



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 16 March 2021

REVISED EDITION

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

QUESTIONS

***Spirit of Tasmania* - Replacement Vessels**

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.02 a.m.]

You have turned the replacement of the *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels into an absolute farce. You have raised expectations that the new ships will be built in Australia. Your promise to local shipbuilders has been exposed as a cruel jobs hoax. On top of that, you created uncertainty and anxiety in the tourism and freight sectors by breaking your promise to deliver more capacity on Bass Strait by the end of this year. Now, after a delay of almost a year, you have returned right back to square one announcing the ships will be built in Finland after all.

This ridiculous episode has seriously called into question your judgment and your Government's ability to deliver major infrastructure projects. Given your sorry record of incompetence, how can Tasmanians have any confidence that the *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels will be delivered by the new deadline of 2023-24?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. It is not unexpected, to be frank. I can certainly anticipate what is coming up from the other side.

Let me be clear on this: this is about Tasmanian jobs and, as a result of a sensible pause, we are now in a position where we can achieve between \$50 million and \$100 million-worth of local content -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Not \$16 million that was in the original contract - \$50 million to \$100 million-worth of local content, including additional spending of around \$40 million on other associated port side equipment as well as significant ongoing maintenance that will be conducted here in the state.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. Members to my left, I am trying to hear the Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - I will bring the parliament back to May and June last year. Our economy was forecast to go backwards. We were forecast to have an unemployment rate of

around 12.25 per cent - potentially, more than 30 000 Tasmanians out of work. In a heartbeat I would make the same decision again in looking at a significant spend by government at a time where the Tasmanian economy was forecast to go into reverse. As a result of the pause -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - Between \$50 million and \$100 million-worth of local content is what we expected to achieve. We expected to get more Tasmanian jobs as a result of the pause we have taken.

Ms White - What about the ones you have already cost the state because of the delay?

Mr GUTWEIN - Importantly, I make the point that there are some in this Chamber who are very interested in Incat and its future. I will be meeting with them tonight to work with them on a plan to ensure that they can maintain their jobs, that they can bring forward work. They are an important employer in this state. I make no apologies.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Dr Broad - Hundreds of millions of dollars this has blown out.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr GUTWEIN - On that side of the House it appears they have forgotten completely that last year, unfortunately, we had 13 Tasmanians die, that we had more than 20 000 Tasmanians at the peak in May who lost their jobs, that we had people locked in their homes, and businesses closed.

The responsible thing to do was to look to see how much of that spend that we are about to commit to in terms of the *Spirits* could be captured in Tasmania. That is the process we have gone down. As a result we are delivering more local content into Tasmania. That is a good outcome.

It surprises me that on that side of the House they are not supporting this. I thought that they, like us, would understand that the more Tasmanians we have in work, the more local content we have, the better it is for the state. Obviously that is beyond them.

Spirits of Tasmania - Cost of Task Force

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.07 a.m.]

You have left tourism operators, the fresh freight industry and shipbuilders scratching their heads about how you have managed to bungle one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the state's history. At the end of the day, you have managed to bitterly disappoint local

shipbuilders and delay the delivery of additional capacity on Bass Strait by at least two years which ultimately will cost the state jobs. In the words of Michael Ferguson on 25 August last year, 'you should be ashamed of turning your back on jobs in this state'. You have turned your back on Tasmanians and you have turned your back on Australians.

How much did your task force cost Tasmanian taxpayers while you dithered and drowned in indecision? Can you show some honesty today and tell Tasmanians how much money you have wasted in this embarrassing fiasco?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, what we have done is increased the investment into Tasmania - \$50 million to \$100 million-worth of investment that will lead to jobs. I will take a moment to point out the strong support we have received from the business sector for the steps we have taken. The TCCI is on board. The TICT is on board. The THA is on board. What we have done -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, could I have some discipline, please?

Mr GUTWEIN - What we have done is secure \$50 million to \$100 million-worth of investment into Tasmania as a result of taking this step, which will lead to more Tasmanians being employed. It will lead to ensuring that the capacity we have in this state is used and, importantly, the new ferries will be on the run in 2023-24. As a result our economy will continue to strengthen.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker; it goes to Standing Order 45 - relevance. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention to the question which was, how much did the task force cost and how much has this whole fiasco cost the Tasmanian taxpayer.

Madam SPEAKER - As you are aware, it is not a point of order. I can only ask the Premier to be relevant.

Mr GUTWEIN - The point I was making is, that this will make money for Tasmania. It will underpin \$100 million-worth of content in Tasmania.

On this side of the House we are interested in Tasmanian jobs, underpinning our economy and ensuring that the rebuild and the growth in our economy continues.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania - Burn-off in the Styx Area

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for TOURISM, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.10 a.m.]

On the Saturday of the Labour Day long weekend, Forestry Tasmania set fire to a logged coup in the Styx. It is clear from subsequent events, that the GBE torched the coup then walked away. The fire did what fires do - it took off, threatening the Styx Tall Tree Reserve and the

World Heritage Area. As of today, a less than 30-hectare logging burn has spread to around 200 hectares.

A major mountain-bike event was on that long weekend and the wine grapes and hops crops were near harvest. All were threatened by the actions of your rogue GBE, which decided to start a fire six days after summer's end and with a high fuel load on the ground after a wet summer.

I am sure you are aware there is a memorandum of understanding between the forestry, tourism and agriculture industries. Do you agree that Forestry Tasmania breached the provisions of its MOU with the TICT and the TFGA in lighting that runaway fire, during high season for local tourism operators and agricultural producers? It commits the GBE to 'avoiding conducting planned burns where there is a significant risk of adversely affecting the experience of visitors attending the events'. I understand that TICT leadership did not know about it until they saw the smoke.

Do you admit that logging burns make a mockery of your own 'come down for air' promotion campaign? As Tourism minister, what are you going to do to protect the tourism industry from Forestry Tasmania's reckless logging burns?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for that question and her interest in this matter. It sounds as though you were a little disappointed that fire did not get away -

Ms O'Connor - It did get away. Wake up: 30 hectares to 200 hectares.

Mr GUTWEIN - My advice is that it was a relatively small fire, around 200 hectares. At no stage did it endanger people, property, infrastructure, the Styx Giant Tree Reserve, roads, or the National Mountain Bike Championships held at the Maydena Mountain Bike track on that Saturday. In fact, I am advised that smoke was not visible during the Maydena event.

On Friday 12 March, while the Greens were calling it an emergency, the official statement from Tasmania Fire Service was 'there is no immediate threat. The fire remains stable, it is not running out of control and no properties are under threat'. That is the official view.

You will do your very best to try and beat this up into something that it is not, but -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the constituents we represent, I take offence to that statement from the Premier. He is clutching at straws here, and his answer is offensive and untrue. If he could contain himself to a decent answer, that would be terrific.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Are you seeking redress?

Ms O'CONNOR - He is resorting to personal attacks.

Madam SPEAKER - I cannot allow that one.

Ms O'Connor - He started the answer with a resort to a personal attack. It is pathetic.

Mr GUTWEIN - I repeat, so it is on the record: the truth is that it was a relatively small fire -

Ms O'Connor - That was not the question and it is 200 hectares.

Mr GUTWEIN - approximately 200 hectares. At no stage did it endanger people, property, infrastructure, the Styx Giant Tree Reserve, roads, or the National Mountain Bike Championships held at the Maydena Mountain Bike track on that Saturday.

The official statement from Tasmania Fire Service was 'there is no immediate threat. The fire remains stable, it is not running out of control and no properties are under threat'.

I am advised that Sustainable Timber Tasmania will continue to work with all stakeholders, such as wine growers and the tourism industry, to ensure we cooperatively adapt -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Could the Premier address his mind to the question, which related to the MOU between Forestry Tasmania, TFGA and TICT, and the fact that this MOU has been breached by Forestry Tasmania.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order.

Ms O'Connor - He needs to answer the question. There is an agreement.

Madam SPEAKER - You know how this system works. That is not a point of order. I can only ask the Premier to be relevant.

Ms O'Connor - There is an agreement. Have your read it?

Mr GUTWEIN - I believe I am being very relevant, Madam Speaker. Clearly, the leader of the Greens does not like some facts about this being placed on the record.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania will continue to work with stakeholders, such as wine growers and the tourism industry, to cooperatively adapt future management and maintain active communication to the mutual benefit of all parties.

Again, I come back to the facts of the matter: at no stage did that fire endanger people, property, infrastructure, the Styx Giant Tree Reserve, roads, or the national mountain bike championships held at Maydena.

Ms O'Connor - Dinosaur.

Madam SPEAKER - That was very unparliamentary.

Building a Brighter Future

Mr TUCKER question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.16 a.m.]

A year after the arrival of COVID-19 on our shores, can you please update the House on the Government's clear plan to build a brighter future for all Tasmanians? Are you aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question, and his interest in this very important matter. As the House will understand, just over a year ago today, Tasmania identified our first COVID-19 case. From that moment on, we know that life has been very different. Our number one priority has been protecting the health, wellbeing and safety of Tasmanians. I believe, as was obvious from previous answers, that I have provided - and the interjections from the other side - that, unlike Labor, most people understand we went through a dark time last year. It was a very difficult time. Hundreds of thousands of Tasmanians stayed home to save lives. Unfortunately, 13 lives were lost and thousands of Tasmanians lost their jobs.

As a result of the incredible efforts of Tasmanians, we are once again the turnaround state. We have bounced back and I give credit to the people of this state. They have shown very clearly they will rise to a challenge, and they will help their fellow Tasmanians to get back on their feet.

We are emerging from the COVID-19 challenge with a resilient optimism, and a clear focus on a shared future. We have good reason to be optimistic. Employment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. There are now more than 257 000 Tasmanians employed. There are almost 4000 more full-time jobs in the state than there were in January of last year. Back in May, Treasury was forecasting an unemployment rate of 12.25 per cent. Now we have the lowest unemployment rate of all of the states, at 5.9 per cent - half a percentage point below the national average. That should be cause for great optimism, because it really is good news.

