view, where they sit?

Moving to the bill at hand, I will talk about the very important element of it, which is the apologies in civil litigation and the recommendation 17.4 and 17.5 of the commission of inquiry, which was about enabling a process for victim/survivors who wish to have an apology, to receive one at the earliest opportunity. This is including the opportunity to meet with senior institutional representatives and preferably someone as senior as the Secretary to receive a direct acknowledgement of the abuse and its impact with information that is specific to that person, is not general, is about that victim-survivor's experience, their time in the institution, their particular experience of abuse, and an apology that is specific and pertinent to that individual. Then, detailing the steps that the institution will take to protect further, to make sure that child sex abuse in that institution will not occur again.

Section 17.5 is to amend the *Civil Liability Act 2002* to make sure that an apology can be made without amounting to an admission of liability. That has always been the reason that institutions have given: listening to lawyers they have been misinformed that they are not able to make an apology because that is an omission of liability under law.

That is why it is so critical that these amendments have come in because we have heard from victim-survivors throughout the commission of inquiry hearings how damaging it was to not have the acknowledgement from a person in authority. Even when all the evidence had been prepared and even when it was accepted by the agency that abuse had occurred, there was not an apology forthcoming.

I cannot imagine what it would be like to be in a situation where it was acknowledged that abuse had occurred to you, but there was no one saying, 'I am sorry'. That must be another level, another type of abuse. I am sure it was not meant with any intention from an individual,

but that is the effect, a compounding of the abuse. If people accept the abuse has occurred, and they do not come with an apology, they do not mean anything. They do not ring true to a person. The commission of inquiry was very clear about why it is important to have a direct personal response.

They also understood the situation we got ourselves into as institutions in Australia, where institutions were riven, incapable of making the normal human response in that situation, of saying, 'I am sorry,' because of being bound up in concern about the legal risk it left the institution open to. That has led to terrible injustices for people and the difficulties that victim/survivors have had in getting adequate responses, including apologies, have increased trauma. Numbers of people mentioned that throughout the commission of inquiry. We very much support the move for this legislation. The Premier's formal apology and the apology made by the Leader of the Labor Party, then leader of the Greens, Cassy O'Connor, and other members of parliament were important, but words without action are not enough. This legislation is part of the step and the action required, so it is very important.

Community Legal Centres Tasmania noted in its submission that the proposed amendments to the *Civil Liability Act 2002* relating to apologies apply to government departments but not to the State. They recommended that consideration be given to applying these provisions to the State as well. Can the minister please answer whether the government considered doing that and why you decided not to extend these provisions to the State?

Recommendation 16.9 in the bill is about people in positions of authority, or the so-called positions of authority offence. I acknowledge the work of Grace Tame, and the rest of the people in the Grace Tame Foundation through the Harmony campaign, to advocate for removing language that suggests there is consent through there being a relationship between an abuser and a child. They have long advocated to remove the language of relationship, which Ms Tame has described as giving licence to 'characterise abuse as romance'. It forms part of a broader campaign to strengthen and harmonise child sexual abuse offences across states and territories. Victim-survivor Lee Sallese also agreed that the language of a relationship is problematic, saying:

I think this language needs to change because it suggests that the victim-survivor shoulders the blame. We're already shaming and blaming ourselves. We don't need a description such as this adding to our trauma.

The commission of inquiry made the point that rewording the provision to remove reference to maintaining a sexual relationship will not change the substance of the law.

Tasmania Police generally seek advice from the Office of the DPP before charging an accused person with sexual offences in cases where there may be a question about the appropriateness of the charge or the strength of the evidence. The aim is to ensure that the charges laid are the most appropriate and to avoid charges being dropped or changed. In addition to implementing various recommendations of the commission of inquiry in relation to 16.9, the bill also introduces similar age defence provisions for the existing and proposed new position of authority offences. The Greens think this is a welcome addition.

During the debate on the Justice Miscellaneous (Royal Commission Amendments) Bill in 2022, which introduced this offence, my colleague, Ms O'Connor, highlighted the lack of a similar age defence in that bill, which was recommendation 29 of the royal commission.

I also raised this issue during the commission of inquiry Estimates last year. To your credit, Attorney-General, you said at the time that you would take it on board.

Even though the government did not include these provisions in the draft bill, the matter was explicitly raised in the consultation document. It is easy in an Estimates process to make vague comments about considering something without following up on it, so it is encouraging to see that you were sincere in that commitment and that you did follow up on it. That is to your credit. Thank you. We keep a pretty close eye on follow-through commitments in the Greens and we have a long memory so that is noted, Attorney-General.

I acknowledge the submissions of Community Legal Centres Tasmania, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) and Volunteering Tasmania, which all made representations regarding the inclusion of these provisions.

I thank all the organisations who made a representation on this issue. We believe it was a concerning oversight in the initial legislation and that it is very important to make sure, as the Commissioner for Children and Young People put it, 'that consensual and non-exploitative peer-to-peer relationships between young people are not captured by these provisions'. As an aside, I do not want to misrepresent the commissioner. I should make it clear that they recommended the consideration of similar age defence provisions but had no final view on the matter.

Other relevant law applies for an age differential of five years when a child is of or above the age of 15 years and three years when the child is of or above the age of 12 years. Of those people who made submissions on this issue, only the Commissioner for Children and Young People put forward a proposed age differential to be considered for the defence provision. That was a differential of three years. In this bill we have a two-year provision. Attorney-General, can you please outline why two years was decided on? We do not have a particular concern about that decision, but I would be interested in the reasons for it.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

On-Farm Accommodation - Answer to Question on Notice

DonateLife Week

[7.30 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Deputy Speaker, first, on indulgence, on behalf of the Premier, I provide this response to the portion of the question taken on notice from the member for Lyons, Ms Badger, with respect to on-farm accommodation *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* amendments.

