



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 29 October 2024

REVISED EDITION

Contents

TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2024	1
TABLED PAPERS	1
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE A - WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE WITHIN THE RACING INDUSTRY – REPORT – GOVERNMENT RESPONSE	1
STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT	1
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LEGISLATURE-GENERAL - APPOINTMENT	1
SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS	2
NORTH WEST JUNIOR ANGLERS CLUB	2
MICHAEL STANLEY ALLEN - TRIBUTE.....	3
2024 PRIME MINISTER'S PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS - DANIEL EDWARDS	4
MOTION	7
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEES A AND B – ADJUSTMENT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO CHANGES.....	7
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEES A AND B - ESTABLISHMENT.....	8
MOTION	9
COLONY 47 AND MYSTATE BANK FINANCIAL WELLBEING IN TASMANIA JUNE 2024 REPORT - CONSIDERATION AND NOTING.....	9
MOTION	23
TEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - RESEARCH BRIEF BY DR CARMEL HOBBS - NOTING	23
QUESTIONS.....	32
BRIDGEWATER BRIDGE - ENGINEERING ISSUES	32
SPIRIT OF TASMANIA - LEASE OPTION	32
CRISIS ACCOMMODATION - STATE CAPACITY	33
ADHD ASSESSMENTS - WAIT TIMES.....	35
RINGAROOMA SCHOOL & DISTRICT SHOW - WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE CARDS	37
HALLS ISLAND - LEASE	37
HALLS ISLAND - LEASE - COMMUNICATION WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	38
HALLS ISLAND - VISITOR ACCESS RESTRICTIONS.....	38
ELIZABETH TOWN - ROAD UPGRADES	39
HALLS ISLAND - WORLD HERITAGE AREA - TRESPASS	40
HALLS ISLAND - WORLD HERITAGE AREA - TRESPASS	40
BRIDGEWATER BRIDGE - BUDGET	41
MOTION	41
TEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - RESEARCH BRIEF BY DR CARMEL HOBBS - NOTING	41
MOTION	45
DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE COMMISSION'S YEARLY REPORT - CONSIDERATION AND NOTING	45
MOTION	59
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE B - INCLUSION OF MOTOR ACCIDENTS INSURANCE BOARD	59
MOTION	60
DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE COMMISSION'S YEARLY REPORT - CONSIDERATION AND NOTING	60

MOTION	82
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2024 - NOTING.....	82
SUSPENSION OF SITTING	95
MOTION	95
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2024 - NOTING.....	95
MOTION	103
POKER MACHINES - MANDATORY CASHLESS CARD SYSTEM - NOTING	103
ADJOURNMENT.....	130
APPENDIX 1	132
APPENDIX 2	146

Tuesday 29 October 2024

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

TABLED PAPERS

Government Administration Committee A - Workers Compensation Insurance within the Racing Industry – Report – Government Response

[11.03 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr President, I table the government's response to the Legislative Council Government Administration Committee A's short inquiry process on Workers Compensation Insurance within the Racing Industry.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT

Executive Director Legislature-General - Appointment

Mr PRESIDENT - Before we move on, as many of you would know, the position of Executive Director was created and funded in the recent Budget to lead and oversight the operation of Legislature-General, our shared services. It is a new position that will report directly to the Clerk of each House, but have the autonomy to provide overall leadership and coordination across Legislature-General business units and managers and to make decisions in respect of the delivery of services that support members and the smooth running of parliament.

Following a competitive executive search process, Mr Todd Crawford has been appointed to the role and commenced with the parliament yesterday. I welcome Todd to the Legislative Council Chamber. He is joining us here today, so please make time to introduce yourself to Todd through the day. We have a whole week as a non-shared service while we are the only Chamber sitting, so we get first dibs.

Todd has a wealth of experience and joins us from the Tasmanian State Senior Executive Service. He brings with him leadership capabilities and a wealth of experience across the full range of corporate functions, strategic policy, business planning, service integration, and digital transformation. Both Clerks are thrilled to have Todd on board to support them in contemporising the operations of the parliamentary workplace and driving business improvement.

It is an area where we have been trying to get a good system in process for some time, so it is wonderful to be at the point where we have made the appointment and to have such a good person in the role who is keen to get on with the job. I know you will all join me in making him welcome to the Tasmanian parliament and the Legislative Council as part of his role.

Members - Hear, hear.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

North West Junior Anglers Club

[11.06 a.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, this morning I want to raise awareness of the North West Junior Anglers Club (NWJA), which is a not-for-profit club run by a small number of dedicated volunteers. It is based at Taylors Dam off the Bass Highway in Latrobe. For those of you from down south, it is opposite Anvers chocolates. The club provides education support for juniors aged 3 to 17 years to fish, to understand the rules and regulations of fishing, and to appreciate the concept of sustainable fishing.

The idea of a junior anglers' pond at the current location first surfaced back in 2005, when I was mayor. Since then, a considerable amount of works have been undertaken, made possible by various grants received from government departments, coupled with thousands of hours of volunteer labour and effort, to make the facility fit for purpose.

Taylors Dam is privately owned and is one of three junior-only dams in Tasmania. It is pleasing to note that at the conclusion of the 2023-24 season, there were more than 284 junior anglers registered to fish there. They are allowed to catch two fish per 'Fishout Day', which are then cleaned and weighed by adult members and taken home for dinner.

I recently had the opportunity to sponsor and visit a North West Junior Fishout Day on Sunday 13 October. It was wonderful to see the young children and teenagers experiencing the joys of fishing, learning new skills, spending quality time with family and friends, and doing what family should do. I received a lovely message from a mum whose son, Ryan, who I believe is 12, caught the biggest fish for a male junior angler - over nine pounds. Ryan was very excited and intends to put his \$50 prize money towards his next fishing rod. His mum stated, 'It was all very exciting and caused a bit of a scene. I love our community. What a great activity for kids on the weekend. My son would do it every chance he got, if he could.'

The chocolate hamper I donated for the raffle was also well received and raised much-needed funds for the club. The club currently has two real issues: fish stock and cormorants affecting their functionality and, by extension, their longevity. In the 2021-22 season, fish stock was supplied by the Inland Fisheries Service (IFS) and most juniors caught fish each Fishout day.

In the 2022-23 season, the availability of fish from IFS decreased dramatically. For the 2023-24 season, the club received some stock from the Anglers Alliance Tasmania (AAT), which was, unfortunately, not sufficient to maintain the club. The club then sought and received sponsorship from a private business, enabling it to outlay \$6000 for fish weighing over 600 grams each. There were a number of Fishout Days that season, but no fish were caught by the junior anglers.

This is where the second challenge comes to the fore. Cormorants are becoming a significant and increasing threat to the trout population in Taylors Dam, with members noticing up to 30 in the immediate vicinity on their Fishout Days. IFS notes that, to date, there have been no formal peer-reviewed studies in Tasmania looking at the impacts of cormorants on trout populations; however, studies conducted in Europe have demonstrated that cormorants were able to reduce trout populations in rivers between 30 and 70 per cent. It is understood that

cormorants cannot eat fish over 1.2 kilograms. The club has, therefore, endeavoured to order fish above this weight for the current season.

The Inland Fisheries Service was able to source fish with an average size of 1.2 kilograms from Tassal at the Russell Falls hatchery with freight paid for by the AAT. The supply and freight of the fish were at no cost to the club, which was greatly appreciated. AAT receives funding from the state government for junior fishing and until now I am advised they have been unable to get any fish stock to Taylors Dam for the current season. If it were not for the Northwest Juniors Anglers Club being able to source fish at a cost of \$15 each from a private hatchery, the 2024-25 season would not have gone ahead.

In conclusion, fishing is a great recreational activity. However, fishing is also an exercise in patience, awareness and providing a sense of achievement. It can teach valuable life skills to those participating in the activity. I was quite surprised when there were some rather large eels taken out of the dam as well - hopefully thrown back in.

The North West Junior Anglers Club currently relies heavily on sponsorship to keep the dam stocked with appropriately sized fish. I am sure they would appreciate any assistance to keep them afloat. Indeed, the small but dedicated group of volunteers are to be commended on their valuable work with our younger community members on making fishing an accessible and inclusive activity to enjoy.

Michael Stanley Allen - Tribute

[11.11 a.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears) - Mr President, today I rise to honour the memory of a man whose contributions to our community have certainly left their mark on many. Mr Michael Allen, or Mick as he was known, was one of those very special people, a wonderful combination of intelligence and wit with a streak of mischief. He was never short on opinion and it was his honest and raw conversation that I admired foremost.

For over 50 years, Mick shared a loving partnership with his wife Joy. I send out a very special welcome to Joy this morning, who is watching from home. Together they built a life rooted in love and support for one another and a shared commitment to our community.

Growing up on the north-west coast, Mick trained as a mechanic under his father in Burnie, before setting up his own automotive business in Wivenhoe for a number of years. His skill as a mechanic then transferred to the classroom when he became an automotive teacher at TAFE at the Burnie campus. While working at TAFE, Mick inspired countless individuals, sharing his knowledge and nurturing the next generation of leaders and skilled professionals. His passion for teaching went beyond the classroom, investing in his students' lives and helping them to realise their full potential.

When the majority of automotive training moved to Launceston, Mick and Joy moved too, along with their sons Simon and Nicolas. Hanging up his teaching shoes, Mick retired at the age of 55. But that did not mean he stopped or even slowed down.

Manions' bus company asked him if he would temporarily drive buses part time in the Beaconsfield area, just until they found some more staff. I am not sure that they were expecting

him to drive for another 17 years, but he did. This just shows the type of person Mick was, hardworking and passionate. He loved working with the young people he met on the buses and the interactions with the other drivers.

Mick's influence was felt far and wide, yet his impact was most felt in the everyday lives of those around him. His efforts in saving the Redbill Point Conservation Area were a testament to his commitment to preserving our natural heritage. Redbill Point is located on the western shore of the Tamar River, just north of Beauty Point. Through Mick's leadership, he rallied volunteers and community members, ensuring that this precious place would be protected for future generations. Mick understood that safeguarding our land was not just an act of conservation, it was a legacy that we could give.

Mick's leadership extended into the heart of our community through his work in various groups dedicated to service and support, such as the Beaconsfield Community Committee and, while the family lived in the north-west, the Burnie Apex Club. Whether it was organising events, advocating for local needs or simply being a listening ear, Mick always put his community first. His ability to unite people for a common cause is a skill that has definitely served my electorate of Rosevears well, banding people together to help keep it a wonderful place to live. Across every initiative, Mick gave to his community and his involvement inspired those around him to participate, to engage, and to care deeply for the place in which they lived.

We lost Mick earlier this year. The sadness felt across our community is only testament to the man that he was. Today, it is an honour for me to reflect on Mick's incredible life in this place. He brought warmth and light and laughter. He was a devoted husband, a passionate educator, and a true friend to many.

His legacy lives on, not only in the projects he championed, but in the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing him. To his family, and in particular to Joy, please know that we are so thankful to Mick for his service and the love that he shared with our community and we thank you, Joy, for sharing him with all of us. Together I know we will continue to honour his legacy by upholding the values he showed every day: kindness, dedication and the importance of being passionate about what you believe in. Vale, Michael Allen.

2024 Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools - Daniel Edwards

[11.16 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I am delighted to speak today about a high-achieving teacher for my electorate who embodies dedication, innovation and the true spirit of teaching: Daniel Edwards, the 2024 recipient of the Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools.

Daniel received this award for his transformative approach to teaching science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), and the way in which he fostered engagement and achievement to students of all abilities and backgrounds at none other than Montello Primary School. Daniel was presented with the award by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Industry and Science on 8 October at a reception at the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra.

Daniel teaches prep to grade 6 students at Montello Primary and also gives much of his own time to after-hours classes. He also works at Parklands High School. In addition to his teaching commitments, he is the founder of GreenSTEM Education, which is the state's first STEM-education-focused charity to help provide equitable access and learning opportunities for young people and the wider community, especially those from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Through GreenSTEM, Daniel launched the Greenpower Tasmania program, challenging students to design, build, and race electric vehicles at Montello Primary as Australia's first school in this international competition. Additionally, he established STEM Unlimited, a free weekly after-school club in Burnie Community House, to bring hands-on STEM activities to all students in Burnie and the surrounding regions.

As members would know, Montello is a low socio-economic area with high unemployment. Daniel's goal is to create pathways from primary school to the workforce. This passion has helped to generate a cultural shift in Montello's student engagement and achievement. In a recent interview, he said we are looking at 90 per cent of all jobs within the next five years requiring STEM skills and, regardless of whether young people are going to STEM fields specifically, these are skills that set them up to live fulfilling and successful lives no matter what they do.

Daniel's journey as a teacher at Montello Primary School began as a general classroom teacher. His passion for STEM was obvious, however, and it soon saw him become Montello's first specialist STEM teacher. In that role, he was able to develop the school's makerspace room to provide new opportunities for students to engage in STEM activities.

He has since coached teams from the school and to the finals of prestigious state, national and international STEM challenges, including the top three Tasmanian teams in the Australian Tech Girls competition and the Asia-Pacific winner of micro:bit's 'do your :bit' challenge. He has hosted STEM expos, volunteered as a judge for the National STEM Video Game Challenge, and the international MakeX Spark Robotics competition, and presented on best practices in STEM education at state and national conferences.

Daniel's many awards speak to his dedication and influence, including the Tasmania STEM Primary Teacher of the Year Award in 2021, selection as the 2022 Tasmanian finalist in the BHP Science and Engineering Teacher Awards, and recognition as a 2022 Schools Plus Teaching Fellow. Other awards include: in 2022, Commended for Excellence in Science Teaching at the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science; in 2023, National Excellence in Teaching Award, and Primary Educator of the Year by the Design and Technology Teachers Association, Victoria; and in 2024, Toyota Community Trust STEM Teacher Scholarship and the ACEL Tas Teacher Leadership Award. He is also one of only two Tasmanian teachers to be recognised by the National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) Foundation, winning the Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching last year, which included a \$5000 professional development grant.

Montello Primary School's Dion McCall said Mr Edwards had helped build an inspiring and empowering culture at the school. Mr McCall said:

Mr Edwards facilitates opportunities for upper primary students to drive their own learning to solve real problems of interest or concern to them. One

example of this involves the Young Leaders of Tasmania, where he supported students to develop functional assistive technology (a 3D-printed deodorant holder) for a student with a disability.

This initiative goes beyond teaching students about science and technology. It instils empathy, problem-solving skills, and a sense of social responsibility. It shows how Daniel's teaching extends far beyond textbooks and tests. It is about shaping well-rounded individuals who can approach the world with a sense of purpose.

Dion also said:

Daniel has built a culture of exploration and empowerment in the school. He encourages his students to believe that STEM can open doors to limitless opportunities. He fosters a learning environment where students are not merely passive recipients of information, but active participants in their own education. By allowing his students to drive their own learning and focus on real-world issues that matter to them, Daniel has created a space where creativity and inquiry thrive.

Former principal, Denise Witherspoon, who saw the absolute potential in Daniel, said:

I couldn't be prouder of Daniel winning the Prime Minister's Primary Science Teacher of the Year. His journey over the last four years is nothing short of incredible. Finding it difficult to cover all areas of the curriculum in his classroom practice when his passion was in STEM, the decision to make him the STEM leader in the school was definitely the right one. Students at Montello have won state, national, and international competitions due to his passion and drive. He is an example of what can happen when the right place is found. I only wish that he had better facilities to expand the wonderful work he has done and he does.

Daniel's success as a teacher is evident in the accomplishments of his students. Through his guidance, students at Montello Primary School have competed and triumphed in STEM competitions at all levels. Four of his students from under-represented groups were recognised as CSIRO Future Shapers in 2023. Some of Daniel's former students have a video game that they created on display as part of a permanent exhibition in the Design Gallery at the Young V&A Museum in London. These achievements are a testament to his ability to motivate students to reach their full potential.

He has proven that STEM education can be a vehicle for social change and personal empowerment, and that teachers can shape the future by equipping students with the skills they need to navigate, and improve, the world around them, recognising the role that educators play in shaping that future.

I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Daniel Edwards for this prestigious recognition. His work has inspired his students and colleagues, and now an entire nation. We look forward to seeing the continued impact he will have and we are excited for all the future scientists, engineers and innovators who will emerge thanks to his guidance.

Daniel says of himself:

It is an honour to work with and empower the future change makers of the world and represent public education. I want to keep furthering these opportunities for young people all across the country, no matter what school they're attending or what school they're in. I am from a small school in Burnie where STEM empowers the students to believe they can achieve anything and they can be anything.

Thank you, Daniel Edwards for your absolute commitment to teaching and to the youth of our community.

Members - Hear, hear.

MOTION

Government Administration Committees A and B – Adjustment as a Consequence of Ministerial Portfolio Changes

[11.25 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the following revised list of ministerial portfolios be allocated to the Legislative Council Government Administration Committees A and B as a result of the ministerial portfolio changes and further that -

Committee A:

- (1) The Deputy Premier
- (2) The Treasurer
- (3) The Attorney-General
- (4) The Minister for Justice
- (5) The Minister for Energy and Renewables
- (6) The Minister for Sport and Events
- (7) The Minister for Parks
- (8) The Minister for Health
- (9) The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
- (10) The Minister for Veterans' Affairs
- (11) The Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy
- (12) The Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation
- (13) The Minister for Environment
- (14) The Minister for the Arts and Heritage
- (15) The Minister for Business, Industry and Resources
- (16) The Minister for Transport
- (17) The Minister for Infrastructure
- (18) The Minister for Local Government.

Committee B:

- (1) The Premier
- (2) The Minister for Tourism
- (3) The Minister for Trade and Major Investment
- (4) The Minister for Children and Youth
- (5) The Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- (6) The Minister for Community Services
- (7) The Minister for Finance
- (8) The Minister for Housing and Planning
- (9) The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management
- (10) The Minister for Skills and Training
- (11) The Minister for Primary Industries and Water
- (12) The Minister for Small Business and Hospitality
- (13) The Minister for Racing
- (14) The Minister for Education
- (15) The Minister for Disability Services
- (16) The Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.

Further, I move that -

Ms Forrest, Mr Harriss, Ms Lovell, Ms O'Connor and Ms Thomas be of Committee A and

Ms Armitage, Mr Edmunds, Mr Gaffney, Ms Rattray and Ms Webb be of Committee B.

Motion agreed to.

Government Business Scrutiny Committees A and B - Establishment

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That two government business scrutiny committees be established to inquire into government businesses in accordance with the schedule detailed below and the rules set out in the in the Standing Orders at Part 22.

That the committees have leave to sit on Tuesday 3 December and Wednesday 4 December 2024 between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. or such other time that may be varied by the Chair and as necessary for the purpose of relevant stakeholder and deliberative meetings.

For 2024 government businesses are allocated to the committees as follows:

Committee A

Tuesday 3 December 2024

- Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation

- Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation Pty Ltd
- Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd
- Aurora Energy Pty Ltd

Committee B

Wednesday 4 December 2024.

- Tasmanian Railway's Pty Ltd
- TasRacing Pty Ltd
- Tasmanian Irrigation, Pty Ltd
- Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority

And that -

Ms Forrest, Mr Harris, Ms Lovell, Ms O'Connor and Ms Thomas be of Committee A and

Ms Armitage, Mr Edmunds, Mr Gaffney, Ms Rattray and Ms Webb be Committee B

and that the committees report on the government businesses by no later than 20 December 2024.

If the Legislative Council is not sitting when government business scrutiny committees complete their reports, those reports may be presented to the President or, if the President is unable to act, to the Deputy President or other office holder and, in that event:

- the reports shall be deemed to have been presented to the Council;
- the publication of the report is authorised by this resolution;
- the President, Deputy President or other office holder, as the case may be, may give directions for the printing and circulation of the reports; and
- the President, Deputy President or other office holder, as the case may be, shall direct the Clerk to lay the reports upon the Table at the next sitting of the Council.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Colony 47 and MyState Bank Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania June 2024 Report - Consideration and Noting

[11.29 a.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, I move -

That the Colony 47 and MyState Bank Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania June 2024 report be considered and noted.

Ms O'Connor - Lovely tie you have on today, great colour.

Mr EDMUNDS - Thank you, member for Hobart, and also welcome to Todd in the gallery and all the best with your new role going forward.

I rise today to speak about the Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania report.

This year has seen the release of the inaugural Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania report from MyState Bank and Colony 47.

Concerningly, it reveals an increasing number of Tasmanians, including renters, young people and those living in the regions, are facing genuine risk of falling into financial distress.

We all know that the cost of living this decade has become one of the biggest challenges facing our society. In a survey I conducted in 2023 of my electorate, it was found that 88 per cent of respondents found the cost of living was a bigger issue for them than it was just 12 months earlier. Only 3 per cent saw this issue being resolved in the near future. When you think about that, it is quite concerning. Pembroke is a great place to live and work. Many people have tertiary education or trade qualifications. The rate of full-time employment is high. Access to the largest economy in the state is on our doorstep.

Even still, nearly nine out of 10 people have noticed their financial wellbeing is more challenged now than it was not long ago, and 97 per cent of them were not sure it would get better in the near future. The Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania report conducted earlier this year found 61 per cent of Tasmanians actually feel worse off than they did just last year, with women, renters and those aged 35 to 49 facing particularly significant challenges with rising house prices, rents and the cost of living.

We can all agree it is quite concerning. It is presenting a large financial barrier to independence for young people with housing and affordability. We found out this month health outcomes are going backwards and know that mental health is a struggle for many. The demand for services is increasing and services such as Colony 47 are experiencing unprecedented demand. What does this look like for Tasmanians? The report found one in five Tasmanians are cutting back on their health care and insurances. Many people under 35 are moving back in with their parents. Young people, renters and mortgage holders are under significant financial distress. One in five Tasmanians would also not be able to raise \$500 in a week for an unexpected bill. More than half of renters actually hold extreme concerns about rising costs, and putting food on the table is a concern for 91 per cent of renters and a high concern for all respondents.

MyState Bank CEO Brett Morgan said:

The findings highlight the urgent need for collaborative efforts to address these challenges and support the financial health and resilience of all Tasmanians.

I agree. What effect is this climate having on our economy? Right now, people are desperately trying to put more money in the bank, so they are working more and spending less and with the challenges on housing, they are prioritising home ownership. Two-thirds of part-time or casual workers under 35 are actively looking for more work to get by. It is great that Tasmanians are showcasing their resilience and willing to work hard to achieve their goals, but I think we would agree this is not sustainable.

Cost-of-living concerns are most acutely felt by renters, with 57 per cent extremely concerned about rising costs; 58 per cent of all survey respondents were searching for ways to save money on everyday items and nearly half had cut back on essential spending.

The cost of putting food on the table is the highest concern for all cohorts and, as I said, including 91 per cent of renters. Concerningly, this is the area where people have the least ability to control their spending. It is an impossible choice between going hungry or cutting back on other expenses.

This is not just a story about individual hardship; less spending is also bad for our business owners, with 56 per cent thinking it is a bad time to buy a major household appliance. Similarly, just as many have no domestic travel planned.

Another aspect of note here is that young people are choosing work over study. Only 23 per cent of 15- to 19-year-olds are working part time while they study full time. This should be much higher. It has showcased that the cost of living is hampering willingness to undertake further study, which will only accelerate the skills gap we will face in the future. Why are they so concerned about money? Well, 89 per cent of Tasmanians believe it is harder than ever to buy your first home and they are absolutely right.

Never in history has it been less affordable to purchase and meet the repayments on a home. This is accounting for prices, interest rates and loan serviceability, and 51 per cent of young people feel urgency towards buying their first home as it is getting further out of reach as time goes on and prices continue to climb. We cannot allow home ownership to become just a dream for our young people.

Unfortunately, this serves to highlight the consequences of government inability to deliver on housing targets. As we have found through various committees, short inquiries, budget Estimates, the parliament itself and media, the promise by then-premier Peter Gutwein to deliver 10,000 new homes has been exposed as a hoax. We learned through Budget Estimates that 3750 of those homes are not homes at all. That figure is just people who may be assisted to buy a home using the MyHome program. Another 1084 of the homes are just vacant residential land lots.

Probably most shamefully, when it comes to actual social housing, there are only 1333 new social homes that are yet to be completed or that are still in the pipeline, and a total of 119 crisis accommodation spots. Meanwhile, Homes Tasmania has used its limited budget to buy the Fountainside Hotel to house locum doctors, at the expense of a rival proposal from Colony 47 to support at-risk youth.

It is clear, from some takeaways from this first-ever Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania report, that we need solutions and we need to work to improve the financial positions of Tasmanians. We all have a responsibility for that. As much as we have criticised, or I have

criticised, the government, I also understand that as a member of the alternative party - the Labor Party - we have a responsibility to do that and we also want the opportunity to do it.

I finish with the words of Dianne Underwood, the Colony 47 CEO, with an extract from her foreword in the report. Sorry, I better get this exactly right, as it is a quote:

This should not be seen as just another report about the rising cost of living.

Of course, concerns over the ever-increasing cost of housing, groceries and utilities leap out from the following pages.

The real alarm bells should be ringing about the growing number of people in our community - renters, young people, and those living in the regions - who have extraordinarily limited capacity to absorb financial shocks.

That means the line between getting-by and falling into financial distress is incredibly fine.

It goes some way to explaining why services such as ours are experiencing unprecedented demand. Increasing rents and lack of affordable housing have seen many Tasmanians ask for help who have never had to reach out before.

We should be doing everything we can to stop people falling off the housing cliff because insecure housing and homelessness sit at the heart of so many issues including educational attainment, unemployment, crime, and mental health. When it involves young people, they struggle to stay connected to education or work, look after their health and maintain community connections. This problem has a very long tail.

Mr President, I seek leave to table the Colony 47 MyState Bank Financial Wellbeing in Tasmania report.

Document tabled.

Mr EDMUNDS - For any members who perhaps have not had a chance to read the report, I would urge that you do. There is some really informative information in there.

I also make the call to all of us within this chamber to ensure we remain mindful of the circumstances of Tasmanians in the decisions we make on legislation and considerations in developing policy now and into the future. Thank you, Mr President. I commend the report.

[11.39.a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for bringing this motion on. The government is acutely aware of the financial pressures facing Tasmanians and is committed to assisting low-income Tasmanians with increases in the cost of living.

These pressures are being driven by high inflation and interest rates, and while these are broader economic issues that are the responsibility of the federal Labor government, our

government has been stepping in to help. We are providing this assistance across government, and I will speak to those measures in key areas.

First, concessions: the government provides eligible Tasmanians with more than 90 different types of concessions on everything from electricity and council rates to water and sewerage, health services and vehicle registration. These concessions, and many others, are indexed annually in line with inflation, and are making a real difference for those in need. Available concessions are detailed in the Tasmanian Government's Discounts and Concessions Guide, which is accessible online. Hard copies are also available at Service Tasmania, libraries, councils and other offices.

The 2024-25 Budget provides more than \$550 million in cost-of-living relief to help Tasmanians with day-to-day expenses. This includes \$344.6 million, over four years, in concessions for eligible pensioners to assist with the cost of electricity, local government rates, travel on the *Spirit of Tasmania*, and water and sewerage bills.

In addition to these concessions, we have provided a massive \$250 to more than 254,000 Tasmanian households and \$300 to 35,000 small business customers, as part of the government's Supercharged Renewable Energy Dividend.

In addition to that, we provided \$45 million for the state's contribution to the national Energy Bill Relief package. For 2024-25, this means that more than 90,000 Tasmanian concession customers will receive up to \$1433 in bill relief, including the \$300 payment by the Australian Government.

These are some of the most generous concessions in the country, and will cover over 65 per cent of electricity bills for eligible customers with the median level of consumption. In fact, eligible customers with a lower level of consumption will have the entirety of their annual bills covered.

These concessions and other payments are very meaningful, and are making a significant difference to struggling Tasmanians right now.

I will touch on housing. In relation to housing, the government recognises that every Tasmanian deserves a roof over their head. The 20-year Tasmanian Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027 sets out the plan for safe, appropriate and affordable housing for our state.

The government committed to establishing the dedicated housing body Homes Tasmania in 2022, which has now been recognised by the sector as a nation-leading framework. Our Homes Tasmania framework marked a historic change in our approach to delivering housing for Tasmanians in the state, in recognition of the fact that more needed to be done and that different thinking was required. Importantly, we have set clear and ambitious housing supply targets of an increase of 10,000 social and affordable homes by 30 June 2032.

We have made substantial gains on the delivery of our 10,000 social and affordable homes goal, with an increase of 3844 social and affordable homes since October 2020 as at 3 September 2024.

As part of our plan for Tasmania's future, we have stamped out stamp duty, with a 100 per cent discount for houses of up to \$750,000 for first home buyers for eligible properties. This will save first home buyers up to \$28,900, making it easier for around 1500 young Tasmanians to get into the property market.

We have also cut stamp duty in half for Tasmanians who buy a new apartment off the plan or under construction, up to a value of \$750,000 for two years.

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.

We are also moving immediately to unlock more affordable rentals by boosting our Private Rental Incentives scheme with an additional 200 homes. This means backing more Tasmanians to invest in property, and more support for renting families with the cost of living. Our Private Rental Incentives scheme unlocks aspiration and, at the same time, will help an additional 200 households into affordable rentals.

In return, investors will receive an incentive payment, guaranteed rental income for two years and fee-free property management.

The government is boosting our highly successful MyHome shared equity scheme, expanding the scheme to support even more Tasmanians to buy or build their own home. Over 1000 Tasmanians have already been supported into home ownership, backing in everyday Tasmanians to take the crucial first step onto the property ladder, helping families achieve sustainability, security and stability.

We are adding a \$10,000 per unit incentive for developers with up to 50 units to get more new infill, medium- or high-density units. This will importantly incentivise higher volume multi-unit developments across the state, encouraging development and residential construction. I am pleased to say that the guidelines for this significant program were launched over the weekend.

In addition to these significant incentives and initiatives, 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. We will also mandate the innovative new PlanBuild Tasmania portal by 2027, making it simpler and quicker to get planning and building approvals, meaning that building and construction can get started faster.

We need more houses, apartments and units for Tasmanians to live in or rent and every single one of those measures will turn plans into reality sooner. We are proud of the government's significant commitments to ensure more housing options and for Tasmanians to have more opportunities to access the housing that they deserve.

I now move to skills. In relation to skills and training, the Tasmanian government is focused on delivering more opportunities for Tasmanians to get a job who are working to get their start or indeed make a change to their career. We know that vocational education and training is one of the most life-changing opportunities available, particularly for young people who are looking to get skilled up and put their foot in the door. That is why we have been on a reform journey with TasTAFE, the state's outstanding public provider, to deliver an

organisation that is reflecting the businesses that it serves with the flexibility it needs to deliver training in a way that works better for students and employers.

Since 2014, there have been huge investments in brand new facilities that are training the workforce of the future. We have upgraded training spaces across TasTAFE sites, including for local care industries in the north and the south, completed the \$27 million Water and Energy Trades Centre of Excellence, which is a nation-leading facility, developed Providore Place at Devonport, the home for in the Drysdale in the north-west, and this year we opened the first TasTAFE Cyber Security Operations Centre, which is delivering modern training to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This is not the full list of investments, but all of these proudly TasTAFE facilities are supporting hundreds of Tasmanian VET students to reach their goals and build our local skilled workforce.

We also acknowledge the fantastic private registered training organisations that we have in Tasmania. We partner with these RTOs to deliver training in a wider variety of industries and sectors like our world-class aquaculture industry and heavy vehicle training. Furthermore, our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, outlined at the recent election, also include significant investments in key job-enabling training and workforce development opportunities. This includes the Housing Industry Association's youthBuild program, the Earth Works Training - Dig, Drive, Go facility, scholarships for early childhood educators and the High Vis Army, just to name a few.

The latest statistics out of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research show that our comprehensive approach is reaping dividends. There were more than 9900 Tasmanians in training for a traineeship or apprenticeship as at 31 March 2024. This was up 11.6 per cent overall compared with the same point in 2020, including a 23.2 per cent increase for trade-focused apprenticeships and trainees. Trade occupation commencements were also up 14.7 per cent for March 2024 compared with the same point in 2020, including a whopping 37.8 per cent increase for electro and telecommunications apprentices and trainees, and 48.3 per cent for automotive and engineering. This means hundreds more apprenticeships and trainees in key sectors for the Tasmanian economy that will drive our future growth and help us to build our communities. We want to continue to put learners at the centre of our training system and we will always back in the thousands of Tasmanians each year who start their VET journey.

I will now touch on recent actions and where we are looking ahead from here. These measures show the significant support that the government is providing to Tasmanians facing cost-of-living challenges. We recognise what needs to be done. We halved bus fares from 1 June across all fares and all buses in all areas of the state, saving Tasmanians hundreds of dollars. We have delivered free TV for patients in all our major hospitals, saving up to \$80 a week. We have opened three new child and family learning centres, providing families that offer of free wraparound services like Kids Clinic, psychologists and speech therapists. We have begun the expansion of the Healthy School Lunch program from 30 schools to 60 schools by 2026. We are helping more Tasmanians purchase energy-efficient appliances with \$500,000 for four years to extend the 50 per cent energy saver subsidy. We are helping with the No Interest Loan Network ramp up to write 2000 more loans each year, helping thousands of Tasmanians on low incomes tackle the cost-of-living pressures. We will be supporting careers, Neighbourhood Houses, Meals on Wheels, our emergency food vans and many other community organisations with additional funding.

The government has a strong record of helping Tasmanians and we will continue to do so as part of the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. I note the report.

[11.52 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I will make a few brief observations on this motion. I thank the honourable member for Pembroke for bringing it forward and his heartfelt words about the suffering that so many Tasmanians are experiencing as a result of a soaring cost of living.

I also point to some structural policy issues that are exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis. While I note that Labor federally is doing some good things, I listened very carefully to the Leader of Government Business's words and it is clear that in some areas the government is seeking to take active measures to lower the cost of living. However, so much of it is tinkering, really, is it not?

We have, at a federal level, a housing system which is absolutely cooked, where a person who is going to buy their fifth, sixth or seventh investment property gets more of a leg up from government than a couple going to buy their first - where you have perks like negative gearing and capital gains tax that just entrench that inequity and help to ensure that low- to middle-income Tasmanians are being priced out of their own paradise.

Until we have a federal government that has the courage to take on these structural reforms and to deal with negative gearing and capital gains tax, so many of the housing affordability problems will not go away. We have also seen, regrettably, a move towards a more neoliberal approach to housing supply where there is a lot more emphasis on private developers, boosting up the community housing providers, which is terrific, but also we are seeing state and federal governments walk away from their responsibility to provide the capital funds to increase investment in social housing.

You want to talk about rents? Yes, rents are soaring and we could do something about that here, like they did in the ACT. In the ACT, they have a process in place which caps rents at CPI plus 10 per cent or the landlord needs to argue why a higher rent is justified. The Greens in the other place have tried to introduce rent controls and rent reforms, being knocked back each time by both the major parties.

It is the same on short-stay accommodation. If you want to help increase the supply of affordable housing and bring down rents, you regulate short-stay accommodation because what is happening is that whole homes, owned often by interstate property investors, are being taken out of the private rental market, which leaves more people struggling, more pressure on the social housing waitlist.

I acknowledge the incredible community work over decades of Colony 47, one of our best and finest not-for-profit organisations. For 10 years they ran the Housing Connect program in the south of the state as well and empathetically as possible in an environment where there are too few homes for people. I really respect the heart and the commitment of Colony 47 and all the people who work for that excellent organisation.

Of course, another area where government could take some direct action to lower stress and cost pressures on families is in the area of gambling harm minimisation reform. I note the member for Nelson this afternoon will bring on her motion calling for information relating to

the card-based play program and the Deloitte report. It is very important we have that debate but let us not kid ourselves, Mr President. The fact we now have an electronic gaming machine scheme across the state where we have them all through pubs and clubs, there is no deed here that expires at any point, just never-ending profits for gambling corporations and never-ending suffering for people who become addicted to those pernicious machines. And what happens to the families and the loved ones of people who have a gambling addiction? Well, they suffer too.

The children suffer because there is not the food on the table or they cannot go off to school camp. If you want to get serious about helping battling Tasmanians deal with the soaring cost of living, you might, as a government, stick to your original policy promise and at the very least have a proper card-based harm minimisation scheme in place with spending limits in place.

I note that Steve Old from the Tasmanian Hospitality Association was looking very chummy standing next to the Premier yesterday while he dumped a bucket on the former minister for Finance, former treasurer, Mr Ferguson, who, to his absolute credit, was committed to reducing the harms caused by EGM addiction.

There is another structural thing that we could do to really take the pressure off struggling families. At a federal level, how about some courage from the Albanese government and raise the Centrelink payments? What is the point of a federal Labor government if they cannot do something like raise Centrelink payments and make sure people have that little bit of extra income to ease their suffering?

We saw what government could do at the beginning of the pandemic. We saw if you give people money when times are tough, it is spent wisely to the greater good.

It is not possible to live on a Centrelink payment. You think about what it costs us. You know we are wealthy people. You think about when we go shopping these days, a small trolley full of groceries can set you back 250 bucks. You are not even shopping for two weeks. How does that impact on families and individuals who are trying to survive on a Centrelink payment? Well, we know what happens: they do not buy as much food, they do not buy good-quality food, they suffer and go without. There are things my major party colleagues in this place could do to really ease pressure on people who are doing it tough. The system we have around us now is designed to entrench poverty. It just is. It is designed to have an underclass of workers there. It is designed to crush unions and collectivisms. It is designed to damage the environment. It is designed to grind people down if they do not have enough money.

I appreciate the opportunity the member for Pembroke provided for us to talk about Colony 47's report and observations. I hope members from the major parties in this place can think about the things they could do in terms of talking to their federal or state colleagues to see some of those substantial and structural reforms undertaken that really lower cost-of-living pressures on the people we represent.