That good news is lost on Labor. This morning I could not believe an article written by the Leader of the Opposition claiming an 8 per cent overall unemployment rate. Did you write that a month ago, and then just sit on it? It beggars belief. I can see even the shadow treasurer shaking his head. You claim our youth unemployment rate was by far the worst in the country. Our youth unemployment rate is the third lowest of all of the states in year average terms. How do you think you can get away with writing such rubbish?

Our state has bounced back; it is confident. Jobs are being created and our economy is growing. Yet, Labor is actually peddling mistruths in the press. It is extraordinary. Either you are attempting to tell lies to Tasmanians, or you were misinformed. I wonder what it was. Perhaps you can explain to the parliament. The last time that our unemployment rate was over 8 per cent was 2574 days ago, when it was 8.2 per cent under the Labor-Greens government in early 2014. You were a member of that government, Ms White. It goes to show how out of touch Labor is.

Despite Labor's best efforts to talk Tasmania down using out-of-date, what appeared to be dodgy figures, our economy is growing strongly and our recovery is well under way.

However, we know that we need to do more to help Tasmanians still doing it tough, and that is why a growing economy is so important.

In the December quarter, state final demand grew 3.3 per cent and is now 1.5 per cent larger than before the pandemic. Our economy is larger than before the pandemic. Business investment in the December quarter grew 8.2 per cent in the quarter and is now 7.4 per cent higher than the year before and businesses are hiring again. In February, job vacancies in Tasmania grew a nation-leading 13.3 per cent, nearly double the national growth. Job vacancies in February were 52.4 per cent higher than in February last year, before the pandemic. Retail trade, one of the best litmus tests for our economy, is higher than last year before the pandemic, and our merchandise exports are higher again than the previous year, bucking the national trend. Our economy is growing strongly.

I am very proud of Tasmanians for the way they have worked together, helped each other, and importantly, supported our plan that we began rolling out last year with the construction blitz, which is ensuring now that we see more dwellings and dwelling approvals than we have seen before. We are seeing jobs return, we are seeing investment flow. Yet, from that side of the House, we see articles that contain dodgy numbers trying to talk down the economy. I say to Ms White, shame on you.

Spirits of Tasmania - Local Content Opportunities

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.22 a.m.]

We have heard and read the comforting words from your Government to Tasmania's shipbuilding and maritime industry as to ensuring Tasmanian local content, or as I like to call it, TLC. Words of comfort are nice but contractual terms are binding. The percentage of local content, I feel, must be stipulated in the contract with the prime tenderer, including measures and reporting requirements, the number of Tasmanian jobs to be landed and payable penalties if local content requirements are not met. Tasmanian industry ought to be able to bid for the local content component to ensure Tasmanian jobs are delivered.

Will you guarantee open and transparent quarterly reporting to the people of Tasmania on the degree to which Tasmanian local content requirements have or have not being met in the *Spirits of Tasmania* build?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms Ogilvie, the member for Clark, for that question. I want to assure her and other members for Clark, including the Attorney-General, that we will work closely with Incat, who I know is disappointed by this decision, to ensure that their business is sustainable moving forward.

In term of the negotiations that will now occur, as I announced yesterday, over the next 30 days, TT-Line will negotiate the level of local content with RMC. TT-Line has advised us that they expect that could be between \$50 million and \$100 million. That will be contractually

specified. Before TT-Line make a decision, that contract will come back to the Government for the final decision to be made.

In terms of reporting, I think what you suggest makes sense. We are happy to look at providing regular updates of local content that is utilised in terms of the *Spirit* build.

Spirits of Tasmania - Incat Concerns

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.25 a.m.]

Last night Incat boss Bob Clifford told the ABC he was, and I quote, 'pissed off' at your decision to go back to Finland for the contract to replace the *Spirit* vessels. Mr Clifford said he was looking forward to getting a COVID-19 vaccine so he could leave Tasmania, go overseas and stay there. He said your Government has no interest in building ferries for the Derwent, let alone the \$850 million *Spirit* vessels, locally.

Your cruel jobs hoax has resulted in a major builder and a major employer threatening to leave this state. All Tasmanians know that your Government is a complete flop at delivering major infrastructure proposals. What do you say to Mr Clifford and to employees at Incat who have been led on by you in a cruel jobs hoax?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I have to say, seriously? What? The hypocrisy in that question is writ large -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. There will be no pointing across the Chamber and no interjections. Please hear the Premier out in silence.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, the hypocrisy in that question is writ large. That is one of the most extraordinary questions I have had raised in this place in my time in public life. For the last six months they have done everything to tear down local businesses. They have done everything to ensure that we delivered zero increase in local content. On the other side of the House their position back in June of last year was that we should have signed the contract and accepted \$16 million-worth of local content. It beggars belief that that side of the House could do a 180 degree pivot so quickly.

I am not going to respond to Mr Clifford in this parliament. I will be meeting Mr Clifford shortly and we will be working with them to ensure that their business is secure, that it is sustainable, and that we can support the jobs in their business as well as the jobs we will be supporting as a result of the contract we will be signing in terms of \$50 million to \$100 million-worth of local content.

Madam Speaker, as to that side of the House, it is breathtaking and the Tasmanians who are watching who have witnessed the full-frontal attack they have placed on us over the last six months in their desire to sign on the dotted line last June - it just beggars belief. To be frank,

that question says more about Labor and the depths that they will go to. More importantly, the fact that once again they have a position - sign the contract in June, accept \$16 million - to now where they are pivoting so very quickly and feigning support for the shipbuilder that they have not had a kind word to say about over the last six months. It beggars belief.

Harness Racing - Use of Whips

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

[10.29 a.m.]

Last time we asked you a question it was in relation to a ban of whips in horse racing on animal welfare grounds and in line with community expectations. Since then, local harness racer, Gavin Kelly, has been slapped with a \$1000 fine for refusing to use a whip on his horses during races. What is going on in your portfolio that a harness racer who makes an ethical decision not to use a whip gets targeted by stewards? Why would the so-called Office of Racing Integrity target a participant in the racing industry for not using a whip? What is your position as minister on the situation Mr Kelly is now in? Do you agree; if you had done the right thing and moved to ban the use of whips, this targeting of an ethical harness racer by your agency would not have happened?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The Government takes animal welfare extremely seriously. That is why we are investing more money than ever before into animal welfare. I listened to Mr Kelly's interview on ABC this morning. I have been briefed on this matter and the matter is before the Tasmanian Racing Appeal Board.

Yes, it involves Mr Kelly as a harness driver being fined to comply with the directions of a steward who asked him to carry a whip for safety reasons. On 19 December 2020 at Mowbray, harness driver Gavin Kelly was issued a verbal direction by stewards to carry a whip when driving. On 29 December 2020 at Devonport the stewards held an inquiry with Mr Kelly because he failed to carry a whip during the race. Mr Kelly was charged under the harness racing rules for failing to comply with the direction of a steward to carry a whip when driving in all races. The steward stated that he did not have to use the whip but that he must carry it for safety reasons. With that hearing date set I cannot comment on that appeal right now.

As far as whips in racing, Harness Racing Australia originally announced on December 2016 that it would ban the use of whips in harness racing and training from 1 September 2017. HRA has reaffirmed its commitment to the removal of the use of whips in harness racing but the original implementation date was not deemed to be achievable. Harness Racing Australia approved restrictions to the whip rule on 21 June 2018 which were implemented from 1 September 2020.

On 12 June 2020, Harness Racing Australia approved further restrictions to the use of the whip and the type of whip that can be used. The whip can only have a wrist action now and there can be no forearm or shoulders. The rule came into effect on 20 September and was

fully supported by Tasracing. Harness Racing Australia is continuing to review its rules into the use of the whip and Racing Australia is also continuing to review -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I am interested in hearing what has happened at a national level but the minister cannot hide behind the failure to act in a speedy way at a national level. I want to understand -

Mr Barnett - Come on.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Barnett.

Ms O'CONNOR - Please address the question of why the Office of Racing Integrity's stewards targeted Mr Kelly.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, it is a very interesting point of order but it is not a point of order.

Ms HOWLETT - There is an appeal going on at the moment and I cannot comment on that appeal. What I can tell you is that Tasracing and the ORI will continue to work with the governing bodies nationally to work out better implementation of the whip.

Spirits of Tasmania - Freight Capacity

Dr BROAD question to **PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN**

[10.33 a.m.]

Your job creation rhetoric is not matched by reality. You perpetrated a cruel jobs hoax by announcing that after nine months of indecision and dithering by you and your Government about the TT-Line replacement vessels, you are heading back to Finland. You know from Saul Eslake's report that each year of delay means at least \$350 million of tourism money will not be spent in Tasmania and 6000 jobs will not be created. Your own task force report shows that the cost to the economy as a consequence of your failure to make a decision for so long will be multiple millions of dollars. Now we hear that the bottleneck on our state economy is not going to get better until at least 2023-24.

What do you say to business owners like Craig Wright from Barry Walsh Transport who cannot grow his business and employ more Tasmanians because of capacity constraints on the *Spirits* and he needs the *Spirits*. Right now, Barry Walsh Transport cannot get their trailers on the *Spirits*, sometimes for days. Your failure to make a decision has put their business under further pressure. What do you say to businesses that rely on the *Spirits* to meet their freight task?

Are you going to apologise for your flip-flopping that has caused havoc to their businesses? What is your Government's plan to manage these capacity constraints in the tourism and freight sectors before the new ships are delivered?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Dr Broad for his questions. It is amazing - things like 'up is down' and 'black is white' in this Chamber. It is extraordinary. For over six months, Dr Broad has been demanding that we take the ferries to Finland -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - I thought that he would at least be happy with the fact that now there is an opportunity for between \$50 million and \$100 million-worth of additional local content in Tasmania as a result of the decision that we have made. It just beggars belief.

In terms of capacity constraints on the *Spirits*, and if there is a need for further day sailings which is the operational plan that TT-Line employs when demand is high, then I am certain that TT-Line will be cognisant of those needs.