TasFarmers, Fruit Growers Tasmania and Primary Employers Tasmania have previously advocated for changes to the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* to make it easier for farmers to provide on-farm accommodation. Our government understands that a major barrier to farmers having the workforce they need is appropriate on-site housing. As part of our 2030 Strong Plan

for Tasmania's Future, we committed to deliver those changes, including reducing red tape that restricts the ability of primary producers to provide housing options for workers and providing greater flexibility for farmers under the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* to offer on-farm residence as part of an employment contract.

Tonight, I acknowledge DonateLife Week 2024. I had the honour and privilege of circulating badges for DonateLife earlier today. I thank all members for their positive response in flying the flag for DonateLife week, which started last Sunday, 28 July, and goes through this Sunday, 4 August. I had the pleasure to promote that on Sunday at a media event with my DonateLife hat and badge, together with member for Bass, Rob Fairs. It was great to be with you, Rob, and with Felix Ellis. We are pleased and proud to fly the flag.

It is a special week where I believe all of us in this place and across the community can come together to learn to share the stories that are out there in the community and to celebrate the incredible gift of life that an organ and tissue donation represents. Organ and tissue donation is a powerful act of kindness and generosity. It is a decision that can transform lives, bringing hope and healing to those in desperate need. Only last Sunday morning in church, I heard of a man who was born with one kidney. His only kidney was failing, but he had the chance of a new life with the donation of a kidney, which was successful. He is now living a fulfilling and meaningful life as a result of that donation. I wanted to acknowledge that and say thank you to the advocacy of families, carers, and loved ones regarding this very important act of kindness.

The Human Tissue Amendment Bill, which I recently introduced in this place, provides important recognition of those people who have given the ultimate gift of life through donation. In 2009, the Australian Government's Organ and Tissue Authority was established, and I commend Kevin Rudd, the former prime minister, for that initiative. He was proactive in that space in 2009 when I was in the federal parliament and the Senate. I thank the government for that initiative at the time, as well as the strong support across the parliament.

The Organ and Tissue Authority coordinates the DonateLife Network in partnership with state and territory governments, DonateLife teams, organ and tissue banks, hospitals, health specialists, and the community. Impressively, in the first ten years of the national DonateLife Network program, there was a 122 per cent increase in deceased donation rates, resulting in an 81 per cent increase in people receiving an organ transplant in Tasmania. We have seen first-hand the profound impact that organ and tissue donation can have on individuals, families, and the entire community.

Imagine a child waiting for a heart and lung transplant. My wife Kate and I know some dear family members who have a young family member who would desperately love a heart and lung transplant. I acknowledge that. Whether it is a kidney, a corneal transplant, or another type of organ, loved ones, friends, and neighbours are the people who will end up benefiting. The gift of an organ or tissue can mean the difference between life and death, between despair and a second chance at life. I know that this is recognised in this place. Without those registered donors, some of these individuals may not receive the life-saving organs that they need in time.

I give a special shout out and tribute with respect to Archie's 100. In early 2020, the Green family lost their amazing son Archie Bear at the age of seven in a tragic boating accident. Out of this tragedy, Archie became an organ donor, and from this incredible gift, he was able to give life to five strangers. Each year, they celebrate Archie, honouring this amazing legacy and acknowledging the wonderful emergency service workers who dedicate their lives to

saving others. For example, this coming weekend, some in the Chamber may be aware that over the last weekend, the entire Southern Tasmania Junior Football League supported Archie's 100, with all teams playing in honour of Archie Bear Green's incredible legacy. Players were vying for the Archie Green Medal award for the best team player in each game. The Archie Green Medal recognises a young player who demonstrates exceptional dedication to their team, embodies the values of fair play, and shows outstanding support. If you want to know more about how to be part of Archie's 100, the best way is to have a conversation with a loved one about organ donation at donatelife.gov.au. Always thank an emergency service worker when you see one; they do an amazing job.

In conclusion, I was recently in the United States and learned more about the transportation of organs and tissues in times of need. They are now doing it via drones - so not trucks, not aircraft, or other forms of transport, but by drones. This is an innovative approach to getting those organs to where they need to be in a timely manner. That was very interesting.

I commend DonateLife to all members in this place and to all Tasmanians. I thank those that donate so wonderfully.

Illawarra Road, Longford - Impact Statement

[7.37 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, this evening I will continue reading the first section of an impact statement for and on behalf of the following landowners of Illawarra Road, Longford. Their names are John MacKinnon of 'Wickford', Illawarra Road; Piers Dumaresq, 'Mount Ireh', ('Entally Forest', 'Illawarra', 'The Glebe', Illawarra Road); Ferdie Foster, 'Rosedale', ('Montreal', 'Forest Lodge', 'Hatherley', Illawarra Road); Richard Johnston, 'Esk Farm', Illawarra Road; and Frances Stewart of 'Valleyfield', Illawarra Road.

In July 2022 Mr Dumaresq was approached by Burbury Consulting to discuss matters pertaining to the upgrade of the road. At this time Mr Dumaresq was presented with a proposal from TasNetworks via Burbury Consulting to create an easement for the relocation of transmission lines in the new corridor. At this time, Mr Dumaresq agreed to the principle of an easement but did not believe it was necessary to sign immediately as the proposed scale of the new road corridor or its impact on the properties he owns and manages was then unknown.