[12.01 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on this motion and thank the member for Pembroke for bringing the motion and providing an opportunity to note this report. I will only speak briefly on it. I appreciate the contribution made by the member to his motion and

agree with many of the sentiments there. I also appreciate the contribution just now from the member for Hobart, who raised many issues I agree with.

Ms O'Connor - Funny that.

Ms WEBB - Yes. It is really great to acknowledge and recognise work done under this sort of partnership model between an excellent organisation from the community services sector, Colony 47, who knows what it is about in terms of what is being experienced in Tasmanian communities, particularly by vulnerable cohorts who are doing it tough. They have an absolute passion for finding good evidence-based ways forward under good social policy from government, of whatever flavour it happens to be at the time, to promote good social policy with government to try to address the issues it sees in the services and supports it provides to the community. Colony 47 is a great partner to have on one side. Then we have MyState on the other side of this report, which also has a really valuable perspective and also a passion for our state and the issues this report highlights. Happily, I think the partnership between an NGO and the community services sector and a corporate entity like MyState Bank gives us a nice sense of balance to the material presented in a report like this and does help us to sit up and take some notice of it.

Rather than go into a lot of detail, my contribution would be based on comments for some particular things that jumped out at me as I was reading the report and worthwhile to note. I agree, in terms of the government contribution to the motion, that there are some measures this state government is taking in an attempt to address the impact of cost-of-living pressures. My view across those measures is they are (a) not enough and (b) they would be better directed from government - at some measures - that would be more about addressing the drivers of cost-of-living pressures, rather than trying to mop up the impacts. That is what I do not see enough from this government. That might come up as I reflect on some of the key issues that jumped out at me as I read this report.

Certainly, what is very clear is that none of us is immune from the escalating cost-of-living pressures being felt across the community, not just in our state, but nationally and even internationally. This is certainly highlighted in this report. Some people and cohorts in the community are much more adversely affected and at much greater risk as a result of the impact of cost of living skyrocketing, particularly across essential items like housing and food. That is important to say - there is a social gradient here, which this report documents effectively, that needs to be brought to the fore when we are thinking about how we respond and seek to solve and address these issues. If we are not applying an equity lens, a social-gradient lens to the measures put forward to address this, then we are probably missing the mark when we say we are making efforts towards that end. That is where I think the government falls short.

Members here would have heard me speak regularly about the importance of applying a gender lens to social policy and it is worth applying one to this topic, too. There are some things that jumped out at me from this report that affect women especially.

What this also points to, however, is our need to think about an equity lens across government policy areas. Whether a policy is about infrastructure, housing, education, social support, or whatever else it might be, looking at it through an equity lens will tell us how it will affect people from different socio-economic categories in our community. Then we can ask ourselves, is that how we want to direct our attention through this policy and through investment in this policy? Without an equity lens, we can end up putting forward policies that

seem very nice on paper, but maybe benefit entirely the wrong cohorts in our community or do not benefit the cohorts that desperately need support enough. That is certainly something that came to mind when I was reading this report.

Some of the cohorts that are highlighted here are young people, and that is a natural space for Colony 47 to be speaking to and highlighting. They do a lot of valuable work with young people in our state, particularly vulnerable young people. They are highly aware of the degree to which lives are stifled. Trajectories into the future for young people are constrained, when we have matters like a lack of secure housing; when we have impediments to pursuing your education through structural inequities that are being experienced. We have a situation where Tasmanian young people who are desperately keen to set themselves up for a bright future are impeded from doing that by things that we could be doing more about. That is really food for thought for any government of the day in this state and it is an area that we are still falling short on.

Housing affordability is foundational. We know that. We know that there are cohorts who are particularly impacted by that. Young people, as I just said, are one of those cohorts. Breaking into the housing market, whether it is the rental market or the home ownership market, is incredibly difficult for young people and, as this report highlights, they are feeling increasingly hopeless about that. Many of us here have children or teenagers or young adults in their lives, and we are acutely aware that those people are probably feeling some sense of this hopelessness about what their future holds, knowing that secure housing is the basis on which they are going to build every other aspect of their life - their education and training, their career, their family, and even the future for their possible children.

It is very disturbing, then, to see issues around housing costs highlighted here. I also note that women are particularly highlighting difficulties here in this space. We know that older women are a growing cohort in the homelessness space. We know that for women, certain life events and things like the fairly chronic lack of superannuation, for example, can leave them really vulnerable in later life to housing and homelessness issues. That is certainly a cohort that needs more attention than it is receiving now.

This report highlights very squarely that, when it comes to concerns about being able to afford a home, renters experience the most acute stress here. Renters are in a more insecure position because, unlike New South Wales, for example, which recently brought in a prohibition on no-fault evictions, we do not have those protections here. While the government is happy to list investments that it is making in certain aspects of the housing and homelessness space, it is trenchant in its refusal to progress meaningful rental reform. It is absolutely disgraceful not to be progressing that when we know that people in those situations in the private rental market are at most risk of tipping into homelessness, are under the most pressure when they contemplate what is going to be their situation for housing next year, when they look at an end of a lease and they have no guarantee at all that that lease will continue or be renewed, when they can be evicted at the end of a lease for no reason whatsoever.

Furthermore, as the member for Hobart said, we have no meaningful constraint on rental increases. The only constraint we have here is that it has to be aligned with the market. Now, because the rental market is skyrocketing, and has done in fits and bursts over the past five years, that is no constraint at all. In fact, it is a race to the top. So, renters are a particular group that jump out of this report as being highly vulnerable and highly stressed.

It is really disturbing when you see figures that say almost half of the respondents have cut back on what they consider to be essential spending to make ends meet. We know that half of the respondents, the 47 per cent mentioned there, are not necessarily going to be people like you and I or others here, they are going to be people in really constrained circumstances. Now, 'cutting back on essentials' is an easy thing to say. It rolls off the tongue, but what it means is going hungry - kids at a kitchen table going hungry, or a mother going hungry so her kids have something on their plates. What 'cutting back on essentials' means is being cold. It means spending a Hobart winter or a Tasmanian winter not able to use your heater because you cannot afford to, and being cold means risking becoming sick, especially for older people and people in more vulnerable health categories. That is what 'cutting back on essentials' means. It is not simply a trite phrase that we can read in a report and pass over without giving any thought to what it looks like in a home in our state, in our suburbs, maybe even in our street.

I will go to another area that jumped out at me that I want to comment on and that was around - I will just find it in the report so I can refer to it correctly. That was around this measure - from my time in the community services sector when we spoke about people facing poverty and cost-of-living difficulties and resilience in the face of that, we often referred to a measure of whether people could raise \$2000 in a short period of time to deal with an emergency. There are all sorts of things that can crop up in life, crises or accidents or the like, that you might need access to a couple of thousand dollars to deal with. And when we surveyed communities, there was always an alarmingly high number of people in our state in a situation of not being able to raise \$2000 within a week to deal with a crisis.

This report takes it even further. It asks the question about the ability to raise \$2000 within a week, and showed that a great deal of people are not able to do that, but it also asked about the ability to raise \$500 within a week. That is a very scary set of data in the report because it identified that one in five Tasmanians could not raise \$500 for something important and unforeseen within a week. One in five. What that means again, let us play that out in our minds, \$500 could be something breaking down in your car that needs to be replaced. The result of that, potentially, is that you do not have access to transport while you spend time, maybe months, saving up for the replacement part and having your car fixed. And, without transport, your employment or education might be at risk. It might mean you cannot take your kids to activities outside of school. It might mean you cannot go and keep caring for your mum a few times a week and so she suffers as a result of it. There are all sorts of consequences of losing access, for example to transport.

Ms Forrest - It also means it can take longer to raise the \$500 when you pay for bus tickets.

Ms WEBB - Yes, 100 per cent. The other thing that might mean is, because you cannot risk all of those consequences, for example of not having access to your car for a long period of time while you patiently save the money to do it, it might push you towards inappropriate and harmful ways of raising that money. The first thing that comes to mind is people who will lend money on these absolutely outrageous conditions that trap people into cycles of debt, high interest rates, short-term lenders. That is an evil cycle that just sucks somebody down into a vortex of debt. But it is tempting when you know you cannot risk, for example, losing your car for the next few months while you save. Again, seeing one in five Tasmanians could not raise \$500 for something important and unforeseen within a week, when we put some thought to what that looks like tangibly in real life for people, it is incredibly disturbing. It is incredibly

vulnerable to be in that position. We are not doing enough to help people lift up from that position and move forward from it.

In noting this report, it was interesting the employment and training section of this report and the fact it was highlighted that cost-of-living pressures put downward pressure on a willingness to undertake further study. This is telling us that it is dampening the way we set ourselves up for the future. Not just young people, because adults, even older adults, can and should engage in lifelong education and training. There are all sorts of reasons an adult Tasmanian or an older adult Tasmanian might want to undergo further training to further develop themselves or improve their employment prospects, or move to something that is a more fruitful line of employment. Cost-of-living pressures are dampening our willingness to do that because of the concern we will not be able to afford it, or we will put ourselves in a position where it will put us under more financial pressure than we are already feeling. Then what we are doing is constraining our future. We are constraining the ability of our communities to thrive.

I note the member for Hobart raised the matter of measures that could and should be considered by the government to better address all these issues of cost-of-living pressures. She mentioned we could be putting much more or could continue with the stated intention of this government of putting much more robust consumer protections in place in areas like gambling regulation. This government has committed now for over two years to putting an excellent measure in place, a nation-leading measure advised and recommended by our Liquor and Gaming Commission after extensive research. We have had a commitment for over two years to put that in place and we are well down the track of implementing that measure. It would be disgraceful in the context of discussing cost-of-living pressures to think this government might right now be in the process of walking back its commitment to that improvement to consumer protection in this state and the harm reduction that will occur as a result of it being implemented.

Here is the thing: not only are Tasmanians who are currently feeling cost-of-living pressures - as demonstrated through this report - additionally piled on with more pressure if they or someone in their family happens to have an issue with using poker machines and are addicted. Not only does that compound everything that is presented in this report, but here is the insidious thing: feeling financial stress, being in a low socioeconomic community or situation where you are under financial stress, makes you more prone to developing a pokies addiction - and in your communities is exactly where we have chosen as a state to put the most pokies. We have put you in harm's way, you are feeling financial pressure from the cost-of-living situation that exists in this state and, at the current time, without any appropriate consumer protections in place, you are at higher risk of developing a pokies addiction because stress in our lives is a risk factor for developing a pokies addiction if we happen to sit down in front of a poker machine.

This is an evil circle of events here, where we have chosen through our absolutely appalling lack of prioritisation of community, social and economic benefit to misregulate pokies in this state for decades. And now, still we are not quite there yet, implementing what will be a nation-leading measure to put better consumer protections in place. Yet right now, and we will discuss this later in the day, we appear to be in a situation where the government is about to abandon that measure. It is absolutely disgraceful and yet the government gets up to talk about providing concessions and things like that, which are all very well, but if you are

giving with the one hand but setting up a system to crush people with the other, it is quite meaningless to start listing things like concession supports.

On that, again, I thank the member for allowing us the opportunity in this motion to consider this excellent report. I do note that they speak about it being the first one, I presume, hopefully, it is intended that it will continue as a series and we will begin to be able to learn more as we have that tracked over time. I know that many of the issues raised in this report will continue to be discussed in this Chamber by me and by many others every time we get up to talk about bills that are relevant on policy issues that affect cost of living, but also things like state budgets. As I said, we would have much better information to assess government policy - whatever government of the day was there - if we were to be routinely applying a gender lens and also an equity lens to any policy decisions made by the government of the day.

[12.22 p.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) – Mr President, I appreciate the contributions of members. This was a notice of motion put up quite a while ago, so it has been good to debate it today. I really thank those who made a contribution for sharing their perspectives and as they were going through the report - I have to admit - I regret tabling the document, so I gave up my hard copy during my address, but I agree with a lot of the sentiments shared.

I believe that, yes, there is a role for federal government, state government and, indeed, local government in how we address these issues, whether it is around cost of living or housing supply. I believe we had the Minister for Local Government talking about the issues that they face in local government with planning, for instance. I believe it is incumbent across all members, across all of those Chambers, to be putting the lenses that the member for Nelson spoke about through policy, and 'thought bubbles' still need to be wrung out through those processes.

In the Leader of the Government's contribution, yes absolutely - and I think that the member for Hobart touched on this as well - there are some good measures in there and they should be applauded, around cheaper transport, et cetera, but the key lines around housing are starting to ring pretty hollow these days because of the information that we as members have unearthed through our questioning. Concessions are great too, but they are basically business as usual. The concessions that are coming through are not a 2020-2024 thing. They are embedded in the Budget in many ways.

I have made reference to this as well, but the extra contribution by the member for Nelson around that \$500 did remind me of when I spent some time working for Centrelink over summer in the call centre and that is when people could call in to get their \$500 advance and it was something you were only eligible for once a year. I do remember, people would start ringing at about 11 months, to ask 'When am I eligible? What date can I ring back and get that \$500?' That was in the mid-2000s. I cannot imagine what the demand for those advances would be like in the current environment.

Ms Webb - They just put you behind anyway.

Mr EDMUNDS - Yes, because it is just taken out of your future payments indeed, but it just made me reflect on it. I do not necessarily have a comment on it, but it certainly shows just how desperate people can be for an equity injection, particularly on fixed incomes. The member talked about this being the first report. The issues are not going away and my understanding is

that the mood of Colony 47 and MyState is to improve on and enhance the work they are doing and continue to report. It is great that we have been able to recognise the outstanding work that has gone into this. I agree with the sentiments from the member for Nelson around the fact that you have a partnership with two organisations from different spheres of the Tasmanian community, but both with the best interests of the Tasmanian community at the forefront of their thinking.

I thank Dianne Underwood and Brett Morgan, their organisations and their boards for pursuing this. It has been valuable and essentially the reason I brought the report to the parliament was that I saw a *Mercury* story, read the story, found the report, read the report, and thought it was exactly the sort of thing that we should be continuing to focus on in this Chamber and parliament, and indeed across elected members going forward. I thank members for their contributions and for listening.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Teen Domestic Violence - Research Brief by Dr Carmel Hobbs - Noting

[12.26 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council

- (1) Notes the research brief by Dr Carmel Hobbs, published in November 2022, titled *Young, in love and in danger - Teen domestic violence and abuse in Tasmania*;
- (2) Notes the seven recommendations in the research brief; and
- (3) Calls on the government to provide a formal response to each of the recommendations that includes actions the government will take in response to each recommendation.

In moving the motion in my name, this notes a very important report by researcher Dr Carmel Hobbs titled *Young, in Love and in Danger*. This report responds to conflict and violence in teen partner relationships in Tasmania. I will get to the statistics shortly, noting they are truly horrific, but I also wish to inform anyone watching or reading this later that I will be speaking about deeply troubling matters, including sexual abuse and sexual violence and a range of other forms of abuse of children and young people that are all traumatic for victims of such abuse. This may be triggering for some and I also note the report contains descriptions and direct quotes of participants referring to experiences that may also be triggering to some readers or listeners.

If people watching or reading this later need support, support can be accessed at 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732); Full Stop Australia at 1800 943 539 (TBC); Rainbow Sexual Domestic and Family Violence Helpline, 1800 497 212; Family Violence Counselling Support Service Tasmania, 1800 608 122; Blue Knot, a childhood and complex trauma support service, 1300 657 380; WellMob 13YARN for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on

13 92 76; A Tasmanian Lifeline, 1800 984 434; Lifeline, 13 11 14; Kids Helpline, 1800 551 800 and Men's Referral Service, 1300 766 491. I include those references because it is important that people know where they can get assistance if they find this content traumatic or triggering.

This report covers a deeply troubling issue, intimate partner violence among children in Tasmania. This research project investigated the experiences of young Tasmanians who have been abused by a partner when under the age of 18. This was the first Tasmanian research of its kind and one of few studies nationally. The aim of the project was to understand the prevalence and nature of child intimate partner abuse (IPA) in Tasmania, to understand the support and service available to child victims of IPA in Tasmania, and to describe current responses to child victims of IPA.

Almost two years ago this disturbing research was released by the Social Action and Research Centre at Anglicare about children experiencing intimate partner violence in this state. It is of great concern that since then there has been almost no action taken by the Tasmanian government to address this issue. Through the recent commission of inquiry into child sexual abuse, we have seen the critical importance of listening to children and young people and the horrendous damage that is done when we do not do all we can to keep them safe.

As representatives of our communities, the importance of understanding and acting on what is happening in the lives of children in our divisions is a responsibility we all hold. Youth intimate partner violence is a pattern of behaviours, actual or threatened, that may be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological in nature and are used to gain power and maintain control over the current or former teen partner.

This research by Dr Carmel Hobbs, who is now working at UTAS, revealed that 28.5 per cent of young people aged 18 to 19 have experienced intimate partner violence in the last 12 months. The research also shows that in Tasmania, the rate is almost 40 per cent.

I want to ask you and all of us here to think about that for a moment. That means that two in five 18- to 19-year-olds you see on the street, in our communities, in our schools, may have experienced intimate partner violence in the last year.

It is hard to tackle an issue when we know nothing about it, but now we do know and we have to act and we need to understand what this violence and abuse looks like. What impact does it have? What keeps young people trapped in these relationships? Why don't they just break up? And what should we do about it?

Dr Hobbs interviewed 17 young Tasmanians who experienced intimate partner violence when they were under 18 and the professionals who work with them who have come to shine a light on this issue and these questions. The report explains how the young people who participated in this research chose to do so because they wanted to be heard. They want people like us to know what is happening, how bad it is and for us to do something about it. These are children.

Many said they were volunteering to share their stories because they wanted to make sure that what happened to them would not happen to anyone else. What the violence and abuse looks like is important to understand. The relationships described by young people, whilst

sometimes loving, were also clouded by abusive partners who inflicted short- and long-term harm through behaviours that sought to exert power and control over the participants.

Their partners controlled what happened to their bodies, their freedom and choices, and their thoughts and feelings. Young people shared harrowing stories of rape, being drugged and life-threatening physical violence, including the use of firearms, knives and other weapons, and choking, a known risk factor for intimate partner homicide. Fourteen of the 17 young people could have died because of the violent acts of their partners and/or the suicide attempts that were a direct result of their relationships. I will repeat that: 14 of the 17 young people who were interviewed could have died because of the violent acts of their partners and/or the suicide attempts that were the direct result of these relationships. But do not just listen to me, listen to these young people.

Elise was 13 when she met David, who was 16. A 13-year-old and a 16-year-old. During their nine-year relationship, there were multiple incidents of life-threatening physical violence inflicted on her by David. She recalled an incident involving a firearm. She said:

He rammed me into the wall, grabbed me by the throat, choked me ... I went to the bedroom ... just holding the puppy really upset, scared ... and when he choked me, he ... booted the dog. I remember he picked up the couch and smashed it through the wall ... Smashed up the whole place, carried on, told me, 'You want to ... leave because I'm going to come back and I'm going to shoot you.'

David left the home to retrieve a firearm. When he returned, he said he was going to shoot himself. When Elise intervened, he turned the gun on her and said:

He goes, 'You want to run, because I'm going to ... shoot you.'

She did not believe him, then he pulled the trigger, let off a shot. She took off running as he shot after her. I don't know if anybody can actually imagine, if they were in that situation, what that would be like.

Sexual violence occurred in most relationships, young people described. Jamie was 14 when she met Brayden, who was 16. She said:

I remember the first time that he did sexually assault me. I wish at that time I had left. I was 14 ... And after he said, 'You'd already said yes before.' At the time, obviously I said no. And I've tried to physically fight. I ended up just getting thrown across the room into a cupboard. And I just lay on the floor there crying until he fell asleep again, and then climbed into the bed. At this stage I didn't have anywhere else to go, so I just accepted that that happened and hoped it wouldn't happen again, but obviously it just got worse throughout the years ... more often, less severe, but because I stopped fighting. It would just be easier to just let it happen ... Like whatever it was, you just got through it.

Young people described how their partners stripped them of their freedoms and choices, how they controlled their phone and their passwords, told them what to wear, how to do their make-up, what they could post online, who they could be friends with and, for some young

people, what they could eat and what time they should go to bed. They were isolated from friends and family, school and work. They were tracked and monitored, their everyday movements under the watchful eye of their abusive partners and sometimes others who were recruited to also monitor them.

Jamie talked about her partner using Snapchat maps to track her every movement when she was apart from him, having to explain herself if she was seen at a location unfamiliar or unexpected. Elise remembered how she would take selfies in front of signs and landmarks everywhere she went and kept a record of all her receipts so she could prove exactly where she had been and at what time.

Many abusive partners erode the self-esteem of young people in this study. Participants described the most awful acts of humiliation and degradation - name-calling, being spat on, being told they were worthless and that nobody else would ever love them. Gaslighting forced young people to question their reality and twisted their perceptions, making them unsure if what was happening to them was normal, something they should tolerate and that they deserved. A deep sense of fear was present for most participants; this was the result of not only the physical and sexual violence they endured, but threats of violence. They were sometimes explicit and sometimes very subtle.

We need to understand that these actions were not one-off incidents. They represent a pattern of behaviours used to gain and maintain control over another person. They were effective. These young people who are part of this project were afraid, alone and in danger. The violence and abuse they endured felt inescapable and unavoidable.

The impacts of these abusive relationships are devastating. Young people live with immediate and long-term detrimental mental, physical and sexual health and wellbeing impacts. They suffer with daily reminders of their abuse in the form of scars, pain, physical disfigurement and mental health conditions including eating disorders and complex PTSD. Alcohol and other drugs have been used as a coping strategy. These are children and they continue to have consequences for their health long term into the future. For girls who fell pregnant during their relationships, the magnification of the trauma resulting from abortions, miscarriages and, for some, having to maintain contact with abusive partners where they had a child together, plague their healing and recovery process.

These young people are also transitioning from children to adults while enduring violence and abuse from their partners. These young people described how this affected their identity, their self-worth, their relational skills and relationships, including their ability to develop and maintain relationships with new partners, families or friends. The risk of future victimisation of these young people is high. Their victimisation also has significant implications for their future. It impacts future housing, education and employment opportunities. Some have criminal records. Some struggle with daily living skills like managing money and managing a routine.

Sadly, we still tend to hear comments such as 'Why doesn't she just leave?' Young people are not just trapped by the actions of their abusive partners; they are also trapped by conditions external to the relationship, including the social and cultural norms that condone, minimise, ignore and dismiss violence and abuse. They are also trapped by the limited knowledge and experience of safe and healthy relationships. They are also trapped by having nowhere else safe to live.

Young people and professionals talked about cultural norms and values that glorify and condone violence and abuse. They talked about people knowing and witnessing what was happening, and doing nothing.

Hazel told her mum what was happening to her. Her mum responded and said, 'Maybe if you were a better girlfriend he would be nicer to you.'

Ali recalled getting punched in the gut by her boyfriend while his best friend stood beside him and watched.

Gina was 14 when she met Heath, who was 15. She described an incident that happened at school where a teacher observed him forcing her to the ground by the back of her neck, and doing nothing about it. She said that led her to believe that nobody cared, and she gave up hope, surrendering to the idea that she was stuck in the relationship.

It is much bigger than individual responses. As children who are aged under 18, they have little or no income, inadequate access to Centrelink, and limited access to affordable housing. This leaves many young people who are being forced to choose between violence and homelessness. We must do better.

This report also includes the voice of 20 professionals who together shared 243 years of experience working with young people. They confirmed what young people had said, and described these experiences resonating with their own observations of young people in Tasmania. Their perception was that prevalence was high, with professionals working with young people in shelters and youth support services suggesting that most, if not all, of their clients were currently, or had been, in abusive relationships.

Adding to what the young people shared, workers expressed grave concerns about the severity of the violence, their observations of young men and boys having skewed views of love and relationships, and the stark absence of policy, services and appropriate training for people working with young people in Tasmania. They also expressed fear about the trajectory and escalation of young people's relationships and behaviour, and the likelihood of future victimisation.

The normalisation of an exposure to violence and abuse poses significant challenges for workers. The need for comprehensive initiatives in addressing norms and values was deemed crucial.

Young people need to hear these messages and be exposed to reliable, safe and loving adults on a regular basis. Workers who felt strongly about the need for direct and honest communication with teens about violence and abuse suggest that current strategies may be shame-inducing for young people experiencing this in their lives.

The sad and truly unacceptable reality is that youth intimate partner violence is experienced by young people of all genders, of all ages, and of all socioeconomic groups right across the state. As representatives of the Tasmanian community, as members of parliament, we need to know that right now, at this very moment, there are children and young people across our state who are in relationships where violence and abuse is happening.

It is possible that nobody knows about that abuse that is occurring. It is also quite possible that they do know, but they are not sure how to help. It is not as simple as providing consent and respectful relationships education. It is not as simple as locking up abusive partners.

It is a complex issue that needs a collaborative, community-wide response. However, these realities do not mean we turn a blind eye and it is all too complex and hard to respond. We can, and we must, respond.

There are four clear things we can start with:

- (1) By making respectful relationships education mandatory in all schools, implementing a state-wide awareness-raising campaign and establishing long-term mentoring programs for young people
- (2) Providing services for healing, recovery and prevention through the provision of a specialist child and youth domestic and family violence support service
- (3) Investing in research to fully understand effective strategies for preventing and responding to this issue
- (4) Establishing a clear policy position.

As this crosses over the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and the Minister for Children and Youth portfolios, I would expect there to be collaboration to develop such a program and policy position. This needs to be a policy position that focuses on the foundation authorising environment to tackle this very real issue head-on.

The recently released Change for Children strategy that was released in direct response to the commission of inquiry recognised that child sexual abuse carried out by adolescent boys in peer and intimate relationships is the fastest-growing form of sexual abuse in children.

I will just repeat that. This strategy recognises that child sexual abuse carried out by adolescent boys in peer and intimate relationships is the fastest-growing form of child sexual abuse in Australia, and was a response to harmful sexual behaviour.

However, the response and strategy overall is lacking in direct action for addressing this violence and abuse in the intimate partner relationships of young people.

In addition, our Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027: Survivors at the Centre was also released this year. This action plan refers to two programs targeted at young people using violence and abuse, and revised and supported the respectful relationships education.

Again, whilst this is a great start, the plan still fails to explicitly recognise that youth intimate partner violence happens in Tasmania, and certainly does not recognise the extent to which it does. At that time, when our genuine focused attention on protecting Tasmanian children and young people from harm is at its peak, the gaps in these two strategies, along with the research we have available to us, show that we have missed an entire cohort of victim/survivors and perpetrators - and we need to fix that.

As the third part of the motion calls for a full response from government to all seven recommendations, I wish to hear evidence of concrete and meaningful responses to respond to this shocking and frightening reality for so many children and young people in Tasmania.

To summarise the key findings of the report, as I stated earlier, the research has revealed that 28.5 per cent of young Australians aged 18-19 had experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months. The research also showed that in Tasmania, that rate was almost 40 per cent.

The key characteristics of the 27 relationships described by young people were:

- over half of the relationships started before the participants were 16 years old.
- almost all - 25 out of 27 - involved a male-identifying abusive partner and female identifying victim/survivor
- almost all were six months or more in duration
- about one-third involved significant age gaps ranging from 18 to 22 years
- about two-thirds of abusive partners were also under 18 when the relationship started
- almost half of the participants were in two or more abusive relationships
- many teens have been, and are, trapped in violent and abusive relationships, and some conditions outside of the relationship strengthen the trap. They include a culture where violence and abuse is normalised, a lack of safe, secure housing and other material resources to enable them to leave; a need for love and connection but limited experience of understanding healthy relationships.

The government clearly has a role in addressing and contributing to the solutions to these factors. When violence and abuse is common, glorified or even condoned among peers, family and the community, there is very little for victim/survivors to question whether or not their experience is abnormal.

Many of the participants were dependent on their abusive partners for housing. As I mentioned, many victims of such abuse earn little or no income and have inadequate access to Centrelink benefits and almost no access to affordable housing. These teens are in an invidious position. For many of them, leaving the relationship would have pushed them into homelessness. With limited or no relationship experience, inadequate exposure to respectful relationships education, and motivated by a natural desire for love and connection, especially in the context of family breakdown and/or absent parents, these teens feel ill-equipped to navigate violence and abuse in their own relationships.

How can we put an end to child sexual abuse and domestic violence without recognising the cohort of our population who are entering into their first relationships, who are at a critical developmental phase of their lives, of whom many are on track for a future filled with violence and abuse for themselves and their future families, and who are currently experiencing and/or using violence and abuse in their intimate partner relationships?

We also need to listen to and really hear the voices of the many young children who are living in abusive, violent and sometimes life-threatening circumstances. These are our children and our grandchildren, our children's and grandchildren's school friends. They are the children and young people we see in supermarkets in our neighbourhood. They are the children in our churches and in our sporting clubs.

The two out of five young people who are currently experiencing intimate partner violence and walking among us - we need to see them. We need to hear them and we need to respond to them. They deserve to be safe, supported and assisted to be removed from harm and to live a life free from intimate partner violence. Let us do better. The foundation work is there in the report. I urge all members not to look away because it is hard, and it is hard because it is complex, or because we feel helpless or at a loss to know what to do. We need to read the report, understand the issue, and make changes to strengthen what we have started so we can keep all children and young people in Tasmania safe and give them the foundation they need to flourish. This group of young people has fallen below the radar and requires a targeted evidence-based approach. Let us not fail them.

I will conclude with the words of these children and young people. Hazel said:

I don't think I had any idea that anything that was happening was avoidable. I thought at that point that that's just how it is, that's what life is like. I thought other people just coped with it better and I just wasn't trying hard enough.

Katie said:

There's not much to hang onto after they've broken you as a person ... I'm always on the verge of tears. I just have this hole in my chest. It's like someone's physically punched me through the chest and I just - it feels heavy and empty at the same time. I don't know how to explain it. It's just my heart is broken physically.

And Jamie:

You can have as many helplines as you want. But until there's physically someone there holding your hand, walking you out of there, a lot of people won't get out. A lot of people will just get stuck because it's so hard to even ask for that help in the first place.

I note the report and await the government's response, particularly to the relevant recommendations. And I personally commit to see, hear and respond to the children and young people however I can. If I can be one of those who holds their hand, to lead them out, I will.

[12.54 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, I only intend to make a short contribution and I will explain why. I thank the member for Murchison for bringing this report to the attention of the Chamber, for allowing us this opportunity to speak about it and, particularly, for your motion calling for a response from the government because that is what is really critical here.

I do not intend to speak at length. I thank the member for Murchison for those support service numbers or support services that she has provided for people. This is a really distressing

report, as those who have read it will know. We have all heard the member for Murchison speak. It is distressing to read, it is distressing to talk about it, but, more importantly, it is distressing for people to hear about. I do not want to add to that by repeating anything unnecessarily. I thank the member for Murchison for bringing the content of the report to the Chamber in a sensitive way and in a way that is clearly trauma-informed and it is evident that the member for Murchison has spent time thinking about how she does that in a sensitive way. It is difficult, it is not an easy subject to talk about, and I thank the member for doing that on behalf of all of us. I will not be repeating content of the report for that reason.

The statistics are horrifying. This report is extremely confronting to read. I acknowledge Dr Carmel Hobbs and Anglicare for producing the report. I add my voice to the call for the government to respond to those recommendations, not just with words, but with action. The recommendations are sensible, they are practical and they are measured. There are only seven, they are not extensive; there are seven key things that this report is calling on the government to do. They touch on legislation, they touch on cultural change, resources for families and young people, support services with specialists in this topic, and education. These are not things that should be out of our reach. I look forward to hearing a response from the government that, like the member for Murchison has already said, contains tangible actions, real investment, and practical solutions, so that we can be assured that these voices that have come through in this report are heard and acknowledged.

I have already acknowledged Dr Hobbs and Anglicare. Importantly, I acknowledge the 17 young people who shared their experiences. I can only imagine how difficult that has been for them and what a process that was. It is through sharing experiences like this that we can all learn what we need to do better. There is a lot we need to do better, but it can be done. I thank the member for Murchison again, and wholeheartedly support the motion. I look forward to the government's response.

[12.58 p.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I, too, extend my thanks to the honourable member for Murchison for the motion that she has brought before the House, and for her continuous advocacy in this space over many years. I also acknowledge the lived experience of the 17 young people who participated in this report. Like the member for Rumney, I can only imagine the bravery it took for them to come forward, to be as honest and as open as they were. I, too, have read the report and thank you again for the sensitive way that you have shared that report in this place. We acknowledge that it is difficult to hear this, especially if you are a young person, or maybe you were a young person who might be a bit older now watching the Legislative Council and realising that perhaps this has been your journey, so I really appreciate the manner in which this has been presented.

Young, in Love and in Danger is the title of Dr Carmel Hobbs's important report that shines a light on the experiences of 17 children enduring violence and abuse at the hands of their partners. The report provides evidence of the prevalence of teen domestic violence and abuse, and harrowing insights from the children who have endured it. Like many Tasmanians, I was confronted and deeply concerned by the lived experiences that were shared through this report. The report shares important stories of young Tasmanians -

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

QUESTIONS

Bridgewater Bridge - Engineering Issues

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr VINCENT

[2.31 p.m.]

Last week, what looked like a serious problem emerged with the construction of the Bridgewater bridge. In response to media requests, a State Growth spokesperson said the works 'for the first joint at pier 15 have not performed as intended and some adjustments are needed.'

Have the issues been rectified? What was suggested would occur over the weekend? If not, when will they be rectified?

Ms Forrest - It looked a bit like the Cam River bridge when I looked at it.

ANSWER

Mr President, is it still floating? Yes.

There was an engineering issue. It is not a major issue. There are three expansion joints in the bridge and they were not sure how the design was going to work till they reached that stage. There was a little difference in it, so they had to rethink it over the weekend. They poured different casts and, as of this morning, when I was out there, Ben Moloney said that he believed it would be rectified in the redesign of the joint, which will be the same in two other locations, and it will be redesigned and in place by the end of this week. If not, thereabouts.

Ms Forrest - We will let you drive over it first, then, to test it.

Mr VINCENT - You will be nervous when you get the first bump.

Ms Forrest - That is right. Exactly.

Spirit of Tasmania - Lease Option

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr VINCENT

[2.32 p.m.]

I understand the government is pursuing the leasing of the *Spirits* until such time as we are able to have them here on the island. A global maritime expert told the *Mercury* newspaper Tasmania could potentially generate significant revenues by leasing the ferries on busy international routes, but there are also advantages to putting the vessels in storage, which I am sure you agree. The quote from IBS Global chief executive John Aitkenhead is:

A two-year charter would be a possibility, but I would be cautious as it could take time to establish and may not eventuate.

Minister, how serious is the lease option, and has any cost-benefit analysis been done on this proposal?

ANSWER

Mr President, thank you to the member for Hobart for the question.

As much as all Tasmanians say they are our boats, they are not actually mine, under my ministry. Rather, they are Mr Abetz's. He would be able to answer those questions for you.

Ms O'Connor - Not infrastructure? The port question is for you, is it not? Just for clarity.

Mr VINCENT - Clarity is that the port structure is also part of TT-Line.

Ms O'Connor - TasPorts.

Ms Forrest - The above deck.

Mr VINCENT - I will seek advice on it. I just wanted to make sure I was right on that. The existing port structure and the upcoming port structure is part of TT-Line's responsibility, not TasPorts'.

Ms O'Connor - Alright, thanks.

Crisis Accommodation - State Capacity

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

[2.35 p.m.]

- (1) Leader, how many women's shelters are there across the state?
- (2) What is their capacity for crisis accommodation?
- (3) Does the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management provide crisis accommodation for families due to domestic violence?
- (4) If so, how many nights of crisis accommodation can be provided to families due to family violence?
- (5) What is the total cost over the 2023-24 Budget spent on shelter crisis accommodation allocated from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Budget?
- (6) What is the forward Estimate for shelter crisis accommodation for this funding?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question.

- (1) There are 20 shelters and three Safe Spaces providing crisis accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Tasmania.

There are nine shelters specifically for women with or without children. The shelters are not specifically for women experiencing family violence, but for all women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

There are an additional three shelters providing accommodation for families and men and women with or without children. This includes some youth shelters that can accommodate young women or men.

Therefore, there are a total of 12 shelters available for crisis accommodation for women with or without children.

Transitional accommodation is also available for women and children who are homeless or at the risk of homelessness who may be experiencing family violence.

- (2) The nine shelters specifically for women with or without children have 89 units of accommodation funded by Homes Tasmania.

The additional three shelters that provide accommodation for families and men and women with or without children have 27 units of accommodation by Homes Tasmania, and seven units of accommodation unfunded by Homes Tasmania.

Therefore, a total of 116 units of crisis accommodation in shelters are available for women with or without children that are funded by Homes Tasmania. There are an additional seven units that are not funded by Homes Tasmania.

Safe Spaces provides 88 beds statewide.

- (3) The Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management is a key stakeholder in the whole-of-Tasmanian-Government Safe at Home response to family violence in Tasmania. Through this program, DPFEM can facilitate crisis accommodation for families in need as a result of family violence incidents. Through consultation with crisis support accommodation providers in the three geographical police districts, police are able to ensure that victims of family violence can access crisis accommodation.
- (4) Crisis accommodation is usually up to a three-month period; however, this can be extended to ensure that people are not exited into homelessness.

The 116 units of crisis accommodation in shelters that are funded by Homes Tasmania equate to 42,340 bed nights available for women with or without children annually.

- (5) In 2022-23, DPFEM incurred \$14,963 in crisis accommodation costs that were funded through Tasmania's Third Family Violence Action Plan 2022-2027: Survivors at the Centre.
- (6) The forward estimates is for \$29.2 million to be spent on crisis accommodation in 2024-25 and \$30.1 million in 2025-26 by Homes Tasmania. This includes all shelters and safe spaces.

ADHD Assessments - Wait Times

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

[2.39 p.m.]