I want to come back to the absolute hypocrisy of those on that side of the House who for the last six months have been demanding that we should have signed on the bottom line and sent all those jobs to Finland without even considering what level of additional local content we could achieve in the state. This was at a time when our economy last year was forecast to have an unemployment rate of 12.25 per cent and there would have been more than 30 000 unemployed. Yet the member completely ignores that.

Dr Broad - You ignored the freight sector.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr GUTWEIN - He talks about jobs and forgets entirely that right now we are back at pre-pandemic job levels in Tasmania. Our economy is growing again.

On that side of the House I wonder what their position would be today if this Government had not laid out its plan, a plan that is working, which has returned jobs and our economy back to a position of growth. What would they would be calling for today? It beggars belief.

I make this point in finishing. I do not apologise that last year, at a time when our economy was forecast to go backwards, at a time when more than 30 000 Tasmanians were forecast to be out of work, for pausing a process which has now ultimately delivered the opportunity for the state to have more than \$50 million to \$100 million-worth of local content here -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - I do not apologise for that, Madam Speaker.

Dr Broad - It is rubbish. You promised this from the start.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr GUTWEIN - It beggars belief how quickly that side of the House is able to flip-flop between positions, on one hand demanding that we go to Finland and on the other, now criticising us for getting a better deal. It beggars belief.

Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings - Update

Mr TUCKER question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.40 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the work being done to establish the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons, Mr Tucker, for his interest in this incredibly important area. Our Government takes the safety of children extremely seriously. There is nothing more important than ensuring the vulnerable in our community, and our children, are protected and able to grow up safe, healthy and happy.

I am pleased to announce that yesterday, 15 March, Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC, as Governor-in-Council, signed the order to formally establish the Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

That order formally established the honourable Marcia Neave AO, as the president of the commission, and appointed two other commissioners to assist her with the inquiry, namely, Professor Leah Bromfield and former Family Court Justice, the honourable Robert Benjamin AM. Professor Leah Bromfield is one of Australia's foremost child protection researchers. She is a co-director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection and was the professorial fellow to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and led its extensive research program. Professor Bromfield is a highly regarded research expert on child protection systems. She has worked closely with state, national and international governments on establishing and implementing child welfare reforms, including the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.

The honourable Robert Benjamin AM was appointed as a judge of the Family Court of Australia in August 2005. He is also a presidential member of the Australian Administrative Appeals Tribunal. He was made an Order of Australia for his significant service to the judiciary and to the law, legal education, mediation, arbitration and professional standards. His Honour retires from the Family Court in May this year and is on leave until that time. I thank the Chief Justice of the Family Court for agreeing to his Honour's appointment.

I have previously spoken in this place about the honourable Marcia Neave AO, who brings to the inquiry an incredible breadth of skills and experience. Once again, I formally thank our president and commissioners for agreeing to undertake this important inquiry. We

are privileged to have such skilled and experienced professionals leading this critical piece of work.

The order requires the commissioners to present a final report of the results of the inquiry and any recommendations to Her Excellency no later than 21 August 2022. The order also authorises the commissioners to present any recommendations or interim reports they consider appropriate. I understand that interim staff of the commission, including interim CEO, Brad Wagg, have moved into administrative premises in Macquarie Street this week. The commission expects to be fully operational in early April. An announcement will be made in due course regarding the hearing rooms.

Any media or statements from Ms Neave and commissioners is a matter for them at a suitable time, but I expect that Ms Neave will come out at the commencement of the inquiry before she commences her important work.

To ensure the commission of inquiry is fully empowered to undertake its inquiry, I will today table the Justice Miscellaneous (Commissions of Inquiry) Bill 2021, which will make clear amendments to the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995 and other related legislation. These proposed amendments have been identified in consultation with the president of the commission of inquiry. The amendments our Government will table in order to further strengthen our Commissions of Inquiry Act will make our act one of the strongest in Australia. The amendments will also implement changes identified by the 2003 Tasmanian Law Reform Institute Report as well as work undertaken by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

The commission of inquiry will take into account the reforms already undertaken within the Government and the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that have already been implemented, or agreed to, by our Government.

The important work already under way by Professors Stephen Smallbone and Tim McCormack in relation to the Department of Education, and Ms Maree Norton in relation to the Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service and other entities, will all continue by being rolled into the work of the Commission of Inquiry. I place on the record my sincere thanks and gratitude to Professors Smallbone and McCormack and Maree Norton for their work in their respective inquiries and investigations to date.

In conclusion, I emphasise again that these issues, and media coverage of these issues, can be extremely upsetting and traumatic for some people. I stress that if any aspect of these matters raises concerns for anyone, please reach out for help. The Department of Justice has a list of supports on its website, but please call services such as Lifeline or Beyond Blue if you need to talk to someone.

Our Government recognises the extraordinary courage it takes for someone to come forward and report sexual abuse. Through the Child Abuse Royal Commission Response Unit (CARCRU) within our Department of Justice, the Government is implementing the more than 200 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse applicable to the states. These include establishing a pilot witness intermediary screen, which I am pleased to advise is now fully operational and will be available to the commission of inquiry. We are also working towards a child safe organisations framework, as well as

facilitating our requirements under the National Redress Scheme, to which we committed \$70 million and more if required.

I welcome the establishment of the commission of inquiry. This is difficult but important and necessary work. I thank my department for the enormous amount of work that has gone into the commission of inquiry process. It shows how seriously we as a government are addressing these disturbing matters. I am proud our Government is shining a light on an area that has been dark for too long.

Hydro Tasmania - Downsizing and Job Losses

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.46 a.m.]

Tasmania has an international reputation as a renewable energy leader - a reputation that has been built up over decades. For the past few years, your Energy minister has attempted to take credit for that reputation when making such claims that your Government would -

... further unlock Tasmania's renewable energy potential with thousands of jobs and over \$7 billion in economic activity set to flow as a result.

Instead, you are undertaking a massive downsizing of Hydro Tasmania's workforce and sacking workers. This is another cruel jobs hoax where you promise to deliver jobs and a renewable energy bonanza, only to flip-flop with another broken promise that will see workers sacked.

Why have you gone missing when Tasmanian jobs are being lost?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his question and his interest in this matter. He has recently made a number of statements about this particular matter.

However, I make the point that Hydro Tasmania is ensuring that it evolves to market conditions and also to future opportunities -

Dr Woodruff - Contracting to expand?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - The national energy market is a fast-evolving, complex challenge. If we followed Labor's lead, we would be stuck in the Dark Ages with rising power prices of 65 per cent over time.

First I will deal with the jobs, and then I will turn to what I believe the member is calling for.

I understand that the Hydro restructure includes organising its resources to focus on its core business, whilst flattening its organisational structure to empower its people. Where staff were displaced, Hydro is offering training and development to transition into newly created future-focused roles as well as roles that become available through natural attrition.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - A more efficient Hydro means downward pressure on energy prices. The other side appears to be calling for higher power prices.

Hydro will manage its business to ensure it provides the best outcome for Tasmanians. Of course, I do not want to see any job losses. We have worked very hard to ensure that right now in Tasmania there are over 4000 full-time jobs more than there were before the pandemic. Our jobs market is growing and the shadow Treasurer knows that from the relative comfort of the economic policies of this Government, we are seeing jobs growth in our economy. From that position and the relative comfort it has provided, he takes every opportunity to criticise rather than attempting to support and grow the economy -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Hydro is managing its business to ensure that it is fit for purpose for a changing energy market and the opportunities that we will see that will come. Importantly, there will be thousands of jobs because Marinus, along with Battery of the Nation, will ensure that we see investment, we see jobs and we see a renewable future.

Hydro Tasmania - Job Cuts and Restructure

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.50 a.m.]

That answer will be cold comfort to those workers who will be taking their redundancy cheques as they walk out the door, thank you very much, Premier.

Less than six months ago, in October last year, your Government was promising to secure Tasmania's renewable energy future for decades. Your Energy minister said:

The Tasmanian Government is seizing the opportunity to secure our state's renewable energy future, which has the potential to create thousands of jobs and benefit our state for decades.

Instead, this massive broken promise and cruel job hoax around renewable energy have now been exposed as you take an axe to Hydro and launch a mass campaign of sacking workers. It was only months ago in this parliament that Mr Barnett, the minister, denied any knowledge of job cuts or restructures in Hydro, only to flip-flop last Wednesday when the secret plan came

out. When were you first briefed about the plan that Hydro restructure announced last week that will see workers sacked, and will you lift a finger and intervene to save these jobs?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for that question. I regularly engage with Hydro and there are discussions always about sustainability and ensuring they are efficient and fit for purpose. Let me deal with the last part of the question. I trust Hydro to get on with the job of running its business and ensuring that it is fit for purpose. Whilst I do not like to see any job lost, I take comfort from the fact that we have a strong growing economy, we have a plan that is delivering investment, jobs and growth and, importantly, we are seeing significant investment in terms of Project Marinus and Battery of the Nation -

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The question was very clear: when were you briefed on these job cuts?

Madam SPEAKER - As you know, I cannot put words into the Premier's mouth.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I have said I meet regularly with Hydro. I have many discussions with Hydro about their business. Most of those discussions are about them ensuring that they are fit for purpose, sustainable, and that they are in a position to keep downward pressure on power prices in what will be a significant period of investment in this state as we roll out Project Marinus and Battery of the Nation.

Mental Health Services in Tasmania

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.54 a.m.]

Over the last 12 months COVID-19 has placed a greater focus on mental health and wellbeing than ever before. Can you provide the House with an update on the Tasmanian Liberal Government's plan to build better mental health services for Tasmanians in need?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker for his question. I know of his personal interest in this matter. Having a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing portfolio demonstrates our Government's commitment to these important areas. We have a \$120 million plan that draws on the strong foundation of the Rethink Mental Health plan for new facilities, additional staff, and more support for the community mental health sector to help Tasmanians.

We are taking a best-practice approach through the Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program to build a contemporary, integrated model of mental health care so that people can get more holistic support at the right place and at the right time.