Mr Dumaresq has never indicated that he would not sign an easement yet, on 23 July 2024, Mr Dumaresq was informed by Burbury Consulting that unless he signed the easement documents on that day, the Department of State Growth would simply widen the proposed corridor using their compulsory acquisition power to acquire the land that would be in the proposed easement area, negating the need for an easement or Mr Dumaresq's agreement.

Mr Dumaresq's discussions with the appointed consultants, ERA Planning, and his recommendations have been ignored by State Growth.

Mr Dumaresq's request for a livestock underpass to enable continued movement of livestock across Illawarra Road, which has been conducted for generations, was refused by State Growth, despite the construction of stock underpasses being a stated aim of the government and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Mr Dumaresq's request to State Growth is that the speed limit be lowered to 80 kilometres per hour to improve safety when accessing the multiple farm entrances on both sides of Illawarra Road.

Christ Church Illawarra, with its history intrinsically linked to the Dumaresq and Johnston families, remains a commissioned and active place of worship, cherished by its local parishioners. Since the church is host to the grave of Tom Roberts, it is a significant tourism attraction and tourists are generally unaware of the perils of Illawarra Road. It would be far safer to have the speed limit lowered to 80 kilometres per hour to allow safe access for parishioners and visitors to the church.

The Johnston family, who have also lived and farmed either side of Illawarra Road at Esk Farm for generations, have also been completely and arrogantly ignored with regard to the impact of this proposed road development on their property. Their request for an underpass resulted in an undersized and impractical one shared with their neighbour at a site that does not work efficiently with regard to stock movement across their property. It was only relatively recently that they ceased moving flocks of sheep along Illawarra Road itself. In the 1980s, there were flocks of sheep safely traversing from property to property along this rural road corridor utilising the purpose it was instigated for.

Illawarra Road is renowned for the prevalence of thick and sight-obstructive fog through winter, including days it remains fog-bound. Mr Johnston currently has to reverse his front-end loader onto Illawarra Road in order to maximise his chances of entering the road corridor safely. He has been told his only shelter belt for his sheep on the eastern side of the road is designated for destruction - either that or the historic and widely disappearing hawthorn hedge opposite, which currently provides a visual barrier between his farmyard, lieutenant's cottage and the road.

With the current excessive road speed limit and the amount of tractor movements he conducts every day, he is dicing with a serious road incident. With an average of six tractor movements required on a corner that is sight-restricted, the impact of freight trucks has substantially increased the danger. Further, he has three children all approaching P-plates, who have to negotiate the intricacies of freight trucks using this rural road corridor at unsuitable speeds.

Mr Johnston has repeatedly requested that State Growth lower the speed limit to 80 kilometres per hour to improve safety, access to his farm, passage of machinery along the road corridor, and to mitigate noise.

Regarding underpasses, Mr Foster has also been met with a brick wall. His most concerning thought is that by upgrading the road to a National Highway, this is going to increase both the speed limit and actual speed of vehicles to the speeds experienced on both the Bass and Midland Highway. Whilst we all know the non-truck speed limit is set at 110 kilometres per hour, in actual practice, because of the shortness of the passing lanes, many cars accelerate up to 130 kilometres per hour to be able to pass large trucks like the many B-doubles now using Illawarra Road. His understanding is that the passing lanes will be along his Montreal and Forest Lodge property road boundaries. Mr Foster is extremely concerned for the safety of his machinery operators who are required to travel along Illawarra Road and under the Bass Highway from Montreal to nearly Hatherley to feed livestock, sometimes on a daily

basis in winter. Tractors pulling out into very fast-moving traffic is simply asking for accidents to happen.

The prospect on the return trip is even worse as the tractor and feed wagon on most occasions will be forced to stop in the centre of the road whilst waiting for oncoming traffic to clear before turning right. Anyone with common sense will realise the danger involved with the fast-moving trucks and if there is a car overtaking the truck, it may not even be aware of the tractor machinery on the road.

Approximately two years ago, Mr Foster met with Deputy Premier, Michael Ferguson, pointing out this danger. Further, at this meeting he pointed out how it would be possible to remove all his farm traffic from Illawarra Road if the government would increase the size of the underpass on the Bass Highway which joins the two properties. Neither the minister, nor Ms Hudson, the responsible bureaucrat for road design, were interested in this suggestion, and did not accept the potentially life-endangering threat to the tractor operators.

Time expired.

Rex Airlines - Voluntary Administration

[7.44 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, given the news about air carrier Rex going into voluntary administration, as transport spokesperson for the Greens, it is necessary to say a few words about the likely impacts on Tasmanians and their transport options and local economies.

The news that Rex has gone into voluntary administration is deeply concerning for Tasmanians, but particularly those directly affected. If Rex is allowed to go the way of Ansett and Bonza, jobs in regional communities in Tasmania will be at risk and the impacts on tourism and the broader local economy will be significant.

The Transport Workers' Union (TWU) have said that many hundreds of jobs across Australia have gone already, but it is not just the jobs directly associated with operating these services that are at risk. However, my thoughts are with those directly impacted and those workers who are understandably worried about the future. I commend the TWU and Australian Services Union for the work they are doing already to support affected members on the mainland.

The knock-on effects will be particularly felt in Tasmania's regional and remote areas, including King Island. Transport services like those provided by Rex provide invaluable social and economic benefits for tourism, agriculture, medical appointments, and connecting communities and families. It is a blow for a regional and remote Tasmanians.