My question is number 83 for the Leader of the Government. The financial burden for families seeking assessments for ADHD and other neurodevelopmental disabilities is significant for those earning a regular and substantial income. For others, with lower or less regular income, it is simply unaffordable.

As at 27 September, the wait time published on the Department of Health website for internally referred paediatric developmental behaviour appointments is 25 days for urgent cases, 480 days for semi-urgent cases and 565 days for non-urgent cases. These significant delays impact on a child's ability to successfully engage in education and develop prosocial skills.

My questions are:

- (1) What are the criteria for determining whether an appointment is urgent, semi-urgent or non-urgent?
- (2) What is the wait time for externally referred paediatric developmental behaviour clinic appointments?
- (3) What action is the government taking to make diagnosis of ADHD and other neurodevelopmental disabilities more accessible?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the honourable member for her question.

- (1) A patient is allocated an appointment category based on the urgency of the condition from the information provided in their referral. The three categories are as following:

Category 1 (urgent):

- appointment within 30 days is desirable; and
- condition will require more complex or emergent care if assessment is delayed; and
- condition will have a significant impact on quality of life if care is delayed beyond 30 days.

Category 2 (semi-urgent):

- appointment within 90 days is desirable; and
- condition has the potential to require more complex care if assessment is delayed; and
- condition has the potential to have some impact on quality of life if care is delayed beyond the 90 days.

Category 3 (non-urgent):

- appointment within 365 days is desirable; and
- condition is unlikely to deteriorate quickly; and
- condition is unlikely to require more complex care if assessment is delayed beyond 365 days.

Developmental and behavioural concerns, including for ADHD assessment, are generally not prioritised as category 1. Category 1 patients are patients with life-threatening and time critical conditions.

- (2) The current average time on the neurodevelopmental waiting list is 406 days.
- (3) The Tasmanian government is absolutely committed to making it easier for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. We continue to progress our election commitment for a new GP specialist service for children with ADHD to ensure families can access the GP with a special interest sooner, with \$2.5 million committed in the recent budget to progress this important service.

Planning work is also underway to develop the ADHD clinic run jointly between paediatrics and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). This would be a dedicated ADHD service, combining resources of our neurodevelopmental clinic and staffing from CAMHS, to run a truly multidisciplinary ADHD clinic, with a priority on improving access. This clinic could incorporate additional GPs.

Kids care clinics have been set up over the past two years and see vulnerable children with neurodevelopmental concerns and conduct both ADHD and autism assessments.

Ringarooma School & District Show - Working with Vulnerable People Cards

Ms RATTRAY question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.43 p.m.]

I asked last week in regard to the requirement to have a working with vulnerable people card for those who are either stall holders or just presenting at the Ringarooma School & District Show. Is there an update for the community that I represent on this issue?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the honourable member for the question. My understanding of the situation is it is not with regard to the actual show day. The big concern is with the day before, which is a set-up day where there will be children at the school. We are having to balance what we have learned from the commission of inquiry about keeping children safe, along with the benefits that we know communities have when they have wonderful events like the Ringarooma Show.

I met with my department this morning and this was raised. We are having to think outside the box to ensure that our children are safe in line with the commission of inquiry recommendations and that we are also able to work with the Ringarooma Show and the organisers to make sure that we can find a balance. We are working through this and we will find a solution, but it does need to tick both boxes.

Halls Island - Lease

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

[2.44 p.m.]

I would like to have a bit of a chat about Halls Island again.

You extended the Halls Island lease to an insolvent company that will remain insolvent until such time as Daniel Hackett pays his bills, which he has not to date, and then applies to the court for his company to be made solvent, which has not happened. It is quite extraordinary really. I am looking for some timing details here. Did the proponent advise you or your department that he had transferred ownership of the EPBC assessment of his heli-tourism proposal just a day before Wild Drake went into liquidation into his own name or did you find that out after 13 September? What we want to establish here is, did you know there had been this transfer when you signed the lease with the director of an insolvent company?

ANSWER

Mr President, a change of name on an EPBC referral is a matter for the proponent and the Australian Government. I am advised that the proponents sought advice from the Australian Government in relation to the name change and, therefore, any concerns about this process should be discussed with the Australian Government.

Ms O'Connor - No, that was not the question. The question was, when were you told that he transferred the EPBC assessment?

Mr DUIGAN - Well, again, his EPBC assessment is a matter between the proponent and the Australian Government.

Halls Island - Lease - Communication with Federal Government

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

[2.47 p.m.]

Are you saying that your department, the Parks and Wildlife Service, which presumably oversaw the signing of a lease with Daniel Hackett, has no communication or connection with the federal environment department? That is not my understanding of how it works. For a project like this, there would be close communication between the state and federal departments. Are you saying your agency has given you no clarity about the legal situation that the government created by signing a lease with the director of an insolvent company? Are you actually saying it is totally hands-off for you?

ANSWER

Mr President, I am certainly not saying that. What I am saying is EPBC is a matter between the proponent and the Australian Government.

Ms O'Connor - The lease is a matter for you.

Mr DUIGAN - Yes and I will discuss the lease at length and continue to do so - publish all the documents.

Halls Island - Visitor Access Restrictions

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN

[2.48 p.m.]

Just to continue my question - our chat. Last week we talked about the public access program for Halls Island, which is heavily restricted and controlled by Mr Hackett. It was recently altered by the proponent to limit visitor numbers to the island to four. He now gets to control the numbers to four, he says, to protect the natural values of the place. These are four people who Mr Hackett deems likeable and worthy and who have been nice to him.

Minister, does this mean Mr Hackett is going to alter his proposed commercial helicopter service to just four people at a time? Have you had any updates from the proponent as to whether there have been any changes to the proposal, given that he now thinks that four is the carrying capacity of Halls Island?

ANSWER

Mr President, the Halls Island public access program is listed on the proponent's website, originally published in January 2019 and subsequently updated this month. The process is now even simpler for people to seek access to the island. There are leases on Parks land and reserves across Tasmania that support a range of uses including by local community and sporting groups such as Scouts; infrastructure such as critical telecommunications equipment; and tourism businesses that provide an array of visitor experiences including accommodation offerings. With regards to any trespass concerns, as part of lease agreements, this is a matter for the various leases. Again, for anyone interested in visiting Halls Island, in particular, they should review the publicly available information on the proponent's website as it is clear the island is not locked out to the public.

Elizabeth Town - Road Upgrades

[2.50 p.m.]

Mr VINCENT - Mr President, I would like to answer a question that was put to me last week on Elizabeth Town by the member for McIntyre. I visited the site on Thursday, as I said I would -

Ms Rattray - Did you call in and have a cuppa with Anne-Marie?

Mr VINCENT - No, I did not have time for that, but I certainly stopped and had a close look at the situation and familiarised myself with it. The department has reviewed the speed limit along that section of road before and, while it is appreciated there is some level of road access, it was found that the existing 110 km/h speed limit aligned with the Tasmanian Speed Zoning Guidelines and there are no plans to make an application to the Commissioner of Transport requesting a lower limit. It is a category 1 road and there is need to consider the importance of transport mobility function with local access roads along that area. The section of road actually falls in the scope of the Bass Highway Corridor Strategy - Launceston to Devonport, which found that the area was one of the high priorities for exploring road improvement opportunities in the future.

Ms Rattray - Get rid of the potholes, you mean?

Mr VINCENT - No, just road improvements. It would be expected that any future upgrades will provide infrastructure that supports higher speed limits, not necessarily in that section, but that is what will make it better for driving through that area - to roadside access and make them safer for all road users. The department's maintenance contractor has been alerted to the missing turning traffic warning signs that they did raise in that letter. Thank you.

Halls Island - World Heritage Area - Trespass

Ms O'CONNOR question to **MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN**

[2.52 p.m.]

I am glad you proactively raised the trespass issue. Can you confirm that, in terms of land, Halls Island is the only place inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area where someone with a valid parks pass could be arrested for trespass if they did not have Daniel Hackett's approval to be there?

ANSWER

Mr President, I will seek some advice. In my previous answer, I basically set out the process to provide access. It is there publicly listed and that is designed -

Ms O'Connor - Answer the question. If you go to Halls Island with a valid parks pass, can you be arrested for trespass?

Mr PRESIDENT - Order.

Mr DUIGAN - That is a matter for the lessee.

Halls Island - World Heritage Area - Trespass

Ms O'CONNOR question to **MINISTER for PARKS and ENVIRONMENT, Mr DUIGAN**

[2.53 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, you were asked a straightforward question. I think that Halls Island is the only place inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Palawa and public land, where a person with a valid parks pass could be arrested for trespass. That was the question you were asked. Is it true that the only place inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the only land place, where you can be arrested for trespassing on public land is Halls Island? It is a yes or no.

ANSWER

Mr DUIGAN - Is it though?

Ms O'Connor - It should be.

Mr DUIGAN - Mr President, in answer to that question, what I would say is that there are a number of leases throughout the TWWHA and access to those leases is a matter for the lessee.

Ms O'Connor - Pathetic, I'll be back tomorrow.

Mr DUIGAN - I appreciate your characterisation.

Ms O'Connor - That's a pathetic answer.

Bridgewater Bridge - Budget

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE, Mr VINCENT

[2.55 p.m.]

What is the budget for the Bridgewater bridge and does it exceed the \$576 million in the report of the Public Works Committee?

ANSWER

Mr President, I discussed this this morning out there at the site. About two years ago, the budget for the bridge was listed to \$786 million with a contingency to take care of the roadworks on either side of the establishment to make it better all round.

MOTION

Teen Domestic Violence - Research Brief by Dr Carmel Hobbs - Noting

Resumed from above (page 31).

[2.57 p.m.]

Ms PALMER (Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence) - Mre President, the report shares important stories of young Tasmanians enduring controlling behaviours and loss of hope, hopelessness to the point of thoughts of self-harm with potentially irreversible outcomes and thinking that abuse is normal or just the way things are. The experiences of teen domestic violence and abuse described in the report are alarming and as the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, I do not want this to be the reality for any Tasmanian of any age.

As outlined in the report, drivers of such abuse can be gender inequality and attitudes towards women and girls, and I am committed to helping to drive the systems change and growth culture that we need so that all young Tasmanians learn and practise respect for each other.

The Tasmanian government is committed to ensuring that all young people in our state can grow up in a safe and supportive environment that is free from violence and free from fear. While much work has been done, there is always more to do, and today I will outline both the progress we have made and the steps we are taking to improve our response to this important issue.

The report's seven recommendations are organised by the acronym INSPIRE, and they cover:

- implementation and enforcement of laws,
- norms and values,

- safe environments,
- parent and caregiver support,
- income and economic strengthening,
- response and support services, and
- education and life skills.

At the heart of our government's response is Survivors at the Centre, Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027. This plan lays the groundwork for our efforts to prevent violence and ensure that victim/survivors, including young people, are at the forefront of every decision we make. The Survivors at the Centre plan builds on years of learning and consultation, ensuring that our policies are guided by those who have experienced violence firsthand. Their voices are at the core of shaping how we approach support services, education and legislative reforms.

Recommendation 1: review and, where appropriate, reform legislation to ensure children are protected from violence and abuse in their intimate partner relationships. Our government is also aware that many of the legislative frameworks we rely on to protect families and young people must evolve as our understanding of violence and its impacts grows. The *Family Violence Act 2004* has undergone regular reviews to ensure it remains effective and reflects best practice. Recent reforms have focused on formally identifying serial family violence perpetrators and ensuring that mandatory behaviour change programs are in place for those who commit violence. These steps are designed to hold perpetrators accountable while providing pathways for rehabilitation and behaviour change. However, we are mindful that the *Family Violence Act 2004* currently focuses on violence between partners and ex-partners. We recognise that there have been calls to broaden the scope of the legislation to include other forms of familiar violence, such as violence between parents and children or elder abuse.

While we have not yet expanded the definition of family violence, the government is always open to reviewing the act to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the community and operate as effectively as possible. We remain committed to ongoing reforms as new issues and initiatives arise, always with the safety of Tasmanians at the forefront.

Recommendation 2: address norms and values that normalise and or condone violence and abuse. Our Watch, a national organisation committed to preventing violence against women and children, has been a key partner in this effort. Tasmania is proud to work closely with Our Watch, which leads the way nationally in developing evidence-based frameworks for preventing violence.

Through this partnership, we ensure that our initiatives are aligned with national best practices and backed by the latest research. This partnership reflects our government's commitment to staying at the forefront of violence prevention in Australia. It is important to recognise that the work we are doing here in Tasmania is part of a broader national effort. Jurisdictions across Australia are expanding their partnerships with organisations like Our Watch and others to ensure that violence prevention programs are informed by the latest research and are delivering real results. Tasmania is not only learning from these national efforts, but also leading by example in implementing programs that are innovative and effective.

Recommendation 3: eliminate the choice between homelessness and violent and abusive relationships. While education and prevention are key, the government also recognises the importance of support services being in place for young people who are affected by domestic violence and abuse. Our response is multifaceted, focusing on ensuring that victim/survivors, including young people, have access to the help they need, when they need it most. This includes making emergency housing options available to young people at risk so they never have to choose between staying in an abusive relationship or becoming homeless.

Recommendation 4: provide parents and caregivers with targeted support to build positive relationships with their children and protect them from domestic violence and abuse. Whole-of-community collaborative approach is also reflected in our engagement with other government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups. This whole-of-community approach ensures we can provide comprehensive and coordinated responses to domestic violence and abuse.

For example, partnerships with community organisations allow us to provide specialised support for Aboriginal families, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and other vulnerable groups who may face additional barriers to accessing services.

Recommendation 5: increase the financial independence of children impacted by domestic violence and abuse. Financial abuse includes controlling a person's financial decision-making or their access to money or assets. Family violence in Tasmania includes non-physical forms of abuse, including financial abuse and has been recognised as a crime since 2004 under the *Family Violence Act 2004*.

The Tasmanian government understands that financial abuse creates further barriers to victim/survivors leaving abusive relationships and that the lack of financial resources available to children is also a barrier to their escape from domestic violence and abuse. Non-physical violence is extremely common but not always well understood by the community, so it can be difficult to recognise. While there is growing awareness, financial abuse is a form of family violence. The Tasmanian government recognises that more needs to be done to educate the wider community. The government will continue to advocate for improvements to income support and other payments to ensure that they meet the need for increased financial independence for young people affected by family violence and abuse.

Recommendation 6: provide specialist teen domestic violence and abuse supports and services, supported by a sustainable workforce of teen domestic violence and abuse specialists. Access to mental health services, counselling and trauma-informed care is essential for young people who have experienced violence. We are continually investing in these services to ensure that young Tasmanians can recover and rebuild their lives after experiencing abuse. This includes ongoing funding for youth-specific mental health services and expanding the availability of drug and alcohol support services.

We know that substance abuse can often be both a cause and consequence of violence, so addressing these issues is critical in breaking the cycle of abuse. We also understand that our service providers, the people on the front lines of supporting young people experiencing domestic violence, need to be equipped with the right training and resources. The government has invested in professional development for teachers, counsellors and youth workers, ensuring they can provide trauma-informed, culturally appropriate and effective support to those in need.

This ongoing commitment to workforce development ensures that Tasmanian young people receive the best possible care.

Recommendation 7: mandate the delivery of trauma-informed, evidence-based respectful relationships education that is codesigned with children and young people and begins when children enter the education system in all government, independent and Catholic schools. A key part of preventing teen domestic violence and abuse is through education. Tasmania has taken a leading role in this space with its respectful relationships and consent education program, which promotes healthy and respectful relationships and addresses the attitudes and behaviours that lead to gender-based and family violence. Our approach to respectful relationships education is holistic and research-based. This is not just about supporting children to avoid harmful behaviours but also empowering them with the knowledge and tools to build positive, respectful relationships in their own lives. Across Tasmania, this program is ensuring that young people, their families and educators are all on the same page when it comes to fostering a culture of respect and safety.

In addition to this work, the government has developed an extensive suite of online resources. These materials are publicly available and provide clear guidance for communities and families on how to understand, prevent and respond to family and sexual violence. This includes education elements, practical strategies and tools for embedding respectful relationships education. The aim is to create environments where respect and equality are the norm and abusive behaviours are never tolerated.

When considering the INSPIRE recommendations, Tasmania works closely with other jurisdictions to ensure that our efforts are aligned with national standards and best practices. This means learning from what has worked in other states and territories and applying those lessons here. At the same time, we are contributing to national conversations on violence prevention, sharing our successes and innovations with others. By working together across borders we can ensure that all Australians benefit from the best possible violence prevention strategies.

Our government remains committed to reviewing and improving our policies, services and legislation as new challenges arise. This is not a one-time effort but an ongoing commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all Tasmanians.

By continuing to invest in education, support services and legislative reform, we are laying the foundation for a safer future for our young people through the Survivors at the Centre Action Plan, respectful relationships education, national partnerships with Our Watch, and the ongoing service delivery improvements we are making, working towards implementing the INSPIRE recommendations and achieving better outcomes for Tasmanian young people. The recommendations are detailed and the report is an important guide for our work to keep children safe.

I can assure members that the Tasmanian government is committed to this work and the insights so bravely shared by some of our youngest Tasmanians were not lost on me. I am driven to make a difference for all Tasmanian young people. I note the motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report - Consideration and Noting

[3.11 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I move -

That the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report on the progress of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 be considered and noted.

Mr President, I also thank the member for Murchison for highlighting the work of Dr Carmel Hobbs, and it seems to segue nicely to the notice of motion that I have in front of me.

Mr President, on Wednesday, 21 August 2024, Micaela Cronin, the National Commissioner for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, tabled the inaugural yearly report to parliament on the progress of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. On the same day, she addressed the National Press Club in Canberra with her reflections on the report, together with thoughts on her work as commissioner.

It would be a massive understatement to say that her observations were both direct and confronting and yet, Micaela spoke with the natural empathy for victim/survivors and held out hope that there can be real and lasting change. Her address is freely available on video streaming services. I urge honourable members who have not had the opportunity to watch it to do so. I must thank my predecessor, Norma Jamieson, for drawing my attention to the commissioner's address.

Mr President, this is a new position which was established only two years ago with Micaela Cronin appointed as commissioner in November 2022. This is a role that she is ideally suited to, with an extensive background in policy and advocacy, and matched with the natural empathy and understanding of victim/survivors. To quote from her biography on the commission's website:

Micaela Cronin began her career as a social worker in family violence and sexual assault services. Since then, she has held leadership roles across the social service sector in Australia and internationally, including as President of the Australian Council of Social Services.

Micaela was also CEO of an international non-government organisation based in Asia, working to build global service delivery and strategic partnerships to tackle human trafficking and human rights abuses.

In 2014, Micaela was awarded the Robin Clark Leadership Award - Victoria's most prestigious children's protection award - in recognition of her leadership in inspiring others to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and their families.

I do not think we could ask for a more appropriate balance of expertise and experience in a person who is leading such a vital initiative.

We might rightly ask, why has it taken so long to establish what is an essential commission? This is one that can rightly focus attention on what is, sadly, an endemic and growing problem in our society. However, in saying that, we are only one of three countries in the world to establish a commission to address what is an absolute scourge of violence against women and children. While this suggests a certain foresight in international terms, the delay marks the endemic tragedy of domestic, family and sexual violence that is an abhorrent, and often hidden and shameful, influence in our communities. The establishment of the commission comes together with the refining of a national plan to end such violence. This has been a policy priority for national and state bodies and the new 10-year plan does give a way forward with a renewed sense of purpose and agency, and forms a core part of the commission's mission and identity.

With an increase in homicide as a result of domestic and family violence of 28 per cent in 2022-23 and a spate of deaths this year already, we must address the underpinning causes with the utmost urgency before more innocent lives are lost and families are destroyed. To that end, I would like to share some of the commissioner's reflections from her address as that highlights various sections from the report that we need to be fully aware of, together with her thoughts for the future.

One of the first points she raised, and one of the most resonant was how powerfully important is the language we use in this domain. We more readily use the term 'violence against women' rather than 'men's or male violence'. She said:

This critical phrasing needs to be more active and less passive. We need to be stronger and clearer in our communication to tell it how it is, rather than looking to soften the impact of violence with calming rhetoric.

As a side note, this may also raise awareness for the added scourge of men's violence against other men.

The commissioner spoke of her desire to get out of the office as soon as possible after her appointment, and that she has spoken to and met with thousands of people since then. The commissioner has been to dozens of conferences and hundreds of community workshops.

It is this perspective of genuine engagement with victim/survivors, advocates and support services that fully acknowledges their lived experience in a way that has only added to the poignancy of her comments and observations.

The report itself extends to five core topic chapters that also includes progressing the national plan and building workforce capability. However, in her National Press Club address, she chose to focus on the three that she sees as an immediate priority. These are:

- (1) The critical importance of embedding the lived experience of violence into government policymaking in a way that allows supported agency to victim/survivors.

The report also, and perhaps surprisingly, states that government should consider how to engage with people who have used violence, including those from diverse populations, to informed, improved interventions.

(2) Engaging men in this conversation.

As she pointed out, the national plan uses the term 'men' 129 times and 'women' 543 times - and yet it is almost always male behaviours and actions that hurt women. We need to talk more about men as, to quote OurWatch from 2021: 'The overwhelming majority of domestic, family and sexual violence is perpetrated by men, most commonly against a woman that is known to them.'

(3) The vital importance of building the capacity and capability of our support systems, as our advocates talk of the lived experience of systems failures that have let them down and work against them.

In my interpretation, the first two points are particularly striking and necessary adjustments. The third point needs to be designed to enable and recognise the necessary changes in policy and practice that will arise from these changes.

I was also reminded when the commissioner in dot point 2 referred to the national plan and the disparity in the number of times the terms 'men' and 'women' was used.

In May 2023, in my response to the Budget, I stated the following in reference to the Gender Budget Statement:

As I was reading the snapshot, I noticed what was missing: the other gender. I thought maybe I was being a bit myopic. However, on further investigation, I decided to test my theory that boys and men had been largely overlooked in the document, not only in this but in the budget as a whole.

I went on to reveal in the gender snapshot section that we received:

The terms 'male', 'man', 'father', 'boy' and 'son' appeared 59 times in the document. The feminine terms 'female', 'women', 'mother', 'daughter' and 'girl' appear 273 times.

Whilst there is a minister for women, there is no recognised equivalent leader of male interests within the government and there is very little funding in the budget to support grassroots men's organisations and the broader community sector to maintain continuous best practice in working with men.

Whilst we understand, recognise and accept that statistically, men are very much at the forefront of violent acts, we men must also be at the core of being able to address this devastating social issue.

My 2023 speech also stated:

Whilst I congratulate the government on its work in the very vital area of women and girls and their challenges, we have to understand we need to put more into men's resources and with men.

We want to be proactive and initiative-taking with being able to help men understand their roles, responsibilities and their impact on society. There was some synergy between Commissioner Cronin's statistical reference in the national plan and our own Gender Budget Statement.

However, as Commissioner Cronin observed: we are not numbers, we are humans. Engagement is not a box-ticking exercise; it must be authentic and genuine. Women and their families are having to cope with the impact of violence on their daily lives and live with the resulting trauma, which can all too often result in a future lived in fear and isolation.

In September, the Australian Institute of Criminology published its research, a study titled Prevalence of Recorded Family and Domestic Violence Offending - a Birth Cohort Study. Within it there were some astonishing statistics. The study looked at three population cohorts that came to a total of over 250,000 people, and looked to instances where the New South Wales Police Force had taken any sort of legal action relating to family or domestic violence. This ranged from criminal referrals to cautions and other infringements. I would like to share with you an excerpt from its abstract that I think provides a stark reality check and a deeper context to this problem. I quote:

Using an accelerated longitudinal design, we estimate that 6.3 percent of people born in New South Wales had been proceeded against by police for a family and domestic violence offence by age 37. The rate was significantly higher for men: 9.6 percent of men - one in 10 - had been proceeded against for a family and domestic violence offence, compared to 3.0 percent of women (one in 33).

Overall, 1.2 percent of people born in New South Wales were responsible for more than 50 percent of recorded family and domestic violence offences. Further, family and domestic violence offenders account for nearly half of all recorded offences by people in the birth cohort.

This is the first estimate of the prevalence of recorded family and domestic violence offending in a population sample in Australia. This is an important step towards increasing the visibility of family and domestic violence perpetrators.

The main body of the study opens with this paragraph:

A significant number of Australians, especially women, will be a victim of domestic and family violence in their lifetime. According to the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2023) Personal Safety Survey, 27 percent of women and 12 percent of men had been a victim of violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. The consequence of this violence to victim-survivors, such as economic insecurity, poor physical and mental health and homelessness, as well as the effects on children, are substantial (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024).

While there is recent evidence of declines in victimisation (ABS 2023) and a longer term downward trend in domestic homicide (Miles & Bricknell 2024), there continues to be serious concern about the ongoing threat to the safety of victim-survivors and the need to increase the visibility and accountability of perpetrators.

These are damning findings. I strongly suspect that if this study were repeated across other areas, including here in Tasmania, that we would be likely to see comparable conclusions. The study goes on to state:

This research has shown that most offenders are men, that offending is concentrated in lower socio-economic communities, that alcohol use by offenders at the time of the offence is common, that prior offending and reoffending is common, and that domestic violence offences and harm are concentrated in a relatively small group of offenders ...

This reinforces the commissioner's observation that we need to have eyes on men in a different way. For many men, where there have not been eyes on them as part of a healing and recovery process for victim/survivors, it has meant that they can freely move on to harm other women and children.

She added that most of our service system has been designed to move women around. She used the example of a man in Cairns who was living below the eyes of the system, where five women and their children whom he had been involved with had needed to be flown out of Cairns to keep them safe from him. Women were much more visible to the system, and this dangerous man had been invisible and free to continue his abuse.

High-risk teams are much more successful when they keep risk assessment processes and their eyes on the men. Does this mean that there is a risk that we move funding away from women - if the aim is keeping women and their children safe, what may have the greater impact, and how might we refine this evaluation?

The commissioner went on to say that we need to build the capacity and capability of our overwhelmed service systems - systems that are struggling to keep staff. We need to understand the demand better, too. Where is it? Where are the areas we need to prioritise to the greatest effect with the resources we have?

Commissioner Cronin also stated:

- There has been an 11 per cent increase in sexual violence in the last year alone.
- Comments from advocates in Alice Springs and the Northern Territory: Please collaborate with our men. We need to be having vastly different conversations with our men - we need eyes on men.
- Another one: We need greater accountability - for men.

Yet, men, as a group, hold more power in our community and have more decision-making authority than women. What can we do to make them truly aware that this is an issue of men's violence, and what these mostly male decision-makers can do about it? We are all keenly aware

of the impact of the pressure in our electorates from the ever-increasing cost of living. This is even in our more stable communities with good incomes and secure housing. Far more vulnerable lower socioeconomic communities carry a disproportionate load where even a slight increase in the cost of living can destroy a family budget and sense of wellbeing. Members have already spoken of that earlier this morning.

Following on from this vulnerability is that there are many individual men struggling to understand what being a good man is, not living up to the expectations that society places on them to be seen as successful. There are long established traditional expectations in our community. The man should be a good provider and strong protector and when, through no fault of his own, he cannot be, he is a lesser person and not worthy of respect.

This last point leads me to the commissioner's comments on the big debate about young men and online misogyny, an open online arena that comes filled with hate speech in a way we have never seen the likes of before, which for some young men can be an extreme challenge as for some unfathomable reason they are attracted to what some of these platforms are saying. The thought is that it gives them some sense of what being a man is, a strong male identity that they can coat themselves with. She added that we need to get better at talking and listening to these young men, and that it requires leadership and mentoring from both men and women.

On a more positive note, it is gratifying to see that earlier this year the federal Department of Social Services announced that in 2024-25 the Australian Government will invest \$34.8 million in an early intervention trial for adolescent boys who have experienced family and domestic violence and may be using or at risk of using violence in their relationships. In this context, another positive starting point in grassroots policy reform, however, if this appears to be an unusual development, it is worth noting that in August a report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare was published on health service use among young people hospitalised due to family and domestic violence.

The report found that 5024 young people under the age of 18 had at least one family and domestic violence related hospital stay. This was over a 10-year period between 2010 and 2021. Of these children and young people, 54 per cent were female and 46 per cent were male, and that is a reasonably even split. This contrasts with adult statistics, where it is well recognised that adult victim/survivors of family and domestic violence are primarily women. The commissioner recognises that we need more and better data about men using violence and services to guide them out of this. Perhaps this will yield some measurable information and outcomes that can be shared and replicated across the nation, or at the very least start to inform our local, state and national policy.

I would like to quote from Box 5 on page 49 of the commission's report as it illustrates another facet of the alpha male problem we face and useful longitudinal litmus test on prevailing attitudes. It says:

Unpacking the Man Box (2024).

The Man Box 2024 is a comprehensive study on attitudes to manhood and behaviours of Australian men aged 18 to 45. The 2024 study builds on the original research first published in 2018 and 2020 (The Men's Project & Flood, 2024).

The Man Box was the first Australian study to explore the association between attitudes to masculine stereotypes and the behaviours of men and to show how the results have changed over time.

The Man Box describes a set of beliefs within and across society that place pressure on men to act in a certain way and that they represent a socially dominant form of masculinity. The 2024 study surveyed more than 3500 Australian men on the 19 rules of the Man Box.

These rules are hypothetical statements as to how a real man should think, feel, and behave in society. Respondents were asked as to how much they agreed or disagreed with the perception of social pressure to conform to the rules and include messages such as a guy who does not fight back when others push him around is weak. It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house or take care of younger children. In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about the decisions in their relationships or marriage, and these are only three of the 19.

The conclusion in Box 5 goes on to state that the 2024 findings are revealing:

- Almost four in ten men feel pressure to conform to Man Box rules.
- A quarter of Australian men aged 18 to 30 personally agree with Man Box rules.
- Men who most strongly agreed with Man Box rules were more likely to have perpetrated violence, hold violence-supportive attitudes and have consumed violent pornography.
- The men who most strongly agree with Man Box rules have a range of poor health outcomes.

What is deeply concerning is the apparent radicalisation of younger men. We must consider what influences are at work here. Is it coming from the impact of social media channels that monitor and amplify content that the algorithms automatically promoted to a person's device, like a tsunami of distasteful content that is triggered by a single click on an item? Is it led from the sharing and discussion of such content between mates, content that is designed to be addictive and often covers quite shocking material that a person would never, if ever, come across in their daily lives? Has the engagement of younger men with divisive and harmful content arisen from isolation during the pandemic, one that has to be understood with the lack of face-to-face social connection and more of us burying our noses in our devices and communicating via typed messages than rather making a call?

Recently I had a conversation with a very caring and loving Ulverstone mum. She has a 20-year-old, an 18-year-old, two sons, and a 16-year-old daughter. We were talking about the opportunities in pathway for her daughter after grade 10 in 2025. Mum said:

My daughter is a strong, independent person who is loved fiercely by her brothers. However, I am far more worried about for my sons, who are both good boys but there are just so many traps and pitfalls that worry me. My daughter will be fine. I just hope my sons are strong enough to do and recognise the right thing when it arises.

We do have a highly capable E-Safety Commissioner who does tremendous work in taking down the very worst of social media and online content, yet there seems to be an unquenchable torrent of material that feeds into what should be innocuous social media channels. Anyone who remembers, and we have mentioned it in this place, the social media platform that used to be Twitter was little more than an online community notice board. Those who still use it as X are all too aware of the unfiltered garbage and propaganda, violence and worse that is now delivered as content.

Ms Forrest - It has taken on a whole new lease of life in the American election, I might add.

Ms O'Connor - It is full of porn now, too. You open Twitter and this filth comes up.

Mr GAFFNEY - It does. Its new owner seems to be obsessed with a free speech model for X in a way that decries any form of censorship or control that might regulate the worst of it. Jimmy Carr, the famous, or should I say infamous, comedian, is also a contrarian and a regular contributor to more serious social media commentaries, clips and reels. This is where he offers his considered thoughts on what he sees as toxic masculinity. He explores causes such as the huge popularity of online video gaming and other sources of hedonistic online media. Carr observes that puts many young men into a boundlessly fantasy world that has no regulation or moderation. He goes on to add that young men need to be in the real world where they can learn what it is to be part of the community, where respect, patience and tolerance can be learned and practised.

We have a growing interest in Tasmanian men's health issues. In the submission to the Inquiry into the Tasmanian Experiences of Gendered Bias in Healthcare, from Jacob Roberts, a registered nurse, clinical nurse consultant, health promotion and men's health advocate and, I might add, a proud father, husband, son, brother and uncle - see, we can multitask- he offered this comment and observation:

Men's adherence to stereotypical masculine traits, such as stoicism, self-reliance, strength and control can stigmatise, and thereby discourage, healthcare seeking. There is widespread recognition in Australia that traditional masculine stereotypes are both inaccurate and harmful. Freeing men from these restrictive stereotypes will likely be good for their health and wellbeing, and that of society more generally.

What can we do to encourage men of all ages to seek out professional health care for their physical, mental and psychological health? It is a vexed question as we have to acknowledge that family and domestic violence is a shared human issue that affects all genders and sexual orientations.

In 2018 Tim Winton, accomplished Australian author, offered his thoughts on toxic masculinities, saying of boys and young men that they are sort of enlisted into the army of misogyny, had the tenderness squeezed out of them, and that they are learning how to be bad men because they did not have enough good men in their lives.

Here in Tasmania, we perhaps have a remedy already in place, as I would like to think that many of our sporting codes, local grassroots clubs and other community organisations, and our community elders have a crucial role in helping young men understand their true value in

their wider community. Many are well placed to help our young men gain these essential qualities and life skills. The question might be how we can support this.

The national Ticket to Play voucher scheme that encourages young people to try a new sport or activity might need expansion to cover additional non-sporting activities that many of our younger people are getting into. We have practical academics working in this space, with one notable example being Dr Bianca Klettke from Deakin University, whose research focuses on cyberpsychology and technology-facilitated violence. She has been working for many years with the Geelong Cats AFL Club on the Cyber Cats educational programs for young people to better understand the impact and ramifications of online activities such as sexting and image-based abuse.

This is just one of the many programs across Australia seeking to educate and inform young men in male-dominated sporting clubs and associations. I hope, for the benefit of our future, that male-dominated cultures can and will change.

As I have discussed, the role of ever-more complex social-media algorithms that drive content to a user is the latest in many exacerbators of men's violence against women. There are more established and pernicious factors and vices, many of which have been with us for generations. Gambling is one which, with our ever-more sophisticated mobile devices and algorithms, has simply and easily broken through the fourth wall into our daily lives. It seems that for the multibillion-dollar betting industry, the hybrids of online algorithms and apps, when mated with gambling, produce a revenue stream that is beyond imagination.

This is a level of income that was simply unattainable in the traditional models of high street betting shops, hotels, or a racecourse bookie satchel. That is not to say that they were poor to start with, but now it is an order of magnitude higher. You only have to see the plethora of online betting app advertising all over television and social media to see the expected industry returns and the drive to recruit even more addicts. This is with the now compulsory government health warnings and support service notifications for gambling addiction.

The Grattan Institute's recent report on the impact of gambling highlights that Australia now has the humiliation of leading the world in gambling losses per adult. In sporting terms, this is hardly a gold medal prize we can be proud of, more of a wooden spoon that shames us as a nation. If we look to the numbers, the 2022 losses amounted to the extraordinary figure of \$1635 per Australian adult, with a comparative dollar value, with Hong Kong as the runner-up at \$1284, then Singapore with \$1180. If we look at New Zealand, it has losses of \$584 per head of population, almost a third of Australia's extraordinary total, and that is in a nation that has a culture with an almost equal passion for competitive sports as ours. Grattan suggests that Australia should ban gambling advertising, introduce loss limits on pokies and online gambling, and progressively cut the number of pokies in each state.

All these are simply commonsense measures that come with the bonus of removing some of the triggering factors that are known to cause dysregulated men to attack women and their children. It is no surprise that the gambling industry is strongly resisting these sensible measures as it runs the risk of reducing its incomes and profits. What is especially frustrating here in Tasmania, is the disappointment of seeing the lost potential to rein in so much of the damage caused by gambling in what is now the *Gaming Control Amendment (Future Gaming Market) Act 2021*.

In saying that, the government can occasionally take us by surprise with the introduction of a pre-commitment gaming card system as an initiative to limit problem gambling. However, the delay in the introduction and the potential loss of mandatory pre-commitment cards until next year has once again extended the deadline, despite a substantial taxpayer subsidy to allow the operators to adapt to the new system. It is interesting to note that no such generosity has been shown to Tasmanian drivers to adapt to a new speed camera system. Why can it not be the same for gambling and poker machines?

In 2020, the highly respected ANROWS, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, published an extensive report on the relationship between gambling and intimate partner violence against women. The report highlighted the complex nature and mix of factors in gambling that led to male violence and abuse against women. One of the strongest factors is the truly addictive nature of gambling, which comes with its own overlay of unrequited hedonism and ego. This excerpt gives a sense of the problem and the nature of the report's finding. It said:

Emotional stressors from gambling reinforce intimate partner violence.

The women typically felt shocked and betrayed to learn of their partner's gambling and economic abuse which he had typically concealed for a long time. They reported ongoing stress as gambling losses increased. Many women blamed themselves for not recognising the problem earlier and felt powerless to change the situation. Many women with a gambling problem believed they deserved their partner's abuse. Regardless of which partner gambled, women typically felt guilt and shame and diminished self-worth which reportedly deterred help-seeking and lowered their capacity to leave the relationship. Having a gambling problem also increased the emotional stress of the person who gambled. Women consistently reported a cycle of abuse, where their partner's violent outbursts were preceded by his mounting stress over and tension surrounding his gambling.

The report also speaks to the interconnected nature of abusive behaviours, where the misuse of alcohol and other drugs fuels violence and abuse.

The interaction of problem gambling with substance use.