We have a long-term plan for a Tasmanian mental health system, with an increased focus on community support options and a reduced reliance on acute hospital-based services, including emergency departments. We are now emerging from the coronavirus challenge with

resilient optimism and a clear focus on our shared future. We have good reasons to be optimistic. Our economy is growing, but we acknowledge many Tasmanians are still struggling and there is more that we can do to help them. It is important to note that while there will always be a need for acute mental health beds in a hospital setting, community-based support and care can and does respond to people with acute needs just as effectively.

I am very pleased to announce that building works have officially begun this week on the Peacock Centre redevelopment. The \$9.6 million project was a key commitment to deliver integration hubs under the Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program. Services at the Peacock Centre when fully constructed will provide an integration hub located on the ground floor providing non-clinical psychosocial short-term support and co-located services; a 12-bed residential facility upstairs operating 24/7; a safe haven for people experiencing suicidal distress operating seven days a week with extended hours; a recovery college; on- and off-street parking for up to 17 vehicles; restoration of the original greenhouse offering a range of therapeutic gardening and craft programs; and restoration of existing heritage landscapes and new garden and pathways.

The new facility will provide a welcome entry and reception; support spaces for service providers; secure staff areas and amenities; large communal areas; 12 private bedrooms with their own bathrooms; outdoor gardens and a courtyard. This new model of integrated and community-based mental health care bringing together a range of services under one roof is aimed at reducing hospital admissions and readmissions and better support recovery for Tasmanians living with mental health challenges.

Builders Hansen & Yuncken have been awarded the contract following a competitive tender process to redevelop this significant heritage building which sustained fire damage back in 2016. A significant project like this would not be possible without the concerted efforts of various Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service representatives, Primary Health Tasmania, and our community and sector partners. In particular, the design of the new Peacock Centre has relied on extensive input and guidance from our consumer, carer and sector representatives.

I personally thank representatives from Mental Health Family and Friends Tasmania, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania and, of course, Flourish.

The redevelopment of the Peacock Centre, together with the construction of a new community-based facility at St Johns Park, will provide 27 new mental health short-term recovery beds and two integration hubs in southern Tasmania over the next few years. Thanks to the hard work of Tasmanians, we are in a good place.

Our economy is in good shape and we have a strong platform ready to harness the opportunities of the future and, as a state, we can achieve more together. This important new development and the new services are part of our clear, long-term plan to secure Tasmania's future. I look forward to following the progress of the Peacock Centre build over the next 12 months and the commencement of these fantastic new services.

Australian Maritime College - Loss of Contract

Ms O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.58 a.m.]

In the past fortnight you have performed an embarrassing backflip on the *Spirit of Tasmania* replacement vessels and you have started sacking workers from Hydro in the two latest examples of your willingness to break promises, sacrifice Tasmanian jobs, and do untold damage to business and the economy. Just days before that, you managed to lose a critical \$36 million contract that the Australian Maritime College has held since 1992 - almost 30 years.

The loss of this training contract will deal a significant blow to the north's economy. It is not the first time we have had a lack of action from Government on maritime contracts. You remember your predecessor taking the extreme action of leaving a voice mail for the previous defence minister. Your Education and Training minister's attempt to make excuses for the loss of this contract to Queensland has been hollow, weak and meaningless. Can you explain how your Government was so asleep at the wheel that it allowed this prestigious and important training contract to slip through Tasmania's fingers?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms O'Byrne, the member for Bass, for that question. I point out, on the basis that there was a quite preamble to it, that our economy is growing. It is stronger today than it was pre-pandemic. We have more jobs in Tasmania. We have returned to pre-pandemic levels of jobs in Tasmania. From staring down a 12.25 per cent unemployment rate in the middle of last year and the potential for an economy to be going backwards, we have actually delivered one of the best turnarounds out of any state or territory in this country over the last six months. Jobs are being created and our economy is growing.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order. Is the Premier saying a \$36 million contract is irrelevant to Tasmania?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order.

Mr GUTWEIN - I was contextualising the answer on the basis that the member in terms of her question has done her very best, as Labor does every time they stand in this place, to contextualise our economy and jobs as either not being important or not growing. To be frank, the opposite is the case.

The AMC is irrefutably one of the leading global maritime institutions. It has a national and international reputation for cutting-edge maritime research education and training. This side of the House is disappointed the AMC was not successful in that competitive tender. We will continue to work with AMC to ensure that the Defence and Maritime Innovation and Design Precinct goes forward, that it develops world-class defence and national security research, education and training capabilities, and a precinct that will form a national hub for defence, industry and research collaboration that will enhance the University of Tasmania's national and international network supporting and promoting Australia's defence expertise.

As I said, it is disappointing the AMC lost that competitive process, but it was a competitive process. We will continue to work with AMC - it has a bright future, one we will continue to invest in, and I am certain that that institution will continue to grow -

Mr O'BYRNE - Through no work of yours.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

**Police, Fire and Emergency Management - Key Leadership Positions -
Retirement and Recruitment**

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER FOR POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[11.02 a.m.]

Can you update the House on two important and well-earned retirements within the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management and the Government's approach to filling these key positions?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question.

Tasmania's emergency services truly are world class and along with the exceptional performance at all levels of the organisation, this especially requires leadership of the highest calibre.

Our emergency service leaders are there for us when we need them and they help the community through some of its greatest challenges. This year will see changes to two of the key leadership positions within the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

The Chief Fire Officer, Mr Chris Arnol, will be retiring from Tasmania Fire Service on 2 July this year. Mr Arnol has been the Chief Fire Officer of the TFS since 2016. As I am sure we all recall, he led the state through the extremely challenging 2018-19 fire season.

Mr Arnol joined the Tasmania Fire Service in 1985 and advanced through the ranks before moving to Western Australia in 2009. In Western Australia Mr Arnol drove significant reforms as the assistant commissioner of the department of Fire and Emergency Services before returning to Tasmania in 2016.

I am sure he will not mind me saying, and I am sure other people in the House already know, that Mr Arnol is a talented artist. He has told me that his plan is to dedicate more time to his passion when he retires. Mr Arnol will remain in the Chief Fire Officer's role until he retires and the national recruitment process for that role will commence shortly.

I also want to recognise the retirement of Mr Scott Tilyard, Deputy Commissioner of Police. Mr Tilyard will retire in July this year. However, he will remain in his role as Deputy State Controller until his retirement date.

Mr Tilyard has played a vital role as the Deputy State Controller through the most significant and extended emergency and the greatest threat to the health of Tasmanians in our lifetime. When he does retire Mr Tilyard will have been with the Tasmania Police Service for 40 years and his departure will be felt across the organisation.

The recruitment for the role of deputy commissioner will commence in the coming weeks and the current acting Deputy Commissioner, Donna Adams, will remain in the role until the position is filled.

Both Mr Tilyard and Mr Arnol have provided outstanding leadership, guidance, commitment and advice throughout their distinguished careers. I thank both Mr Tilyard and Mr Arnol for their dedication and continued commitment to keeping Tasmanians safe and I am sure there will be further opportunities to acknowledge them closer to the conclusion of their careers in July.

Time expired.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Leader of the Opposition, Ms White

[11.06 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, on indulgence under standing order 127, Personal Explanation. The Premier accused me of lying in the parliament. I did not. In fact, *The Examiner* printed that article on 11 January; they must have liked it so much they published it again today. If he has a problem with that he needs to take it up with the editor.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Spirits of Tasmania - Cost of Task Force

[11.06 a.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I wish to add to an answer about the costs of the task force. Noting that the TT-Line has advised that they expect that we will be able to achieve between \$50 million and \$100 million-worth of local content, I believe it was a very good investment by the Government in the task force. The cost in dollar terms was \$146 000.

JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY) BILL 2021 (No. 6)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Ms Archer** and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The TT-Line

[11.09 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: TT-Line.

Madam Speaker, look what we see here. We see the responsible ministers fleeing the Chamber. They are so ashamed of this horrendous back-flip that they cannot even face parliament to justify their own existence, to justify this decision. What they have before us is a humiliating back-flip. There is no way to say this: the Government has completely stuffed up this TT-Line procurement. A better deal you maybe could have got last year but anyway, 'a better deal' - absolutely believe the spin from this Government.

All we are hearing today is this massive back-flip and spin. The minister responsible and the Premier, Mr Gutwein - it is not too late for the Olympics. They could make a run for the gymnastics team because that is what we are seeing here today - huge back-flips and spin. There is absolutely no way that they can hold their heads up and say this was a good decision. We are literally back to square one.

The Government has been crowing all along, right back from 2018, that they were going to maximise Tasmanian content in this procurement in these new *Spirits*. We have heard today that the Premier shamelessly used COVID-19 as protection; shamelessly talking about the deaths of people during the COVID-19 crisis; shamelessly ignoring that this is a monumental back-flip because we are back to square one.

I know Mr Ellis is taking this 'village idiot' thing really seriously but he has to listen to his own words. Is he ashamed that his Government is heading back to Finland after what he has said in this place about Finland? Finland is famous for two things now, saunas and Liberal government backflips. That is what Finland is famous for and Mr Ellis over there is one of the best. This has cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars, and they are in denial. Hundreds of millions of dollars in extra costs and the *Spirit* vessels are not going to be replaced for longer. We should have had the first vessel here at the end of this year.

Saul Eslake said that \$350 million tourism dollars will be spent in Tasmania every year. That is the cost of this decision. Six thousand jobs a year will not be created. That is the cost of this decision. Costs are going to go up - the Premier has already belled the cat on that and he is now talking about \$1 billion deal. Up from \$850 million, up from \$688 million from the first contract they signed. It has blown out to a billion dollars, and what have we got? We have a promise for 2023-24. What we should have is a vessel here this year. That is what we are talking about here.

There is a massive bottleneck on our state's economy. The freight sector has been capped out on the *Spirit of Tasmania* since 2013. By the time the first vessels are delivered, if the Government can be believed, is going to be 10 years of maximum capacity. What do they say to Barry Walsh Transport which cannot get its trailers on the *Spirit* when it wants to? What do they say to SRT for having to make decisions every night about which time-sensitive freight to get on the *Spirits*? There is a massive bottleneck on growth and jobs in this state because this

Government is incompetent. The freight sector was capped out and that is why TT-Line's business case was so strong.