Focusing on the north west, the Mayor of Devonport, Alison Jarman, has expressed concern at the prospect of a Qantas monopoly. The Mayor of Waratah-Wynyard, Mary Duniam, has publicly stated her concerns about the impact on communities and their access to services. If people in north-west Tasmania are forced to fly from Launceston Airport, this is a greater financial impost on them. They live in an area which is already poorly serviced by transport options and may become more isolated and with greater disadvantage. It will be a step backwards for the whole state. Transport should be seen as an essential service.

The Premier has said he stands ready to work with the Commonwealth Government on a path forward. He is correct that we cannot afford to lose these links to King Island, the north-west coast and other regional communities. Will he ensure services are running, supporting local economies, jobs and regional connectivity? What is his suggestion to keep these areas connected to the rest of the country? Will he consider regulating these routes to ensure they remain operational?

We are already under-serviced in Tasmania with transport options, especially in the north-west of the state. It is vital for Tasmania that Burnie and Devonport do not lose their direct connection to the mainland. In Queensland, regional Rex flights have long been supported by the state government, who recognise that these flight corridors are often the only way of providing essential services, such as access to health care, to remote communities.

Federal government studies have shown that moving from three airlines to two on any given route would lead to a doubling of fares. Moving from two to one will have a similar impact. This lack of competition has been cited by experts as a key factor in rising airfares.

Swift action is required. Should the residents of King Island be left with only one service, it is inevitable that prices will rise even further. Australians have long suffered financially due to lack of competition in air travel. This is especially true in Tasmania, and particularly so in rural and remote Tasmania. It is the tyranny of distance.

Now, yet again, Tasmanians may suffer because of monopolistic practices. The Greens believe it is crucial that the government take action immediately, because transport is an essential public service.

Port Arthur Historic Site - Model Replica Exhibit

[7.49 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for the Arts) - Honourable Speaker, I am really excited to talk tonight about the very successful event held a few months ago at the Port Arthur Historic Site. The event featured the unveiling of the meticulously restored three-dimensional model of the World Heritage listed Port Arthur Historic Site.

This model depicts the convict colony at its peak in the 1860s. It is impressive; 3.5 metres by 2.5 metres inside, built to scale and historically accurate. It includes 50 buildings, with convicts engaging in various activities, guards and farm animals. Originally constructed in 1973 by Tasmanian artist Audrey Flockhart, the model was displayed for 40 years until it was taken down in 2010. In 2023, it was decided to have the model restored, a process that took 1200 hours of hard work.

The restored model now sits in the gallery and is already proving popular, with increased dwelling time. Tasmania's rich cultural heritage is an integral part of our state's identity. Our historic sites, from convict settlements to architectural landmarks, tell the captivating stories of our past, and we remain dedicated to telling and activating Tasmania's heritage in diverse and engaging ways.

Whether it is through cutting edge AI technology or the restored Port Arthur model, our goal is to unlock and share Tasmania's unique stories with the world. This restored, one-of-a-

kind, three-dimensional model of Port Arthur offers visitors a unique perspective, showcasing the scale and complexity of the site in a way that simply walking the grounds cannot achieve.

By activating the stories behind our heritage-listed buildings and places, no matter how small or minor, we invite everyone to engage with our shared history. It is the stories we tell through these heritage-listed buildings and places that have the power to inspire, educate and unite us all. These stories spark a sense of belonging, pride and a profound connection to our shared history.

The restored model has undoubtedly contributed to activating the story of the Port Arthur Historic Site and helped to bring the past to life, sparking curiosity and fostering a deeper appreciation for our heritage. As mentioned, 1200 hours of careful attention to detail were dedicated to the restoration of the model. Additionally, there are two hidden Tasmanian tigers within the model, adding an element of intrigue and fun for visitors. I managed to spot one while I was there, but I could not promise I did.

I express my sincere thanks to the PASMA team and everyone who contributed to the restoration and reinstallation of this remarkable model. Thank you also to our local community and stakeholders for your continuous support.

Our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future secures important World Heritage sites for generations to come, providing everyday Tasmanians with the support they need to activate heritage spaces and places. We continue to encourage families and visitors to explore the Port Arthur historic site, taking in the intricate details of the model and immerse themselves in the rich stories of our past. Together, let us ensure our heritage is preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

Science and Technology - Government Commitment

[7.53 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to make a contribution in my portfolio as the shadow minister for science and technology. Since I have been in this portfolio, I have had the great delight to travel around the state meeting with industry organisations, individuals and businesses, incredibly successful Tasmanian companies and people who hold different positions about organisations in Tasmania.

I note with interest at the beginning of this presentation that the government still has not responded to the requests from the Tasmania ICT regarding the appointment of their own minister of science and technology. Despite making commitments that there would be attendance, for example, at the digital ministers meeting, I note that we did not have representation from a minister. That breeds concern and doubt about the commitment that this government has to the science and technology sector and also the readiness that this government has to embrace and manage many of the opportunities that will present themselves, but the challenges that will come with that.

One of the most enjoyable meetings that I have had so far was with a gentleman at the Devonport City Council, Jeff Griffith. He is an incredible gentleman who has moved to Australia and made Tasmania his home. Having grown up and been successful in America working in the technology sector, and working in many areas to support things in the United

States and around the world, he found his way through a curious journey through Western Australia to the northwest coast of Tasmania. We now get to benefit from his insights, capabilities and leadership that he shares with the Devonport community and across Tasmania, and continues to share both across Australia and the world.

With his permission, I share some of the things he laid out to me relating to what he sees as great opportunities for Tasmania with the onset of AI, automation, robotics and improvements in these areas, what it means and how rapidly these changes will occur.