Women reported that they or their partner being affected by alcohol or drugs, especially crystal methamphetamine, dramatically increased their gambling. They described alcohol- and drug-fuelled violence following gambling losses as escalating quickly and viciously, with women being terrified for their own and their children's safety.

This is confronting language in a 148-page academic report with 17 authors, and is rightfully shocking. Whilst the authors have kept a professional perspective in their use of language, I cannot even begin to imagine the lived experience of the women they describe and the trauma that they live with.

In her address, the commissioner posed the question: should domestic violence be treated as seriously as terrorism? It is not terrorism in the same way, but we need to take threats seriously and act on them urgently, whilst recognising them as different. I must agree with her

point as, if there were a terrorist event that killed the same number of women that are killed in a year by men's violence, there would be a national outcry and it would make international headlines.

Two weeks after the commissioner's address on 6 September, the Prime Minister issued an agreed media statement that represented the outcomes of a meeting of the National Cabinet, one where family, domestic and sexual violence was a key agenda item and, hopefully, where the commissioner's observations were still fresh in their mind, as a number of her concerns seem to have been considered and addressed. The result is that there was an agreement on a \$4.7 billion package to accelerate action to end gender-based violence and deliver the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032. There is also ongoing work to address the impact of violent online pornography, alcohol and online gambling as drivers of men's violence. The perilous influence of violent pornography and the misuse of alcohol are widely accepted as harmful influences in cases of abuse and family violence.

Again, the eSafety Commissioner is doing her absolute best to hold social media channels and online services to account for image-based abuse and online pornography. The joint statement described the intent as being a number of important innovations including changes to manage and monitor offenders; to share information across authorities and systems; to include specialist services for women; services to support children exposed to family, domestic and sexual violence to help heal and recover; and collaborating with men, including men's behaviour change programs for perpetrators of gendered violence.

The National Cabinet's joint statement does suggest that it has carefully considered the commissioner's report and reflected on the points raised by the commissioner's Press Club address, together with contributions from a range of national stakeholders.

Here in Tasmania, there is a growing recognition on the need to support gender equality with a range of measures now included in the government's Gender Budget Statement, one that highlights a range of pertinent factors.

In the week following National Cabinet, we received this year's Tasmanian Gender Budget Statement, one that is again a highly reflective document that whilst in some parts gives us hope, in others gives us a stark evaluation of where we are as a state and where we need to do much better.

In the context of this motion is a section of safety that sees us in an ever-worsening position. In the case of family and sexual violence and sexual assault, we are in a deteriorating three-year trend. The statement offers a warning that the measured increases may in part be due to reducing barriers to reporting and 'the unprecedented community focus on the prevalence and response to sexual violence'.

What is particularly concerning is that if this is the case, how much of men's violence stays hidden away in shame beneath an outward veneer of contrived respectability? Additionally, the section on cashflow problems further highlights the disparity between men and women, where women in Tasmania are three times more likely to report difficulties in paying bills than men. I can only imagine the amplifying effect the current cost-of-living increases place on this. If we were to add this to the disproportionate ratio of women to men in Tasmania who seek help from specialist homelessness services, then we are still in a dark place.

The government's 2024-25 Budget allocation of \$1.2 million over two years of additional support for two crisis accommodation facilities is to be welcomed, but is it enough?

If we look to the latest report from Anglicare's Social Action and Research Centre that was released earlier this month, *Unsafe and Unhoused: Barriers to Addressing Domestic and Family Violence in North West Tasmania*, it clearly states that the north-west is a domestic and family violence hotspot with an instance rate that is 35 per cent higher per capita than southern Tasmania. Adding to this is the number of people seeking housing assistance due to domestic or family violence at a rate nearly four times higher in the north-west than the south. Compounding the problem in the north-west is the lowest availability in the state of crisis shelters for women and children, together with the ongoing shortage of affordable short- and long-term housing options. This shortage severely limits the ability of women and their children to leave violent and abusive situations. This is an especially dangerous problem for those on limited incomes and only adds to the stress and trauma experienced by victim/survivors.

The author of the report, policy and advocacy officer Ginny Toombs, was quoted at the report's launch:

One of the greatest barriers to the safety of victim-survivors in the North West is the shortage of safe and affordable housing, especially for those on low incomes. Housing options give people greater opportunity to leave abusive situations and access help and support.

She went on:

The recent announcement by National Cabinet provides a unique opportunity to focus on responding to the needs of the region by delivering more housing and other supports.

Yes, the National Cabinet's joint statement does speak to new policy priorities and coming responses and innovative programs. However, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis only worsens all these problems and more, and especially so in north-west Tasmania. As has been stated, this is an extraordinarily complex policy area, and as the commissioner highlights, there are other pernicious and competing factors at play that are often driven as a by-product of the interests of wealthy industries.

What has caught my attention in both the commissioner's address and the statement from the meeting of the National Cabinet, is the focus placed on men as well as many factors that can be said to trigger men's violence. They both speak to the need for better intelligence in systems that can share information across authorities and agencies that can better identify abusive men that are by vast majority the perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence and often as a small cohort of repeat offenders.

Most of the current focus is quite rightly on what I could describe as the front end, that is community services dealing with the immediate need by helping and supporting women and their families that are victim/survivors of men's violence. If we look back to the back end for the systems and service that can find better ways of driving cultural change, programs to manage drink driving and speeding have seen a shift for the better. We need the same and more to change men's violence, and that is violence of all kinds. The commissioner says we must

engage with men who use or are at risk of using violence to understand and change their behaviours; we must also find a way of bringing change in some young men's perspectives as, for better or worse, there is far too much social media drivel out there that is full of misogyny and toxic masculinity. We must be careful that well-meaning advertising may be simply overwhelmed by the sheer volume of competing rubbish that is out there and will simply fail. With the ever-growing power and sophistication of artificial intelligence and its ability to produce increasingly sophisticated fake imagery and video, I dread to think what it will do to online content of misogynistic influences on young people.

I hope that we are not too late, as the majority of our men in our community are good men who are decent, honourable and highly respectful of everyone around them. Maybe it is their turn now to step up and fully support the efforts to end men's violence, to take an added interest in the perspectives of younger men as the next generation and to help them understand that a real man is someone a woman will never be fearful of or frightened by. The commissioner said that we must have better conversations between men and boys and within families too. We need to talk about when women feel unsafe to get an understanding, to check in with the women in their lives when they do feel unsafe and how men might adjust even basic things so women feel safe, and what it means to be a good man.

One of my most professionally satisfying initiatives as a high school teacher was when I was able to have all grade 9 boys in my high school receive a 10-week course which I called Boys to Men, which took those 20 to 25 boys aged 15 years out of that. I had been teaching health and sexuality for a number of years. I know that course was so important and effective for so many of those young men because you come to realise that a lot of them did not have role models or men that they could rely on to show them alternatives. I think that is somewhere we have to get back to - breaking the system to have proper processes in place at that age group, thinking that those young men all need assistance and how to do that within the education system. I was an ear for answering questions and providing alternative options to problem solving, especially ones involving violence.

There is quite a telling anecdote to and I am not quite sure where it comes from - that perhaps speaks to the nub of the problem. It goes something along the lines of this: a man asked a woman, 'If men did not exist, then who would protect them?' 'From what?' was the woman's immediate reply. We can and must do better.

I move that the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report on the progress of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 be considered and noted.

[3.52 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I thank the member for Mersey for bringing this motion on. It is bit of a heavy day today talking about these matters, but in any event, that is how it flows sometimes. It is a really appropriate report to note and to understand the implications of.

Before speaking to this motion as a fresh motion that we are debating, I do wish to warn those listening or reading this at a later time that we will be mentioning matters related to sexual, psychological, physical, emotional, financial, technological abuse and coercive and controlling behaviours. This may be triggering and I note there are a number of organisations that can be contacted for support. These are all available on the Services Australia website but

I will mention a couple of key supports before I begin, particularly 1800RESPECT, which is a free and confidential service for those experiencing sexual, domestic and family violence. That is available 24 hours day, seven days a week on 1800 737 732; Full Stop Australia, a similar service, on 1800 943 539; Men's Referral Service, 1300 766 491; The Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline on 1800 497 212; the Sexual Assault Support Service and Laurel House on 1800 697 877; Lifeline 24-hour crisis support on 13 11 14; A Tasmanian Lifeline on 1800 984 434. For Aboriginal people, there is 13YARN, which is 13 92 76. I reiterate that anyone who is in the immediate danger should call Triple Zero.

I say that particularly today because again we have seen another woman being murdered in Victoria and her partner has been arrested for her murder. Her name is Nikkita Azzopardi. I do not know what else to say here. It is shocking; it is more than one woman a week being murdered by a current or former intimate partner. I was listening to the member for Mersey when he was speaking about the role of men in addressing this issue and there is a role for men to play and I will get to that. But the reality is, from what I have read - I have read a lot about this and I am sure other members have too - what men fear most in these sorts of areas is being laughed at or embarrassed. What women fear most is being murdered. There is a vast difference, even though the impact can be lifelong, of being embarrassed, humiliated, made fun of and the shame that goes forward into that man's life, but they get to live. The women on the other hand are worried about being murdered and are murdered; some of them are seriously injured to the point of brain injury but continue to live.

We need to focus our particular effort where the greatest harm is, so I make those points. I recognise Nikkita Azzopardi. We should say her name. We should remember her name. We should remember the name of every woman who was killed by a current and former intimate partner, as well as those who are harmed by them because until we start naming all these women more regularly, this just becomes another number.

Nikkita is not another number. Anyone who has seen the media today would see her brother, who found her after forcing his way into the house to be confronted by her partner, who said she was sick and in bed. She was dead and in bed, allegedly, at the hands of that person. That is yet to be proven. It is so easy to talk about numbers, but these are people. This is a sister, a daughter. I am not sure about all of the family connections, but she is one who I am talking about today because of her very recent death. We know that every week, at least every week, one or more women are murdered by their current or former intimate partner. So, I would like to, having made those comments, speak about what domestic and family violence actually encompasses, as well as the incidence of these abhorrent crimes.

Domestic and family violence is any behaviour that is violent, threatening, controlling or intended to make you or your family feel scared. Family and pets can feel scared and unsafe too, and this can be considered family and/or domestic violence. This can include some of the following forms of violence:

- controlling behaviour
- physical violence
- sexual violence or sexual assault
- emotional abuse
- stalking

- technology-facilitated abuse, including putting tracking devices on people's phones, or in their handbag
- financial abuse
- legal abuse, using the legal system to abuse a person further
- reproductive abuse.

Have we not seen aspects of this playing out writ large just recently? You do not have to go as far as America. We have seen a very real threat of reproductive abuse in South Australia that was narrowly defeated; and now in Queensland, and who knows what is going to happen there if Robbie Katter has his way, for example.

- threats to the person in their relationship, their children, their belongings or their pets.

In a previous motion, you will recall one of the young women I spoke about who was covering her puppy for comfort and the puppy was kicked as well as she was.

Family and domestic violence can affect anyone in all types of relationships. Although it may be more prevalent in low socioeconomic communities, it is not limited there. We have seen it right across the spectrum and it is sometimes easier to hide in well-off families and it is often much harder for those women and victims to seek support because they often are less likely to be believed, 'What have you got to complain about?'

Family and domestic violence can occur in past or current intimate relationships, including relationships where the couple are dating, living together and regardless of their gender or sexuality; relationships involving carers of people with a disability or medical condition or older people; relationships with relatives and guardians; culturally recognised family groups.

As I said, it can happen to -

Sitting suspended from 4.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

MOTION

Government Business Scrutiny Committee B - Inclusion of Motor Accidents Insurance Board

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the resolution of the Council of today's date establishing Government Business Scrutiny Communities be amended by including Motor Accidents Insurance Board in the Committee and in the government businesses to be scrutinised by Committee B.

In speaking briefly about that, I note the member for Launceston picked it up who is not afraid of work, so it is very good of her to do so.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report - Consideration and Noting

Resumed from above (page 59).

[4.32 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) – Mr President, before the break, I was talking about the prevalence and the occurrences of domestic and family violence. I said it can happen to anyone, regardless of country of origin or residence, religion, sexuality, gender, social background and socioeconomic status, age or culture.

It is important to note some key points that are often not well understood. These include the fact that family and domestic violence is not always physical. It can happen to anyone, no matter their age, gender or sexual orientation, and it can continue after you have left a violent relationship. Family and domestic violence is always the fault of the person causing the abuse. It is never the fault of the person experiencing abusive behaviour. Coercive control is almost always an underpinning dynamic of family and domestic violence.

Perpetrators who use coercive control exert power and dominance over their partner by using patterns of abusive behaviours over time that create fear and deny liberty and autonomy. Perpetrated behaviours can be subtle and specific to the victim and not necessarily be easy to observe by others.

Domestic and family violence is a national crisis and I agree with the member for Mersey that it should almost be treated in the way terrorism is and called domestic terrorism, such is the frequency and incidence of family and domestic violence - with over one woman a week being killed at the hands of a former intimate partner. One would think, if you lined all those women up in a row and said 'This is the number of women who have been murdered this year' at the end of the year, surely that would elicit that sort of response. We would not accept it if a terrorist were killing people that indiscriminately.

Domestic and family violence is a national crisis with high numbers of women and children harmed and murdered. In Australia it is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. The member for Mersey also referred to a recent Anglicare report, Unsafe and Unhoused. I will refer to that as well because it makes for disturbing reading, especially for victims of family violence on the north-west coast, which is sadly also a hotspot for family violence.

This is my community. This is where I live. I will refer to some detail in this report. The impacts and costs of domestic and family violence include pain and suffering experienced by victim/survivors, including long-term impacts on physical and psychological health and premature death. The associated costs include the costs of moving, debt default, replacement of damaged property, absence from work; and costs of the justice system and violence prevention programs; costs have lost taxation revenue, increased social welfare payments and other associated government-funded services as many of these women exit the workforce; costs to the public and private health systems that are treating the effects of violence on victim/survivors.

Second generation effects on children witnessing and living with violence: Children's exposure to domestic and family violence causes trauma and can adversely impact a child's development as well as the parents' caregiving capacity. Childhood trauma or adverse childhood experiences, including family violence, are identified, as I mentioned earlier in my motion today, in the Social Action & Research Centre's (SARC) report, *Young, in love and in danger*, as risk factors increasing the prevalence of domestic violence in intimate relationships of young Tasmanians. Breaking the cycle of domestic and family violence is vitally important to reduce persistent disadvantage.

As I mentioned, rates of family violence in Tasmania's north-west are higher than in other regions of the state. In 2024, there were 35 per cent more family violence instances per capita reported by Tasmania Police in the north-west than in the south and 13 per cent more than in the north. The Anglicare report notes the proportion of people reporting domestic or family violence as a reason for seeking housing assistance through Housing Connect is significantly higher in north-west Tasmania compared to other regions of the state. Analysis of Anglicare Tasmania's Housing Connect data for July 2024 found that per capita people in the north-west of the state are twice as likely to cite domestic and family violence as the reason for seeking assistance as people in the north. When compared to Housing Connect clients in the south, north-west housing clients are almost four times as likely to be experiencing domestic and family violence. I think if we are going to fix the housing problem, we need to fix the domestic and family violence problem first.

Research has found that support programs for women and children affected by domestic and family violence cannot compensate for the absence of affordable and appropriate housing. Frontline domestic and family violence services may be unable to provide effective support to a person if they cannot be housed in a place of safety. Frontline domestic and family violence practitioners work closely with accommodation services and advocate strongly for victim/survivors to be housed.

It is not just a victim/survivor in a house. Often it requires modifications to create a safe room in the house or other security measures, because if you do not do that, we know that perpetrators of family violence are not necessarily stopped by a police family violence order. The only safe place is a safe room, which is completely secure and locked in a way that cannot easily be broken into.

This is from the practitioners working on the frontline:

They cannot always assist [these victims] to a place of safety because there are insufficient short- and long-term housing options for women in the North West, especially for people on low incomes. For example, if a person is homeless following a significant domestic and family violence incident, the practitioner can arrange urgent contact to Housing Connect to assist with applying for all available housing options. These include shelter accommodation, social housing, assistance into private rental, and Rapid Rehousing for family violence. Shelters are regularly full and there can be lengthy wait lists for longer term options. Housing Connect aims to ensure they have best possible chance of being housed and in some cases can broker funding for short-term accommodation. However, a long-term housing outcome may not eventuate for that person for months or years due to a lack of affordable homes.

As we know from the previous debate, and I think the member for Mersey mentioned this, they then find themselves back in that relationship because they have nowhere else to go. People will say: why did they go back? It is not a question that should ever be asked. These people are left with no choice or no choice they can live with.

There are consequences for the safety and wellbeing of women and children. Women remain living with the perpetrator of violence to keep themselves and their children housed, or opt for sub-standard housing options such as caravan parks or free camps.

Which are hardly safe housing if you have a perpetrator who wants to find you.

We know that women and their families will hide in some of our more remote communities to try to escape family violence, and I know there are many situations like that around my electorate, in the more vast reaches of my electorate. It is a shame that people have to run to an area with basically no services to feel a modicum of safety because there is nowhere else.

Sometimes women and children move in with family and friends. This can cause overcrowding and place strain on relationships and informal relationships and friendships. It is wonderful that people will do that, but it is not sustainable in the long term.

An inability to leave a violent situation due to having nowhere to go can exacerbate the stress and trauma experienced by victim-survivors. Without being housed in a safe home, the person may not be able to engage further in their recovery and meeting their goals.

...

As long as domestic and family violence is occurring, access to crisis accommodation is needed to ensure people can safely leave a violent situation.

I have said in this place before, and I am pretty sure most members are aware of it, the most dangerous times for a victim of family violence, particularly a woman seeking to leave a violent relationship - whatever form of violence it is - is the time when they make the decision to leave and are still there, before they actually leave, and then when they physically leave. The chances of being murdered at that point are higher than at any other time in that woman's experience.

Sometimes the physical violence or the murder is the first physical violence that has been used. If you need an example of that, look at the Clarke family in Queensland, who were doused in petrol by the partner she was escaping from with her three children, and they were burnt to death. I do not think anyone can forget those images, if you saw them - the most horrific of things. As we understand from the coverage of that case, that was the first act of physical violence - there was plenty of other violence - but that can be the case.

Whilst victim-survivors should not be the ones uprooted from their home or community wherever possible, often women and children must leave for their

safety. This means there is an ongoing and permanent need for the provision of specialist crisis accommodation services.

As noted in the Anglicare report:

Currently in the North West there are two facilities that can provide crisis accommodation for women and children. Between the two facilities there are a total of 15 self-contained crisis units specifically for women.

The women's shelter has 10 self-contained crisis units and capacity for 4 women and their children in shared accommodation. The second facility has 5 crisis units for women and children, 3 units for men with or without children, and 4 transitional units for families. They report that family violence remains the major reason people seek accommodation in their crisis units (33.73 per cent).

The report goes on to add that women's crisis accommodation in the north-west is not actually suitable for all.

In addition to capacity concerns, the North West crisis accommodation options are located close to population centres. That means those in more remote areas such as the West Coast may have to fund increased petrol bills or rely on goodwill of others to transport them, if they are willing and able to leave their community and uproot children from school.

Again, it is the victim who pays the price.

Suitable crisis accommodation is self-contained, accessible for people with disabilities, and safe, with staff on site 24/7 ... There are often as many or more children than adults in shelters so safe spaces for children and appropriate supports are important for breaking the cyclical nature of family violence.

I will digress for a moment. I know I have spoken about this in the past, but I remember speaking to a principal in one of the schools in my electorate. He was recounting to me a situation we have with some young children in a primary school in a low grade - low being from grade one to three. There had been an incident in the classroom or in the playground, I am not sure exactly where, where a little boy had physically assaulted a little girl. There had been calls to both families to report this incident.

When school pick-up time came, the mum of the little girl came to the office to meet with the principal. The principal told her what had happened, and the mum's comment was, 'Oh, she will just have to grow up knowing she is going to be hit'. My reaction was something that I will not say on the record. The principal said that was their reaction as well. This is the intergenerational impact, for that little girl to grow up expecting to be hit. We have to change that.

Importantly:

No new units specifically for women and children have been built in the north west in the last five years. The Tasmanian Government reports that in the four years to June 2023, 91 additional units of crisis and transitional accommodation were completed. This included 35 additional units for women in the North and South, 25 units for men in the south, and 31 units for young people in the North and North West.

Now, those 31 units for young people in the north and north-west are terribly welcome but we have not built any new ones for women and children in the last five years in the north-west. And there is no report of new units for women being built in the north-west at this stage. So, I think you get the picture here. It is hard enough for women to leave a violent relationship and almost impossible if they have nowhere to run to.

So, this is a disturbing report and whilst the Rapid Rehousing for Family Violence is welcome, it is certainly not always rapid, nor is it always safe. Family and domestic violence and abuse continues to be a crisis for our community. We have been talking about this for years. I know that the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence indicated that she had a meeting that she could not get out of at this moment. She will have people watching in another place, but I know this is a matter that she cares deeply about and has only just got the portfolio back. So, she is aware of this and she knows, as we all do, that it is not an easy problem to fix. There is no simple fix.

The other thing is that it has taken years to have all forms of violence recognised for what they are and we are slowly recognising financial abuse, emotional abuse, legal abuse, reproductive abuse.

Those were just things that women put up with in the past but now we recognise them, particularly when they are a pattern of behaviour and a pattern over time when different forms of abuse are either included in the abusive relationship or escalated during the time to become more evident and then possibly evident to other people outside. But often it is very subtle to start with - that is what gaslighting is all about, making you think you are going mad, that it is not real. It must be me. It has to be me.

Legislative change in Tasmania has been very welcome and in many of these areas, Tasmania has led the way and the study is to be commended for that. This is not a criticism of that, it is just acknowledging the very wicked problem that we have here that we do need to address.

In spite of those changes though, we are not making the impact needed with the rates of family violence and the number of women being murdered at the hands of their current or former intimate partners not reducing. It is clear that a greater focus on prevention is needed.

It would be much better to prevent these, rather than have to pick up the pieces at the end. The cost of family violence is far-reaching and whilst it should never be reduced to matters of economics and money, it is important to note that the cost of violence against women and children is estimated at \$26 billion a year. I will just repeat that. The cost of violence against women and children is \$26 billion a year.

Women who experience partner violence during pregnancy are three times more likely to experience depression, with all the personal and financial costs of that. Children exposed to

domestic and family violence may experience trauma symptoms including PTSD and possibly long-lasting effects on the child's development, behaviours and wellbeing.

Violence represents 10 per cent of the burden of disease for Indigenous women.

Intimate partner homicide is the most prevalent homicide in Australia. In 2019-20, there were 4706 hospitalisations of young people aged 15 to 24 due to assault.

For women aged 18 to 44 years, violence against women is the single biggest risk factor contributing to their disease burden. This is greater than the risk of smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity.

They spent a lot of money trying to prevent people - encourage people not to smoke, to have moderate alcohol consumption and try to reduce obesity. We need to focus it equally or more on preventing violence against women because that is the single biggest risk factor contributing to the disease burden for women aged 18 to 44.

Before commenting on the first yearly report on progress, which is actually the subject of this motion, I will just reiterate some detail from the plan itself because we need to understand what the plan says to look at - what the review says. The plan includes a prominent statement from victim/survivors, whose voices must be heard, believed and learnt from. I will read this statement from the victim/survivors. This is in the front of the report.

It is time to transform our pain into action. There can be no more excuses - that it is too hard, we don't know what to do, it's too complex.

It is everyone's responsibility to end the perpetration of violence against women and children, and all victims of gendered violence.

We are your mothers, your sisters, your brothers, your aunties, your uncles, your cousins, your children, your partners, your colleagues, your friends, your family, your kin, your community.

Do not continue to shame us for what other people have done to us. We did not ask for abuse. We have resisted violence or done what we needed to do - to protect ourselves, our families. To survive.

Stand with us, do not look away when we show you our pain. See what is happening all around you every day, from the sexist comment or homophobic joke, to the excuse 'boys will be boys'.

Discard the intuition that just because you know someone, they could not possibly hurt or abuse another. The people who use violence and abuse against their families, partners, children, colleagues, friends or dates are people you already know. People like you. People you love.

The people who have abused us are the people we knew; people we liked; and most often people we loved.

Too many of us are being re-traumatised trying to engage with systems that are meant to 'protect' us but fail. Systems that create barriers to access and have costs beyond our means because services are not designed for the realities of our lives. Instead, they perpetuate the same dynamics of power and control as our abusers. Systems that wait until the worst has happened before they respond, then blame us for not reporting or leaving.

We should not have to die to get your attention.

We should never be forced to choose between violence in our homes or being homeless and facing violence on the streets, or having our families torn apart in ways we never wanted and that cause further harm.

This is not safety. The time is now to remove the inequalities that allow perpetrators to exercise power over others because our society:

- does not believe women
- does not value all women equally
- does not hear the voices of First Nations women and learn from their diverse experiences
- does not reward women equally for work
- does not value women's unpaid labour
- does not believe children can be trusted to tell the truth about abuse
- does not view people with disability as equal or able
- punishes those who do not conform
- creates disadvantage and poverty as a problem of individuals.

It is time to stop people and institutions choosing to use violence, feeling entitled to control and dominate to degrade others' values based on their sex, gender, sexuality or perceived 'rights'.

We are not damaged goods. We are not incapable or less than you because we experience trauma. We are survivors. We will not be silenced, pushed into the shadows nor spoken for any more.

We hold knowledge and answers that others simply do not.

We are diverse but galvanised by a common cause. We know what needs to change. No meaningful solutions can be made about us without us.

Stopping our suffering depends on all of us choosing to do something differently. We cannot repeat more of the same and expect to achieve change.

Abuse and violence is a problem for victims but it is not the victim's problem. Genuine change begins with a willingness to listen. We must stop protecting perpetrators with our silence and through inaction. We must be willing to sit in discomfort. It is time to be brave.

I am sorry, I appreciate that was a long quote, but that is the voice of victim/survivors, and I think it is important that it was read and reflected in full.

The plan has laudable aspirations, but the evidence we read in the media and see in our communities tells us we are not making the progress we want and we need. The plan itself tells us it:

is our commitment to a country free of gender-based violence - where all people are free of fear and violence and are safe at home, at work, at school, in the community and online. This is a human right for all people and we commit to ending violence against women and children in Australia in one generation.

Violence against women and children is a problem of epidemic proportions in Australia. One in 3 women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

That is one in three. How many women in this place? Do your sums.

On average, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every 10 days. Rates of violence are even higher for certain groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. A woman is also more likely to experience violence at particular life stages, such as while pregnant or while separating from a relationship. In 2021, girls aged 10 to 17 made up 42 per cent of female sexual assault victims.

Forty-two per cent of the female sex assault victims were girls, aged 10 to 17.

These are not just statistics. They represent the stories of real people, and everyday realities.

The impact of this violence ripples out across Australian families, communities and society as a whole. Intimate partner violence is the main preventable risk factor that contributes to illness and death in women aged 18 and 44. It is the leading driver of homelessness and incarceration for women. Children exposed to violence experience long-lasting effects on their development, health and wellbeing.

...

Violence against women and children is not inevitable. By addressing the social, cultural, political and economic factors that drive this gendered violence, we can -

and this is what the plan seeks to do

end it in one generation.

which is a lofty and a laudable goal, but we need to do it. We need to achieve this.

The plan says:

While our focus for this National Plan is the next 10 years, we know that we need to continue to prioritise ending violence against women and children as we strive to build a community that is safe for all.

To achieve this, we must reshape the social, political and economic aspects of our society that allow gender inequality and discrimination to continue. Across Australia - in cities and regional, rural and remote communities alike - every individual's humanity and worth must be respected and valued, regardless of their age, gender identity, sexuality, sex characteristics, disability, race and culture.

It is an ambitious vision, but we do need to work together to achieve it and we do need to address gender inequality and rigid gender norms. The member for Mersey spoke about this and some of the gender norms around what healthy masculinity looks like. We need to address discrimination that can prevent these this form of violence.

Gender inequality, compounded by other forms of discrimination, including racism, is at the heart of the problem.

We need to focus on advancing gender equality and that must be central to the solution.

Everyone has a meaningful role to play - as families, friends, work colleagues, employers, businesses, sporting organisations, media, educational institutions, service providers, community organisations, service systems and governments.

I will come back to the point that the member for Mersey made around sporting clubs and the role they can play.

Mr President, the National Plan to Reduce Family Violence against Women and Children in 2010-2022 was established to coordinate efforts across all levels of government to address this matter. According to the new plan document, over the past 12 years, the 2010-22 National Plan has:

- helped bring family, domestic and sexual violence to the nation's attention
- demonstrated the collective commitment by the Commonwealth, states and territories to address family, domestic and sexual violence
- supported increased collaboration, including between organisations, government departments and services, including services that respond to groups disproportionately impacted by violence
- supported the development of a world-leading approach to prevention, including the development of *Change the Story*.

These are good measures that have been taken, but it is just starting the journey, sadly.

Since the 2010-22 National Plan, evidence shows, positively, that fewer Australians hold attitudes that support violence against women. That is a positive thing and most Australians support gender equality - not all, but most. Women also report, in broad terms, that they are increasingly feeling safer in private and in community settings. The plan notes that:

Despite this progress, the 2010-22 National Plan did not succeed in its goal of reducing violence against women and children. The prevalence of violence against women and children has not significantly decreased during the last 12 years and reported rates of sexual assault continue to rise. While increases in reporting may be due to women feeling more supported to come forward and seek help, we must reduce the prevalence.

A point worth noting is that sometimes when you make it safer for people to come forward and report, you will have an uptick in reports of violence or whatever it is that you are making it possible to report. That is a good thing if that is what is happening, that people are reporting this violence and so they have a chance of actually understanding the full scope and scale of it and be able to support these people so they are not further harmed.

The new national plan commits to 10 years of sustained action, effort and partnership across sectors and levels of government toward our vision of ending violence against women and children in one generation. So how are we doing? Micaela Cronin, the Domestic and Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, stated in her foreword in the report:

As I consider the year in view, I am profoundly aware of the sense of urgency, anger and distress that many people across the community feel at the scale and complexity of the problem we face - and our lack of progress in addressing it.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) report that in 2023-24, 43 women were victims of intimate partner homicide, compared with 34 in 2022-23.

That is one-year difference between those two years. It went from 34, which is still horrific, to 43.

While we have seen a decline in homicides over the past three decades, the AIC reported 28 per cent increase in the rate of women killed by intimate partners in 2022-23, and a further 25 per cent increase in the rate in 2023-24...

We know that these numbers do not show the full extent of lives lost and harm done. Many more women and children are living with the terrible impact of gender-based violence every day. We know from research that publicly available data is likely to underestimate the true extent of domestic, family and sexual violence. Every life lost is one too many. Every person who lives with the ongoing impact of domestic, family or sexual violence requires us to strive to do better.

This is not the progress we are needing.

The report goes on -

We are witnessing the first generation to grow up exposed to violent pornography and misogyny online in a way that has never been seen before.

The member for Mersey addressed his mind to some of this. I read some time ago a book called *QAnon and On* by Van Badham. I do not know if anyone else has read it. It is a pretty compelling and disturbing read. She went undercover and went in to join some of these groups that were living and breathing on the Dark Web, and a number of their chat groups. It is worth a read to understand the traps and the depth of it and the impact it has on people, and particularly on young men who get drawn into these groups and they become what they call 'incels' - 'involuntary celibate' - guys who have been rejected by women as sexual partners usually. They then congregate on the Dark Web and build basically a hate platform for women because of the rejection they have suffered in some part of their lives. I note the member for Mersey's comments about how do we help men to be good, healthy men. We need to keep men out of these places, that is for sure, which is much easier said than done, and help them to learn to deal with rejection too. It is not their right to have a sexual relationship with a girl because they like the look of her or whatever.

Ms O'Connor - But it is a biological programming thing; they think they should.

Ms FORREST - That is right, there is a bit of that, but we can change that.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, it takes time, though.

Ms FORREST - We can change the software, the system that runs the operating platform.

The one-year progress reports that:

Participants at the crisis talks convened by the Commission in May raised the importance of acknowledging the role of factors such as alcohol and other drugs, gambling, and pornography in promoting violence.

Again, the member for Mersey raised some of these.

While these factors do not in themselves cause violence, there is strong evidence that they may contribute to reducing inhibition and result in more serious violence. There are now calls to have serious, evidence-based discussions about the role these factors have on violence and what levers the government can use to mitigate them. We must diligently reassess our approaches to prevention and response to ensure they are effective and adapting to the changing world around us. We cannot afford to waste the opportunity presented both by this National Plan and the commitment from governments and leaders across the country to 'do better'.

It goes on:

Within the term of this ten-year plan, all Australians should expect to see changes that bring us closer to the goal of eliminating gender-based violence

in one generation. This report highlights key areas for opportunities to accelerate, amplify and drive impact.

It goes on:

Serious concerns have been raised that government systems, including the family court and child protection systems, are causing harm, and that police too often misidentify women as the primary aggressor - with terrible consequences - when they are the person in need of protection.

These are things we can absolutely work on and change. We have known about some of the challenges of the family court and our child protection systems for some time. This is not news to us. Neither is the misidentification of the victim as the primary aggressor. The report goes on:

These outcomes are the result of systems and processes that can be changed with the necessary commitment and inputs, and with the sense of urgency that the current situation demands. And if we are bold and determined to achieve the goal of the National Plan - to end domestic, family and sexual violence within a generation.

Australian Government reporting on the National Plan is yet to commence. The availability of this data in the coming year will enable a clearer focus on assessing the outcomes of the National Plan.

Clearly, there is some more work to be done in terms of the data collection.

The key findings? There must be more options for those at risk of, or using violence, to get help. The member for Mersey spoke about men's behaviour change programs, and these do -

remain the most used and commonly understood intervention for men who are using violence.

There are currently no agreed national standards for these MBCPs (men's behavioural change programs).

While some jurisdictions have standards in place, given the importance of MBCPs in the service response, developing national standards and guidelines should be strongly considered.

We do need to work with these men, but we need men who are not perpetrators to also be on the front foot here, working with this.

The second point:

We must equip mainstream service providers to respond to gender-based violence. In addition to men's behaviour change programs, the Government must also look to mainstream service providers as additional opportunities for intervention for men who use violence.

General practitioners, nurses, medical staff in hospital, mental health and alcohol and other drug practitioners are key personnel who can engage with people where violence is known to be present.

Workers in these settings could benefit from training and skills to identify and respond to men who may be using violence in their relationship.

The third one is:

Working with men who are, or are at risk of, using violence must acknowledge experiences of trauma. The Australian Childhood Maltreatment Study shows that a significant number of people in the community experienced domestic, family and sexual violence as children. That exposure has previously been found to have significant, long-lasting developmental impacts...

While exposure to domestic and family violence alone is not seen as a factor in future perpetration of violence, there is a link between childhood experience of violence with adult use of violence...

The next one is:

Governments must prioritise the development of new and better data on men who use violence. There remains a lack of evidence on people using violence, the pathways in and out of violence, and what works to reduce violence...

- Prevalence data on who is using gender-based violence. While there is an understanding about the extent to which women experience violence and the various risk factors that lead to and result from violence, more data and research is needed around the prevalence and risk factors for those using violence.
- Understanding the pathways into, and more importantly, out of, using violence. ANROWS has been allocated an additional \$4.3 million to further build the evidence on perpetration pathways...
- Further understanding is needed about what works to engage non-violent men to become allies and adopt more non-violent forms of masculinity. This includes the individual, community, and societal factors that lead men to adopt or reject certain versions of masculinity and, by extension, certain attitudes to gender-based violence.

This is where we have a really important body of work. We need good men to stand up and not accept their mates making sexist jokes, their mates hitting or pushing around - or any form of abuse of - their partners, particularly if they see it.

The member for Mersey talked about the value of sporting clubs. What is indisputable is that the night of the AFL Grand Final, the night of the Rugby League final, the night of any of those major male sporting events, the family violence statistics go through the roof.

Any woman who has had any experience of family violence knows to get out of town and hope like hell he has cooled down by the time she gets back, particularly if his team loses.

It is horrific. The police know but we do not talk about it enough. This should be a warning on the TV screen, on the big screen at the footy saying 'Do not abuse your partner when you get home'.

Ms O'Connor - Real men do not hit women.

Ms FORREST - Yes, real men do not. Give the helpline numbers, put the numbers up there, the 1800RESPECT number. Put up the men's referral line, put that information out there. Let these people see it because we know what goes on and just turning a blind eye, because it is great to be at the footy, is no excuse.

I cannot think where I was the day of the Grand Final. I must have been speaking publicly to someone and I made this point, that 'tonight there will be a significant uptick in family violence right across the country', and that is the truth. It is a shameful truth.

We need to make it really visible so that maybe these men who, sadly, use violence, all forms of it, can be more visible to their mates who might stop them - some of those good mates who might stop them.

The report provides extensive commentary on all areas related to the key findings and there is a lot of detail on the plan and acknowledgement that it will take time. We do not need further reviews, however, what we need is real action. What we do need is to see results and a real reduction in the incidence of family violence and genuine, measurable progress to true and real gender equality.

These are the many challenges facing members of our community. Financial and other societal pressures can add to the risks, but we do need to have some hard conversations about the factors that contribute to disrespect of women and increased use of all forms of violence.

We need effective bystander support and action and safe places for victims to go. And there are some really helpful and effective bystander programs that anyone can engage with. It is not easy making sure that when the bystander intervenes, it is safe to do so for them and for the person they are trying to protect, but it is crucially important that we do it and we do it in a safe way.

We must address the underlying contributing factors and men must be part of the solution - not just the men who do not perpetrate violence against women and children, but the men that do.

We need evidence-based, effective programs that perpetrators are required to complete or mandated to complete, as we do with drug diversion programs, et cetera. We need to teach and role-model healthy, respectful behaviour towards women and children in our homes, in our schools, in our community. We need people of courage to call out disrespectful, sexist,

misogynistic behaviour and comments. We need to help young men of today to avoid the traps of toxic masculinity and understand and embrace positive masculinity, acknowledging the pressure on them, and that many of them have not had positive role models.

