

**CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY
APPROPRIATION FOR 2007-08) BILL 2008**

Second Reading

Mr BARTLETT (Denison - Premier - 2R) - Mr Speaker, I move –

That the bill be now read the second time.

Mr Speaker, to keep Tasmania moving forward, we need to invest in efficient and effective major infrastructure, such as road, rail, and a new hospital. We need to invest in public housing and in drought proofing the State. We need this investment to maintain the State's economic momentum.

Mr Speaker, as part of the 2007-08 Budget, the Treasurer announced that the Hobart International Airport Pty Ltd and Printing Authority of Tasmania would be sold and the proceeds directed towards critical infrastructure investment. The Government successfully sold these businesses earlier this year. The proceeds from the sale of these businesses and higher than budgeted taxation and GST receipts provide a unique opportunity to act on these priorities.

The bill before the House today appropriates an amount of four hundred and eighty two million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$482 250 000) from the Consolidated Fund, for infrastructure investment, public housing, and drought assistance, and for important capital purchases by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr Speaker, the key feature of the bill before the House today is the establishment of a three hundred and twelve million, nine hundred thousand dollar (\$312.9 million) Infrastructure Tasmania Fund, which is funded by the net proceeds from the sale of the Hobart Airport and the Printing Authority.

The Infrastructure Tasmania Fund will be used to progress a range of infrastructure projects that will underpin future economic growth and provide benefits to the entire Tasmanian community.

Mr Speaker, the Government is committed to the establishment of a \$900 million Hospitals Capital Fund, which will contribute to building work on Tasmania's major public hospitals, including the crucial development of a new Royal Hobart Hospital.

The bill today provides for the Government's first contribution to this Fund, a contribution of seventy five million dollars (\$75 million). The Government's intention is to provide a further \$75 million allocation to the fund in 2008-09, with a further \$125 million in 2009-10 and 2010-11, and \$200 million in 2011-12 for a total allocation by 30 June 2012 of \$600 million.

This funding will ensure that our public hospitals continue to service the needs of all Tasmanians for decades to come.

This bill also fulfils the Government's commitment to fund an investment of sixty million dollars (\$60 million) in public housing in Tasmania. Housing affordability is a national issue, and it is no secret that it has become significantly harder for Tasmanians to rent or buy their own home. The sixty million dollar allocation will be used to increase the supply of public housing in Tasmania.

Mr Speaker, funding of twenty five million two hundred thousand dollars (\$25.2 million) is also provided through Finance-General to the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund for new education facilities in Bridgewater and the Southern Midlands. Further funding will be allocated in the future.

This Bill also includes a capital appropriation of five million nine hundred thousand dollars (\$5.9 million) to the Department of Health and Human Services for the conversion of existing LPG appliances and hot water heaters to natural gas, and the installation of a co-generation plant and purchase of an MRI unit at the Launceston General Hospital. These commitments add to a Health Budget that is already at record levels.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the bill includes a recurrent appropriation of three million two hundred and fifty thousand (\$3.25 million) to the Department of Primary Industries and Water, to assist farmers, and communities, that are suffering from the drought. This funding will directly assist farmers with maintaining breeding stock, and help rural communities to cope with the flow-on effects that are caused by the drought.

Mr Speaker, the seeking of an additional appropriation through a Supplementary Appropriation Bill is the most transparent process for allocating the asset sale proceeds and additional revenue to expenditure. The bill before the House is an important step in continuing Tasmania's strong economic growth.

I commend the bill to the House.