What did the Government do? They tore it up, ignored TT-Line, put in place some sham process that we now hear cost \$146 000 which they ignored, and now they have gone back to the bottom drawer to try to find the contract that they were about to sign, maybe begging for a better deal, trying to maximise Tasmanian jobs. If this was so important - and yes, we were in the middle of COVID-19 - if they wanted extra Tasmanian jobs from RMC, the Finnish boatbuilder, why did they not do it then? We could have had a new vessel here this year and they could have argued for the Tasmanian content then. Instead, they put in place a sham process, got everybody's hopes up, bagged us out continually and backflipped. They are the minister for Finland, the premier for Finland and the backbencher for Finland. That is what we have here. What has the tourism industry got? It has \$350 million less being spent until the Government gets around to signing a contract they had in front of them.

I know the minister, Mr Ferguson, must have been really upset because he was looking forward to signing this contract. He had the pen ready - shined and probably had it engraved - and was about to sign the contract, and then the Premier took it and tore it up in front of his eyes. The minister now has to go back and defend the decision on ABC radio and say, 'This is fantastic'. It is fantastic that the bottleneck on the state economy remains for another three or four years. He has to say to the tourism industry \$350 million will not be spent in the state. Imagine the difference if the Government had signed that contract when it had it in front of it instead of crawling on its hands and knees back to Finland to argue for a better deal. We would have a new vessel coming this year. Imagine what the tourism industry would be looking forward to.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. There is a lot of chatter across the Chamber.

Dr BROAD - Imagine the extra capacity, the extra caravans that could come to Tasmania, the extra tourists. Not only that, imagine our small fruit sector, our salmon industry, our lettuce and vegetable producers -

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I appreciate this a very passionate matter for all sides of the Chamber but I ask that Dr Broad be allowed to make his contribution in peace, please.

Dr BROAD - You have to go to the freight sector and apologise to it and you also have to apologise for not understanding its business. You say they can use Toll or SeaRoad. Toll and SeaRoad have put on bigger vessels, and that is fantastic, but that has not meant the *Spirit* is empty. The *Spirit* remains full despite that extra capacity. That is because our shipping is a bottleneck on the state. It is elastic. Every time the capacity increases, it fills up. That is because Bass Strait is a bottleneck on our economy.

What are you doing about it? Nothing, just politicking, spinning and delaying a decision that you should have made, for another three or four years. That is what you have on your heads. You did not even speak to your freight costumers. You did not talk to Huon, you did not talk to Tassal, did not talk to SRT, did not talk to Fresh Freight - you did not talk to anybody. You have put this sham process in place. You should hang your heads in shame. Instead what

we have now is a bottleneck on our state economy for another three or four years and a government on its hands and knees crawling back to Finland, begging to sign the contract it should have already signed. Shame!

Time expired.

[11.15 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, if only we saw that passion from Dr Broad on some of the big issues like climate change and raging social inequality.

It is a good thing that respected economist Saul Eslake is such a decent human being. If I were Saul Eslake, I would be annoyed, because in the last Estimates, when his report on the proposed plan to build the *Spirits* not in Finland was discussed at the table, really terrible language was used by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to denigrate Mr Eslake, who has been absolutely vindicated today. This is an entirely predictable reversal of what was a populist idea at the time, and here we are. All those issues Dr Broad raised are highly relevant and very concerning.

I am, however, interested in the fact that there is selective concern for jobs in the tourism sector in this debate on the placement of the TT-Line *Spirits*. We do not hear anything from either the Labor Party or the Liberals on the impact on tourism jobs from logging burns. I would have liked to make a personal explanation at the end of question time but did not make the opportunity for myself, so I am going to take the Premier on here. He misrepresented our question on the escaped logging burn in the Styx, and I believe he was reckless with his answer. The Styx fire was at advice level last Friday with 25 kilometre per hour north-northeasterly winds growing and the temperature rising to 28 degrees. Advice level on the Tasmania Fire Service website is one level below watch and act, and that is just below emergency level. At advice level, the Tasmania Fire Service says:

If you are not prepared for a bushfire, think about leaving for a safe place
if it gets more dangerous. If your family has made a bushfire survival plan,
check it now.

In downplaying the Styx fire and the TFS advice, the Premier was dismissive of a critical emergency tool that can save lives and property, something Tasmanians rely on, for cheap political point-scoring. It was just luck and a turn of the weather that prevented this logging fire from causing more damage. Everybody is relieved it did not go further and it is simply nasty, highly personal and false for the Premier to suggest otherwise.

If we are serious about promoting the tourism sector and growing jobs in the tourism sector, we have to get serious about this rogue GBE that lit a massive fire - well, it was not massive when it started: they napalmed a 30 hectare coupe on the Saturday of the long weekend and by Wednesday that runaway fire had grown to 175 hectares. It threatened the tourism mountain bike event at Maydena. It threatened to taint the grape harvest. Hop growers in the region were apoplectic with rage, and while the Tourism Industry Council has stayed silent on the former Forestry Tasmania's, now Sustainable Timber Tasmania's, conduct over that weekend, I know they are not happy.

If the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania wants to be really effective in this space, we need to hear its voice. We need the TICT to speak for tourism operators who every autumn

have smoke impacts on their businesses which in turn impacts on our visitor economy. Let us have some more broad discussions in this place about tourism and the conflict between tourism, agriculture and forestry in this state.

These are not fuel reduction burns, Madam Deputy Speaker, as Mr Whitley tried to tell us, on radio, it had turned into once it ran away. This is a hot logging burn. It was started six days after the end of summer, with a wet summer causing a high fuel load.

We would like to know what kind of risk matrix Forestry Tasmania applied before it lit that fire. We would like to know why Forestry Tasmania breached the terms of its memorandum of understanding with the Tourism Industry Council and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association.

Our understanding, and it is in writing, is that the first Luke Martin of the TICT heard of this was when he smelt the smoke on that long weekend. We have a rogue GBE, that loves to log and loves to light fires and treats its MOUs, whether it be with the tourism industry, the agricultural sector or the beekeepers, as though it is not even worth the paper it is written on.

The conflict between the tourism sector and Forestry Tasmania will continue as long as you have a GBE which has been unleashed by this Government. It will not secure Forest Stewardship Certification, and is driving the swift parrot and species like the masked owl to extinction. It is damaging the tourism sector in this state, and damaging our brand.

Why is it that every year as soon as summer ends and we have those beautiful autumn days that tourists and Tasmanians love we have to cop this smoke in our atmosphere? There is no accountability, no logic behind it whatsoever. Massive damage to ecosystems. People who experience or see these fires will tell you they can hear ring-tailed possums screaming. That might not matter to other people in this place except Dr Woodruff and me, but it does matter -

Ms Ogilvie - Hang on, we all care about the animals.

Ms O'CONNOR - I would love to hear you talk about forestry burns at some point, Ms Ogilvie. I would love that.

Time expired.

[11.22 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak about our fantastic approach on new vessels for the replacement *Spirits*. We have been able to take significant advice and get a great outcome for our state through the work of the task force. I thank all the members of the task force for their great work. It was a labour of love in the interests of our state. I am grateful to all of them for their work, and for the very careful way which they stepped through the Government's challenge to find a way to get more jobs for Tasmania in the process of replacing the *Spirits*.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I listened very carefully to Dr Broad's contribution. It was very loud and angry. I believe it reflected a lot of pent-up hurt in Dr Broad's world, because he spent the last seven months rubbishing -

Ms O'Connor - Are you going to apologise to Saul Eslake?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, the member has the call. As I asked other members to show Dr Broad some respect, I ask that members allow the members to make their contribution. We have two more speakers on this.

Mr FERGUSON - rubbishing Austal, rubbishing Incat - rubbishing Australia. The union was perhaps more useful. Federal Labor was perhaps more useful -

Dr Broad - Are you a European trade ambassador now?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, I do not want to start issuing warnings. I ask that you quieten down the interjections, because it makes it very difficult for Hansard to record who is the member making the interjections.

Mr FERGUSON - In the limited time I have, Dr Broad was listened to in silence despite his shouting. It is fair to say that regardless of which decision the Government makes at each step prudently looking after our state, Dr Broad and the Labor Party have whinged and sooked every possible time.

If we had gone for a full European build, we know Labor would have whinged and complained. If we had gone for a hybrid build, between the Philippines, Western Australia and Tasmania, we know that Labor would have complained. If we had gone for catamarans on Bass Strait, we know that Labor would have complained and they would have railed today. If we had gone to a new tender process which, in fact, was recommended and remains an option if RMC is unable to deliver, they would have complained - because that is all that they are programmed to do.

Only one year ago, Dr Broad was here in this place whingeing and complaining about Geelong. He said it would be a failure; he said it would be rejected by the freight industry. That is what he said.

Dr Broad - No, I did not.

Mr FERGUSON - He said, 'I am already hearing people comment that if the ferries were to dock in Geelong they would not use the service anymore.'

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - You need to remember what you have said on the record. You are as bad.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - On the same day.

Dr Broad interjecting.

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

Mr FERGUSON - He also said on the same day - he rubbished RMC. He said, 'Now that we learn that an MOU is with RMC, a Finnish boatbuilder that has not built a ferry this big before' -

Dr Broad - They have now. They had not then. They have now.

Mr FERGUSON - It is interesting. It shows that they are playing a political card, not a pro-Tasmanian card.

Dr Broad made another interesting comment, as an interjection during question time, when he accused the Premier of being to blame that the ships are full. Well, of course, the ships are very busy; the TOLL ships and the SeaRoad ships are also very busy, because our economy is going strongly because of the Premier and our Government.

I have to agree with Dr Broad on that point, perhaps. Our economy is moving forward, but what we need right now is a clear-headed, pro-Tasmanian approach. I am very pleased to have reached the decision that the Government did yesterday, and working with TT-Line. I would have thought you might be able to take some joy that the state is moving ahead, not with a \$16 million component of goods and services but potentially \$50 million to \$100 million.