While this government has been able to demonstrate that they might identify opportunities it is not always able to act at pace to realise these opportunities. Jeff shared with me that it could be challenging for us to grasp the speed at which AI and automation is going to impact the workforce globally. The disruption is very real and the impact will be more substantial than we can imagine. I believe it is important when we see disruption approaching that we embrace it and prepare for it so that as a state, Tasmania can take advantage of the opportunity.

Substantial job losses will result in population migration. If Tasmania can position itself as a leader in tech and AI and take advantage of a more stable climate during ongoing climate change, it may be an attractive destination for interstate migration.

My question for the government this evening is when will this government deliver an AI strategy and action plan? The reason I take this opportunity to present that question to the government is for the statistics that Jeff shared with me that I will put on the record this evening.

It is estimated that, by 2030, AI could replace the equivalent of 300 million full time jobs. This was outlined in a report by investment bank, Goldman Sachs. It could replace a quarter of work tasks. However, it might also mean new opportunities in a productivity boom. It could eventually increase the total annual value of goods and services globally by 7 per cent. The report also predicts that two thirds of jobs are exposed to some degree of AI automation, and about a quarter of all jobs could be formed by AI entirely. There is a range of jobs that will be impacted, but by the year 2030, and that is not too far away, we will use AI as our personal assistants, tutors, career counsellors, therapists, accountants, and lawyers. They will be ubiquitous in our work lives, conducting analysis, writing code, building products, selling products, supporting customers, coordinating across teams and organisations, and making strategic decisions.

By the year 2030, over 100,000 humanoid robots will be deployed in the real world. Large language models will automate vast amounts of cognitive work in the years ahead. In parallel, humanoid robots will automate the vast amounts of physical work. These robots are no longer a distant science fiction dream. Although most people will not yet realise it, humanoids are on the verge of and being deployed in the real world.

By 2030, AI-driven job losses will be one of the most widely discussed political and social issues facing us. This is going to change much more abruptly than people can appreciate. Before the decade is out, AI-driven job loss will be a concrete and pressing reality in everyday lives of our community. In the years ahead, not too distant, organisations will find that they can boost productivity and profitability by using AI to complete more and more work tasks previously required to be done by humans. This will happen across industries and across all pay grades: customer service, accountants, data scientists, cashiers, lawyers, security guards,

court reporters, pathologists, taxi drivers, management consultants, journalists and musicians. This is something that Tasmania needs to be ready for.

In Tasmania, what does that mean for us? The World Economic Forum predictions on jobs and AI indicate significant shifts in the workforce. By 2027, an estimated 69 million jobs will be created, while 83 million jobs will be eliminated, resulting in a net loss of 14 million jobs globally. The rise of AI is expected to change job roles and required skills, emphasising the need for upskilling and adaptability. For Tasmania, this could mean a shift in job types. Industries like tech and renewable energy may see growth while traditional roles may decline.

Skills development - a focus on digital literacy: AI-related skills and continuous learning will become essential.

Workforce adaption: companies may need to invest in training programs and support employees transitioning to new roles.

Economic impact: potential challenges in employment rates and economic stability necessitating proactive measures from both the government and the private sector.

Opportunities in Tasmania: we can leverage this opportunity in this uncertainty created by AI. Develop a tech hub, education and upskilling, the appeal of our lifestyle, government incentives.

By focusing on these areas, Tasmania can turn AI-related workforce challenges into a growth opportunity. My question for this government is: when will you prepare an AI strategy, an action plan to protect and allow Tasmania to realise there is opportunity?

Time expired.

Youth Parliament 2024

[8.00 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Children and Youth) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to express my admiration for a group of intelligent and articulate and remarkable young Tasmanians who recently occupied this Chamber to debate matters of importance to their vision for the future of our state.

Youth Parliament 2024 began on 15 July. It was my honour to speak at the closing ceremony on 19 July and also to receive the Youth Parliament bills on behalf of the Tasmanian government.

I take this opportunity to thank your good self, honourable Speaker, for presiding over the opening of Youth Parliament, as I understand, and to all the members of both Houses of this parliament who gave their time to chair sessions, to answer questions, and to listen to our remarkable young people.

Youth Parliament has been held annually for more than 20 years. The week-long program is planned and delivered by a group of volunteers appointed by the Tasmanian Youth Government Association. Its purpose is to educate young people about our parliamentary

processes and provide opportunities for them to engage with parliamentarians, government officials and community leaders.

Participants craft motions and bills that are then debated in the Chamber before being put to a vote. This experience builds skills in civic engagement, public speaking and debating, leadership, and event planning. The bills passed by this year's Youth Parliamentarians demonstrate their concern and compassion for their fellow Tasmanians. They touch on education, healthcare, cost-of-living support, housing affordability, criminal rehabilitation and social inequality. They aspire to increase the number of young people completing year 12 and encourage more to continue beyond senior secondary school to training or tertiary education.

They would tackle housing affordability by identifying vacant and underutilised land for subdivision, with minimum targets for affordable and social housing. More energy bill relief would be offered to those on lower incomes. New renewable electricity infrastructure would contribute to stable base load and keep downward pressure on the cost of energy to consumers. Criminal rehabilitation and reintegration would become a greater focus of the justice system with mandated drug addiction programs and counselling support provided.

Through these bills and others, the Youth Parliamentarians have shown an appreciation of complex issues and applied themselves with maturity and a clear social conscience to consider how they could improve the lives of others. I congratulate them on what they brought to the Chamber and sincerely hope they have taken valuable lessons, fond memories and relationships home with them. I am told it was not all hard work. During the seven-day camp, the group enjoyed recreational activities, a tour of Government House, and a variety of social functions and outings.