We need to focus on prevention as a priority, whilst we also need the real support of the current victims. We also need to believe those who have lived experiences. It is not too hard. I will finish by echoing the words of the dedication of the National Plan and it says here:

We thank the victim-survivors who have spoken out and shared their stories. Their work to share their experiences continues to inspire us and drive us to do more.

We mourn those who have been murdered and the children we will not see grow up. We recognise those with lived experience who continue to recover from violence and manage the life-long impacts of trauma. We acknowledge the life-long disabilities and impairments that many live with as a direct result of violence against women.

We acknowledge and thank all the people and organisations who work tirelessly every day to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and children, and whose advice and advocacy, have informed this plan.

I read the statements from the victim/survivors at the beginning of my contribution. I just want to finish by reiterating the latter part of that statement put together by victim/survivors. They state toward the end of their contribution:

The time is now to remove the inequalities that allow perpetrators to exercise power over others because our society:

- does not believe women
- does not value all women equally
- does not hear the voices of First Nations women and learn from their diverse experiences
- does not reward women equally for work
- does not value women's unpaid labour
- does not believe children can be trusted to tell the truth about abuse
- does not view people with disability as equal or able
- punishes those who do not conform
- creates disadvantage and poverty as a problem of individuals.

It is time to stop people and institutions choosing to use violence, feeling entitled to control and dominate to degrade others' values based on their sex, gender, sexuality or perceived 'rights'.

We are not damaged goods. We are not incapable or less than you because we experience trauma. We are survivors. We will not be silenced, pushed into the shadows nor spoken for any more.

We hold knowledge and answers that others simply do not.

We are diverse but galvanised by a common cause. We know what needs to change. No meaningful solutions can be made about us without us.

Stopping our suffering depends on all of us choosing to do something differently. We cannot repeat more of the same and expect to achieve change.

Abuse and violence is a problem for victims but it is not the victim's problem. Genuine change begins with a willingness to listen. We must stop protecting perpetrators with our silence and through inaction. We must be willing to sit in discomfort. It is time to be brave.

I thank the member for Mersey for bringing on that report. I will just repeat that 1800 number for anyone who may be listening or watching, it is 1800 737 732. For anyone in immediate danger, please call 000.

Members - Hear, hear.

[5.17 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important debate today. I thank the honourable member for Mersey for providing the Chamber with an opportunity to focus on and assess the progress of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022 to 2032. I note that the member for Murchison has provided the appropriate numbers and support contact details for people who may be listening or may be engaging with this debate at a later date, so I do not feel the need to repeat those and thank the member for Murchison for doing that.

Specifically, this motion asks us to consider the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Commission's yearly report reviewing the National Plan's progress, which is an incredibly valuable thing to do. I appreciate the member for Mersey's thorough contribution on his motion and agree with many of the areas that he covered and the sentiments he expressed. So my contribution will be relatively brief. I support the material that has already been contributed.

It has been acknowledged nationally and locally that Australia faces a domestic and family violence epidemic. This is a hard truth for any community to have to face. It requires an honest, self-scrutinising gaze into our collective mirror. In this context, the opening statement in the yearly report of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin, provides a steadying force by which to guide our response to this social epidemic, and I quote:

What gives me hope is that some of our biggest challenges and greatest opportunities for improvement are completely within our control to change.

Those opportunities to change is what I wish to focus on during this contribution. First, it is important to acknowledge and note this inaugural report to the federal parliament by the National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission on the progress of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, The 'National Plan'. Fundamentally, it is an independent report card on how we are all going in implementing the National Plan.

In undertaking this inaugural yearly report, the commission evaluated whether and how the National Plan has changed the landscape for those involved in its implementation, those with lived experience and the broader community.

It examines policy, implementation and service delivery that present opportunities to accelerate, amplify and drive impact towards the immediate and long-term objectives of the National Plan. Significantly, the commission's inaugural report card has also identified key areas of focus for consideration of the national, state and territory governments to act upon.

In general, the key findings of the inaugural report can be summarised as these: the need for an ongoing evaluation of the governance of the National Plan's implementation and efforts to assess and measure progress and eventual reporting mechanisms once established. While the governments have recognised the critical role of lived experience in policy-making, more needs to be done to embed lived-experience engagement across all aspects of policy design, implementation and evaluation, prioritising a codesign approach.

Governments have invested significant public funds to address domestic, family and sexual violence, yet despite this, services and systems are overwhelmed by the need that is there in the community.

Men must have a part in every aspect of ending violence. Governments must support efforts to redefine masculinity and engage men effectively. More intervention options for men using, or at risk of using, violence are needed. They need to take a trauma-informed approach, improve information-sharing, risk assessment and management.

Workforce capability development needs national leadership prioritising the specialist domestic, family and sexual violence workforce. Since addressing domestic, family and sexual violence is a key element of work across many sectors, capability development and integration with these workforces is also an opportunity to improve our service system response.

The national report card notes, as a positive development against the National Plan's Actions List, Tasmania's two established Arch Centres, as well as the funding for the third in the north. However, it also identifies that Tasmania is the sub-jurisdictional outlier when it comes to having an established domestic and family violence death review mechanism. Such mechanisms are important to identify systemic gaps in service responses to domestic and family violence and develop evidence-based strategies to prevent future deaths.

On page 103 of the report card, it is noted that, to strengthen Australia's death review mechanisms, Tasmania needs to establish a domestic and family violence death review mechanism with the latest specific reiteration on page 105, allocating responsibility for this reform at the feet of the Attorney-General. I hope to hear the government's response today provide an update on when and how the Tasmanian Attorney-General is planning to act on this recommendation.

The National Alliance of DFV Specialist Services stated in response to the release of the commission's yearly report the following:

As the report notes, existing specialist domestic and family violence services need an immediate uplift of funding to meet demand for services. Despite the horrific number of women and children murdered this year, despite national

outrage and rallies across the country, despite the declaration of a national emergency, calls for increased frontline funding haven't yet been heard, and services are forced to turn people away.

Until all frontline, specialist domestic and family violence services are adequately and sustainably funded, we will not see meaningful progress against the national plan or a future without gender-based violence. Given that the States and Territories are required to do much of the heavy lifting in implementing the National Plan, improved structures to ensure flow-through of resources is required.

These are very salient observations. Further, the commission's yearly report also highlights the need for drastic improvements in funding to improve outcomes for women and children, noting that the experience and outcomes of involvement in family law processes is also influenced by a person's access to legal representation. This has resulted in calls for increased funding to the community legal sector.

This report also speaks of the need for more targeted education regarding family violence for legal practitioners and frontline workers to assist in identifying and responding to family violence in their spheres.

Tasmania must be prepared to do its share of heavy lifting across all of these areas. Looking forward, there is a concrete opportunity by which Tasmania can build into its own women and gender equity policies and plans a formal response to the commission's yearly report, this report card, as it were.

For example, the now established annual Tasmanian Gender Budget Statement could and should include indicators and benchmarks derived from the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, and which also address feedback provided by the national commission's evaluation report card, such as in this inaugural report. Doing so would make the Gender Budget Statement more robust and comprehensive as it details whether and how identified necessary policy and delivery apparatus such as resourcing community legal centres and implementing the state domestic and family violence death review mechanism is being funded and delivered to the Tasmanian community.

Similarly, the commission's yearly report cites the National Plan's identified outcomes and targets against which it measures the delivery efforts of our national and sub-national governments.

These identified national plan goals include the following:

- Systems and institutions effectively support and protect people impacted by gender-based violence
- Services and prevention programs are effective, culturally responsive, intersectional and accessible
- Community attitudes and beliefs embrace gender equality and condemn all forms of gendered violence without exception
- People who choose to use violence are accountable for their actions and stop their violent, coercive and abusive behaviours

- Children and young people are safe in all settings and are effectively supported by systems and services
- Women are safe and respected in all settings and experience economic, social, political and cultural equality.

They set targets here, and the targets are:

- 25 per cent reduction per year in female victims of intimate partner homicide
- 2 point increase in community understanding of the behaviours that constitute FDSV every 4 years
- 2 point increase in community attitudes that condemn violence against women every 4 years
- 2 point increase in community attitudes that reject gender inequality every 4 years
- 2 point increase in community attitudes that reject sexual violence every 4 years
- By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress, towards zero.

Just articulating those national targets for improvement of our social safety brings home how horrific the current reality is and how valuable, in turn, the commission's independent evaluation of the delivery of these goals and targets is.

Significantly, it also provides a template of how Tasmania's policy apparatus could also monitor and report upon our own goals and targets against similar state-based data. It is very hard to track progress if you do not measure definite targets. I hope that is something that the state government will look at closely and see whether we can incorporate similar data collection, analysis and reporting as part of our gender equity policy development and implementation strategies.

To conclude, I wish to also highlight an important point made by the commission in the yearly report, and that is the importance and significance of language, not just our daily language, but also that in the development of our public policy. For example, the yearly report notes the National Plan uses the terminology 'violence against women and children' to acknowledge the high prevalence of men's violence against women and children. Further, the commission uses the term 'gender-based violence', stating that such language recognises gendered violence is primarily perpetrated by men against women, while also recognising higher rates of domestic, family and sexual violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities and other cohorts underpinned by patriarchal norms. Similarly, at a local level we have seen the more nuanced language applied to policy tools such as the now Gender Budget Statement rather than women's budget statement. All this emphasises the complexity of this systemic problem of violence, which our society must tackle in as comprehensive a manner as possible.

It highlights the degree to which family and domestic violence should not be diminished as an apparent women's problem, but is something we all have a responsibility to address. Similarly, gender-based bigotry is all our shared responsibility to tackle without losing sight of the very real fact that women and girls are far and above over-represented in the victim/survivor datasets. This is indeed a whole-of-community challenge to which we must all rise and, as such, we require an integrated whole-of-government response and commitment.

It will be interesting to watch and evaluate further yearly reports issued by the national Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner. The success in that independent evaluation mechanism in keeping the National Plan accountable and on track will be interesting to continue to observe. Again, this work at the national level may provide valuable insights on how we can also effectively monitor and evaluate our statewide policy implementation in a rigorous and accountable manner.

Again, I thank the member for Mersey for raising this matter in this chamber today. I note the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report on the progress of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, and I support this motion.

[5.30 p.m.]

Ms PALMER (Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence) Mr President, I, too, thank the member for Mersey for this motion and certainly appreciate his ongoing interest and, indeed, his advocacy in this area. I very much appreciated the comments that he made during his contribution.

As members in this Chamber would be aware, I have separately held the portfolios as Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence previously. While I am honoured to take on this role again as minister, the weight of the responsibility of overseeing these important portfolios is not lost on me. It is a privilege for me to rise today to respond on behalf of the government to the discussion on domestic, family and sexual violence, and to outline the significant steps our government is taking here in Tasmania to address this critical issue.

The release of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report to parliament gives us the opportunity to reflect on our progress, to examine current strategies, and to reaffirm our commitment to achieving meaningful outcomes for all victim/survivors, while ensuring we involve all Tasmanians in this effort, including men and boys, who are essential partners in ending violence.

The alignment of our initiatives with the national objectives outlined in the commission's report, alongside our Survivors at the Centre, our government's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan, demonstrates our dedication to building a safer Tasmania. Our plan was informed by extensive consultation, and it reaffirms the government's commitment to eliminating family and sexual violence in our communities. We acknowledge that domestic family and sexual violence affects everyone and that any solution must be holistic, addressing both immediate and long-term needs.

We also know that the attitudes and behaviours that lead to gender-based and family violence are present across every corner of our society, and reaching children and young people is key to addressing some of these long-entrenched societal norms.

A core pillar of this Survivors at the Centre action plan is education. Tasmania has already taken a proactive stance through the Respectful Relationships and Consent Education program, led by our Department for Education, Children and Young People. This program educates young Tasmanians about respect, consent and healthy relationships from an early age, laying the foundation for preventing violence by shaping attitudes and behaviours early on.

Our approach goes beyond individual classrooms, fostering a culture of respect across all our communities through publicly available resources, practical teaching strategies and community support materials. We are creating an environment where respect and equity are the norm and abusive behaviours are clearly recognised and addressed. This is particularly vital in Tasmania's rural and remote communities where service, accessibility and community dynamics can differ from metropolitan areas. By embedding these values at every level, we ensure that violence prevention efforts are comprehensive, creating inclusive spaces that support all Tasmanians.

The commission's report highlights the essential role men must play in ending violence, and this is an area our government takes seriously. We understand that true, lasting change requires men to be active participants. While the statistics show us it is women and girls who are adversely affected, we absolutely acknowledge that men are also victims of family violence and sexual violence.

Across Tasmania, we are expanding options for men who are at risk of using violence, recognising that their path to change is grounded in accountability, education and support. Programs such as men's behaviour change programs are pivotal for encouraging men to confront harmful behaviours and develop respectful, non-violent relationships. These initiatives not only benefit the men involved, but also create safer environments for their families, children and communities.

Importantly, our approach recognises the diversity of men's experiences and the different challenges and pathways to behaviour change. Intervention programs are designed to be accessible and relevant to men from all backgrounds, whether they are young or old, from culturally and linguistically diverse communities or indigenous communities. This approach ensures that every man has the support needed to make positive changes. Incorporating trauma-informed practices into these programs acknowledges that some men who use violence may themselves have experienced significant trauma. I want to be clear that there is never an excuse for violence. However, understanding trauma and its impact is a key consideration for creating interventions that focus on healing alongside behaviour change.

The commission's report rightly notes the urgent need for robust, sustainable support for frontline services. Tasmania is acutely aware of the growing demand on our crisis services, which are stretched by increased awareness and reporting of violence. Our government has responded by increasing funding to meet this demand, while also recognising the importance of secure, long-term funding. Short-term funding cycles do not offer the continuity that these services need, and we are committed to providing secure ongoing support to ensure frontline workers, counsellors, social workers and law enforcement can deliver the essential services that protect Tasmanians.

At the same time, we understand that violence prevention requires a holistic approach that goes beyond crisis response. Our partnerships with national bodies, such as Our Watch, reinforce this strategy. Our Watch has been instrumental in developing evidence-based frameworks for violence prevention, and through our collaboration, Tasmania ensures that its initiatives align with national standards and the latest research. This partnership underscores our commitment to being a proactive contributor to the national agenda, adopting best practices and bringing those benefits to Tasmania.

In engaging men as allies in violence prevention, we recognise the unique challenges presented by the online environment, which can perpetuate harmful depictions of masculinity and violence. Our programs work to meet men where they are, whether online, in workplaces or community spaces, encouraging positive expressions of masculinity rooted in respect and empathy and equity. In a world where harmful influences are readily accessible, providing healthy alternatives and role models has never been more critical.

In addition to preventative measures, we are enhancing data collection to better understand what leads men to use violence. This information is invaluable for shaping policy and designing interventions that are effective and targeted. Through these efforts, we are gaining insights into the pathways men take, both into and out of violence, allowing us to develop earlier, more effective interventions. The more we understand these pathways, the better we can prevent violence before it begins. Again, I stress that men are not immune from family and sexual violence, be that physical, emotional, financial, or any other form of abuse.

While prevention and intervention are key, our commitment to supporting victim/survivors remains unwavering. The Survivors at the Centre action plan is named with purpose, ensuring that the voices of those who have experienced violence are at the forefront of all decision-making. This includes our work on the *Family Violence Act*, which has undergone reviews regularly to ensure it meets the needs of Tasmanians. We continue to evaluate our legislative framework to ensure it reflects best practices in victim protection, alongside accountability and rehabilitation for perpetrators.

Our current legislative framework focuses on violence between partners and ex-partners; however, we are actively considering expanding the scope to encompass a broader range of familial violence. We recognise that family violence takes many forms, and we are prepared to adapt our legislation to better reflect the realities facing Tasmanians. Our commitment is to evolve our legislative tools as our understanding deepens, ensuring that Tasmanians are protected regardless of their specific circumstances.

Furthermore, we are strengthening our collaborative approach. Across Tasmania we are working closely with non-government organisations, community groups and other stakeholders to deliver holistic responses.

Our partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations allows us to provide culturally safe support to Aboriginal families, ensuring their unique needs are recognised and met. This whole-of-community approach is essential for addressing the factors contributing to violence and ensuring that all Tasmanians, regardless of background, have access to support.

To support these efforts we have prioritised workforce development, teachers, counsellors, healthcare workers and social workers who are on the frontlines, often the first to identify and address domestic, family and sexual violence. We have invested in professional development to ensure they are equipped to provide trauma-informed, culturally appropriate care. This investment recognises the importance of a skilled, knowledgeable workforce in achieving our goals in violence prevention and response.

In conclusion, domestic, family and sexual violence is a complex challenge and we in Tasmania are addressing it with determination and with purpose. Through the Survivors at the Centre Action Plan, respectful relationships, education and partnerships with organisations like

Our Watch, we are making significant strides. We are investing in Tasmanians' safety, improving support services and involving men as allies in creating change. By taking a comprehensive approach that includes immediate support for those affected and preventative measures that shift behaviours and attitudes, we are building a safer and more equitable Tasmania. Yet, despite record financial investment, exceptional programs, a whole-of-government and community focus, there is still so much more to be done.

Tasmania should be proud of the progress we have made, but we must remain steadfast in our commitment to addressing this issue with rigour and resolve. Again, I thank the member for Mersey for bringing this motion to the House and I note the motion.

[5.42 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, thank you and I thank all the members who contributed. I also acknowledge those who are sitting and listened know that we have covered it fairly extensively from the Floor. That is a good way for it to work. I thank the government for their response as well. I appreciate everybody's contribution and look forward to the next notice of motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

State of the Environment Report 2024 - Noting

[5.40 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes the long-delayed State of the Environment Report 2024 prepared by the Tasmanian Planning Commission and tabled in the Council on 17 September 2024.
- (2) Further notes the findings in the Report that of the 29 indicators:
 - (a) 16 (55%) are deteriorating, including: sea surface temperature, kelp, threatened marine fish, beach change, saltmarshes, migratory shorebirds, pests, soil diversity and condition, land use intensification, native vegetation extent and fragmentation, native vegetation, threatened flora, threatened fauna;
 - (b) six (21%) are stable, including: fisheries, the extent of marram grass, Macquarie Island albatrosses, gulls, resident shorebirds, and greenhouse gas emissions;
 - (c) five (17%) are unknown, including: soil stability, wetlands, water quality, liquid waste, and solid waste; and

- (d) only two (7%) are improving, including the extent of rice grass, and particulate matter in the air.
- (3) Recognises the report paints a dismal and challenging picture of decline that must be arrested.
- (4) Further notes the 16 report recommendations including:
 - (a) Development of a long-term vision and strategy for Tasmania's environment;
 - (b) Exploring opportunities for the government to collaborate with the Aboriginal community in ways that continue to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and values into better care of the environment;
 - (c) Development of an environmental data strategy;
 - (d) Contemporising the Resource Management and Planning System objectives and legislation;
 - (e) Establishing more marine protected areas;
 - (f) Undertaking a review of Tasmania's coastal policy;
 - (g) Supporting the collection and analysis of fisheries-independent data;
 - (h) Improving native vegetation mapping and information;
 - (i) Implementing measures to end illegal vegetation clearance;
 - (j) Continued investment in Tasmania's terrestrial reserve system in order to maintain the integrity of the current reserve estate;
 - (k) Implementation of a state-wide soil monitoring program;
 - (l) Strengthening fire management activities;
 - (m) Regular review of programs dealing with biosecurity matters and invasive species to ensure these programs are properly resourced, strengthened and prioritised;
 - (n) Development of a broader water policy, monitoring and reporting approach;
 - (o) Air quality monitoring and emissions reduction across all sectors and
 - (p) Implementation of the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy.

- (5) Calls on the government to implement all of the recommendations in the report for the health of our environment, the health of our people, the health of our economy and the future of lutruwita / Tasmania.

Mr President, we talk about many important and meaningful subjects in here each day. I do not think we talk about the environment quite enough. If we, as a parliament, and the government do not respond to the findings and recommendations of the State of the Environment Report, we are wilfully consigning Tasmanian children, our kids, generations not yet born to a more depleted island.

We have some choices to make here. Before I begin, I want to acknowledge that for tens of thousands of years, we do not know how many thousands of years, but fair to say, for countless millennia, Tasmanian Aboriginal people looked after this island. They understood its seasons and its cycles. They had patterns of landscape management, of cool burning, of hunting, that after 50,000 to 60,000 years of human habitation of this island, left the island in an extraordinary - not that any of us were there at the time, but environmentally sound and healthy state - 50,000 or 60,000 years. So, in the last 221 years, the damage that we have done to this beautiful island is profound and it is detailed in a State of the Environment Report that is 10 years overdue, where we had a government that missed two statutory deadlines.

What this report tells us is that the state of the environment across multiple indicators is in decline. This is not due to natural causes, it is due to us. It has happened since European colonisation of Lutruwita/Tasmania. Now, there is a feeling that I think a lot of Tasmanians have and it is not something that is all that easy to articulate, but it is a sense of being blessed, which we are. We live in one of the most beautiful, peaceful, safe places in the world and it is that feeling as a Tasmanian, as you look around you and you realise, you know, and for many of us, I think it happens in subtle ways every day: what an extraordinary place this is. So we have a duty and a solemn responsibility to look after it. We have a solemn duty to respond to the State of the Environment Report 2024 and in doing so today, in bringing this motion forward today, I want to honour the great Tasmanians who have, or who did dedicate their lives to protecting this island's natural environment or dedicated their lives to being part of a civil society movement that stood up and continues to stand up to defend this place's environment.

One of my favourite quotes about Tasmania came from Olegas Truchanas, where, he said:

Is there any reason why Tasmania should not be more beautiful on the day we leave it, than on the day we came? If we can revise ... our attitudes towards the land under our feet - if we can accept the role of a steward, and depart from the role of the conqueror; if we can accept ... that man and nature are inseparable parts of the unified whole - then ... Tasmania ... can be a shining beacon in a dull, uniform and largely artificial world.

It was Olegas's images of the south-west wilderness that brought that extraordinary place to the world's attention. I do not know how many honourable members know this, but the 1967 bushfires burned a lot of his original photography. So it just made him more determined to go back into the wilderness to again capture this place because he understood that in order for it to be protected, in order for it to be saved, people needed to see it. People who could not walk into it needed to understand what it was.

Then of course, Peter Dombrovskis, who idolised Truchanas, said:

We have a chance now to save these places, to stop them from being destroyed. Once they're gone, they'll be gone forever.

This is the same Peter Dombrovskis whose iconic image of Rock Island Bend changed the national conversation about the then Gray government's plans to dam the Franklin. He said:

When you go out there, you do not get away from it all, you get back to it all. You come home to what's important, you come home to yourself'.

He said - I know there are other honourable members who share this feeling; I certainly do:

Whether distant and strange, or close and familiar, I need contact with wild nature. It is as necessary to my soul as breathing and eating are to my body. It gives meaning to my life and reaffirms my kinship with all life.

Mr President, both Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis died in the wilderness, and it sounds clichéd to say it, but they definitely died in a place they loved dearly, doing something that they loved very much and knew was important.

This place, its environment, has inspired photographers, artists, writers, poets, the intrepid, the lonely and the in-love-with-nature. It certainly inspired the late and mighty Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, who died recently. I pass on my sincere condolences to Jamie's family, to the many, many people who loved him, whom he helped over the journey, whom he taught. He was one of the greatest Tasmanians who ever lived.

Just briefly, on Jamie Kirkpatrick, before I get to the report itself - Jamie had been working for Tasmania's environment since the 1970s. He led the scientific and academic charge for the recognition and protection of our unique biodiversity, ecosystems and geoheritage. He published hundreds of scientific papers and articles underpinning community campaigns and collectively contributing to the understanding and incremental protection of some of the world's most precious places. As a member of the former Save Ralphs Bay Incorporated group, I know that for the 'Ralphies', being able to tap into Professor Kirkpatrick's great knowledge, to be able to ask him questions, to be able to reference his work, was really important to us in protecting Ralphs Bay, and all the life that it sustains, from a Gold Coast-style canal estate.

He said when he arrived here in 1972:

I came to Tasmania, saw this amazing place, knew learning about the socioeconomic impediments it was worth fighting for, and decided to dedicate the rest of my life to doing just that.

What a remarkable Tasmanian. I am certainly very thankful for his life. I wonder, as I was thinking today, what would Jamie Kirkpatrick have made of the State of the Environment Report 2024? I think he would have found it unsurprising and quite dispiriting reading. Certainly, what it tells us is that of the 29 indicators that were measured in the report, 16 - more than half - are deteriorating. Six are stable, probably, but we do not have enough data to be absolutely sure of that. Two are improving, and five of the indicators are unknown. Again, it is

because there has been a failure of government to invest in proper monitoring, research and data-gathering that there is some inability to understand the state of the environment in key areas.

If you want to have a look at what is in decline and has declined significantly over the last 10 years, sea surface temperatures are rising on the east coast of Tasmania. We have some of the fastest-warming waters in the world. That has impacts on people who live along the east coast, people who rely on that natural environment to earn a living. It has potential future impacts on the tourism industry for the east coast. Our kelp, our incredible kelp, is in decline. We have species hurtling towards extinction. We have threatened marine fish, the Maugean skate. We know that the red handfish and the spotted handfish are also in trouble. We have seen sea level rise and storm surge damage our beaches. Our salt marshes, those incredible vital ecosystems - the lungs, in many ways, of the coast - are also in decline. Migratory shorebird numbers are plummeting. We have more pests here than we did before, bigger biosecurity challenges. Our soils are in trouble, overused, under-protected. We have certainly intensified the way we use, misuse and abuse land. Native vegetation is being illegally cleared. Forestry is listed as a pressure on eight of the 29 indicators. I note that the State of the Environment report does not recommend an end to native forest logging, but it certainly points to native forest logging as a very significant contributor to the state of environmental decline in Tasmania.

We have fragmentation of habitats, a massive loss of native vegetation, increasingly threatened flora, threatened fauna. We have the war on wildlife, which is going extremely well, as is the war on women, which we heard today. In budget Estimates, we got back the details of the crop protection or property protection permits. There are still permits being issued to kill thousands and thousands of native Tasmanian animals. In some ways, that is just a lazy policy response, where instead of working with farmers on ways that you might minimise the impact on wildlife, which was there first, we just hand out permits to shoot them. We shoot black swans here. I cannot work out why, as a farmer, you would want to pop off black swans, but we do. Our rivers are in trouble, as well.

There are 16 recommendations made by the Tasmanian Planning Commission and the team that worked on this report. I say a big thank you on behalf of the Greens - certainly in this place - to the authors of this report and the team that worked on it in the Tasmanian Planning Commission. It is meticulous. It is clear and easy to understand, and within its quite cautious language there is a strong sense of urgency. The word 'essential' is used in the State of the Environment Report multiple times in multiple chapters and recommendations. 'It is essential', say the authors of this report, 'that we develop a long-term vision and strategy for the environment.'

How is it that we could not have one in Tasmania? How is it that we can have an Environment Protection Authority (EPA); we can have the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* (EMPCA); we can have the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA). We have all this legislative framework, which is ostensibly part of a protective framework, but the State of the Environment Report makes it clear it is not working, because it is in decline.

Where are the worst pressures? In the coastal and marine area, sea surface temperatures: the condition is poor and getting worse. From October 1944 to May 2023, monthly mean sea surface temperatures for June to October inclusive have increased by approximately

2.5 degrees Celsius, and between, in the summer months, November and May have increased between 3.1 degrees Celsius and 3.8 degrees Celsius. That is the waters around Tasmania. It is caused by a rapid warming of the Tasman Sea and the increased strength and persistence of the East Australian Current.

Our threatened marine fish: poor and getting worse. The report notes conservation efforts have helped some fish, but many are declining, including the skate, the red and spotted handfish, which are vulnerable to the impacts of habitat degradation, pollution and invasive species. In some good news, the great white shark and the bluefin tuna are improving from historic lows. I might just say, on the bluefin tuna, there are fishers who catch that down on the Tasman Peninsula. It is a critically endangered fish and it is still being fished. Sometimes, because of the limits on that fishing, you will see that there is excess bluefin tuna dumped near wharves. Why is it that we would allow fishing of bluefin tuna if we fished them to the point that they are critically endangered?

There is some good news in terms of our fisheries but, again, there are data issues. We have ocean warming. According to the State of the Environment Report, about 57 per cent of fish stocks are sustainable and a quarter of them are depleted. We need stronger management strategies. Fisheries management needs to be a real priority of government.

There has been a long-term decline of saltmarsh extent and condition, ongoing effects from land clearing and climate change causing erosion and dieback. Our salt marshes are not unlike mangroves. Where I grew up in south-east Queensland, all the fisher folk understood that mangroves were fish nurseries, and we intuitively understood their value to a healthy coastline. In Tasmania, we are not taking care of our saltmarshes. There has been research out, I believe since 1997 by Robert Costanza et al., which talks about estuaries and salt marshes as being the most important ecosystem for human survival in terms of the environmental, economic and social values that they bring.

Some good news: the Macquarie Island albatross is apparently in a fair state and the trend is stable. Macquarie Island is a long way from here.

Would it not be terrific if we had a government that prioritised, for example, the survival of the fastest parrot on earth, the swift parrot? We do not have that because what we have, and you can see it in the State of the Environment Report, is a blithe and arrogant belief that business as usual will be okay because governments have short attention spans; they are about four years long. Within the space of a term, you do not get many governments, even really good ones, planning for the future and that is part of the problem. The other part of the problem is major parties that have been running this island since Federation and that have been very easy pickings for corporations.

We have seen it with the salmon industry, Mr President. We have an ancient species on the verge of extinction in Macquarie Harbour and a Premier who has \$4000 ticket dinners with corporate salmon and has made a promise to JBS and Huon Aquaculture, for example, that the industry will expand. And his words, quoted, which he never denied were: 'It won't be popular, but we're going to do it', which he said to JBS, one of the Batista brothers. It is just one example of taking this island for granted and thinking that we can just take and take and keep taking from it. The war on nature involves, usually, men in suits in boardrooms. Men are having a pretty bad rap in here today and I am sorry to all the men -

Ms Forrest - There are some women who certainly participate in this space. Make no mistake.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know. Absolutely, I know. It has long been corporate players in their suits and, yes, mostly men historically, but certainly there would be plenty of people of other genders who are making these decisions for corporate profit that lead to poisoning, draining, bulldozing and burning of natural systems, and it is all lawful. As Olegas Truchanas said, 'This island could be a beacon to the world', and yet we are not seizing the opportunity to make it so. We seem to think that we can keep taking from Tasmania and everything will be fine. We seem to think - the government seems to think - that business as usual is the answer, and we just go to the recommendations of the State of the Environment Report. These are not in any way radical. I have read the report and I have even been a tiny bit disappointed in it because there could have been stronger calls made. Some of the calls, for example, are for increased monitoring of data. That is nice, but we do not want to be monitoring species to extinction. We want to be taking the kind of action that saves the species and saves their future. The State of the Environment Report makes these recommendations not just to government, but to the parliament, and all of them, if you look at them, are reasonable and achievable.

There could be a political consensus built around these recommendations and it is surely a responsibility of government to try to do that. Nobody, surely, wants their legacy to be a natural environment that is in a worse state when they leave this earth than when they arrived. We know from the World Wildlife Fund's analysis that over the past 50 years, within the space of many of our lifetimes, 73 per cent of the world's species have disappeared, 73 per cent of the world's wild animals have disappeared, three-quarters, in our lifetime. That is why you do not see anymore those great flocks of swift parrots that used to fly through Hobart seasonally. When I first arrived here, one flew into the window of my car. I was probably in some ways part of the beginning of its extinction. We do not see, for example, those great swarms of insects. People remember driving up and down the midlands and there were thousands of bugs which hit your car.

Ms Forrest - Bugs on your windscreen, that is what it was.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, hit your windscreen.

Ms Rattray - They are still there.

Ms O'CONNOR - Not like they were.

Ms Rattray - They are still on mine. Perhaps they like my car better than yours.

Ms O'CONNOR - Perhaps they have all gone to the lovely east coast. Anyway, it is a state of decline that needs addressing.

The commission recommends that the Tasmanian government develops a long-term vision for the Tasmanian environment and a strategy to implement that vision, acknowledging that it is a whole-of-society response which is needed to care for the environment. That is true, but it is unfair to place responsibility for this degradation and decline on individual Tasmanians. It is unfair and unreasonable in the same way it is unreasonable to place the responsibility for climate change on the shoulders of an individual person because these decisions, where the power lies, is with governments and with corporations, and they are failing. They are failing to

protect the environment. There need to be reports to parliament on progress towards the goals and targets of the strategy every two years or so, says the commission.

Recommendation 2, something we have never done enough of, and I know there have been some positive moves in this direction, but the commission recommends that the Tasmanian government explores opportunities to collaborate with the Aboriginal community in ways that continue to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and values into better care of the environment. This is a critical aspect of maintaining and restoring healthy cultural and ecological landscapes. This is how we succeed and prosper as an island community looking after our environment, walking with the Palawa to learn more about respecting country and how to look after it, to deeply understand and acknowledge that we are part of the natural world, not over and above it, and it is that attitude of thinking we are somehow separate from it that is hurtling us towards very difficult times.

Recommendation 3: develop an environmental data strategy. The commission recommends the government leads the development of an environmental data management strategy that promotes data standardisation, sharing and accessibility to ensure the best information is readily available to inform environmental decision-making. Again, what we have seen in recent years is a decline in investment in the State Service.

When I first got here as a journalist, the Parks and Wildlife Service, through the then Lands Department, had specialists in every ecological field - the Nigel Brotheres, the Nick Mooneys, and the Mark Holdsworths of this world - who were paid to deeply study species, their habitats, the threats to them and how we can protect those species and the science and the data that was being gathered then was extremely rich. Over the years, those functions have not been completely taken away, but the focus on research has diminished because for governments, research takes a long time and it is not something you can get an obvious productive outcome from, but it is essential that we invest in science and we invest in sound data because if we do not know what is going on, we will have no idea how to tackle it and make it better if we can.

We have a resource management and planning system which has done a fair job. Its first principle is one of sustainable development, sustainable management and use, but it needs upgrading. The commission recommends the government reviews the existing legislated sustainable development objectives within the RMPS to ensure they are contemporary and effective by aligning them with the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kumming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Recommendation 5: this is an area of public policy which has been completely abandoned for the best part of 12 years. Tasmania used to be part of a National Marine Protected Areas Strategy that was agreed to by the federal government and states and territories. We made commitments to set aside representative bioregional ecosystems for protection. We made commitments to establish marine protected areas, not lines on maps but genuine no-take marine protected areas in places where we know there is real pressure. If we are serious about fish for the future, then we need to understand that you have to protect certain ecosystems so that they have resilience within them and are generating life for the future. In New Zealand - I think I have told this story in here before, but it is worth repeating - where fisher folk were initially fiercely resistant to no-take marine protected areas, they ultimately became their strongest advocates because the fishing industry was ultimately an economic

beneficiary of having some areas where you could not fish which could become healthy fish nurseries.

It is time. We cannot have this antagonism towards protection. If we are going to look after this island and the complexity of the ecosystems that are part of it, we have to do some brave things and take people with us. Government should not be scared of setting up marine protected areas. It is almost like there has been a political reaction to the rise of the conservation movement and the green movement, so that there is a feeling in government that we will just push back against anything that is green. We have to get over this. It is childish and ultimately self-defeating on a grand scale. Let us get back to working out a marine protected area strategy, work with coastal communities, scientists, recreational and professional fishers and come up with a plan that we can get behind, because before it was called the Tasmanian Planning Commission, the Resource Planning and Development Commission was doing fantastic work on a bioregional level, understanding the nine marine bioregions around this island, getting into the science and the complexity of them and making sure that we had a policy response so that they are well managed. Let us get back to establishing more MPAs.

Recommendation 6, and this is something that will probably come up a bit tomorrow and the next day and in the weeks ahead, but the commission calls for a comprehensive review of the Tasmanian Coastal Policy in response to pressures and threats to natural and built coastal environments, including consideration of the impacts of climate change, development, recreational activity and other activities on important coastal environments and habitats, as well as matters of habitat protection. What we are being presented with in terms of a State Coastal Policy review, which follows the validation bill, is something which is not about strengthening the State Coastal Policy's protective capacity, but it is about making it easier for developers to build on and access the coast. That is what the planned review of the State Coastal Policy is founded on, because it has come up after the Robbins Island situation and a clear problem that government and some developers have with provision 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 of the State Coastal Policy. It is sad that we are discussing changing the State Coastal Policy but it is not about protecting ecosystems. That is not the conversation that we have been having to date. It is more about providing certainty for industry and developers.

Recommendation 8: improve native vegetation mapping and information; a recommendation that the government continues to improve native vegetation mapping and information by building on existing TASVEG data sets to enable more timely assessment of native vegetation clearance. Again, this is another neglected data set where you can look at that data set and understand that the relationship between the data set and what is happening on the ground is almost zero because it is not a data set that is being invested in and maintained to the level that it needs to be.

The ninth recommendation is that the Tasmanian government acts on illegal native vegetation clearance, and this is not a problem that is unique to Tasmania. In Queensland, where I grew up, they flatten thousands of hectares in a day to put cattle in and grow cotton with very little constraint. Native vegetation clearing is happening here too. There are arguments, people will say 'this is private land and farmers should be able to do largely as they please on private land', but in the end, none of us really owns anything except our own skin and the notion that a piece of land - an area of land that has been in our family, on our little place at Nubeena, I never really feel like I own the land because we are just passing through, and it is a feeling of wanting to be a custodian for it and love it properly. I understand why farmers should feel that they should have maximum flexibility about how they manage their

land. Overwhelmingly, land management in the agricultural sector is very good, but there is a custodianship issue here. We should be encouraging landowners and primary producers through legislation and regulation, if necessary, to prevent unnecessary native vegetation clearing on their properties.