Dr Broad - You could have done this last year. Your words mean nothing. You could have done this last year.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Broad, you have already received one warning.

Mr FERGUSON - Would you just care to listen, rather than being incessantly rude? If you had been challenging the Government over the last seven months to increase goods and services from Tasmania, that would have been fair enough; but you have not done that. You have simply demanded that we sign on the dotted line with the \$16 million part. I am aware that in a limited time debate, Labor cannot contain themselves - because they have been exposed. Labor's claims about a \$350 million hit has been proven by the task force to be false, and I refer Dr Broad -

Dr Broad - Saul Eslake.

Mr FERGUSON - If you would just stop being rude, Dr Broad -

Dr Broad - They are his figures. They are not our figures; they are his figures.

Mr FERGUSON - You have had your turn -

Dr Broad - What you are actually doing is bagging out Saul Eslake.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad, this is your second warning. I ask you to keep your comments down to a quieter level and allow the member to make his contribution.

Mr FERGUSON - The task force addressed this very delicately in chapter 6. I refer Dr Broad to that. The task force has completely debunked this wild claim. I quote the report: 'It does not appear that the ferries' current capacity has resulted in significant levels of forgone economic activity and employment in Tasmania.' It then refers to the baseline 2018-19 year, 2023-24 year and 2027-28 year. I refer you to that report. You will find that the report has delicately but comprehensively debunked those claims.

I will briefly turn to Incat. This is a business that I am phenomenally proud of and we will work with Incat, the company that Ms Ogilvie and others have been promoting. Labor has been rubbishing it. We do need to support Incat. We all need to support our manufacturing capability in Tasmania. We will do that. We will be the side of this parliament that does that. They have been stressed because the ferry market internationally has been smashed to pieces, with the loss of international visitation and COVID-19 restrictions. I welcome the feedback from the TICT and the TCCI, which have warmly embraced the Government's decisions.

Time expired.

[11.29 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this matter of public importance. There has been no more important issue with respect to the growth of the Tasmanian economy than how we unlock the constraints across Bass Strait by replacing these vessels. They were due for replacement this year but because of this Government's flip-flopping and bungling of one of the biggest infrastructure projects in this state, we now will not see those vessels on the horizon until perhaps 2023-24. That is if they can be believed because we know this Government has been unable to deliver a single major infrastructure project for the entire time that it has been in government. We have a situation here where they have made false promises - a cruel jobs hoax that more Tasmanians would be employed in the construction of these vessels, that Incat would have a role in the construction of these vessels - all lies because Incat will have no role.

In fact, the Premier has not bothered even to go and speak with them. I have been out there a couple of times now. I have been in contact with the company over the course of the last nine months. Do you know who has not? The Premier. If you are really serious about supporting Incat, how about you get out there and actually chat to them? They are in trouble and the actions of this Government are not helping them.

I remind the member of some remarks he has made in this place. He is very good at quoting other people but let us reflect a little on what Michael Ferguson, the minister for Infrastructure, has said about this project and maybe listen to how these words sound in your own ears now, minister.

Back in a media release in 2020, on 24 August, you accused us of 'acting more like European trade ambassadors than members elected to represent Tasmanians'. It seems a bit strange that you made those remarks given you have now gone back to square one, and the only losers in all of this have been the Tasmanian people, Tasmanian freight users and Tasmanian tourism operators because of your flip-flopping and inability to make a decision.

You said:

What I am hearing here is a little bit of a death rattle of this dog of a policy from the other side. ... You should be ashamed of turning your backs on the

jobs in this state; you have turned your back on Tasmanians; you have turned your back on Australians; you have locked in for Europe. That is your decision and you stand accountable for that.

They are your words, Mr Ferguson, and yet today here we are back at square one with your flip-flopping and your backflipping. It is extraordinary.

You went on to say:

The member asked me how many jobs. I will tell him how many jobs he is proposing for Finland - 3000 jobs. Not Tasmania, not Australia - a European nation ... in whatever weird universe in which they live, they have settled on that for a policy for this state.

Guess what, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is the Liberal Government's policy. Your policy for this state in whichever weird universe you live in is to go to Finland and get them to build the ships - that is if you can secure a contract given you tore the other one up within days of actually signing it. How insulting. How incompetent.

What kind of government manages significant contracts like that?

What has the cost been to the Tasmanian taxpayer because of your inability to negotiate a contract?

What has the cost been to Tasmanian businesses, freight operators, tourism operators because of the delay in the replacement of these vessels in the time you promised? Another broken promise by this Government, another failed infrastructure project under the failed minister, Michael Ferguson.

Saul Eslake said in his report, and he is a well-renowned economist - no-one can dispute that and his credibility on this issue:

Even in the event that the Future Vessels Task Force established in July comes to the conclusion that it is not practicable to have the replacement *Spirits* built 'in Australia', and that they should be built in Europe in accordance with the TT-Line board's recommendation (and as the Government had intended until July) there will be significant costs to the Tasmanian economy arising from the consequential delay in starting, completion and delivering the new vessels.

For tourism, he went on to say:

... each year that the delivery of the replacement ships is delayed up to 184 200 fewer passengers will come to Tasmania via ships each 'peak season' compared with the number that would have been carried had the TT-Line been allowed to proceed with its Board's original decision.

Given an average spend for a visitor of \$1924 ... that implies a loss to the Tasmanian economy of \$354 million per season. That is equivalent to about 1 per cent of Tasmania's annual gross state product or about \$656 per person.

The loss may in fact be greater than this, according to the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania. Visitors arriving by ship and bringing their own car typically stay longer and spend more than visitors arriving by air. It is not just about tourism. It is about our freight capacity too.

On this Mr Eslake says:

If the delay in delivering the replacement ships were to extend to more than two years -

Guess what? It now will at the very least, compared with the original schedule:

... then those losses could become significant, as a result of businesses deferring plans to increase production in order to take advantage of the enhanced capacity to transport produce to the mainland or overseas.

He goes on to conclude that:

... this decision could turn out to be the most financially ill-advised decision, certainly in financial terms, of any Tasmanian government since January 1983 ...

In nearly 40 years, he goes on to conclude that:

This is the worst decision of any Tasmanian government.

That is Saul Eslake. This is this Government, not only failing producers, freight forwarders, and tourism, but also our broader economy and the impact this is having on jobs right now. Those ships were due to come over the horizon at the end of this year. This Government cannot even get that right. This is another cruel jobs hoax; they have not locked a single thing in. They talk about how they will secure more jobs for Tasmania. We will wait to see it because they promised to maximise Tasmanian content and the first contract, and they failed to do it.

Time expired.

[11.37 a.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, one of the most important things the coronavirus pandemic has taught Tasmanians, other Australians and everyone around the world is just how important it is to buy local. Every single dollar spent in the local economy goes to supporting -

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. The member has only just started his contribution. I ask that he is shown some respect, please.

Mr ELLIS - Every single dollar spent in a local economy means that job is supported, that family is supported, those kids who can have the school fees paid for, and that is health

insurance. Every single dollar injected into a local economy, particularly in Tasmania, makes a difference, and that is what this Government is delivering.

One of the time-honoured wisdoms we should all heed is that time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted. In the middle of the global pandemic, the worst one that we have seen for a 100 years, this Government decided to spend a bit more time in reconnaissance, to see what more opportunities there are to protect local jobs and to build our manufacturing capability here in Australia. That is what people want to see. To make sure that with every dollar we spend, we are considering how we can bring that home and how we can support our people. This is a plan that puts Tasmanians first, whenever we can at any moment, at any point in our negotiations with people in Australia or overseas.

We believe we should be supporting Tasmanian jobs, Australian jobs, and that buying local in a global pandemic is one of the most patriotic and heartfelt things you can do. Two approaches have been compared today. We have had on one side a plan that was pushing \$16 million of local content. On the other side we have had a plan that is pushing between \$50 million- and \$100 million-worth of local content. It is pretty simple maths; perhaps even the kind of maths those opposite can understand - \$16 million is less than \$50 million to \$100 million. I know it is a simple point, but it is one of the staggering things that I cannot understand they cannot get their heads around. It is a 400 per cent potential increase in local content.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, there is a lot of chatter across the Chamber. If everyone has so much to say on this issue, we will have adjournment this afternoon and I encourage you to come back and you can all make a seven-minute contribution at that time. I ask that the member is allowed to make his contribution now in quiet, please.

Mr ELLIS - We are looking at a potential 400 per cent increase in local content that we will see on the beautiful *Spirits of Tasmania*. That is a 400 per cent local increase in jobs, in potential timber, mattresses, fit-outs. We know how much capacity we have in this state to fit out these beautiful vessels because we have companies that are world leaders in delivering vessels all around the world. Those jobs include not just building the hull but putting together the whole show. For those of you who do not have a lot of shipbuilding experience, it is a bit like a house. The frame and the slab is one thing, but there is so much that you can be buying locally in every part of a house and the same with every part of a ship. We are talking about beautiful local timber, Tasmanian oak, that could be fitted right throughout the vessels, and the guys who are doing that, the plumbers, the sparkies, the tradies. It is about more jobs for locals.

In the Labor report, which was paid for by Dr Broad, I assume, they were found to have got their numbers wrong by about \$340 million per year. In chapter 6 of the report of the task force, it was found that the Labor report had about a \$340 million per year black hole. That is a staggering amount of money and goes to show that people cannot trust Labor costings. They have come out with a shiny red report and said it is fully costed. I hope they can figure out how much it cost at the printers. In the report they said that the economic cost of this time spent in reconnaissance was not expected to be substantial, but we know the benefits are substantial. We are looking at between \$50 million to \$100 million under this new plan, less than \$16 million, which that side seem to be obsessed with.

There is a global recession going on because of a global pandemic. The shipbuilding industry around the world is in a very big hole. That is the right time to take a look, to use

negotiating tactics, to walk away and come back to get a better deal for Tasmania and Tasmanian jobs. A total of \$16 million versus \$50 million to \$100 million is a better deal in my language, and a better deal in the AMWU's language that supports increasing the amount of local content. The AMWU was sickened by Labor's buy un-Australian policy. Much like the CFMEU, they were sickened by Labor's forestry policy because the unions understand that every dollar spent locally means local jobs.