I thank the many people involved in Youth Parliament for the hard work and long hours that went into making the program such a success and a memorable event in the lives of its participants. I have been informed by one of the Youth Parliamentarians from my electorate, that the co-conveners, Jemima and Tom, are 'the coolest people I have ever met'. Well done, and thank you to Jemima and Tom. I know that they thanked an army of volunteers and helpers who helped them in their role to bring this all together.

In the coming weeks I hope to meet with the Braddon members of the Youth Parliament to learn more about their individual experiences. I look forward to catching up with Jayda, Leigh, Claire, Elliott, Seth, Kiara, Nikki, Cameron, and Nick for a conversation. I cannot wait to hear about their aspirations for the future and their vision of how we can make Tasmania an even better place to live, and their interests in staying connected to the parliamentary process in their own future lives and careers.

I encourage all young people who will be in Year 10, 11 or 12 next year to consider raising their hand to be part of Youth Parliament in 2025 and all of us in this place, I am sure, will look forward to welcoming them.

While on my feet, I thank and recognise the member for Clark, Ms Burnet, for her comments in recognition of the importance of air services to remote and regional communities like the one that I represent in Braddon and on King Island. It is notable that Greens members have not always been the ones who have stood up and recognised the importance of investment in transport as an essential service and infrastructure for our communities right across the state, and your comments are noted and appreciated.

DonateLife Week

[8.06 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about DonateLife Week, which runs from Sunday 28 July to Sunday 4 August. Held annually in July, DonateLife Week is the Australian Organ and Tissue Authority's national awareness week to educate and promote the importance of organ and tissue donation and to encourage more Australians to register as a donor. Currently there are about 1800 people across Australia on the organ wait list and 14,000 more Australians on dialysis for kidney failure. All these people are waiting with hope and anticipation for the chance to receive a lifesaving organ transplant.

Organ and tissue donation is a powerful act of generosity. It transforms lives, offering recipients a chance to continue to live, to experience life more fully, to pursue their dreams and to share precious moments with their loved ones. For the families of donors, it can provide a sense of closure and pride knowing that their loved one's legacy lives on through giving the gift of life to others.

Organ and tissue donation is a decision that speaks to our shared humanity and to the profound impact we can have on each other's lives. An inspiring example of the transformative power of organ donation can be seen in the story of Tasmania's Joanne Galliher.

Joanne endured over three years with end-stage lung disease, battling each day with the reality of her declining health. Her situation seemed bleak, especially when she received the devastating news from her GP that she would need to transition into palliative care. However, just a week after receiving this heart-wrenching prognosis, Joanne's life took an incredible turn. Joanne received the miraculous news that a pair of donated lungs had been found for her. Following successful lung transplant surgery, Joanne was given a new lease of life.

Joanne has since returned to living a normal, healthy life and is eternally grateful to her donor and their family for giving her this second chance at life.

We can all play a part in helping to transform people's lives. Approximately four in five Australians say they support organ and tissue donation. However, only 36 per cent of Australians are registered to be a donor on the Australian Organ Donor Register. While in Tasmania we are above the national average with 48 per cent of Tasmanians registered as organ donors, we still need more Tasmanians to step up and say yes and to please register.

In 2023, the lives of 57 Tasmanians like Joanne's, were transformed after receiving organ donations from 21 organ donors and their families who did say 'yes' to donations in our state. However, the fact is that very few people will ever be in a position to become a donor, even if they are registered. Only about 2 per cent of people who die in hospital can be considered for the donation process, and this process can only proceed with the consent of the donor's family. Statistics show that about eight in 10 families will say yes to donation if they know that their family member is registered. This number, however, dropped significantly to only four in 10 if the family does not know their loved one's wishes. While it is an individual's decision to register as a donor, it is ultimately up to their family to decide if their loved one will, in the end, become a donor.

DonateLife Week not only aims to encourage people to register as an organ and tissue donor, but also to emphasise importance of ensuring that registered donors communicate their wishes to their families.

Throughout DonateLife Week this week, a variety of activities have already and will continue to take place across Tasmania to promote organ and tissue donation. More than 60 cafes statewide have joined the Register into Sips Campaign to encourage donor registration through coffee cup stickers and posters, featuring a QR code to access the online donor register.

Tonight, I encourage all Tasmanians to take up this opportunity to consider registering as organ and tissue donors and to inspire others to do the same. Registering is very easy to do. You just have to open up the Medicare app on your phone, select the organ donation option in the menu, put in your driver's licence number, and tick a box. You will then be registered as a donor and honestly takes two sips of a cup of coffee. It is a very quick, easy step to take that can potentially make a life changing difference for someone else and their loved ones.

Wynyard Fire Brigade - Tribute

[8.10 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to honour the incredible service of generations of firefighters at the Wynyard Fire Brigade, celebrating 110 years of active service across generations. It was a family event the other night in Wynyard, with many members being able to recall memories of their forebears who have been part of the brigade and served the community and inspired them to take a role as a firefighter, perhaps an officer, and someone who loves and supports the extraordinary gift that the Wynyard Fire Brigade gives to their community in keeping them safe.

Our firefighters around the state do extraordinary things as volunteers. They put themselves in harm's way, running towards the danger. It can be for loved ones, it can be for family, but more often than not, it is for people they do not even know. That extraordinary act of bravery and generosity is something that our community should always be mindful of, honour and celebrate.

The event also included the brigade's annual presentations of awards and medals to the deserving recipients.

Five-year service pins were presented to Beau White, TJ Polk, Chris Folden, Jeremy Schmidt, Brett McClymont and Riley McClymont.