The report found that the state of our soil stability is in unknown condition, but our soil diversity and condition are deteriorating. It is recommended that the government considers the need for a statewide soil monitoring program to build on the existing soil and land resource information surveys undertaken in Tasmania and facilitate the reporting of soil condition and trends. We all know that this island has very old soils. They are not, as I understand, particularly rich, for example, in iodine or some of those sorts of minerals. That said, we also have a very a robust primary production sector and a clean, green and natural brand which is in part based on our agricultural sector and the health of our soils. If we do not look after our soils, honestly, we are stuffed. I might just say on that point, the most important animal to the health of soils on this island is the echidna. It is arguably one of the most important animals on the island because echidnas, in their special little way, aerate the soil, which helps to keep it healthy. They are arguably doing a better job of looking after the soil than any government in Tasmania to date.

Recommendation 12 is one of the most significant recommendations in this report. It is that the Tasmanian government continues to strengthen and support fire management activities, including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities which are essential to the care of Tasmania's environment. This is an area of public policy which we are nowhere near close to being on top of. Any member in this place who has heard Prof David Bowman speak about fire risk to communities will be very cognisant of the risk to our communities as the planet heats. We need to have a very robust fire prevention, fire management and firefighting system in place that is properly resourced so that our TFS, SES, Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania firefighters know that the government and the parliament are there to support them to do what will become an increasingly demanding and difficult job in the years ahead. It should be an absolute priority of any decent government to invest in fire management.

We have Recommendation 13, which is about biosecurity and invasive species. It was really great to see the State of the Environment Report name the fallow deer in the room and call for the removal of protections by regulation of wild fallow deer from regulatory frameworks, including under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations. It is perverse and stupid politics to think that we can continue to let feral deer breed up here and not be eradicated from the island. They are already costing farmers tens of thousands of dollars a year in fencing and lost crops. They are in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area; anyone who drives up over the Central Plateau at dusk will see a deer. They are everywhere. Part of the reason they are everywhere and causing so much damage is that no government in the history of this place since colonisation or since deer were introduced has done anything meaningful to control deer numbers. The consequences of that are really significant. That animal does not belong in this landscape and we should remove the protections from it, engage the shooting community and just have an eradication program that deals with this species over a sustained period of time, with the resources in it and doing it humanely.

The water issue, Recommendation 14 - we need a broader water policy monitoring and reporting approach. Again, this is one of those areas where I think the commission could have been a bit stronger in its language. It does cite former premier Mr Gutwein's PESRAC report, which states that:

To meet future demand for water and ensure that water quality is sufficient for our agricultural and environmental needs, we need a broader water resource policy approach that addresses resource allocation, water security and water quality, setting specific targets and binding the State Government to monitoring and reporting, as well as more transparency. This should be an immediate priority.

We obtained, and I have talked to members about this before, through the caretaker period, in the 2021 state election, the Temporal and Spatial Patterns in River Health across Tasmania report, which found that more than half of all the major river systems on the island are in decline. This was a report where the science was so robust and so damning that government tried to hide it. We asked for it, then we tried to get it through Right to Information, could not get it, then it was provided to us in the caretaker period. You cannot expect to be taken seriously as a government on the environment if you are trying to hide basic data about river health. It is very poor form.

The commission recommends the government addresses these issues. It does not mention, however, the unfairness and inequity over water metering, for example, where you have some primary producers who have water meters and some who do not. It is a historical issue that no government has taken on. Some primary producers are paying whatever rate for the water that they can count that they use and other primary producers who are on unmetered allocations - who knows what they are using? It is an unfair, inequitable system.

We also need to be quite thoughtful about how we roll out irrigation on the island too, because if you do irrigation badly you can have issues with salinity in the soil; it can have a degrading and scouring effect on our soils and we need to address that.

One area of the State of the Environment Report which showed some improving in particulate matters is in air-quality monitoring and emissions reduction, and the recommendation is that the government continues to support monitoring efforts in Tasmania and the expansion of this to meet requirements of strengthened Australian air quality standards. I will say at this point, because I cannot resist, every autumn the air quality here is appalling because Forestry Tasmania is napalming clearfelled forests, pumping tens and hundreds of thousands of tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

Recommendation 16, the final recommendation, is for the implementation of the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy. I remember when the Hodgman government first came to office, they talked about establishing a circular economy. That was 10 years ago. We enacted a container deposit scheme; this is what the member for McIntyre was talking about the other day, and still, nothing. We still have very little emphasis going into reducing household waste. Could we please have a waste management strategy for this island?

There is a word I found the other day when I was doing some reading that explains how some of us feel when we read the State of the Environment Report or when we think about the state of the world. It is 'gnostalgia', and it comes from two Greek words put together: 'gnosis', which is knowledge, and 'algos', which is pain. Gnostalgia is something that climate scientists, for example, suffer from. It is the pain of knowing.

What the State of the Environment Report does, first of all, if you read it, is: you will feel sad. There is just no way around that. I feel sad. But it gives us an opportunity to understand

the challenges. Not all of them, it is a solid report, but it does not and it could not capture everything, and there are data gaps that prevented a deeper understanding of some impacts on some systems. We have this real opportunity here to understand that there is a moment here. The world is in trouble. The climate is heating, biodiversity is in decline, but here we are on this tiny island, this little heart-shaped island, cooled by the Southern Ocean: most beautiful. It is even more - this is a big call - but for anyone who has been to New Zealand, it is a stunningly beautiful country, but it is very environmentally degraded in parts. We are not there yet. We should not allow ourselves to get there. This is a parliament with 50 intelligent people of goodwill. Even though we all come from different backgrounds and have different stories, fundamentally, on about 80 per cent of issues, we share the same values. All of us, I am sure, love this island.

We have an opportunity here, not to just say, 'Oh yeah, that was the State of the Environment Report, a couple of statutory deadlines late. It's done now. We don't have to think about it anymore' - and, if you are in government, 'Oh, thank God that's out of the way'. We cannot do that. We cannot do that to our kids. We cannot do that to our grandchildren. There are things in this report that everyone should be able to agree on. We should all agree - I am sure we all agree - Tasmania needs a long-term vision and strategy for the environment. That is not a big ask.

Through the PESRAC consultation, it came back that that is what Tasmanians want. Twenty years ago, when Jim Bacon was the premier, through the Tasmania Together process it became really clear through an extensive, statewide consultation process that Tasmanians wanted the environment looked after. Something like 70 per cent of people who were surveyed through Tasmania Together said they wanted old-growth - and that was the terminology used at the time - logging to end by 2010. We are still logging old forests, at a massive loss.

I am sorry this has been a sort of sad telling. There is nothing cheery in the State of the Environment Report, and we cannot confine ourselves to only looking at the positives. Today has been, in this place, a very moving and profound day of debate. We have talked about weighty, significant and, in some instances, utterly tragic matters. The state of our environment is weighty and significant, and we have an opportunity here to avoid tragedy. We can look after our rivers, can we not? We can look after our soils. We can have good regulation and legislation in place to respond to a report that has come out of an independent planning body that is very measured. It is a very reasoned body of work.

I have not heard, and I note the Minister for Parks and formerly Environment has come into the Chamber and I hope it is to respond on this matter, even though I know that the State of the Environment Report is a responsibility for the Minister for Planning, but I have not heard a meaningful statement from the government about the State of the Environment Report. We ask questions about it in the House of Assembly and in Estimates and in here, and all we get is this glib 'Oh well, we'll consider its recommendations and maybe get back to you sometime'. That is how it feels. It is not good enough. It is not good enough to have a body of work like this done and everyone just move on. The Greens certainly will not be letting parliament move on from the State of the Environment Report.

We pressured the government into doing this. We cajoled them over years as they missed statutory deadlines and finally shamed the Planning minister before the most recent Planning minister, Mr Ferguson, into making sure it was done. Now the work has been done by the Planning Commission. It is on government and all of us to deal with this. Why are we standing

here, nearly six weeks after this report came out and we have not had a meaningful response from government? It is a core responsibility of any government to look after the environment. It is honestly absolutely a core responsibility and to do anything less is negligent and reckless.

Mr President, I am sorry if any member is annoyed because I have talked at length about depressing and distressing things, but the state of our environment is distressing.

Mr Gaffney - I liked the bit about the echidna.

Ms O'CONNOR - Did you, more than the swift parrot slaughter?

Mr Gaffney - Yes, echidnas are good.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thanks. I will get some more echidna stories in there in future. What was that?

Ms Forrest - You were talking about how they mate? That is interesting.

Ms O'CONNOR - I hope it is face to face.

Ms Forrest - You did not know? That is an interesting story - there is a little dance that goes on.

Mr PRESIDENT - Maybe for another day.

Ms Forrest - There is a little dance that goes on, a big dance, actually.

Ms O'CONNOR - I thank members for their time in listening to this. If you have not read the State of the Environment Report, even read the summary report, we have a responsibility to do that and the Greens are in this place to keep this on the table and to make sure that we are talking about these issues and pushing government to take them seriously because we are here to work constructively. We are here to seek consensus. We will not agree on everything, but we will do everything we can to make it better. I hope that the government understands that there is a willingness in the community; there is a yearning for things to be better. Politically, if the right conversations were had, I think there is a willingness to do things differently. We can do it. We can make this island a beacon of hope to the world.

I note the motion. I hope other members take the opportunity to think about this matter and hope that the government understands we are not going to let the pressure off on this. We think we represent overwhelmingly everyday Tasmanians who want our beautiful environment looked after.

[6.39 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - I am very pleased to rise to speak to this motion and thank the member for Hobart for giving us the opportunity to do so. However, given the time, I am going to, in the first instance, move to adjourn the debate for the purpose of a dinner break and make my substantial contribution, or not very substantial contribution, when we get back from that.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[6.39 p.m.]

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

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

This is for the purpose of a dinner break.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.39 p.m. to 7.34 p.m.

MOTION

State of the Environment Report 2024 - Noting

Resumed from above (page 94).

[7.35 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I will pick up where I left off, which is right at the beginning of my contribution to the motion where I was thanking the member for Hobart for bringing the motion for us to consider and welcoming the opportunity to contribute to this important critical debate, noting the State of the Environment Report 2024 and calling for a formal response from the government to its findings and recommendations.

It would be interesting to ask who, of the members in this Chamber, can recall the predecessor of this year's State of the Environment Report? Who here would remember the release of, and findings of, the State of the Environment Report 2009? It certainly predates me in this Chamber, and many others, although not all. There would be current teenagers in our state who were not born when the last State of the Environment report appeared in this place. Within that period, what we see now in this report is a mapping of a stark and worrying decline in the ecology of the home of those teenagers I just mentioned.

Members may recall that there have been growing calls over the last five years demanding the government act to resource the production of an independent and comprehensive state of the environment report in accordance with section 29 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*. I was one who repeated those calls, and have followed progress of this debate with keen interest on behalf of concerned members of my electorate and the broader Tasmanian community.

It is worth noting that it took the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), acting on behalf of the Australia Institute in 2022, to compel the then Planning minister, Michael Ferguson, to direct the Tasmanian Planning Commission to prepare the State of the Environment Report by no later than June 2024.

Due to the huge backlog of research required, combined with inadequate resourcing over a considerable period of time, the Tasmanian Planning Commission required an extension, finally delivering the State of the Environment Report to the Minister for Planning on 30 August this year. Then, ironically, the government decided to be a stickler by the act, with the minister refusing to publicly release the report until November - sorry, not November, October, I think it was. What was the date it was released?

Ms O'Connor - Second-last week of the last session downstairs. It was 4 October.

Ms WEBB - We digress, Mr President, until later.

Citing section 29, subsection (3), which requires that:

The Minister must cause a State of the Environment Report to be laid on the table of each House of Parliament within the first 15 sitting days of the House after the Report is received by the Minister.

Of course, that provision requires a tabling of the report within that specified time frame. It does not decree the report cannot be made public until 15 sitting days have expired. However, that seemed like intransigence and misreading of the broader Tasmanian community's room. It is symptomatic of the attitude which strived to ignore its legislated responsibility to produce and implement findings of a State of the Environment Report in the first place.

Changing this attitude, which required NGO stakeholders to add to the political voices who had been making repeated calls - NGOs including The Australia Institute and the EDO - having to pursue potential legal action in order to have the government act in accordance with Tasmanian law - is possibly going to be as big a challenge as it is acting on the State of the Environment Report's findings that we now see in front of us.

After 15 years of a long wait, there are many hard truths detailed in the State of the Environment Report 2024. The member for Hobart has highlighted and presented a thorough precis of the report's 16 key recommendations, 29 indicators, and their combined ramifications. I do not intend to repeat that exercise now. I thank her for doing that and getting it on the record.

As stated by the EDO managing lawyer Claire Bookless upon the release of the State of the Environment Report:

Over the past decade, and in the face of climate, pollution and extinction crises, the Tasmanian Government has been systematically undermining the environmental protections and community rights provided under RMPS laws.

The jury has now delivered its verdict on those changes: the long-awaited SoE report provides a sobering assessment of the abject failure of the RMPS and decision-makers to conserve our precious and life-supporting natural systems.

The State of the Environment Report paints an alarming picture of an environment under significant strain and facing multiple threats. There are no two ways about it. It is unequivocal that of the 29 environmental categories this report assessed, 16 were found to be getting worse,

and 11 were in poor condition. Further, the list of Tasmanian threatened plants and animals is spiralling in the wrong direction, with an ever-increasing number joining that list. Our unique and sensitive island state ecosystems are being decimated by climate change, vegetation loss and invasive species.

Of grave concern is the State of the Environment Report's finding that over the last 15 years since the last report was published, our native vegetation decreased by at least 3 per cent, becoming far more fragmented. Approximately one-third of Tasmania's native plants are now classified as threatened; 154 species are listed as endangered and at risk of extinction, and on our watch, over the last 15 years, 20 species became extinct.

The report also confirms that which many of us had feared. Our island is experiencing significant impacts from climate change, including the warming of seas around Tasmania which are heating faster than the global average, beach erosion due to rising sea levels, and the disappearance of the state's unique kelp forests.

This must be heeded as a wake-up call. In fact, it is as piercing a local, evidence-based emergency alarm as we have ever received. It should shatter any complacency or ideologically based denial. Whether convenient or not, our island home is not immune from climate change. Our beach borders, currently the focus of much populist characterisation as being the epitome of the Tasmanian lifestyle, are eroding on our watch. We cannot pretend our marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are robust and can keep providing for us when all we do is take while returning so little and protecting so little. That is what the State of the Environment Report 2024's 29 indicators and 16 recommendations tell us, based on rigorous, peer-reviewed and evidence-based research.

Where to from here? Since 2009, it took us 15 years to wrangle, argue for, pursue, demand, and finally obtain this mandated State of the Environment Report. For 15 years, Tasmanians were kept in the dark about the true condition of their home and all the other species with which we share it. Sadly, as the evidence tells us and the scientists keep reminding us, ignorance is not bliss. The failure of successive governments to produce, regularly, every five years, such a report as prescribed under section 29 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*, was a breach of the law. To now ignore the findings of this report is to breach Tasmanians' trust and confidence. It would be a breach of any government's moral compass to put it on the shelf and consign it to either the 'too hard basket' or the 'disinterested' category.

It would be an unconscionable betrayal of current and future generations to fail to act to protect our home, this island of lutruwita/Tasmania. The State of the Environment Report 2024 should not be regarded or treated as a full stop. Its purpose is not merely to serve as a tick box to indicate section 29 of the act has finally been complied with. Indeed, it is nothing less than an urgent call for action.

As highlighted again by the EDO:

Luckily, the SoE report provides a roadmap out of this disastrous situation. The Tasmanian Government must accept and act on all the expert recommendations outlined in the SoE report.

Specifically, we need to tackle the identified key drivers for declines, including climate change, vegetation and habitat loss, pollution and waste. The report's roadmap out of this

decline is structured around its 16 recommendations for better management of Tasmania's environment, which can be summarised as prioritising the following.

First, the development of a long-term vision for the Tasmanian environment and a strategy to implement that vision and reporting to parliament on progress towards goals and targets of the strategy every two years.

Second, identifying opportunities to collaborate with Tasmanian Aboriginal groups and incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and values into better care of the environment.

Third, development of an environmental data management strategy to ensure the best information is available to inform environmental decision-making.

Fourth, Tasmania's resource management and planning system legislation needs to be amended to align with Australia's international legal obligations and ensure it provides for contemporary and effective decision-making.

Critically, we are still waiting for the government's formal response to the State of the Environment Report. That will tell us whether the emergency alarm is being heeded or whether we are going to continue on a crash course to ecological disaster. When we do see the government's formal response to the report and its recommendations, as a bare minimum, it must include benchmarks by which each of the 29 indicators can be monitored and reported against in a consistent and robust manner throughout the period between now and the next State of the Environment Report.

Further, there must be a comprehensive implementation plan for each of its 16 recommendations. I would go as far as saying we have a precedent and prototype for prioritising, in an accountable manner, serious recommendations that have a collective intergenerational impact on the Tasmanian community and action plans to ensure both their delivery and scrutiny of their delivery. I am talking about the catalogue of findings and recommendations arising from the state commission of inquiry into the government's response to child sexual abuse. Following the delivery of those recommendations, we have a formal whole of government response, including a tabulated breakdown of departmental responsibilities against each of the findings and recommendations, indicative time frames and required actions detailed.

The parliament then, with the government's agreement, also established a dedicated Joint House Committee by which to provide transparent and accountable scrutiny of how well the delivery of the action plan is consistent with the intent of the findings and recommendations of the commission of inquiry. This is all appropriate apparatus, exercising responsible oversight of significant public policy implementation to address an identified crisis within our community - in that particular example's case, that of institutionalised child abuse in the public interest.

In the face of the current global climate crisis and our national and state biodiversity crisis, in an ideal Tasmania, we would immediately establish similar parliamentary oversight apparatus to ensure and monitor the delivery of the State of the Environment Report's findings and recommendations to counter the identified drivers of ecological decline and securing the intergenerational health of our island home. I believe it warrants such parliamentary oversight, yet that may be a debate for another day.

One last point I would make, however, is to place clearly on the public record now that when the government does provide its formal response to the State of the Environment Report 2024, that response must also include a clear and funded plan for the preparation of the next State of the Environment Report in accordance with section 29 of the act. We cannot allow a repeat of another 15-year delay.

I note the following comment made by the TPC Executive Commissioner, Mr John Ramsay, in the opening pages of the State of the Environment Report 2024, in which he states:

In conjunction with the preparation of this Report, the Commission has given consideration to developments that have occurred in relation to the SoE reporting since the Tasmanian requirement for SoE reporting was established in 1993.

The Commission would be pleased to provide further advice on contemporary and timely SoE reporting during the course of the next 5-yearly reporting cycle.

I hope and expect the government's formal response to the 2024 report reflects the fact that they have taken up the commissioner's offer and acted upon the offered advice.

To conclude, I thank the Tasmanian Planning Commission, the State of the Environment Report steering committee, especially the independent expert authors and theme coordinators, the case-study authors, the policy reference group, the peer-review experts, and all others who assisted in this endeavour. However, the best way to thank and to pay genuine respect to all those who contributed to this timely and critical State of the Environment Report 2024 is to not just thank them in a forum such as this, but to heed their findings, actively listen and interrogate their findings, and act on all 16 recommendations with rigour and without fear or favour. That would be the most meaningful acknowledgement and all the thanks needed, I am imagining, for those who put their blood, sweat and tears into providing Tasmania's first State of the Environment Report in approximately 15 years.

I thank the member for Hobart for ensuring this place addresses the long-awaited and critical Tasmanian State of the Environment Report 2024.

I note the report and I support the call for the government to implement all of its recommendations for the health of our environment, the health of our people, the health of our economy, and the future of lutruwita/Tasmania. I support the motion.

[7.50 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I do not have a lot to add, but I did want to put on the record, first of all, I thank the member for Hobart for bringing this to the Table and to this parliament for our discussion and debate. She was very clear on the different aspects of the State of the Environment Report. I also acknowledge the member for Nelson, who outlined in an excellent way the delay and the difficulty there has been in getting this report to this place.

I was thinking the other day, we heard - I was listening to the ministerial responsibilities for Committee A and I counted, I do not know, 17 or 18 - and I imagine, there are similar numbers on Committee B. I know that some of the aspects of this State of the Environment Report cross-fertilise those portfolios, that is to be recognised. But if I was to say to the people

in this room, I want you to think of the seven most pressing things that are facing the Tasmanian community in your head, what are the seven or eight most important things that you think are facing our community today and tomorrow and next year? And I sort of sat down and went, 'Oh, well, cost of living, that would be up there; jobs, health and education - those would get a guernsey. Transport perhaps, housing', and then I went, 'climate, environment, safe communities', but climate and environment would be higher on the list for some of the people in your communities, about the state of that - especially our younger people.

Therefore, if we want a government to be in stewardship - and that is what all governments are, they are there for a certain period of time to do the work on behalf of the people they represent, and I really do not mind which flavour it is, as long as they are doing their job - you want them to minimise the cost-of-living rises. You want them to prepare our community for jobs. You want them to address significant health issues. You want them to improve our education statistics. You want them to try to create better transport systems. You want them to build and find more ways to house people. And you want to try to minimise our impacts on climate change, but then you would definitely want them to address all the aspects of the environment that is so important to our community and so important to us.

We are all a small green. I do not go to the dark green because sometimes they go overboard, but I like that most people in Tasmania have that green bent. I think of the recent elections in Queensland, where they have the - what is that, thinking of all those down the side of Queensland in the water?

Ms Webb - The Great Barrier Reef.

Mr GAFFNEY - That one. They have that, they have the rainforest, they have fracking issues, and yet the Greens did not get to do that well in the recent elections. That is not to say that that is a reflection on those people, but Queenslanders appreciate that.

Yet in our election recently, we increased the number of Greens because I think Tasmanians feel that the environment is important. That is part of the reason why we need to ensure, or the government needs to ensure, that they do address this State of the Environment Report. I also think the Greens did not support the stadium too, but that is another issue.

Ms O'Connor - We should support the stadium, you think? Gosh, not there.

Mr GAFFNEY - That is it. However, we do need a long-term vision, but we also need short- and medium-term goals on how to get to that place. We cannot afford in five years to come back and have another State of the Environment Report, say 2029, and we have more degradation. We have not addressed some of the issues that are there. It is important that the government take on board the report and they come back to the parliament saying, 'Look, this is going to be really hard to do, but these are the things that we are going to be looking at doing' and take some responsibility for the State of the Environment Report that let us say will happen in 2029 because that way we can measure if what they have put in place now is actually improving our environment and making it better. If we come back here in 2029 and it is worse, then we failed in our job too, I think, because we are part of the parliament which instructs the government about what to do.

I appreciate it coming to the Chamber. I appreciate the other points of view. I understand that the government will respond as best they can, but seriously, they need to take this on board

and say, 'What can we do to make sure this decline does not continue?' because we all want our children and grandchildren and their children to be able to see an echidna every now and again.

[7.56 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the government's plan for Tasmania's future outlines our commitment to protecting our state's much-loved natural environment.

It is important to recognise that we have much to be proud of in Tasmania. We have just over 50 per cent of our land under reserves. The Australian average is 22.1 per cent of jurisdiction protected. Queensland has 8.8 per cent protected. Keep that in perspective. We have one of the world's largest temperate wilderness areas, covering almost a quarter of Tasmania or more than 1.6 million hectares in this state. We were the first Australian jurisdiction to achieve net zero emissions, which has been maintained for the last nine years.

Ms O'Connor - Thank you, Tasmanian Forest Agreement.

Mrs HISCUTT - Let us not dismiss these achievements. The State of the Environment Report is an important means of documenting baseline data, trends and risks across our state. The report makes 16 recommendations across a range of areas, including managing our waterways, protecting threatened species, fire management, biosecurity and invasive species. The government recognises that this is a significant body of work. We are committed to sustainable management of our environment while also continuing to pursue economic development opportunities, ensuring Tasmania remains the best place to live, work and raise a family. The government is currently reviewing the report, its detailed findings and its recommendations.

The report is broad-ranging in scope, significant in length and highly technical in nature. It touches on many areas of government, industry and community responsibility. It will be important to take time to consider the findings, seek advice and formulate a measured and consolidated response to the report. We will prepare a thorough government response to all the recommendations in due course. As such, we do not support the members' motion at this particular time. As the previous minister for Environment indicated during budget Estimates, the government will provide a response by the end of the year.

Importantly, there are many existing government activities and commitments that are protecting and enhancing Tasmania's natural environment that are building our understanding through science and research investments and that we are delivering through partnerships. In addition to the vast range of existing programs and activities in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania and various other agencies, the government continues to invest in a range of threatened species research and conservation management programs. This was evidenced with the announcement on National Threatened Species Day on 7 September of a new \$8 million Threatened Species Fund to directly support conservation activities for priority species.

The government is also continuing to invest in key partners to deliver on-ground conservation action across the state. For example, in the 2024-25 State Budget we have allocated more than \$1.865 million over three years toward Landcare's programs and initiatives. This includes \$900,000 over three years towards expansion of the successful Landcare Action grants and programs which fund a diverse range of practical on-ground

conservation activities. We also committed an extra \$1.2 million per year for two years to the state's Natural Resource Management (NRM) bodies, which means each region will receive \$544,000 per year for two years.

Recently, the state's three NRM bodies wrote to my colleagues, Mr Duigan, Mr Ellis and Ms Howlett, outlining the extensive work that they are already delivering in response to the report recommendations and the important role that our funding of the NRMs plays in supporting the delivery of the government's NRM framework and each of the three regional NRM strategies. The state government funding is crucial to our NRM organisations leveraging and attracting additional Commonwealth, international and philanthropic investment. I am pleased that more than \$54 million has already been invested and attracts investment into the environment projects across Tasmania.

We will continue to explore with the NRMs how their work can align directly with the recommendations outlined in the State of the Environment Report. These are only a few examples of the good work that is being progressed and we are awaiting comprehensive advice from respective departments on the recommendations.

It is important to point out that there is already a significant amount of work underway which addresses or responds to the report's 16 recommendations. In fact, I could spend another 45 minutes talking to members through each and every one of these reports and recommendations and what we are doing. In the interest of members' time, the government is prepared to table this information for members to hopefully read and look at and know exactly what we are doing. They will highlight the progress and achievements which are being made. In light of that, I seek leave to table a document and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Document tabled and incorporated.

See Appendix 1 (page 132).

Mrs HISCUTT - Thank you, Mr President. It is very lengthy; I could read it out, but we would be here for another hour, so thank you for that. The government does note the notice of motion, but we disagree with it. Thank you.

[8.03 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I will just make a brief reply. I thank the honourable members for Nelson and Mersey and the Leader of Government Business, but particularly Nelson and Mersey, for their very thoughtful responses to the motion to note the State of the Environment Report, but also calling on the government to fund and implement its 16 recommendations.

I am disappointed to hear that the government does not support the motion and I can indicate, so members can prepare themselves, that I intend to call the division on this notice of motion. No more Mrs Nice Guy.

Ms Forrest - They might not vote out loud. You might not lose.

Mrs Hiscutt - You wait till the President makes a call.

Ms O'CONNOR - Anyway, I have put a motion up for the council to consider and I feel it requires a vote. I have found it interesting in the Leader of Government Business's response, how sometimes - and the same thing happens when we talk about the climate - the government is so proud to say that around half of our state is protected in reserves, and then at other times it is almost like talking about our protected areas is anathema to them. The same with the climate and forests, 'maintain native forest industrial logging', then, in another breath, when you are talking about the climate, talk about how proud you are of our net-zero profile, which, of course started in 2013 when we set aside those forests for the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. Here, in a couple of examples, is why we are in this strife we are in: because we have a report here that says these things need to be done and a government that says we are doing all sorts of things, but not the big picture, strategic, seriously funded and, in some cases, quite difficult things to do.

I am disappointed that the government has decided not to support this motion, and I can indicate that we will be back and we will talk about the State of the Environment Report again. We will talk about its recommendations and findings again and I hope over time our government sees that there is a strong will in the community for real action on the environment.

I have my own thoughts on what happened in the Queensland election. The Greens vote held on a statewide percentage point of view, but we lost a seat. It is interesting to have a look at our campaign because, it could be argued, for example, we did not talk about the environment enough in Queensland. That could be argued.

I look forward to seeing whatever the government's response is to the State of the Environment Report because then that will give us something to work from and we will have a better understanding of the government's commitment - or not - to protecting the environment. It is one thing to put \$8 million into threatened species protection, but you are still logging the native forest that the swift parrot needs. You still have tens of thousands of fish in a closed harbour in Macquarie Harbour, which is the only remaining habitat of the Maugean skate.

We have this cognitive dissonance at scale here. It is deeply frustrating because I know if we had a one-on-one conversation with every single member in this place, they would agree that we need to tackle the challenges that have been put forward to us in the State of the Environment Report and the obvious challenges that we know about and we can see all around us. All you have to do is pay attention to what is happening around us and you can see it and you can feel it. Talk to young people, as the member for Nelson and the member for Mersey were talking about. Young people are stressed up to their back teeth and it is by responding in a collective, cohesive and strategic, focused way to something like the State of the Environment Report 2024 that we give them hope and that is part of our job.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Poker Machines - Mandatory Cashless Card System - Noting

[8.09.p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes the state government's Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission Ministerial Direction (No. 1) 2022 requiring the implementation of a mandatory cashless card system for poker machines in Tasmanian hotels, clubs and casinos, including loss limits, breaks in play and optional commitment for time spent playing;
- (2) Acknowledges the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission's public consultation process on the implementation of the poker machine mandatory card, which closed on 18 October this year;
- (3) Notes the statement provided on the adjournment debate by the Leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly, on Wednesday 16 October this year, that the Department of State Growth has engaged Deloitte Access Economics to undertake an analysis of the social and economic impact of the Government's poker machine pre-commitment card policy;
- (4) Further notes that the Premier has not released publicly the terms of reference or contract provided for the Deloitte Access Economic review; and
- (5) Calls on the government to release immediately the terms of reference for the Deloitte Access Economics' social and economic impact review of the poker machine pre-commitment card policy, as commissioned by the Department of State Growth.

I rise to speak to motion No. 19 in my name on the Notice Paper. I cannot imagine how excited members must be that here we are at just gone 8 p.m. and I have risen to speak on this topic that I am very passionate about. Members will be very aware that I like to discuss it in some detail.

However, this is a fairly straightforward motion. I am hoping that we can move through this and agree on this quite readily. The motion relates to a topic, as I said, that I have spoken on many times in this place at great length. The motion revisits the topic of poker machine reform and harm minimisation because it appears we are seeing an exceptional opportunity to genuinely and substantially reduce the harm caused to Tasmanians and their families by pokies addiction being torn away by the Rockliff government, as it yet again appears to be doing the bidding of the politically powerful pokies industry lobby.

I believe that is what we are seeing occur: covert actions taken at the direction of the pokies industry to pave the way for a shameful retreat from the implementation of what is an evidence-based, expert-recommended and community-supported consumer protection measure. The points of this motion lay out this disgraceful pathway that the Rockliff government is on, as it again appears to be on the very verge of utterly failing to prioritise the Tasmanian community's social and economic best interests over protecting the addiction-derived profits of the pokies industry.

The motion asks that the Legislative Council first, in point (1) of the motion, notes the state government's Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission Ministerial Direction (No. 1) 2022, requiring the implementation of a mandatory cashless card system for poker machines in Tasmanian hotels, clubs and casinos, including loss limits, breaks in play and optional commitment for time spent playing.

The 2022 Ministerial Direction mentioned here in the first point of the motion requiring the Gaming Commission to implement the mandatory cashless card system did not come out of the blue. It is worth recapping here how it came about so we are clear on the order of events. In fact, that ministerial direction originated in the lengthy debate in both Houses of parliament over the Gaming Control Amendment (Future Gaming Market) Bill, which was legislated here in 2021. No doubt members who were in this place at that time will recall our extended debate on that legislation. That parliamentary debate led to an initial ministerial direction, which was Ministerial Direction No. 1 of 2021. This was a direction to the Gaming Commission, which said it was to:

1. investigate the extent to which facial recognition technology and a smartcard-based identification system for electronic gaming machines in casinos, hotels and clubs could minimise gambling harm; and
2. provide a report on the outcome of the investigations and recommendations as to the most effective method of implementing these technologies in casinos, hotels and clubs.

That was the first ministerial direction. That ministerial direction asked the independent Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission for its recommendations, basically, on the most effective method for minimising harm from those two areas specified.

In preparing its report in response to this direction, the commission consulted widely and provided plenty of opportunity for industry to raise concerns and provide evidence in this process.

As the Treasury's website states:

Following the Direction, the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission conducted a robust investigation that included targeted and public consultation, a review of national and international research and an independent feasibility study.

All the supporting materials for that investigation, including all submissions received from public consultation undertaken by the commission, can be accessed on the Treasury website including the final report produced, which was publicly released on 15 September 2022.

In delivering its final report in response to that 2021 ministerial direction, the Gaming Commission was very clear. Its report explained why facial recognition technology would only be marginally effective in reducing harm from poker machines and did not recommend its adoption, but rather provided ample evidence for the effectiveness, desirability and community support for a mandatory card-based system for using poker machines. That was its strong, clear,

prioritised recommendation. The government's response to this report, which is also available on the Treasury website right now, stated this:

The Tasmanian Government commends the Commission for the breadth of work conducted for the investigation and extends appreciation to stakeholders that contributed to the consultation. The Government has accepted all recommendations and will work with the Commission to implement the first state-wide mandatory player card gaming system with pre-commitment in Australia, further strengthening gambling harm minimisation for the Tasmanian Community.

That is the government's response to that report from the Independent Liquor and Gaming Commission. This indicated the government was satisfied with the commission's work in investigating these matters. The government accepted the recommendation to develop and implement a mandatory card-based system and to give effect to that, the 2022 ministerial direction was issued, requiring the Liquor and Gaming Commission to begin undertaking that process.

I note that the government's response to the final report of the Liquor and Gaming Commission also said this:

The Government anticipates that venues will retain a greater percentage of their turnover under the new FGM arrangements than under the current arrangements even taking into account the costs of card-based systems.

This indicates that the government, in deciding to accept the recommendation for implementation of a mandatory card-based system, had considered the expected impact on the revenue of pokies venues and deemed it to be acceptable. In explicitly acknowledging that pubs and clubs 'will retain a greater percentage of their turnover under the new FGM arrangements than under the current arrangements even taking into account the costs of card-based systems', the government has admitted that it had given a significant financial boost to pubs and clubs under the future gaming markets reforms. That is what is referred to there for those members who worked in when we passed those reforms. FGM is the future market gaming reforms. For total clarity, that was the change to the licensing model for poker machines in our state where our state moved from a single licence to individual venue licences.

Alongside acknowledging that this financial boost to venues under the new licensing model, explicit in this statement in the government's response, is that preserving the financial expectations of venues would not override the expert recommended good public policy on harm minimisation in its commitment to implement card.

Revisiting that statement from the government in its response to the Liquor and Gaming Commission's final report certainly prompts us to question exactly how much of a financial boost poker machine venues have received in the first full year of implementation of that future gaming market reform. The first full year being the 2023-24 financial year, we are now well past that.

The whole basis of that licensing model reform was to move from that statewide single pokies licence to individual venue licences that restructured how the pokies 'profit pie', if you like, was divvied up. Under it, venues themselves would take a much larger slice of the profit

pie than they had previously under the single-licence model. How much of a revenue boost did venues get in that first year of 2023-24 under the new licensing model compared to, say, the previous year as the final year under the old model? The answer is 'we do not know'. In this state, unlike many other states, venue-based data for poker machines is not publicly disclosed. Venue-based data disclosure should be a responsible part of regulatory accountability in this state. The pokies industry has always opposed and managed to stave off any such requirement, unlike in some other jurisdictions, Victoria, NSW and Queensland to some extent, which do have public disclosure of various venue-based data.

We do not have ready public reporting of how much of a revenue boost venues have received under the new model with their larger slice of the profit pie that they now take, but my guess is that it would be substantial. The only reason to keep that secret and, for example, not make that data public would be because they are embarrassed about exactly how large that boost has been, and when I say they would be embarrassed, I am referring to both the government and the industry.

Maybe the Deloitte report, which is discussed in this motion and we will get to shortly, will provide us with an insight into this data about the boost to revenue for venues under the new licensing model, because the data is very important if Deloitte is to look at potential economic impacts of the card. These newly acquired financial windfalls for the pubs and clubs under the new licensing model should not be quarantined from the introduction and the effects of the mandatory card. Those new super profits that they have been able to tap into with their larger slice of the profit pie are not a right to which those pokies businesses are entitled. They were gifted to them and we should not be seeing any protection rackets to see them maintained and sustained.

Back to ministerial directions. A key question: what has the industry been doing since the 2022 ministerial direction for the Liquor and Gaming Commission to implement the poker machine mandatory card? Given their history of secret lobbying and deals with the major parties, I am sure they were not sitting on their hands doing nothing. Has the industry raised concerns about the pokies card? If so, with whom? Are there publicly available records of any meetings or correspondence where concerns have been raised by industry? Is there any publicly available record of the response or promises made by government to any such concerns raised by the industry? There certainly does not appear to be.

The government's commitment to implement the mandatory card-based system of September 2022 was made well ahead of the start of the new licensing system, which came online on 1 July 2023. When implementing the new licensing system, the tender for the licenced monitoring operator, the LMO, which sits at the centre of operating that system, included that there had to be the capacity to include the mandatory card as part of the system. It was built in as an expectation, expected and planned as part of the way forward, responsibly regulating poker machines in this state.