It is typical of the uni student professional politicians on the other side who only know how to negotiate a coalition with the Greens and do not know how to negotiate with corporate companies.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Thank you. There are 52 seconds to go.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. One of the things that is very sad about the Labor Party these days is that they have lost their capacity to take part in hard-nosed negotiations with anybody who is not the Greens. They do not know how to negotiate about ships. They only know how to negotiate on bike rides up Mount Wellington, unfortunately.

Our economy is very important in Tasmania and one of the most important things that governments of any stripe can do - and I hope that one day Labor decide that they are pro Buy Local - is to buy local, to support local jobs, to know that a \$16 million local spend is not as much as a \$50 million to \$100 million local spend, and that is jobs for local people, jobs for tradies and that is a fantastic thing.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

That the House be suspended until the Premier's Address at 2.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 11.45 a.m. until 2.30 p.m.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Madam Speaker, in January last year I was honoured to receive the support of my colleagues to become the state's forty-sixth Premier and shortly after that, around 12 months to the day, coronavirus found its way to the Australian mainland and unfortunately to our shores as well.

We were faced with the probability of a significant health crisis if action was not taken swiftly to protect our community. That action meant limiting people's movements and closing businesses where people congregated and, sadly, the impact on our economy was severe.

We banned cruise ships, closed our borders and we stayed at home to save lives. There were hundreds of thousands of Tasmanians who did their bit. Fishing, camping and going to the shack were banned. We kept our older Tasmanians safe by limiting visits to aged care homes and hospitals, and all the while our courageous frontline workers and volunteers willingly worked with us to keep our communities safe.

We will not forget the sacrifices that Tasmanians made, the costs borne by individuals, families and communities, nor will we ever forget that, tragically, 13 lives were lost. While this is not over yet, we are in a good place. Tasmania is one of the safest places in this country and we are, without doubt, one of the safest places in the world, a world that is adding nearly 500 000 new cases a day to a total that has now reached more than 120 million cases, with sadly nearly 2.7 million deaths.

Today I acknowledge and thank all Tasmanians for working together to ensure we kept our state safe. Over the past 12 months I have witnessed some incredible examples of self-sacrifice, courage and kindness as Tasmanians, regardless of race, religion, politics, background and circumstance, held out their hands to each other and helped each other in the most extraordinary example of common humanity I have ever witnessed.

As a result of those incredible efforts, Tasmania has not only managed on the one hand to conquer a health crisis, but has also turned around our economy, which is once again growing strongly and supporting Tasmanian jobs.

I acknowledge our First Peoples, the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging. Last week I committed to receive and consider proposals for a further land return. I will be clear: this Government is committed to taking significant steps on our path to reconciliation and also, importantly, to taking significant steps to ensure we improve the lives and circumstances of our First Peoples.

Further, with regard to the rallies held yesterday around the country and the hundreds of women who marched and rallied for a more inclusive, safe and fair society here in Tasmania, I see you and I hear you. This Government, this parliament, sees you and it hears you. While action has already been taken, there is more to be done and we will not shirk our responsibilities to ensure that everyone is safe, everyone is respected and everyone is supported.

Madam Speaker, next week I will meet with the leaders of the other parties - Ms Ogilvie, yourself, the President of the upper House and Ms Webb to work through and shape the independent review of practices and procedures for this workplace, for ministerial parliamentary services and for our electorate officers.

Today, I provide for Tasmanians an update on our economy, the Government's response to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council final report, which I will release in full today, and the steps we will take to grasp the opportunities ahead that will secure Tasmania's future.

The social and economic consequences of COVID-19 were felt far and wide, and for many they continue. Families remain separated by international borders. Schooling was disrupted, businesses were closed and marriage plans were set aside. Some people had to deal with losing their job or having much less income, balancing this with home schooling and decreased community connection.

In April last year retail trade fell, confidence dropped and by May nearly 20 000 jobs had been lost. I did not sugar-coat the severity of the challenge we faced. In May, we were the first jurisdiction to release an economic and fiscal update.

Treasury was forecasting an unemployment rate of around 12.25 per cent by June, which would have meant around 34 000 Tasmanians out of work and an economy that was going backwards.

We were facing the dual threats of a health and economic crisis and we knew we had to act decisively to deal with both. As a government we put in place the largest economic and social support package in the history of our state and the largest out of all the states in terms of the share of our economy, at over \$1 billion.

In June we led the way with our construction blitz, bringing forward \$70 million in public building maintenance and \$24 million to bring forward 222 new social home builds and investments in training centres, schools, roads and irrigation as well as stimulating the construction of thousands of houses through the \$45 000 HomeBuilder package.

In July we released an interim Trade Action Plan to support Tasmanian businesses to reclaim and grow trade in disrupted global marketplaces, and we accepted all the initial recommendations of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Council Interim Report.

In the November budget, we continued to address both the health and social challenges as well as addressing the economic challenge.

We invested where it mattered most to help more Tasmanians with the essential services they needed, including a record \$9.8 billion into health over four years and a record \$7.5 billion into education.

As part of our plan to support economic recovery, we announced a landmark \$5 billion infrastructure investment package, including \$300 million into the largest ever program of social and affordable housing in the history of the state. We expect this will support 25 000 jobs over the next four years and provide a pipeline of projects to underpin confidence and demand across Tasmania for years to come.

Our plan is working. Confidence is up. Our economy is growing again; we have the lowest unemployment rate of all the states and job numbers are at pre-pandemic levels. In fact, job vacancy ads in February led the nation, at 52.4 per cent higher than the previous year and more than double the national growth over the year. We have jobs available right now for skilled people, especially in our construction sector, which now has a full book of work in front of it.

With confidence returning and businesses investing, retail trade - which is one of the best litmus tests you can have for your wider economy - grew 1 per cent in January to be 9.3 per cent

higher than this time last year while our merchandise exports were higher in 2020 than the year before, bucking the national trend.

Recent expert commentators reinforced that our economy recovery is in full swing. CommSec has placed Tasmania as the best performing economy in the nation for the fourth quarter in a row. ANZ rates our surging exports and booming housing market. Deloitte notes our gangbuster budget and Sensis finds that our businesses are the most confident in the nation.

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout program is underway, with a plan to have our 14 000 strong priority frontline health, quarantine, aged and disability workers, along with aged and disability care residents, vaccinated by April. All Tasmanians over the age of 18 will be vaccinated, should they choose, by October this year, subject to the supply of the vaccine arriving in Tasmania.

Phase 1B of the vaccination rollout plan commences this week and will see an expanded group of people, including elderly Tasmanians aged over 70 and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as healthcare and frontline workers eligible to receive the vaccination.

The vaccine is safe. It is effective and it is free. While it is not a silver bullet, it is a key safeguard that will help to further suppress and contain the virus and support our pathway back to a freer and more normal life.

A strong economy strengthens our budget through increased GST receipts and own-source investments. As shown in our Revised Estimates Report, compared to the November budget, the net operating balance this year is estimated to improve by \$157.3 million. Net debt is also expected to improve to be around \$150 million lower.

These results show the confidence and resilience of businesses in Tasmania, backed by a government that supports them. Small business is the engine room of our state, which is why we stepped up and delivered a nation-leading Small Business Support Package of \$80 million, providing more than 20 000 grants to more than 14 000 businesses. More than 370 businesses have been supported by our \$110 million low or no interest loans schemes.

We will continue to support our small business sector as we rebuild across all sectors and regions by providing access to specialist financial counselling through a new \$1 million COVID-19 Small Business Financial Counselling Support Program over the next 12 months. This program will help eligible businesses that need advice to support them to recover, transition or apply other strategies to address business impacts due to the pandemic. This program will run in parallel with existing programs, and complement the financial support provided through grant and loan programs that are being delivered by the Department of State Growth.

Madam Speaker, I will now provide an overview of the final report of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council. On 30 April last year, I announced we would establish PESRAC to provide advice on how best to support Tasmania's short-, medium- and longer term recovery from COVID-19. The council was chaired by well-respected former Treasury Secretary Don Challen AM, who was supported by a group of extraordinarily talented individuals who represent a good cross-section of our community.

I recognise Mr Challen, along with Professor Rufus Black, Dale Elphinstone AO, Tim Gardner, Kym Goodes, Samantha Hogg, Leanne McLean, Paul Ranson and Brett Torossi. Thank you for all your time and effort and invaluable expertise. Within two months, the council provided an interim report containing a package of 64 recommendations aimed at our short- and medium-term recovery. We accepted all these recommendations, provided funding where necessary in the Budget and continue to implement them.

I also tasked the council with a second and more critically important task - to look over the horizon to the medium- and longer term opportunities for our state, with a time frame for implementation between two and five years. The council has taken a whole-of-state approach to identify the priority areas and consulted extensively, hearing from Tasmanians through the most comprehensive consultation program undertaken in two decades. Around 3500 people were involved, and the report reflects their voices as much as it does the voice of the council.

Tasmanians clearly articulated a vision for our future based on five key priority areas: namely, jobs and income, health and housing, community connectivity and engagement, environment sustainability, and public sector capability. Madam Speaker, these priorities are the priorities of Tasmanians, and they align strongly to the priorities and values of my Government.

Today I am making a commitment to the Tasmanian people: this report will not be another report that will sit in someone's desk drawer. Madam Speaker, if we can close our borders, shut our businesses and support those most disadvantaged in a time of crisis, we can seize this moment to adopt the future-focused recommendations of PESRAC informed by Tasmanians for Tasmanians. Today, we will make the PESRAC Final Report 2021 available to all Tasmanians. Today, I am committing to accept all of the report's 52 recommendations - however challenging they may be.

Time does not allow me to comment on all the recommendations, but I will touch on each of the key priority areas contained in the report and some of the immediate steps we will take in each priority area. The PESRAC consultation identified that one of the most important concerns for Tasmanians was jobs and incomes, and especially skills and training.