20-year service medals were presented to Daniel Cox, Daniel Jackson, George Hoogendorp and Damian Polk, who is also the brigade chief and dad to TJ.

Those awards celebrate our firefighters' dedication. We also had a couple of awards that celebrate their excellence.

The Firefighter of the Year award was jointly awarded to Nigel Pointon and Christie Polk, wife of Damian, mum of TJ, and who does so much extraordinary work making sure that brigade continues to function efficiently and well and bringing new people on board.

One of the awards is not for dedication and excellence. It is - what is the right term for it? The clanger award, I suppose. They call it the Stretch Award at the Wynyard Fire Brigade for silliest act of the year. Those who know Bruce Corbett AFSM, he is an extraordinary servant

to the people of Tasmania and to Wynyard, particularly through his fire brigade. He is not above gentle ribbing or gentle poking as it so happens in the Wynyard Fire Brigade and has won the Stretch Award again this year. This is the third time he has won the illustrious Stretch Award. I will not tell you what it is for, but firefighting is not all guts and glory. Sometimes it can be just good mates having a bit of fun as well.

Mr Jaensch - He is coming up to 50 years of service to the Wynyard Fire Brigade.

Mr ELLIS - He is and it is an extraordinary record. He has also been on the State Fire Commission and made major contributions. As much as he has a sense of humour, he is a powerhouse of regional and rural firefighting.

There was a brilliant story of the history of the brigade. I encourage anyone who has an interest: 110 years really sees its fair share of stories, indeed, starting off 110 years ago under the auspices of the Table Cape Council. When they purchased their first-hand cart, it was Tasmania's seventh fire brigade, as I understand it, and continues strongly under the leadership of Brigade Chief Damian Polk and Second Officer Daniel Cox, Third Officer Bruce Corbett and Fourth Officer Nigel Pointon. They are an extraordinary group of people.

Margot and I were blessed to be able to break bread with them and enjoy the evening to celebrate 110 years and also to wish them well on the next steps in the journey. Wynyard is going to be the location of a new emergency services hub that our government committed to at the last election as part of our 2030 Strong plan. We thank the council for their work in that. The opportunity to unite fire, SES, police and ambulance in the one location will be a leading facility for the state.

The Wynyard Fire Brigade, an amazing heritage, a proud presence with wonderful people and a really exciting future ahead.

Environmental Defenders

[8.15 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I rise on adjournment to express my support for the fearless people who seek to hold governments and corporations to account for acts of environmental destruction through our courts. People's defence of our natural places in the legal system is a central part of our democracy. Organisations like the Environmental Defenders Office provide vital assurance to citizens to navigate this legal system.

It is very concerning to hear from the Minister for Business, Industry and Resources, Eric Abetz' comments on 4 July where he said, quote:

In Tasmania, a consortium of well-funded, lawyered-up activist organisations are attacking salmon jobs on the west coast, sustainable native forestry, renewable energy projects in the north-west and mining in the multi-use Tarkine.

Mr Abetz referred to a Menzies Research Centre's report, which he said blows the lid on the Trojan horse of environmental activism in Tasmania and nationally.

Attacks from the Liberal Party and the Menzies Research Centre, which is a Liberal-aligned think tank, on these environmental defenders is an attack on our democracy and on the laws that we have passed to protect our environment. Healthy democracies enable citizens to hold governments and corporations to account. From the beginning of the environmental movement in lutruwita/Tasmania, activists have worked to enforce the law where corporations and governments disregard it.

The Franklin River is beautiful, wild, surrounded by rainforest, and is of significance across deep millennia for the Aboriginal community. When it was threatened, the Tasmanian community rose up and the Australian people joined us, recognising the global significance of this incredible area. Collectively, we spurred on the Australian Government to take the Tasmanian government to the High Court and hold them to the constitution, and the Franklin now runs free today as a result of that effort.

In the Tarkine/takayna, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, represented by the Environmental Defenders Office, took the government to the Federal Court to prevent them reopening four-wheel drive tracks across ancient middens and burial grounds. The Liberals had not received approval under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This action ultimately stopped what would have been awful impacts - indeed, had started to be terrible impacts - on world-significant indigenous living cultural heritage within this area of the Tarkine. The fight continues today with the current government attempting to go back in with a \$10 million-boosted campaign for a mainland four-wheel drive tourism plan for that beautiful area of the takayna.

In 2016, following the Liberal Government's secretive expression of interest process designed to open up parks to private development, Tasmania saw a proposal that would create a helicopter access tourism project on Halls Island in Lake Malbena. Lake Malbena is the beating green heart of an internationally significant pristine environment inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. It is of vital significance to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, with caves and other heritage values. Without litigation by the Wilderness Society and the National Parks Association, represented by the Environmental Defenders Office, and without the massive support of community groups led by Fishers and Walkers Against Helicopter Access (FAWAHA), this development would have gone ahead, contrary to law.

Another example still ongoing is the government's delayed release of the State of the Environment report. The Tasmanian government has not complied with the requirements of section 29 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*, which requires the State of the Environment report to be produced every five years. This report is now 10 years overdue. It is an essential update on the quality and health of our environment. Actions of the Australia Institute, with the support from the Environmental Defenders Office, have added pressure on the minister about this legal failing and helped force the government to commit to this report. We wait to see if it is delivered by 30 August, as promised.