Work has been underway in the Liquor and Gaming Commission and the Liquor and Gaming branch of Treasury to progress the card system, the design and the implementation plan. In December 2023, the Liquor and Gaming Commission provided key pokies industry stakeholders with a preliminary consultation paper providing information about the design and function of the system, focusing on how venues and patrons will be impacted, including the practical impact of the policy on gaming-machine play. Information on that industry consultation can be seen on the Treasury website, including the consultation paper that was

prepared for industry. It is noted on the website that the consultation was confidential because of its focus and no submissions are available on that website.

Here is a key question: did industry respond to this formal consultation undertaken by the Liquor and Gaming Commission on the poker machine card reforms? If they did, where are their responses? We know from comments made by the Gaming Commissioner on ABC Radio in the middle of this year that there was no engagement at all from the industry with that formal departmental consultation process conducted over last summer. What an astonishing revelation.

What other industry in the state would refuse to engage with a formal departmental implementation consultation process on a fundamental matter relating to its regulation? I will tell you: an industry that knows it is above good governance, robust policy-making and responsible regulation, that is who. The Tasmanian poker machine industry - an industry that knows it can throw its weight around behind the scenes, in secret, demanding and getting far more favourable outcomes through political threats and promises than through engaging in proper process. That is who.

Another key question: we can only wonder, with what was no doubt escalating pressure from the industry behind closed doors, at what point did the government start thinking it might need to backpedal on this card?

Moving on to the second part of the motion: point (2) of the motion reads:

Acknowledges the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission's public consultation process on the implementation of the poker machine mandatory card, which closed on 18 October this year;

Subsequent to the formal consultation process with industry over last summer, which we know was disdainfully ignored by the industry, the Liquor and Gaming Commission has continued to progress development of the technical requirements of the player card. It recently called for public submissions in response to a public consultation paper that outlined proposed systems and sought feedback to help further develop aspects of the card-based system.

The commission's consultation was supposed to 'assist the commission by providing views on the player experience and operational requirements for the system' and 'the feedback from consultation will be considered and included in system design and implementation plans as appropriate'.

Submissions to this consultation closed on 18 October, 11 days ago. With horrible irony, this happened to be the same week we heard in parliament that the government had secretly commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to apparently investigate the economic impacts of the planned poker machine card. We do not yet know how many submissions were made to the commission's public consultation process, who they are from, nor what they say.

I know that, unlike in the earlier industry consultation process, there have been submissions made, there has been engagement from the Tasmanian public to this commission consultation process. I know this because a number of the key community stakeholders have shared their submissions with me, knowing I would be keenly interested.

I thank any community members and stakeholders who went to the trouble of investing their time and care in making a submission to that process. For some - let us be clear here, they were seeking input from people with lived experience - who made submissions to that public process, it may have been quite a painful and challenging thing to do. It is unconscionable to consider that Tasmanian community members and stakeholders who have engaged in this way may be subjected to the betrayal of the state Liberal government in thrall to the pokies industry heavyweights if, as it appears, they are preparing to backpedal their way out of implementing the card.

I take this opportunity to thank the commission and the staff in the Liquor and Gaming Branch who have been progressing this work of implementing the mandatory card-based system. It is nation-leading work and it is shameful in its clear and present danger that we see right now of it being discarded and dishonoured.

Point (3) of the motion says:

Notes the statement provided on the Adjournment debate by the Leader of Government Business in the House of Assembly, on Wednesday 16 October this year, that the Department of State Growth has engaged Deloitte Access Economics to undertake an analysis of the social and economic impact of the government's poker machine pre-commitment card policy;

The grip of the pokies industry on both major parties in this state through a combination of donations and political threats has historically seen industry dictate government policy - literally write it, in fact, in some instances - and limit effective regulation through its demands. That is fact and nobody can stand up in this place and say otherwise.

The ministerial directions of 2021 and 2022 seemed to be a change in this paradigm. Finally, it appeared that responsible, evidence-based public policy and consumer protection was proceeding regardless of industry power and the way in which it is exerted in this state. However, as I have already discussed, the industry has clearly been working furiously behind the scenes, seemingly seeking to sabotage this new dawn.

The fruits of this political influence came to light two weeks ago, dragged into the light of day in parliament and likely a little earlier than had been intended by the government on the afternoon of Monday 14 October, with the resignation from Cabinet of Mr Michael Ferguson MP, the original decision-maker and primary champion of the card-based system within the government. It was immediately clear that the card was likely at risk. At this turn of events, correspondence was sent to the Premier from me and other MPs seeking his urgent confirmation of his government's commitment to fully implementing the card-based system as described in the Ministerial Direction of 2022, and under development these past two years.

In addition to this, questions were put to the Premier in Question Time in the other place on Wednesday 16 October and Thursday 17 October. On Wednesday 16 October, the Premier's answers to questions put to him were less than satisfactory. Rather than allay concerns about risk to the pokies card, they inflamed them. In answering questions, or indeed perhaps more accurately, contorting himself in order to not provide a straight answer, the Premier raised a number of red flags, including this: instead of answering, he pivoted to promoting the government support of facial recognition technology and implementing that in Tasmanian

venues. We know the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission did not recommend that and said it was only of marginal benefit in reducing harm caused by poker machines.

Any time any politician from any party gets up and starts talking about facial recognition technologies, they are parroting the pokies industry lines. They are acting as a puppet of the pokies industry, because facial recognition technology is industry-approved technology that they want to see implemented. What that tells us is it will not be effective in meaningfully reducing harm. It will be quite handy for the industry and for venues. It could be part of a great marketing system - but it will not meaningfully reduce harm in the Tasmanian community. When you see that happening - politicians of any party getting up and speaking about facial recognition technology - they are being a puppet of industry. When the Premier pivoted to that, it is a red flag.

The Premier also pivoted to raising issues about the economic effects and impacts on the hospitality industry and jobs that might be caused by the card. That was a massive red flag.

Later that sitting day, on the adjournment of the Chamber, it became clear when the Leader of Government Business in that place rose to provide further information to the Premier's earlier answers in the day. This is what was said, on adjournment, by Mr Abetz, leader of government business in the other place:

Honourable Speaker, the Premier was asked about the Government's commitment to harm minimisation and the implementation of electronic gaming machine reform during Question Time. The Premier repeats that our government remains committed to harm minimisation. We acknowledge that there are concerns around economic impact and effect on jobs which we must consider in the implementation.

The Premier advises the government has requested advice from the Department of State Growth on the current government policy impact on the hospitality venues across the state, including tourism and hospitality election commitment, the government's electronic gaming machine existing policy and the government's 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy commitments - regional events. The Department of State Growth has engaged Deloitte Access Economics to undertake an analysis of the social and economic impact of the above. A report will be publicly released by the government.

There is a Dutch saying - I cannot say it in Dutch - and I think it is apt here. The translation is: 'Now the monkey comes out of the sleeve', meaning now, the hidden thing comes into the light; now the trick is revealed. That additional information slipped under the door in adjournment in the other place at the end of a long sitting day and we see the monkey coming out of the sleeve from this government. A secretly commissioned report, not by the minister responsible for pokies card reforms, not within the development and implementation process being undertaken by the responsible body, the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission and the Liquor and Gaming branch of Treasury. Rather, it looks like it has all been done through the Premier, where, clearly, the lobbyists of the pokies industry have found a more willing ear and, clearly, a more favourable response to the political influence they have been bringing to bear these past two years.

This is a playbook we are more than familiar with from this industry. Cries of impact on jobs and venue viability are the predictable first port of call. Remember, this is the industry that in 2018 said that the Labor Party's then-policy of confining pokies to casinos only would put 5000 jobs at risk. It was a blatant lie, with no backing in reality or data, and which was thoroughly disproven by an ABC fact check. Yet the industry was happy to shout it from the rooftops, as was the then-premier, in support of them. This industry has form in making grossly exaggerated claims as it demands fealty from the major political parties in this state and brings them to heel through backroom political threats and deals.

Lo and behold, just yesterday, with predictable shamelessness, the loudest lobbyist for the pokies industry has come out with yet another utterly ridiculous claim. Steve Old of the Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) stood in front of the media yesterday morning and said that on the data they have, the introduction of the card-based system would close up to half the pokies venues in this state.

Ms O'Connor - Lying again. Lying again.

Ms WEBB - If the industry expects anyone to take that as anything other than a ludicrous exaggeration, pulled out of thin air in order to bully the Liberal government, they must put the data in the public domain so it can be tested. A refusal to put their claimed data in the public domain can only be taken as an admission that the claim is simply made up for dramatic effect by Mr Old. Believe you me, that performance is getting tired in this state.

We have been here before. We know emotive, unfounded claims such as this, no matter how loudly you shout them, are nothing more than a pathetic lie. It will be telling if the Premier stoops to parrot this lie this time. The then-premier in 2018 parroted the industry lies told then. Will Premier Rockliff have the self-respect to avoid such subservient boosterism? It remains to be seen, but right now he looks to be teetering on the edge of it.

Here is a key question: what is Deloitte likely to report about the social and economic impact of the pokies card? That, of course, depends what the intention was in commissioning the report and on the terms of reference defined to give effect to that intention, which brings us to the next point in my motion.

Point (4) of the motion says:

Further notes that the Premier has not released publicly the terms of reference or contract provided for the Deloitte Access Economic review;

What was the Premier's intention in commissioning this report, behind the back of his Treasurer who found out about it in parliament; behind the back of the responsible minister for pokies reform, the Minister for Finance; behind the back of the Liquor and Gaming branch in Treasury; and behind the back of the independent Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission? What was the Premier's intention in commissioning this report, and how will this be given effect to through its terms of reference? We do not know yet. We do not know because the Premier has been cagey about the origins of this analysis, and we have not seen the terms of reference. The Premier has not released them publicly.

So far, in the absence of open information, our only impression of this Deloitte report is that it has come about because the pokies industry appears to have demanded it. As a result, it

starts off with little credibility. There is no reason for secrecy on this front. If the Premier expects Tasmanians to give any credence to the Deloitte report when it is released, he must step away from the shadow of secrecy in which it was commissioned and be open about its intent, scope and terms of reference.

To continue to withhold these details simply perpetuates the impression of a furtive arrangement, dictated by a powerful industry to deliver promised outcomes at the expense of the social and economic wellbeing of the Tasmanian people.

I do think it is worth being honest and upfront about the social and economic impact of poker machine addiction and harm in the Tasmanian community. Let us recap on that a little, shall we? A total of \$186 million in losses was the amount that was taken from Tasmanians by poker machines in 2023-2024. Evidence indicates that around half, in this case, let us say around \$90 million, was bled from Tasmanians being harmed by pokies. I am just going to pause there for a minute to clarify something. Every claim I make in relation to poker machines, every bit of data I quote or evidence-based claim I make, I can point to a reference for it. I can point people to why I am saying that and what expert has said it or shown it or researched it. I can say that. The pokies industry does not show its data. The pokies industry cannot back its claims and point to references that back up everything that it says on this matter. I want to make that point right here.

Evidence indicates around half the losses, let us say \$90 million, in the 2023-24 period was bled from Tasmanians being harmed by pokies. These Tasmanians do not exist in a vacuum; they are our family, our friends, our workmates, our community members. For every person harmed by addiction to poker machines, evidence says five to 10 people around them are also being harmed.

With Tasmanian income demographics and our cost-of-living pressures, which we have already discussed today, the economic impact of addiction-derived losses of \$90 million a year is devastatingly harmful and it would absolutely, categorically include children going hungry, mortgages and rents going unpaid, homes being lost, increased domestic violence, families breaking apart, debts being accrued and defaulted, employers and community organisations being defrauded, jobs being lost, criminal acts being committed, crippling mental ill health, and lives being destroyed. These are the additional costs to both the social and economic outcomes of Tasmania when we are talking about the harm caused by poker machines.

It is not just a straight \$90 million being bled from people harmed by pokies; it is all the flow-on effects - the harm that bleeds out into the community. These costs are not often readily included in cost-benefit type analyses. Will Deloitte, in its analysis, include consideration of these costs currently experienced as a result of pokies harm? We do not know because we have not seen the terms of reference.

In 1999, the Productivity Commission recommended a mandatory cashless card with loss limits as the best way to reduce harm from poker machines. The mandatory pokies card being implemented in Tasmania - as we speak because it is on its way; we are two years into its implementation - will significantly cut the losses from addiction and will meaningfully reduce the human and economic harm.

Any politician of any stripe stating their commitment to pokies harm minimisation is by definition saying they support a reduction in profit for pokies venues. Let me repeat that. Any

politician of any stripe stating their commitment to pokies harm minimisation is by definition saying they support a reduction in profit for pokies venues. I tell you what: it is a given that the introduction of the pokies card will affect revenue of poker-machine venues. Their revenue will go down somewhat. That is by definition the effect of a successful harm minimisation measure. That \$90 million is lessened. The \$90 million that was taken in 2023-24 from people being harmed would not be repeated. It will be a lower figure.

If we do not expect there to be an impact on the profits of venues, that would indicate an expectation the card will not be effective. So, spoiler alert: the Deloitte economic impact analysis will definitely indicate lower revenue for pokies venues as a result of the mandatory card. It is a given. That means it works. The government knew that from the time it responded to the Liquor and Gaming Commission report that recommended introducing the card. Remember the government response to that report in 2022, in accepting the recommendation, said:

The government anticipates that venues will retain a greater percentage of their turnover under the new FGM arrangements than under the current arrangements, even taking into account the costs of card-based systems.

So, the government had thought about this and had decided that venues would still be ahead because, guess what, they just gifted them the new licensing model that gave them a bigger slice of the profit pie to offset any impact the card may have.

On another angle, will the Deloitte analysis also include assessment of the positive human and economic impact of less pokies addiction and harm that will result from the introduction of the card? We do not know because, you guessed it, we have not seen the terms of reference. How will this analysis weigh, I wonder, ruined lives against maintaining corporate profits? Will it model the positive jobs and growth created when money no longer drained by pokies is spent in other Tasmanian businesses?

We know that money spent virtually anywhere else in our community other than into poker machines has a greater economic benefit. It generates more economic growth and jobs spent virtually anywhere else we choose to spend it. Will the model include the positive impact of redirected spending when we reduce the harmful spending into poker machines by reducing the likelihood of addiction? We do not know because we have not seen the terms of reference.

Will this analysis take into account the recent likely massive boost to venue revenue under the new individual licensing model that came into play on 1 July 2023? We do not know that either because we have not seen the terms of reference or the scope.

Why the secrecy? What role did the pokies industry interests play in proposing and designing this Deloitte study? Who wrote or who had input into the terms of reference? What methodology is being used and who was provided with an opportunity to have input into designing that methodology and the study?

Will the study draw on industry data that is not publicly available? I can tell you it would be entirely unacceptable to base this analysis on hidden data and release a report without also releasing the data so that it can be publicly known and tested.

Is the study perhaps already complete? We do not know. It is secret - behind closed doors. I wonder when the government expects to publicly release it. We do not know. Will the government be sharing the report with the pokies industry stakeholders before it is publicly released, I wonder?

Ms O'Connor - Of course they will.

Ms WEBB - How does the government expect the results of this analysis and report to inform the implementation of the pokies card? That would be something to have an explanation for. So many questions, so much secrecy.

The Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, told the media that the Department of State Growth finalised the Deloitte contract in August or September this year and that the report would be released 'pretty soon'. He also told the media that, to his knowledge, the study had not been proposed by the Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) or the Federal Group, but we know that that does not necessarily mean that it is the case. Things are often kept away from political decision-makers if they are going to be embarrassing for them to have learned of it. If it is the case, and this is a straightforward situation of a legitimate exercise in gaining more information to inform the implementation of this card, why the secrecy? Why are we not seeing the terms of reference? Why was that not put out straightaway when it came to light that the study was underway?

In fact, why was there not a media release back in August or September, which is apparently when the contract with Deloitte was finalised by the Department of State Growth? Why was there no media release from the government telling us about this excellent study taking place to help inform the implementation of the card? We see media releases for pretty much anything else that the government is doing on any given day, patting themselves on the back. Why was this not part of the 2030 Strong Plan for this state, with a media release and bells and whistles to go along with it? Why is the study taking place, given where we are at in progressing the pokie machines card and all the opportunities that have been there for concerns to be legitimately raised in accountable ways through formal processes?

The introduction of this card has already been delayed by 12 months. Will this study lead to further delays or even the abandonment of the card altogether? It looks quite like it is being set up to provide a rationale to backpedal, and that would be exactly what the industry would have been demanding behind closed doors. Every delay in the implementation of the proposed card is a win for the gaming industry. Every single delay.

The recent data if we look at, say, the August losses to poker machines in this state, tells us that more than \$524,000 a day is being lost to poker machines in this state, half a million dollars a day. Losses since the 2018 pokies election are now more than \$1.1 billion in this state. That is only six-and-a-half years ago.

Glenorchy, Launceston and Devonport are the hardest-hit LGAs by pokies losses in the state, particularly Glenorchy. I know there are members here who find that very disturbing.

This brings us to the final point of this motion.

Point (5) calls on the government to release immediately the terms of reference for the Deloitte Access Economics' social and economic impact review of the poker machine pre-commitment card policy as commissioned by the Department of State Growth.

This is a simple call on the government and the Premier for transparency, accountability and integrity. It should be easy to agree to this and, in the interests of rescuing this work from its murky and secretive origins, the Premier could act with integrity and respond to it promptly.

I hope members in this place will support this motion and this simple call that it makes.

Members need not share all my views or all my concerns in relation to poker machine regulation, but I think most would recognise this is a modest and reasonable call which can be readily supported.

I trust members will feel concerned, as I do, about anything that is done by a state government in relation to a powerful vested interest that appears to be secretive, hidden and behind closed doors and counter to an appropriate good public policy process that is playing out in the public domain. It is highly disturbing.

This motion is an opportunity to put reflections on that on the record and at its conclusion, it makes a modest call, which I invite members to consider and support.

[8.51 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I thank the honourable member for Nelson for, first of all, bringing on this motion, but also for your excellent and, as always, informative and heartfelt contribution on this matter.

We should not be having to have a debate in the Legislative Council simply to have the government, or the Premier in this instance, release the terms of reference for a publicly funded report. How did it come to this?

How did it come to the Greens in the first instance? On 16 October, after the ministerial reshuffle, going in to ask the Premier - to be honest, it was a slight fishing expedition whether or not the government was still committed to the harm minimisation of mandatory pre-commitment cards.

And boy, did we have to squeeze out of the Premier, although his words did give him away, that there had been a very significant change of position. And if you look at the timing, we had a state election in March of this year, and -

Ms Webb - An early state election.

Ms O'CONNOR - A state election one year early in March this year and then a referral to or a commissioning of Deloitte Access Economics in a contract that was organised by August, which means it was very quick work after the state election to find a way through in order to appease the industry, and that site yesterday, *deja vu* all over again of Steve Old standing there looking ever so smug, which is his special skill apart from lobbying and bullying governments into doing what he wants. But he was standing there next to the Premier and obviously he had just found his new best friend. The problem is we have a Premier who is

a nice guy, but he is a pleaser. That is one of Jeremy Rockliff's traits. He is a pleaser. You ask him, you look him in the eye, and make the case to him, and he wants to please you.

So here we are, a short time after the state election where there was no honesty from government about how they were going to move away from a harm minimisation scheme recommended by the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission. I remember that debate in November of 2021 in the House of Assembly. We had the Greens in there obviously doing what we have been doing on pokies for decades, which is making the case to get them out of pubs and clubs; independent MP Kristie Johnston, also a champion of the removal of poker machines from pubs and clubs and making sure that there is not that huge and devastating financial impact on communities. We gave the then-treasurer a very hard time. That debate, I think, went on for eight or nine or 10 hours. We were there for a very long time and the focus was in very significant part - first of all, there was the gift, the additional value that was provided to venues as soon as this new contract would come into place would be about \$150 million in extra value of venues. So we did engage with the Treasurer on that gift to the industry, but we hammered him on harm minimisation - question after question, clause after clause.

Ms Forrest - We hammered him in here too, trying to get a reduction - or an increase, sorry - on the tax paid - did a power of work on that. It had all the figures. No-one disputed it. The government certainly did not, but no.

Ms O'CONNOR - But what I was going to say is that on the harm minimisation issue, I found Mr Ferguson to be very sincere. I still feel that he was going to try to find a path through that allowed him to sleep at night as the minister responsible for effectively the extension of this industry beyond a deed.

Michael Ferguson, as treasurer, was committed to harm minimisation and that is why Steve Old wanted to get rid of him, is it not? That is why Steve Old says this sort of thing about the former treasurer, that he had not been impressed with Mr Ferguson. I will bet that is because Mr Ferguson dug in. I will bet it is, obviously, and then Mr Old goes, 'We have had issues with him for a long time'.

It is not going to be able to happen on the time lines that Mr Ferguson has put in place because from all the information we have heard, it is going to be too costly, it is going to take too long to roll out. He said a lot of things to our industry that did not turn out to be true from the great doyen of truth, Steve Old. Then the kicker, he has his new best friend now you see and his new best friend is the Premier, and he said, 'We will put our faith in working with the Premier and his government moving forward'.

For any member who has not read James Boyce's magnificent book, *Losing Streak: How Tasmania was gamed by the gambling industry*, I highly recommend it. But here we are all over again, an industry that destroyed a government over the planned Launceston casino, brought down a government in 1972-73; an industry that in 2006 helped to fund Tasmanians for a Better Future that got in behind a Labor majority government this time because they are agnostic, Liberal, Labor; they do not care, just so long as they do what the industry wants.

In 2006 we had money from the Farrell family funding a dishonest 'you must vote for majority government Save Tasmania' campaign. So, that's 2006. I can barely talk about the 2018 election without feeling deeply traumatised but that was a corrupt election. I mean, it

might have all been lawful, who would know? It was an election that was made filthy, dirty and dishonest by millions of dollars from the gambling industry to buy an outcome and what outcome did they want to buy? And they bought it cheap too. What outcome they wanted? They wanted to re-elect the Gutwein Liberal government that was committed to not ending the deed. That was not going to happen, but turning the deed into a rolling contract with pubs and clubs basically.

So the industry got what it wanted in 2018. It bought an election outcome and overnight, as the honourable member for Nelson's contribution made clear, as soon as those new arrangements were in place, the industry was doing very well and it is disgusting. It is absolutely disgusting, the naked greed of this industry. More than \$500,000 out of the pockets of some of our poorest people goes into those predatory machines.

Steve Old could not give a shit, to be honest. Pardon my language. He could not. He does not care. He does not care about the suffering. He does not care about the mental health. He does not care about the kids who are suffering. He does not care about the broken man who came to see our Greens stall at the Glenorchy Market 10 to 12 years ago, quivering with shame and fear and self-loathing because he had been down to whatever that golden mile is, where all the pokies are in Glenorchy, the day before. He did not know what he was going to tell his wife because he had lost everything. The mum who was staying up at the Anglicare facility in Burnie, the homelessness support facility, who basically lost her two kids because she had a gambling addiction. Do not call them 'problem gamblers'. They are not problem gamblers; they are addicts and we have created a system that allows that addiction to be fed on a daily basis - and here is a chance, through a mandatory pre-commitment scheme, to restrain, to curb some of that harm. We have the most parasitic, hypnotising poker machines in the world in Australia and here in Tasmania. They literally hypnotise people into pouring their last cent in there.

Then we had the 2021 state election. I know it is getting late, but the 2021 state election where we got hold of a letter from the Tasmanian Hospitality Association to the then Labor leader, Rebecca White, demanding, which Labor agreed to by the way, that they change their position, confirming that their position on EGMs had changed and demanding that should Labor make any further adjustments or changes to its EGM policy that it would fully consult with the Tasmanian Hospitality Association.

I cannot remember exactly what the quote from Steve Old was at the time, but the media spoke to him and he sort of was almost slapping his back pocket there, because he had the Labor Party right there in his back pocket. He did it again and here we are again. We should absolutely have a right to see, on behalf of the people we represent, the terms of reference for that Deloitte report. It is a fair question to ask when all the foundational work has been done by the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission, why the Deloitte work was commissioned by the Department of State Growth. They have become a sort of Voldemort department in government, because all the dirty work gets done in State Growth these days, does it not? You want to put a cable car up kunanyi? Do not let the Minister for Parks or the Parks and Wildlife Service anywhere near it, give the job to State Growth.

Here we have State Growth looking at harm minimisation. I mean, for heaven's sake, what expertise would or could anyone in State Growth have? The expertise is in the Liquor and Gaming Commission, which consults with the people on the ground who clean up the human mess caused by these machines.

I hope that members support this motion. We have a right to demand these terms of reference. We need to understand what is happening here because it looks like, once again, Tasmania is being gamed by the gambling industry. An industry that can argue it provides many, many jobs and we will never know exactly how many, of course. An industry, which over the course of its slightly over half a century history here, has demonstrated it is a cancer on democracy.

We cannot allow this to happen to us over and over and over again. Steve Old is not the premier of Tasmania. The Tasmanian Hospitality Association should not have a seat at the Cabinet table, but it seems to. We had a minister who stood up to the THA for all his flaws, for all his flaws, and he is gone now.

There is a question to be answered by the Premier. Did he make any promises before or during the last state election to the THA? It sounds like it. It sounds like the THA's lobbying, which was detailed very precisely by the member for Nelson, started to get to the Premier well before the state election. So, was a commitment made before the March state election this year? How would we know? Because you cannot get an honest answer out of this government on these sorts of issues. The House needs to see the terms of reference for the Deloitte report. How dare the government try to hide that? Having taken a policy position, first of all to the 2018 election, then to the 2021, then to the 2024.

The Tasmanian people were made promises about harm minimisation and an effective card-based player scheme that allowed people to have limits set, and here we are. There is something really smelly happening. We should see the terms of reference for the Deloitte report and I hope members support this motion on behalf of the people we represent.

[9.07 p.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, thank you to the member for Nelson for bringing this motion. The member is right to seek more information on the scheme and what the government is doing, and I support her bringing this on for debate. Indeed, I want more information myself. I also support the government seeking more information about their policy and I am amazed they have not sought it sooner. As the motion requests, I hope they release it when they have it to fully inform the Tasmanian community.

We do not have to look much further than Devonport, or perhaps Finland, to see how badly the government's big announcement, no-delivery schtick can hurt the Tasmanian community and economy. For all the grandiose announcements, a new *Spirit of Tasmania* ferry is unlikely to sail before 2027 at best. Six years delayed, at least \$500 million over budget, with a real cost to our economy of \$3 billion over that time, according to Saul Eslake.

This is also a government that promised to shut down the Ashley Youth Detention Centre by now, that we would have a container recycling scheme, Project Marinus, an underground bus mall, a Mornington roundabout, Tamar Bridge upgrades, and local schools are still waiting for their promised upgrades. Our government businesses are failing and the governance structures that have overseen them for 30 years need a serious overhaul.

To the point of previous speakers and perhaps future ones, a tell-tale symptom throughout these issues is unfortunately spin, re-announcements, cover-ups, distraction announcements, and doubling down when they know they cannot do something - anything to avert attention from the failures.

I am hearing a lot of 'gonna' from the Premier lately: 'We are gonna do this, we are gonna do that.' He is a man who is always patching up the problems but never delivering long-term solutions, and perhaps his photo-op with the potholes is a good descriptor of that. The hard work is not being done.

I entered this parliament about the same time as Mr Ferguson's policy announcement. I was asked about it by a journalist and I said it is not something you could stand in the way of. I would like more detail and, unfortunately, due to the lack of that detail, I would probably believe it when I saw it. It has since been delayed and the fact that the government is now scrambling for the actual information shows just how made up on the run it was.

With that said, the Rockliff government can gain advice and consult at any time and, I have already said this on record, that it is not unreasonable at all when dealing with this or any other policy. I suggest, however, that this work should have been done two years ago. Why has it taken two years for a review such as this? Why was it not requested as part of the progressing of any proper policy by any government around or before its announcement in September 2022?

I appreciate the comments of previous speakers about this and we do not all have to agree on every single issue about this, but irrespective of what you think of electronic gaming machines or harm minimisation policies, surely we can all agree that before a policy is implemented, some basic information should be known. How much will it cost to implement? What will be the impact on the community? What will be the impact on the people who use whatever the policy is on the workforce around it, on businesses?

It is not controversial to say that governments should understand the impacts of policies they might implement. That this did not occur shows a massive failing in policy development and governance. It reminds me of Scott Morrison's politics writ large, there for the photo-op, never for the follow-up. 'Gonna do this, gonna do that'? Maybe that is a better way to say it.

It was not that long ago that Michael Ferguson was claiming the card-based scheme could be implemented by the end of this year. He then admitted, and this too is telling, during the election campaign late on a Friday afternoon, that anyone scrutinising this promise would probably have been able to tell, it could not be delivered in the original time frame. Even the new time frame, by the end of next year, looks extremely optimistic. Two years after the announcement they have, and I stand to be corrected, no system design, no costing, and no understanding in the revenue model. They are even saying, and this came out in Estimates from Labor questioning, that they will pay for it through the Community Support Levy (CSL) because there is no money allocated to implement the system. The risk with the approach of funding the program through the CSL is that there is less money for gambling research and support, less support for people who actually need it, and that is where we need to focus: on the people who need it.

Almost two years since it was announced, there is no final system design, no implementation plan and no budget. In two years, no progress. I ask, if the Leader or whoever is speaking on behalf of the government, can point to any progress.

Back to the Labor Party. Our position has not changed since 2021. We support the implementation of facial recognition technology in every gaming venue so that if you have self-excluded, or been excluded, you cannot play the pokies. It has already been implemented

in South Australia, where I believe there was pushback from the industry, and is working. It could be implemented quickly and would prevent problem gamblers losing money.

We have worked with the United Workers Union and their workers on the gaming floor at the casinos and other venues who wanted to see registered gaming officers on the floor trained to monitor for behaviours consistent with problem gambling, offering immediate interventions when required. These dedicated workers know the signs to look for and indeed the people to look for and, supported by technology, can do great things for harm minimisation.

On workforce, it is worth noting that the policy uncertainty has done workers on the ground no favours. The regulatory uncertainty has made it more difficult and harder to negotiate a fair pay deal. The bosses on the other side of the table can, and will, point to grey clouds in the policy space as a negotiating tool.

I, and I am sure others in this Chamber, ask priority questions about any policy when we have to consider it. Included amongst those questions, in no particular order, are: How much will it cost, including what is the impact on the budget? What is the impact on workers? What is the impact on the community? What is the impact on the economy? Who is paying for it? Can it be delivered? What are the risks? What is the view of my community? What is the view of key stakeholders? And plenty of others. I might touch on a few of those as we go through.

As I said, my colleagues and I have sought information on this policy over the past two years, whether through briefings or Estimates, and ultimately, we have got duck eggs. Even simple questions about why the budget Estimates saw no drop-off in revenue despite the policy they are going to do - no information. They are going to do it, though.

On top of this, there is no concrete information on how much it will cost or how it will be paid for. It is unclear how it will be delivered.

The views of my community range from hating EGMs through to having them as a valued social outlet. I think the majority would see them remain as long as harm minimisation measures are in place. As we have debated in this place recently on other bills, freedom of choice is a big deal to people when you actually sit down and discuss policies with them.

I will make this point: for a policy discussion where harm minimisation should be at the forefront, it seems to have sort of fallen by the wayside at the moment, and I will get into that.

What steps forward have we seen in harm minimisation in these two wasted years?

I want to see Tasmania be a leader in harm minimisation, but it must be effective and workable harm minimisation that we can implement, and it must be able to be actually delivered, and as soon as possible.

I read the comments from the mover of this motion in a recent op-ed about the Labor Party allegedly remaining silent on this topic, and I just consider that rot. I know several of my colleagues have addressed this in media interviews and, indeed, I was asked several questions on it recently. No-one is hiding from this issue. Indeed, as I have outlined, we have been the ones asking the questions. As I said, the government has refused Labor a briefing twice. Is it because they know their plan is in tatters? Perhaps, like the *Spirits* debacle or the ferries fiasco,

they are only realising now their plan cannot be implemented. Yet we cannot even get a briefing on it.

Every day of delay is a day where harm minimisation practices could be improved. The member for Nelson did outline the losses.

Why is the government not looking to other jurisdictions to see what we can improve? Perhaps they might start, and I would certainly encourage them to.

In that spirit, I support the motion, and I urge the government to be more honest with the details of this policy and its impacts on the Tasmanian community and economy. I support the motion and I look forward to, one day, knowing the full details. While I support the government seeking extra information to inform decision-making, can we not have this policy going the same sad way as the *Spirits* project, with time and cost blowouts and a let-down Tasmanian community and a let-down Tasmanian economy?

This is the government's policy, and it is up to them to outline how it will work or, if it will not work, for them to be upfront and honest, and for us all to remember that every delay is another day where a lost focus on effective harm minimisation is failing Tasmanians. I commend the motion.

[9.18 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I offer this brief contribution of support for the motion before us. For those of you listening, I can clearly remember in 2017 when the committee inquiry into pokie reform and gambling took place, and it was a huge task and undertaking. This is not a new conversation. This has been going on for some time.

There were 23 recommendations and 73 findings during that inquiry, and some of those led to further introduction of the cashless card system. It was sort of the next stepping stone that way. There are times when repeating oneself is seen as an indulgence on the patience of others. Other times, it reinforces essential points of debate. Earlier this afternoon, a number spoke about the pernicious influence of gambling and its relationship with the prevalence of family and domestic violence in our most vulnerable communities. I am not going to read that all again, but I am going to paraphrase some of that so those who are listening now can understand the relationship between gambling reform and domestic violence, because that is a real concern for us all as a group.

I am going to highlight a few things that I mentioned this morning in my speech to try to influence the government to say, you have to be open with this. You have to come out with the terms of reference. You want to let us all know what is going on so that we have greater confidence in where you are heading with this.

The Grattan Institute's recent report on the impact of gambling highlights that Australia is now leading the world in gambling losses per adult. For those listening, in 2022 losses amounted to an extraordinary figure of \$1635 per Australian adult. The second-highest group was in Hong Kong - runners-up with \$1284. People say we are a gambling country and we love our sports and we love our outdoors. You can say that about New Zealand, too, but their losses per head of population were only \$584 - which is a huge difference when you look at those figures.

The member for Nelson said about the extraordinary figure in Tasmania this year that has been lost, in the millions -

Ms Webb - It is \$186 million for 2023-24.

Mr GAFFNEY - It is \$186 million for 2023-24? That is \$90 million in a six-month period. Then when I heard Devonport - that impacts on our family. We are not that big in that community and yet there is a lot of money going out the door somewhere.

Grattan then suggested Australia should ban gambling advertising, introduce loss limits on pokies and online gambling, and progressively cut the number of pokies in each state, saying that is what we should do. They were simply commonsense measures. They came up with the added bonus of 'removing some of the triggering factors that are known to cause dysregulated men to attack women and their children'. There is a close relationship between those people who are under pressure from gambling losses and domestic violence, and we are here saying that we want to do something about domestic violence. Here, this is a first step of getting something done.

Ms Forrest - It is the same as providing housing, isn't it? You have to fix the problems that lead to these things.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes, and as people have mentioned, gambling losses then impact down the line on the family, the kids, whatever.

However, the delay in the introduction of mandatory pre-commitment cards until next year has once again extended the deadline, despite a substantial taxpayer subsidy, to allow the operators to adapt to the new system. It turns out that Mr Abetz, under question by the Greens, was hinting that there may yet be a revision of the policy in light of concerns around economic impact and effect on jobs, which we must consider in the implementation. If so, this is a truly shameful capitulation.

The motion talks about the social and economic impact. We know the social impact of gambling. It is a furphy to say that this is going out to look at the social impact. It is not, it is going out to look at the economic impact on those industries.

I think that it is only right and just that we know those terms of reference. A little bit here for people who might be listening: the highly respected Australian National Research for Women's Safety in 2020 published an extensive report on the relationship between gambling and intimate partner violence against women. The report highlighted the complex nature and mix of factors in gambling that led to male violence and abuse against women. Perhaps one of the strongest is the truly addictive nature of gambling activity, one that comes with its own overlay of unrequited hedonism and ego. So, when the national commissioner was speaking about doing things now to improve it and each year getting 2 per cent better or 2 per cent better and 2 per cent better, these are some of the things. We cannot be delaying this because of an economic study we need to do now into gambling. They went on to say the emotional stresses from gambling reinforce intimate partner violence. Women consistently report a cycle of abuse where their partner's violent outbursts were preceded by his mounting stress and tension surrounding his gambling.

The \$180 million out of our state in one year is going to have an impact, and then we worry about the groups of women and children primarily being violated or being in physical confrontations with adult men.

The report also speaks to the interconnected nature of abusive behaviours where the misuse of alcohol and other drugs fuels violence and abuse. They describe the problem with gambling with substance use. They describe alcohol- and drug-fuelled violence following gambling losses as escalating quickly and viciously, with women being terrified for their own and their children's safety.

Men, if they have been gambling, they have lost. We obviously know if they have lost, they have lost money under more pressure and the cycle continues. They go home, they are under pressure and this is what happens. Tasmania cannot afford any further delays. There is a proven link between gambling and domestic and family violence. Are we expecting our women and families to pay the price to appease our pokey barons? They should not have to talk of the impact of reducing the gambling spend of visitors. It is an absolute furphy. It simply means our visitors will have more free cash to spend in other areas of our economy - the cafes, retailers and other local services, small businesses, market stalls and unique visitor attractions that make up our true Tasmanian character instead of wasting \$180 million of Tasmanian money in a 12-month period on poker machines. I support the motion.

[9.27 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for bringing on this motion. The government remains committed to harm minimisation. We are working towards implementation of a mandatory card-based system for electronic gaming machines. We are working with a monitoring operator, MAX gaming, to implement player card gaming, and we have acknowledged this is going to take longer than originally anticipated.