The Bob Brown Foundation, on behalf of Tasmanians and Australians who care deeply about the ancient rainforest of takayna/Tarkine, the masked owl, and the other species that live there, have stood to protect its drowning in a toxic tailing waste dam by the MMG Corporation. Everyday Tasmanians have been part of challenging the legal issuing of road permits to MMG by the minister for mining and continue to work to uphold the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

Just last week, 19 Tasmanians defended their rights in court to protect the Meunna Forest on the edge of takayna/Tarkine against logging. The case was settled by Forestry Tasmania after it admitted that the prohibition orders it made to these forest defenders was illegal.

We are seeing an orchestrated narrative by the Liberal Party and by donor corporations. Salmon Tasmania CEO Luke Martin said:

Tasmanian environmental groups have seen a boom in funding and have ramped up their activism accordingly.

This is an attempt to demonise everyday Tasmanians who are gathering to protect natural values that are under threat now more than ever.

Mr Martin went on to say:

Every day it seems there is a new stunt, a new AI-generated website or full-page ad in a local newspaper.

He singled out the Bob Brown Foundation, the Australia Institute and the Environmental Defenders Office. He should have also included the Neighbours of Fish Farms and the many other community organisations who will use the law to protect environmental values when they are being threatened. Tasmanians are rightfully outraged at the damage to the Maugean skate's home waters from the developments of fish farms there.

I will end by extending the Greens' respect to the environmental defenders in lutruwita/Tasmania throughout the decades, affirming their right in our democracy to ensure that the Tasmanian government and corporations comply with law through the courts. Defending our unique environment is critical in a time of climate and biodiversity crisis. It is not law fair to communities to say; it is not law fair to ask the courts to determine a point of law. We will continue to stand against this narrative.

Time expired.

DonateLife Week Oatlands District Football Association

[8.22 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to add my voice to the DonateLife week that is happening, as has already been mentioned tonight in the Chamber. It is a very important week. It is a national campaign to recognise the importance of organ donations in our community. You have heard me speak in the past about the fact that I am a blood donor and have donated whole blood nearly all my life. I can only recall that a long time ago it was only a matter of ticking a box on your driver's licence to become an organ donor. I can recall that at Agfest only about 15 or 20 years ago, the campaign was changed, and now you have to register. I did that and I can recall doing that at Agfest.

I have always been of the belief that if my organs are no longer any good to me, I hope that they will be of value to somebody else who is on the donor list and allow them to have a decent life.

DonateLife Week is to be celebrated Australia-wide starting on Sunday 28 July and going through to Sunday 4 August. In Australia, four out of five people say that they support organ donations, which has already been said tonight, but only about 36 per cent, one in three, are registered to be a donor. It has already been said tonight that about 48 per cent of Tasmanians are donors, so we are above the average. I congratulate everybody in Tasmania that has been through the process of organising to be an organ donor.

The important thing about becoming an organ donor is the fact that your family knows, because obviously if you are in that situation, then it is important that your family knows that you wish to contribute to somebody else's life with some of your organs. It is a matter of having that discussion with family, loved ones and friends about the importance of organ and tissue donations.

If you want to become a donor, make sure that everybody around you knows. You can get the card off the app; most importantly through the formal registration process to become a donor. It is an easy process. As I tried to indicate earlier on, if you already have a Medicare app, then it is simply a matter of opening up your phone, going to your Medicare app, logging into Medicare and then ticking the box, which is the next stage. You can simply go through that process.

The SPEAKER - Thank you for demonstrating it for us.

Mr SHELTON - I am in.

The SPEAKER - You are in.

Mr SHELTON - I am in, and then down the screen, 'Organ Donations' - press that one and then you can either indicate if you want to change or if you want to protect any part of yourself. It is a very simple process. If you do not have the Medicare app on your phone, then it is only a matter of downloading that and away you go.

I can only stress the importance of that. It does not matter how old you are, your medical history, your lifestyle, where you were born or what medical conditions you may have, you can still be an organ donor. During the week, you will see plenty of advertising on the television and social media and through the print media about what it means to be an organ donor.

Let us face it - if the decision has been made to donate organs or tissues, we are clearly not on this Earth anymore and therefore the use would be appreciated by many other people. One of the issues about organ donation, you might think, is that they want everybody to become a donor. The reality is only about 2 per cent of people who pass away do so in circumstances where their organs and tissues can be used for donation. For the major organs we all hear about - the heart, lung, pancreas, and so on - you basically have to die in hospital for those to be used. However, your eyes and tissue donations can be used, as long as it is within 24 hours. I know that is a bit morbid, but it is about highlighting these issues to the general population so that they are aware of the situation.

There are about 1800 names on the list waiting for an organ donation and there is a significant amount of work to be done to find a match and go through that process. I can only stress to everybody in the Chamber - and it is a pleasure to see most people wearing the badges; hopefully that means that they are already donors - if we can talk to our family or community about donating then that is going to be of benefit to many people. The word is slowly getting out there. In 2023, 53 per cent of families agreed that organ donation is a good thing, compared to 54 per cent two years earlier in 2022. That is an important thing to highlight.

In the one minute I have left, as I am the patron of the Oatlands District Football Association, I congratulate Brendan Klok, who won the best and fairest for the association on Monday night at Oatlands. He is a player from Triabunna. Triabunna had a pretty good year because Mitchell Reeve, also from Triabunna, was runner up on 13 points. Brendan had 21 votes; Mitchell, 13, and Jamie Sokolski from Bothwell was the third place with 12. Brian O'Reilly, the president of the ODFA, is a great bloke and puts in a huge amount of effort in running the association.

To all the presidents, the volunteers and the support staff of all the teams, well done for another year. I wish every team in the finals all the very best. Go, AFL.

The House adjourned at 8.29 p.m.