There are a number of issues to be worked through in implementing a brand new statewide cashless player card system. There are concerns about the economic impact and effect on jobs which, as a government, we must consider. This is why, as part of our plan for Tasmania's future, we have committed to implementing a number of new poker machine harm reduction initiatives, including providing \$100,000 to promote awareness of the Gambling Exclusion Scheme, which includes third-party exclusion; examining the options of implementing automatic responsible gambling systems as part of gaming machine software for the detection of potential problem gambling behaviour in real time; engaging with venues interested in using facial recognition technology to help identify excluded persons; and requiring that responsible conduct of gambling training be undertaken by relevant employees every two years instead of the current requirement of every five years. We will continue to work closely with key stakeholders to implement these commitments.

On 13 August 2024, the then minister for hospitality's office made a request to the Department of State Growth for 'some urgent work done on current government policies, impact on the hospitality venues across the state in the future, including, if possible, the jobs per town impacted'.

On 3 September 2023, the secretary of the department provided a scope for this work and the main priority area was identified as the government's electronic gaming machine existing policy. Subsequently, the Department of State Growth worked with Deloitte Access Economics

Pty Ltd to frame up formal terms of reference. This work is to be conducted in phases which I will summarise.

Phase one is gathering the views of stakeholders. In this phase, we will conduct consultation to gauge the views of stakeholders, including large organisations, peak bodies and a sample of regional venues.

Phase two is understanding how gambling behaviour might change. This phase will draw on available literature to understand what effects the reforms are likely to have on reducing the use of EGMs and to what extent there is a move towards other forms of gambling. We would undertake a detailed literature review to understand the extent of potential shifts between gambling modes whether EGM players would play less, whether they would substitute to other types of gambling, or whether these have the same propensity for high-risk gambling.

Phase three is estimating the degree to which harm will be minimised. In this phase we will leverage the substitution impacts that will be estimated in phase two, which I have just described, namely the change in spending on EGMs towards other types of gambling and/or other types of consumption not relating to gambling.

Phase four is assessing the likely flow-on economic impacts, based on the findings in phases two and three of this work. We will model the potential economy-wide impacts of the reform using our in-house computable general equilibrium (CGE) model.

Phase five reporting is where this project will culminate in the delivery of a Deloitte Access Economics-branded, public-facing report demonstrating the social and economic impacts of the proposed reforms to EGM use.

An executive presentation of main findings: the presentation will be shared with DGS as part of the deliverables. The report will incorporate a one-page graphic and visualisations summarising key findings. It will be written with a broad audience in mind, and will include a clear and transparent description of the methodology.

I have been asked to table another document that describes the phases in full so that any member who is interested can have a look at that.

Mr President, I seek leave to table a document and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

See Appendix 2 (page 146).

Mrs HISCUTT - In light of that, and looking at the motion, the government was able to note but not necessarily agree, as mentioned by the member for Nelson, that not all views are shared. Points (1), (2), (3) and (4) would be in that category. As part of point (5), the government will take that on notice. Just bear in mind we will therefore not be able to support the motion in full.

[9.33 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I thank members for contributions on the motion. I very much appreciate the engagement on it. If I understand the Leader correctly, they are

rejecting the call to release the terms of reference. It was not clear to me whether she said they are taking it on notice. I do not know why they take it on notice, given that the motion has been on the books for some time and they could have just said yes or no to it now. However, we will see how we go when we come to a vote anyway, if necessary.

It is an interesting topic to be discussing. There are a few things from members' contributions I would like to pick up on and make some remarks about in my summing up, if I may.

I thank the member for Hobart for her contribution and remarks. She has stepped out of the room at the moment, but probably a few of us had a little grin when she mentioned the other place taking quite some time in 2021 with the future gaming market legislation - a whole eight or nine hours apparently -

Ms Rattray - I think we took a little bit longer than that.

Ms WEBB - I took nearly about as long as that myself, I believe, in my second reading contribution. I am making light, but actually I do not make light of this topic overall, and certainly not the gravity of what we are talking about in relation to maybe betraying Tasmanian people in seeing nation-leading, expert-informed, evidence-based harm reduction and consumer protection being put in place.

I want to recognise, as the member for Hobart did, Mr Michael Ferguson MP for the leadership that he did show on this matter in being the person in the Liberal government Cabinet as treasurer and at the time finance minister, who, in 2022, took the leadership on the decision to implement a mandatory pokies card with pre-commitment limits as we have been discussing. I believe he has been a personal champion of that card in that space across the intervening time. That was why his resignation from Cabinet put the matter at risk, because pushing back against what was no doubt intense industry pressure and continues to be intense industry pressure behind the scenes, no doubt on all other members of Cabinet, would have been quite some task, I imagine, over these two years. In his absence, I think this is why we are beginning to see that crumble.

It is interesting to hear a Labor contribution for labouring the delays in the card. It is a little bit of a shame. It is a fact that when the Gaming Commission first recommended the card, it was always their view it would take three years to implement, that that was realistic. I understand why Mr Ferguson at the time, as he was treasurer and minister for Finance at the time, announced that the government would implement the card. He announced it with a two-year implementation time frame. That is a shame, in a way, because it did mean that when it was not able to be done in that time frame and we have another year to travel in implementing it, it looks like it has been delayed. In reality, on the advice of the Liquor and Gaming Commission, a three-year time frame was about right. Again, the Gaming Commissioner has confirmed that publicly since.

The reason Michael Ferguson, at the time, would have announced a two-year time frame is that that would have kept it within an election period. It would never have had to be taken to an election if it could have been done in a two-year time frame and if we had not gone to early elections. We know that the two greatest risks to derailing any responsible poker machine regulation and consumer protection is having to legislate it through this place or having to take it to an election. Those are the two opportunities for the greatest industry pressure and influence

and bullying to occur. That is where political threats and promises can be extracted and dominance of a vested interest with that much power can be brought to bear, particularly on the major parties that are trying to contest to form government in an election, or trying to get a piece of legislation through this place if they are the government.

The announcement from Mr Ferguson at the time was that it would be two years, I presume, in the hope that it would be done under ministerial direction without having to be legislated, and within an election period and, therefore, not vulnerable to industry influence to the same extent that it would otherwise be.

Sadly, it was not able to be done in that time frame. Realistically, the commission had thought that it would not and now we see it taking the additional time. Certainly, it is not that nothing has been happening in that time. It is quite sad to hear it implied in the Labor contribution that nothing has been happening in that time because, clearly, the Liquor and Gaming branch of the Treasury department and the Liquor and Gaming Commission have been working quite hard and consistently on implementing these measures. They have had to do it alongside implementing the new licensing model that came on board on 1 July 2023 as well, and with that came the new Licensed Monitoring Operator (LMO) in that model, who was the key stakeholder within the system to have to then co-design and develop this with.

I acknowledge the extensive work that has been happening. For example, the effort that was put into the consultation process, theoretically, with industry last summer, putting together consultation material, reaching out to industry with the opportunity to engage - industry did not. It was probably too busy engaging with the two parties behind the scenes, knowing that that was a more preferable way to gain influence.

There certainly has not been no progress in two years, and it is fairly telling just to hear that said by a party that then is parroting industry-approved lines on facial recognition technology, which I foreshadowed in my contribution.

Facial recognition technology is marginal in its benefit in reducing harm by poker machines. All expert evidence tells us that, and that is what the Liquor and Gaming Commission said in its report. The reason, just for utter clarity, and I am not sure - whether the member for Pembroke, who spoke about this - has read the initial report from the Liquor and Gaming Commission outlining its recommendations. I do not know whether he has read their consultation material since. I do not know whether he has read other material in this space around facial recognition technology, or whether it is information that has been provided by industry which is very much in favour of it.

The reality is facial recognition technology is relevant to the people who are on a self-exclusion scheme. Very few people who are addicted to pokies are on a self-exclusion scheme. That is because it is so highly shameful to have a pokies addiction and to be struggling with it, that people do not come forward to seek help until the absolute extremity of their circumstance - not until their lives are destroyed. One in 10 people with a poker machine addiction will come forward seeking help and they do that at the extremity of their distress when their life has crumbled. That is the circumstance when people are pushed to breaking point by their addiction, that some of them choose to go on a self-exclusion scheme or have family who assist them to engage with a self-exclusion scheme. There are a very small number of Tasmanians who are typically on that scheme. I have not checked on the numbers recently. Typically, it has always been about 350 or thereabouts on that scheme in times past when I was

more familiar with the up-to-date numbers. That is a very small number of the Tasmanians who are likely to be struggling with a pokies addiction.

Facial recognition technology means that instead of having a paper copy book with photos of people on the self-exclusion scheme for venues and workers to check as people come in, the technology does that automatically and can identify someone as they come through, presumably the door of the gaming room, and it sets up a little alarm to say this person is self-excluded. Workers are then able to engage with that person and perhaps redirect them out of the venue to give effect to the self-exclusion. That makes sense. We automate a lot of things in this day and age. It would be helpful in some ways, but that is why it is not meaningful in reducing much harm. It is a tiny number of people for people who are already at the extremity of the harm caused by poker machines. It does nothing to work against the development of a pokies addiction in the first place. That is why it is beside the point.

It is also potentially quite handy. Along with some of the other technological things that the Leader mentioned in her contribution as things the government has subsequently committed to during the election campaign around automated systems to detect problem gaming behaviour, these sorts of automation of systems within venues like that, and certainly facial recognition technology, also present interesting opportunities for marketing purposes and the like for the industry. They also have unanswered privacy concerns around them, which the Liquor and Gaming Commission identified. There are all sorts of problems with them.

Again, it is an absolute furphy to talk about that being a meaningful way forward. By the way, we do not have to necessarily discard it. There is no reason not to do it at some point. It simply is not a priority and it is not a reason to displace the card. If all efforts were being made to implement this card, by a government that was not internally conflicted over it and did not have to have a champion defending it on all fronts internally in the party, if the government was fully behind the card from the beginning, perhaps we could have been implementing it more promptly than we are. If there was not sniping from the outside, from the opposition and others, but certainly from the industry, perhaps it could have been implemented more quickly, who knows. All hands to the wheel would have helped.

I thank the member for Mersey for his contribution. It is always worthwhile to highlight that link that is proven to be there between gambling and gambling harm and domestic violence. When we talk about that, we have to talk about pokies because they are the form of gambling that is most frequently the reason that people are experiencing harm. It is the biggest usage and the highest harm.

Ms O'Connor - Most available - most accessible.

Ms WEBB - It is the most accessible. It is the most frequently used. The member for Mersey mentioned, I think, a per capita figure for gambling, which was 1000 and something.

Mr Gaffney - Sixteen hundred.

Ms WEBB - Sixteen hundred. Now, a large slice of that is poker machine losses. The largest slice of it, I would imagine - I do not imagine; I know. This is a link that is real. It is one we cannot ignore. It is partly building our understanding about these sorts of links, like the very clear one between gambling harm and domestic violence.

It helps us to better understand the reality of what this public health issue is that we are dealing with when we are talking about gambling harm, particularly pokies harm, because that is what goes by the wayside when we focus in on this as just another public policy measure. As the member for Pembroke talked about, we should fully understand all our policy measures that we are implementing. We should have investigated all the impacts and the economic side of it, get a full picture of what implementation is going to mean. That is correct broadly for public policy. We should have a good clear understanding of it. But if the point of gathering that understanding of it is to be able to tear it down - and in this case, what we are talking about is a public health measure - the best sort of comparison to make would be with the public health measures and the policies we pursue when we are trying to reduce harm from smoking.

When we came, for example, to the point of deciding as a government and a community that we would ban smoking from hospitality venues, I wonder if an economic impact analysis on the venues and on jobs was done then, potentially with the purpose of stopping that measure being implemented. I am sure the industry was arguing for it to be done. I do not know whether the government did it. If the government did do it, would it have been a reason? Would anything discovered in that economic impact analysis and jobs impact analysis have justified not banning smoking in venues? Would anything have caused a government to walk that back? We did not go down that path, but I wonder.

This is a similar issue here. Exactly what are we saying when we want to understand the economic impact and the impact on jobs? By all means, the reason to understand that would be to say, what might we do to have a transition plan in place or to assist industry in other ways, alongside an impact that they might feel from this policy? We do that in all sorts of other ways. Right now we are rolling out a voucher scheme because we have been so derelict in the performance of our duties as a government that we are going to have two ships that are further delayed from arriving with no berth to tie up to.

We do offset impact on industry often with other sorts of measures. Maybe that is the reason to do this kind of investigation. If that is the case, it should have been done at an earlier time in the process, and it should have been done openly and clearly and transparently, by all means.

By all means it should have, but to be very clear, it should never have been done on the basis of watering down or wheeling back the policy, because the policy is 100 per cent evidence-based, expert-informed public health policy. It is to do with an issue that costs lives. It is to do with an issue that decimates families in our community. This is a public health measure. So, in the same way that we would not have made arguments about job losses to say no, we will let people keep smoking in venues, then we would not, and should not, be making an argument about impact on jobs relating to putting in effective, meaningful, real harm minimisation in terms of pokies with this pokies card.

Ms Forrest - Well, they did give them a bit of a subsidy anyway by not taxing -

Ms WEBB - Well, excuse me, it is indeed, member for Murchison. We changed our licensing model on 1 July 2023 and gave venues a massive, unearned financial boost because of the largest slice of the profit pie they now take home. That is hidden data. It should not be. Even in a de-identified way, we should know what is the average boost in the revenue retained by venues under the new licensing model compared to under the old licensing model.

Ms WEBB - How many pokies venues around the state have been doing renovations in the last year? Has anyone noticed any? Has anyone noticed any pokies venues spending up big in their communities, doing a bit of a touch-up on the old lovely environment? Some of them have been, I will tell you that. That is because they have had a massive -

Ms Forrest - Been in there looking, have you?

Ms WEBB - No, I can see it from the outside, member for Murchison.

Ms Forrest - Just checking.

Ms WEBB - Not only that, because we could not have the casinos miss out under that new model, we did give them a lovely sweetener and let the casinos dictate their own new tax rate under that new model that came in on 1 July 2023. They now pay a massively reduced rate of tax. All parts of the industry, not just the hotels and clubs - although there are virtually no clubs in Tasmania with pokies, mostly hotels. It is not just the hotels, but the casinos received a boost out of that too. All of that needs to be taken into account. It is hardly reasonable to cry poor if you have just, say, had a boost of, I would be guessing, more than 50 per cent in the revenue retained from profits from pokies in your venue. I would like to hear someone tell me that it is wrong and that it is lower, on average, across the state.

It has been interesting to hear the government's contribution on this motion. Laying out phases of this work is a great start. Why not give us the terms of reference fully? Why on earth go halfway there? If you are going to be honest and open, lay it all out. How can we not feel that there is something being hidden if you are not going to be open and lay out the full terms of reference and scope of this work being done? It is only reasonable for us to be able to assess and test that then. How can we take as credible a result that has been contracted under less-than-open circumstances, as this has been, hidden away? Back in August and September, all of this was playing out, as I said, not by the minister responsible for pokies regulation, not by the department responsible for implementing the policy, not by the independent Liquor and Gaming Commission. Half of the things listed in these phases that the Leader of Government Business spoke about in the government contribution are work that should be, and generally is, done by other appropriate entities in this state.

We have a social and economic impact study done here; it used to be on a three-yearly basis. Sadly, when we legislated the future gaming markets, that was another casualty; it shifted to every five years instead of every three, with the last one being 2021 we are not expecting the next one until 2026. Half the things laid out in the scope of these phases here from the government is work that is typically done in those SEIS reports. Normally, we get credible interstate entities to do those reports, not necessarily corporate entities like Deloitte Access Economics, often in conjunction with academic entities. It used to be the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES) and other groups like that. As soon as you see in the scope of a piece of work to look into the impact of pokies, as soon as you see that it is going to look at matters regarding transfer of gambling from one form to another, you know it is written by industry. This is written by industry.

It is on the government to deny that. Industry provided the scope of this work. As soon as you see distracting flags waved, 'Look over here, look over here - if we better protect people from pokie machines they will all just rush off to online gambling' is the typical one we have heard for years. There is not one bit of evidence to support that, to be clear right here, right

now, for any members who are interested. Not one bit of evidence. Transfer of gambling from poker machines to other forms of gambling is not a thing. It rarely happens in any way that is meaningful. By the way, if it did - let us pretend for a minute there is anything to that claim - that is not a reason to not appropriately regulate poker machines; that is a reason to appropriately regulate all forms of gambling, which would be consumer protection and harm minimisation measures on poker machines. We should have the same on every other form of gambling. Just because, if it were true - which it is not - that people transferred from one to the other, it is on governments at a state and federal level, whichever is the relevant regulator, to appropriately regulate and put consumer protections in place across those forms of gambling.

This really sticks in my craw. This is an argument that is industry-written time and time again. It is rolled out by whichever party happens to be speaking about it, 'Oh no, we can't put protections around poker machines, people will run off to another form of gambling'. To hear that in this scope, laid out by the Leader, of what this is all about, this piece of work from Deloitte, is an absolute pointer to it being written by industry.

Regarding estimating the degree to which harm would be minimised under the card, I think there are expert entities available to do that work. Why on earth are we getting Deloitte Access Economics to do that? I will be fascinated to see more detail on that. It is a shame we do not have the full terms of reference; keeping that hidden means it is going to be very difficult to give it credibility when the report comes to light.

There is a lot more I can say about this, as you well know. I think I have been quite a light touch in my contribution today because this motion was an entirely simple one. It was factual things to note and it was a modest call which the government is still falling short of delivering on. I thank the Leader for delivering the reply, for the very minimal information provided in it is something, but how disgraceful to not even be able to be open and upfront with the Tasmanian people, with this chamber and this parliament, by releasing an actual full set of terms of reference and scope for this work.

It calls into question the validity of the work from the outset. If it cannot be tested in the public domain in terms of its full scope, its full terms of reference, then it is already looking like it is created for a particular purpose and that purpose is to portray the Tasmanian people.

I thank members for engaging with the motion. I hope members will support the call of the motion because, as I said, even if they do not share my full views and passion on this issue, it is a modest motion that deserves support in order to send a message to the government that openness, transparency and integrity are things that we in this place and the Tasmanian people out there in the Tasmanian community should expect and should be able to demand of the government of the day.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[9.59 p.m.]

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

That at its rising, the Council adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday,
30 October 2024.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs HISCUTT - Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

The Council adjourned at 10 p.m.

Appendix 1

Table & incorporate
into Hansard
L. Hiscott 29.10.24

Table - incorporate
into Hansard

TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT WORK UNDERWAY STATE OF ENVIRON REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Develop a long-term vision and strategy for Tasmania's environment

- The Tasmanian Government is developing the *Tasmanian Positive – Our State's Sustainability Strategy*, to commence in 2026. This Strategy will provide the overarching policy framework for the management of our environment.
- The Sustainability Strategy will link other important environmental policies including:
 - *A new Tasmanian Threatened Species Strategy*
 - *Rural Water Use Strategy 2021*
 - *Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2025*
 - *Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2023*
 - *Natural Heritage Strategy 2013-2030*
- The Tasmanian Government has also contributed to the development of various national initiatives led by the Australian Government, including:
 - 30 by 30 National Roadmap (Sep 2024).
 - National Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Framework (Jun 2024).
 - Australia's Draft Sustainable Ocean Plan (currently being consulted on).
- The Tasmanian Government is participating in national and cross-jurisdictional senior officials, working groups and reference groups to support collaboration and learning across Environment, Water, Circular Economy, Climate Change and Threatened Species.

Recommendation 2: Aboriginal knowledge and values

- The Tasmanian Government is working nationally on the development of an approach for an inland waters target under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- The Government is also working collaboratively with Tasmanian Aboriginal people to deliver joint management outcomes across the Tasmanian Reserve estate, with a number of important foundation programs and projects underway, including:

- the Working on Country Aboriginal Ranger Program which seeks to ensure Tasmanian Aboriginal people can participate in the management of protected areas and to care for and connect with Country;
- Establishment of the Caring for Country Section in NRE Tas;
- a Cultural Burning Program within Tasmania's Reserve Estate with \$330 000 per year of funds committed to support this program; and
- projects as part of the Detailed Plan for a Comprehensive Cultural Assessment of the TWWHA, led by Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania.
- In addition, the Government is working to manage invasive species including boxthorn on Chappel Island in conjunction with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre with a particular focus on this work through a project called "Protecting the economic and natural assets of Tasmania's off-shore Islands from the impact of vertebrate pests and weeds" project.

Recommendation 3: Develop an environmental data strategy

- The Australian Government has allocated \$1.5 million over three years to each state and territory through the Digital Environmental Assessment Program (DEAP) initiative to enhance the capability of the Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas to exchange biodiversity data with a national Biodiversity Data Repository (BDR) that is being developed.
- The Natural Values Atlas is a web-based platform managed by NRE Tas that holds and delivers high-quality Tasmanian natural values information relied on for development assessment and approvals processes. This enhancement will support better environmental assessment and decision making.
- Through the Interjurisdictional Environment Data and Information Oversight Committee, we are also engaging with the Australian Government on the establishment of Environment Information Australia; and development of a National Environmental Standard on data and information standards.

- Tasmania also collects reserve estate data feeding into the national Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database.

Recommendation 4: Contemporary RMPS objectives and legislation

- Tasmania has a strong set of environmental laws to support sustainable development, and protect our natural and cultural heritage, including the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and the *Whales Protection Act 1998*, which each contain specific provisions to manage threatened species and threatened native vegetation communities.
- The Government has made amendments to the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to increase the penalties for any person convicted of killing listed threatened species, including the potential for a custodial sentence.
- We are also working with the Australian Government to implement the Common Assessment Method (CAM), which is a consistent approach to the assessment and listing of threatened species across Australian jurisdictions that will require legislative amendments to establish the agreed national categories of threat.
- A number of important amendments were made to the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act* in 2022 which confirm the independent role of the EPA Director, allow the EPA to release environmental monitoring data, give the Minister powers to make Environmental Standards and the EPA Director powers to make Technical Standards.
- The Government is considering options to reform the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* to enable a streamlined assessment processes as it relates to use and development on reserved land. The interaction between the NPRMA and the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* is a key focus of the review, with the RMPS objectives being a foundation of both acts.

Recommendation 5: Establish more marine protected areas

- The marine protected areas in Tasmania comprise 21 marine reserves and marine conservation areas that protect and conserve species and habitats across a number of bioregions.

- Our existing State and Commonwealth marine reserve reserves protect many hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of picturesque coastline, and biodiversity from shallow to deep water.
- In fact this government recently supported a significant expansion to the Marine park around Macquarie island, managed by the Commonwealth.
- The Tasmanian Government has a combination of policies and legislation that contribute to the conservation and protection of marine species and habitats. Collectively, these provide strong measures and controls for conservation management and, where appropriate, sustainable resource use.
- Examples of marine reserves:
 - The Tasman Fracture Marine park (42,500 sq.km)
 - The Freycinet Marine Park (57,900 sq.km)
 - The State managed Macquarie Island Nature Reserve (Marine Area) (750 sq.km)
- The Tasmanian Government is engaging with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions on the development of a National Sustainable Ocean Plan.
- We are also engaged in cross-jurisdictional work on addressing the impact arising from the extended range of the long spined sea urchin on the Great Southern Reef.
- The new Marine Finfish Environmental Standards under the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* also support the protection of Tasmania's marine environment.

Recommendation 6: Undertake a review of Tasmania's coastal policy

- Coastal processes and hazards such as flooding, storm surge, dune erosion and landslip are managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) in accordance with the *Tasmanian State Coastal Policy (1996)* and the *NRE Tas Coastal Hazards Policy 2019*.

- The Tasmanian Government is currently seeking to amend the Tasmanian State Coastal Policy to ensure that the protection of our coastal environment is achieved whilst allowing sensible and sustainable recreational and other infrastructure that is necessarily connected to our coasts.
- The Tasmanian Government will also ensure that decisions made under previous interpretations of the State Coastal Policy and Tasmania's planning system are validated to address any unintended liability consequences that may now arise.
- Reserved coastal land is managed in accordance with the relevant management objectives outlined in the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

Recommendation 7: Support the collection and analysis of fisheries-independent data

- Data to support fisheries management is collected from a variety of sources and is supported by the independent Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS), including fishery independent data on a case-by-case basis. Fishery independent data including rock lobster, scallop, abalone, calamari and scale fish fisheries are collected from time to time to support stock assessment and fishery management.
- IMAS is supported with significant funds including \$12.4 million over 4 years through the Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement to support fisheries research, inclusive of an additional \$2 million over four years in the 2024-25 State budget.
- The 2024-25 State Budget also includes \$250,000 to support the development of a sardine fishery in Tasmania. The stock assessment for this potential fishery has been developed using fishery-independent data.
- Additional research is supported through the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC).

Recommendation 8: Improve native vegetation mapping and information

- The Tasmanian Government produces and maintains TASVEG, the comprehensive digital map of Tasmania's vegetation.
- The map depicts the extent of more than 150 native vegetation communities, as well as vegetation substantially modified by human activity.
- The map is continually updated with new data as it becomes available.
- The Tasmanian Government also supports a Land Cover program that analyses satellite images to detect change (loss) in woody vegetation types.
- This information is used to update the extent of native vegetation mapped by TASVEG and is made available to the Forest Practices Authority.

Recommendation 9: Implement measures to end illegal vegetation clearance

- Land clearing controls apply to all land in Tasmania, both public and private.
- They apply to native forest through the Tasmanian Government Policy for Maintaining a Permanent Native Forest Estate (30 June 2017), which is implemented through the *Forest Practices Act 1985*.
- There are also controls on clearance and conversion of threatened native vegetation communities through the Forest Practices Act.
- The Forest Practices Authority FPA undertakes compliance of unauthorised land clearing activities.
- The FPA issued approximately \$517,450 in fines to landowners in the last financial year – approximately 319 hectares cleared without approval.
- Efforts continue to stem the impact of illegal wood gathering in reserved and forestry lands through prevention, investigation and compliance activities. This is a joint effort between agencies and divisions who have land management responsibilities and includes resource sharing in relation to compliance.

Recommendation 10: Reserve estate

- Approximately 50.4 per cent of Tasmania's land is already protected.
- Firstly, it is important to note that this government recently reserved Crown-owned Future Potential Production Forest Land within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). This was gazetted in March 2023.
- Reservation of other areas in the TWWHA is underway, which will see the remainder of the Future Potential Production Zone Land, which is managed by Hydro Tasmania, become reserved land.
- Phase two of the Government commitment is underway with the rehabilitation of Permanent Timber Production Zones that sit within the TWWHA. Once the natural values are sufficiently restored, the Government will pursue reservation, consulting with the public where appropriate on the reserve class.
- As per the TPC's recommendations, we are also investing in private land conservation through the Private Land Conservation Program.
- Through that program we administer 959 conservation covenant agreements that protect 4.2% of Tasmania's private and public land in perpetuity.
- In the 23/24 financial year, 13 new conservation covenants have been added, covering a total of 700 hectares and many have targeted Swift parrot habitat.
- As of July 2024, there are another 10 individual conservation covenants (4 of which are for swift habitat) being progressed, delivering approximately 800ha of private land under binding covenant.

Recommendation 11: Implementation of a statewide soil monitoring program

- A \$2.34 million partnership (over four years) with the Australian Government announced in June 2024 will deliver a range of fit for purpose products and tools to improve our knowledge of carbon-rich soils and support their sustainable management across the state.
- The Government recognises that soil condition monitoring is more effective if complemented by an active program of industry relevant agricultural research, development and extension (RD&E), that achieves practice change on the ground (in the paddock).

- The Tasmanian Government provides TIA, its preferred supplier of publicly-funded agricultural RD&E services, with over \$5 million per annum in core funding, complemented by specific additional research projects. In 2023 this leveraged over \$12 million in additional research funding.

Recommendation 12: Strengthen fire management activities

- The Parks and Wildlife Service has 103 personnel who are trained to fight fires in remote areas (arduous firefighters), and 26 tanker based firefighters (moderate firefighters), totalling 129 firefighting personnel. These numbers include the seasonal firefighters recruited to boost numbers for the fire season and to assist with planned burning operations.
- In addition, the Parks and Wildlife Service has 61 people trained to undertake roles in Incident Management Teams, including Incident Controllers, Planning Officers, Logistics Officers and Operations Officers.
- Other activities being progressed to strengthen existing PWS fire fighting activity includes:
 - Funding over the past three years for training of Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters to be able to winch into difficult to access areas to fight fires.
 - The Government allocated \$600,000 (over two years) to replace fire tanker units to help maintain bushfire management capacity.
 - The Mosaic Burning Project, which ensures the protection of ecological values when performing controlled burns, an integral part of the PWS planned burning program.
 - We have committed ongoing funding of \$330 000 per year to support Tasmanian Aboriginal people to undertake cultural burning within Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves.
 - The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) continues to work closely with the Tasmania Fire Service and Sustainable Timber Tasmania as part of the State-wide Fuel Reduction Program.
 - As part of the \$9 million allocation to the State-Wide Fuel Reduction Program in 2023-24, \$500,000 per annum is allocated for planned burning in and around the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). This includes regular large landscape planned burns to maintain biodiversity and ecosystems and to protect the environment, visitors and communities.
 - NRE Tas is developing new guidelines on the assessment of priority natural values, specifically threatened flora and fauna, in a planned burn context.

Recommendation 13: Biosecurity, invasive species, fallow deer and feral cat programs

- The Tasmanian Government is committed to managing invasive species that impact our natural land and marine environments.

Wild Fallow Deer

- The Tasmanian Government Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan 2022-27 sets contemporary objectives for managing wild fallow deer in Tasmania over the next five years.
- The Plan has identified where deer are managed as a sustainable hunting resource and where they should be removed or controlled.
- Two aerial culls were recently undertaken in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park (removing 711 deer) and nearby Central Plateau Conservation Area (removing 306).
- A Peri-urban deer control program has also been developed and funded to remove wild fallow deer from key locations within Tasmanian communities.

Feral Cats

- A new five-year "Tasmanian Cat Management Plan is being developed.
- Two significant feral cat control projects on Tasmanian islands have been progressed in partnership with the Australian Government:
 - A four-year, \$1.5 million project on Bruny Island in conjunction with the Kingborough Council and NRM South that tracked and trapped feral cats on Bruny Island; and
 - A program of tracking, trapping and poisoning feral cats that are impacting shorebirds on Three Hummock Island in conjunction with Cradle Coast NRM.

TWWHA Biosecurity Strategy

- The Government committed funding of \$3.27 million (over 4 years) in the 2022-23 Budget to deliver the biosecurity strategy and to build a dedicated PWS Biosecurity Team for the TWWHA.
- To date, the Team has built partnerships with stakeholders to undertake high priority weed control in the TWWHA and participate in the final year of the aerial component of the Deer Control Project in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. For 2024-25, the team will focus on weed treatment and biosecurity plans, along with a

continued focus on communication, collaboration, and innovation in invasives species management for the TWWHA.

Recommendation 14 – Development of a broader water policy, monitoring and reporting approach

Rural Water Use Strategy

- The Rural Water Use Strategy and our existing water policy framework already sets a broad water resource policy approach for water resource allocation, water security and water quality for Tasmania.
- Review of key elements of Tasmania's water management framework is underway through the Rural Water Use Strategy to enhance and strengthen water security in response to climate change pressures, population growth, growing complexity in water management arrangements and more demands on our water resource.
- A major milestone having been recently met for water accountability in Tasmania, with the publication of the Water Accountability Framework review report with 23 recommendations for enhancements that have been accepted. Work on implementation is underway.
- The Rural Water Use Strategy is underpinned by an investment of \$6.5 million in Tasmanian Government funding, including \$1 million over 3 years allocated in this year's State Budget.

Urban Water Quality

- Priority urban water issues are being considered as part of a new National Water Agreement and, where appropriate, could be developed as part of the State action plan that would support Tasmania's implementation of a new National Water Agreement.

Statewide monitoring and analysis

- The development of NRE Tas' statewide water resource monitoring program, which will include and be informed by river health information, water accountability settings and reporting, a revised hydrological network monitoring and a water quality monitoring program.

State of the Water Report

- The finalised Tasmanian Water Resource Monitoring Program will establish a reporting framework that will provide substantial information to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 15: Air quality monitoring and emissions reduction across all sectors

- EPA Tasmania conducts Tasmania's ambient air monitoring program, which consists of:
 - Three main air stations across Hobart, Launceston and Devonport with instrumentation to meet requirements under the National Environmental Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure.
 - A particulate (smoke and dust etc) air network, known as BLANKET (Base-Line Air Network of EPA Tasmania. These stations report real-time particle and meteorological data used for public information, assisting in the management of planned burns, and for Department of Health air quality advisories, especially in bushfire events.
 - Car-based, portable air stations to spatially map winter wood heater smoke distributions in suburbs and towns.

Recommendation 16: Implementation of the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy

- Prior to the introduction of the Landfill levy, we took action to help kickstart the circular economy in Tasmania with an investment of over \$20 MILLION to progress resource recovery initiatives; improve the recycling of plastics, organics and end of life tyres, and to introduce new legislation to reform and act as a disincentivise sending precious re-useable resources to landfill.

- Some of the key initiatives we have already delivered:

Container Refund Scheme

- Referred to as Recycle Rewards, Tasmania's Container Refund Scheme will soon move into mobilisation phase after a protracted contract negotiation period is finalised.
- These schemes are proven to both reduce public littering and improve recycling outcomes.

Problematic Single Use Plastic

- The Government is committed to the legislative phase out of single use plastics in Tasmania by the end of 2025.

- A Discussion Paper was open for community feedback until the 01 October 2024.
- More than 1000 submissions were received with 98% of respondents supportive of reducing single use plastics in Tasmania.

Waste and Resource Recovery

- The Waste and Resource Recovery Act was introduced in 2022, which established the landfill levy, which is hypothecated and reinvested in programs to grow our recycling and resource recovery sector and reduce the amount of waste ending up in landfill.
- The Waste and Resource Recovery Board, Chaired by Pam Allen and led by CEO Mr Hugh Christie is charged with a range of powers and functions including oversight of the landfill levy funds.
- The High Priority Investment Package is the boards largest investment to date with an allocation of \$4.5M.
- Approximately \$1M of additional projects are being rolled out this year to support remote Councils with recycling projects; the development of partnerships with peak industry groups, and waste and resource recovery education.
- We are well on track to deliver Tasmania as “*a place where nothing is wasted*”.

ENDS

Appendix 2

Tabled and Incorporated
into Hansard
L. Hiscott 29.10.24

L. Hiscott
Table = incorporate
into Hansard.

Phase 1: Gathering the views of key stakeholders

In this phase we will conduct consultation to gauge the views of key stakeholders, include large organisations, peak

bodies and a sample of regional venues. We will be guided by you on the specific stakeholders with which we consult but

can commit to a maximum of 8 sessions. To the extent possible we will conduct these sessions in-person, however,

where that is not possible, given the tight timeframes of the project and regional base of some stakeholders, we will

conduct them virtually.

Phase 2: Understanding how gambling behaviour might change

This phase will draw on available literature to understand what effect the reforms are likely to have on reducing the use

of EGMs, and to what extent there is a move towards other forms of gambling.

We would undertake a detailed literature review to understand the extent of potential shifts between gambling modes –

whether EGM players would play less, whether they'd substitute to other types of gambling, and whether these have

the same propensity for high-risk gambling.

Phase 3: Estimating the degree to which harm will be minimised

In this phase we will leverage the substitution impacts that would be estimated in phase 2 (described above) – namely

the change in spending on EGMs towards other types of gambling and/or other types of consumption not relating to

gambling. Using these substitution effects we will use two channels to consider the social impact:

- Option 1 would consider the substitution towards gambling activities that are less likely to result in harm (as

measured by the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI)). For example, if substitution from EGM towards

sports betting results in a lower average PGSI score, this will result in savings from a social and wellbeing

perspective (see costing below). Alternatively, if the move to cashless gaming results in safer gambling

behaviours while using EGMs (i.e. through the introduction of limits and/or mandatory breaks) then the

average PGSI score may reduce this way. We would be measuring a change in PGSI and the resultant social and

wellbeing savings derived below.

- Option 2 would look at the total change in gambling spend and the average relationship between gambling

spending and social harm. If the policy reduced overall gambling spend, this approach would demonstrate

additional savings from a social impact perspective.

Phase 4: Assessing the likely flow-on economic impacts

Based on the findings in phase 2 and 3 of this work, we will model the potential economy-wide impacts of the reform

using our in-house Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model. The model would be calibrated to represent the

Tasmanian economy, split into 15 discrete regions (lining up with SA3s) and sectors, with particular focus on those

directly affected like Accommodation and Food Service, Public Administration and Defence, etc. The model would be

calibrated to a baseline path which follows the official Tasmanian government forecast/projections. We would then

simulate the impact of changes to EGM use and associated in-venue activity (proxied through recreation services)

alongside any potential uplift in activity associated with a shift in consumption to non-gambling goods and services.

Depending on the findings available, the modelling could also include the avoided cost from reduced problem gambling.

Phase 5: Reporting

This project will culminate in the delivery of:

- A Deloitte Access Economics branded, public facing report demonstrating the social and economic impacts of

the proposed reforms to EGM use.

- An executive presentation of main findings. The presentation will be shared with DSG as part of the deliverables.

The report will incorporate a one-page graphic and visualisations summarising key findings. It will be written with a

broad audience in mind, and will include a clear and transparent description of the methodology.

We will provide DSG with a draft report for comment. Once feedback is received on the draft report, we will address the

comments and proceed to finalise the report. We will work closely with DSG, ensuring that final deliverables match your

objectives.

The beginning and the end of the report will include content which clearly outlines the scope of this report, and the

limitations and interpretation of the modelling framework and results. In this content, we will acknowledge that the

report is an social and economic impact study, and as such, it does not seek to characterise or estimate regulatory

impacts, fiscal impacts or present the findings in a Benefit-Cost Framework.

Any work we provide to you may be used only by you for the Purpose and in the manner described in the Terms.