When I became Premier, I said my vision was for a Tasmania that, no matter where you live or what your background is, no matter what your circumstances are, opportunities will be there and that if you want to grasp those opportunities, a better life will be within your reach. This Government has a strong and proud record of achievement in this regard.

There are now 22 000 more Tasmanians employed since we came to government in 2014. Our economy is one of the strongest in the country, and we have the lowest unemployment rate of any state in the country but, Madam Speaker, we can still do better. PESRAC has recommended that the Government continues to support major investment to stimulate economic activity, create jobs and attract other investment as well as building confidence and hope.

In line with the PESRAC recommendations, we will take the opportunity to support major investment and realise projects that can make a real difference to our state - projects such as the Macquarie Point development, which has the potential to rival Southbank and other

landmark waterfront precincts. While we delivered the remediation works within budget, there is still more to do - and now is the time to accelerate this work and attract investment.

That is why I am today announcing we will provide an additional \$77 million investment in the site for the corporation to continue to advance the site development, including more than \$6 million that will be provided this year. This certainty will get the next development stage to market sooner - over the next three years - providing the foundation for around \$500 million-worth of investment to take place so that this fantastic waterfront precinct can come alive for all Tasmanians to enjoy.

Madam Speaker, in the Budget we have already announced a \$10 million fund to support paused private sector projects that were shovel-ready. Today we are building on that, with the establishment of a \$30 million building construction support loan scheme. The scheme will provide loan finance to support paused commercial-scale building and construction projects that create new or improved building or associated infrastructure. Under the scheme, projects of \$3 million or more will be able to apply for low interest commercial loans through the Office of the Coordinator-General.

Madam Speaker, a key recommendation of PESRAC is the creation of Jobs Tasmania local networks to strengthen the links to job opportunities, to ensure more Tasmanians have the opportunity to live and work in the place they call home. The local networks will be regional, with local leadership, and they will complement the work of the Australian Government's Jobactive networks. We have already taken steps down this path under our Strategic Growth portfolio. We are delivering job hubs in Sorell and Glenorchy, as well as initiatives to better connect skills and training provision directly with local industry and business, such as the regional growth projects underway in George Town. In line with this recommendation, we will establish Jobs Tasmania local networks that link to our existing hubs. However, there is no time to waste and businesses are telling us they need workers now.

Today we are announcing a two-year, \$20.5 million package to help more Tasmanian workers into jobs. Through this, we will establish a Job Ready fund of \$2 million to help jobseekers gain essential tools they need to get a job, such as White Card licencing, Working with Vulnerable People checks, boots, protective clothing, equipment or a toolbox.

We will expand our Area Connect service to get more people to work, training or education where no easy transport options exist. We will invest \$3.2 million and expand the current transport services from six to 16 local government areas. We will fund a \$400 000 Worker Connect portal, providing Tasmanian businesses and jobseekers with information about local jobs, as well as the programs and the support services available.

We will deliver a regional job show and events program with \$200 000 available to showcase local employment and industry opportunities, in partnership with regional job hubs and community groups. We will expand our successful job matching service, with an additional \$2.4 million to place more jobseekers with local employer vacancies, and we will introduce the Tasmanian employer bonus, incentivising employers to take on a long-term, unemployed jobseeker. In coordination with federal government programs, we will invest \$6.5 million over two years to help employers take on jobseekers who have experience and skills but need a fair go, with a \$6500 incentive to those employers.

Some of the fastest growing industries in Tasmania are the aged care and disability support sectors. We know that the skills pipeline for these sectors was disproportionately affected during COVID-19. We will invest \$3 million to fund an additional 600 training places in Certificate III in Individual Support, which is the crucial qualification staff need to work in these sectors.

The successful Skype initiative will also be extended for a further 12 months, with a \$1 million investment to continue to provide fee-free training for those hardest hit by COVID-19, delivering more new entrants into the job market by upskilling jobseekers or those wanting to retrain in key areas.

To safeguard our disadvantaged youths from the ongoing fallout of COVID-19, we will invest \$850 000 in the youth Navigators' Project for the next 12 months. This will see a youth employment alliance formed between community organisations to deliver triage services specifically tailored to young people, including one on one guided support to enter the job market.

I am also pleased to announce these projects will be managed by a new jobs and participation unit in Skills Tasmania. This unit will also oversee the establishment of the Jobs Tasmania local networks, helping to ensure Tasmanians can access opportunities in their local communities and that they are trained and ready for work.

The initiatives I have just outlined will remove some of the barriers especially in relation to costs and access to training and support. While we have been focused on rebuilding TasTAFE since we came to government, it is time to take the next steps with TasTAFE's evolution. TasTAFE is in a stronger position than when we came to government. However, one of the strongest themes PESRAC heard in its consultation with business is the need for our training provider, TasTAFE, to meet the needs of a generation of young people and an influx of jobseekers who need to quickly upskill - and reskill - to move across sectors as we recover from the structural impacts of COVID-19.

We know our construction sector has a pipeline of work in front of it that cannot be met by our existing workforce. Our plan is to deliver more apprentices and trainees and more Tasmanian tradies, rather than relying on fly in fly out interstaters. Job vacancies - which are increasing across all industry sectors but especially in the trades and construction sector - are at record highs. However, the single largest risk, the greatest challenge that the state faces to rebuilding our state and delivering both public and private projects, whether that be building someone their first house or building a school or a bridge, is the fact that we need more skilled and trained people.

PESRAC points strongly to the critical role of skills in building recovery and TasTAFE takes a central role in this. However, they are of the view that TasTAFE must be given the autonomy and workforce flexibility to continuously align its training offering with our evolving workforce needs. I could not agree more. We have the jobs that need filling. We have Tasmanians who want to work, and need to work. We have worked hard to improve the outcomes from TasTAFE and great steps have been made, but without further change, without further intervention, the single largest risk we face in terms of our recovery is the ability of our major training provider to train enough people quickly.

I do not want our businesses to be employing people from interstate in the coming months and years because our training provider is not empowered to act as nimbly, as quickly and as flexibly as the businesses it seeks to serve. The PESRAC consultation tells us there was overwhelming support for improving and investing in TasTAFE as the public provider and creating the operational flexibility TasTAFE needs to match the needs of business. Across our business and industry sectors that are creating employment pathways and providing jobs for Tasmanians the message was loud and clear: we need a public skills and training provider that is fit for purpose, industry-specific and offers training specific to the outcomes required - a provider that looks and operates more like the businesses it serves.

PESRAC heard that employment conditions for TasTAFE trainers align more to a school than an industry environment, with restrictive maximum training loads and inflexible time-of-day training arrangements that make it difficult to deliver to industry work patterns or for students' out-of-hours needs. No business or adult learner should reasonably expect training to be unavailable for 11 weeks of the year, or for training to be undertaken during office hours only, or for salaries that do not incentivise new industry skilled trainers, especially in trades areas.

These restrictive practices do not happen across most TAFEs in Australia. Businesses expect TasTAFE to be able to recruit new staff quickly in response to industry demand. That is why we agree with PESRAC's recommendation that TasTAFE must have the autonomy and the workforce flexibility it needs to continuously align its training offering with evolving workforce needs, as well as the financial capacity and flexibility to invest in and manage infrastructure best suited to deliver contemporary training.

PESRAC's recommendations are that the most effective way to achieve the flexibility and the agility required is to make TasTAFE an independent government business which has available to it all the tools and resources that other public trading enterprises have, including a modern and fit-for-purpose industrial relations framework. Under this model of TasTAFE, the public would have a clear view of its charter aligned to government priorities to address industry and business needs as they emerge.

We have a growing economy and there are jobs to be had. We have emerging industries with new jobs on the horizon, and we must act now to make sure Tasmanians have the best access to fit-for-purpose industry-endorsed training. To make sure that learning skills and training is fully integrated, we support PESRAC's recommendations as well in relation to implementing a range of training and education pathways, including school-age work experience, apprenticeships, cadetships and internships.

It is time to take action and build a bolder, better TasTAFE with a smart approach to delivering hands-on training through courses that best equip Tasmanians to gain a job, removing material barriers and enabling greater participation in skills training and the workforce. It is imperative that we do this, otherwise we will deny Tasmanians the opportunity to receive the skills and training they need to achieve a better life and to secure Tasmania's future.

Tasmanians told PESRAC that health was a priority. We need to keep investing in mental health, and securing affordable housing close to work, family and friends remains challenging. There is no denying that COVID-19 has impacted on many people in ways never imagined and PESRAC has identified very clearly the challenge of mental health. While we are rolling out

a \$120 million plan for new facilities, additional staff and more support for the community sector, we know there is more to do. Over the next few years we will deliver significant reform arising from the Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program and the reform agenda for the alcohol and other drugs sector in Tasmania.

In last year's Budget we invested \$4 million to commence phase 1 of implementing the Government's response to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) review report and recommendations. Late last year we also released Tasmania's Mental Health Plan, Rethink 2020, which represents a shared approach to mental health service planning and delivery in Tasmania. However, we understand that as a result of the impact of COVID-19 over the last 12 months, there is more to do.

I am pleased to announce today, in line with the PESRAC recommendations, that we will invest a further \$41.2 million over four years to fully fund phases 1 and 2 of the Government's response to the CAMHS review. The review recommended large-scale changes in the way CAMHS operates, including in its structure, practice and culture to better support our children and adolescents, with particular emphasis on those most vulnerable and in need of support. We have also prioritised mental health and wellbeing in our schools, delivering an extra 80 FTE professional support staff, including school psychologists, social workers, nurses and speech and language pathologists to support children and young people impacted by trauma. We now have support and wellbeing teams established in every school.

Today I am announcing we will further strengthen the supports already in place by upskilling all school health nurses with the latest youth mental health first aid training, with school nurses given the opportunity to begin undertaking specialised training later this year. We will also fund the wellbeing of lead teachers and principals in every government school in Tasmania to undertake online professional learning focused on student mental health and trauma-informed approaches.

Furthermore, we understand how alcohol and drug and mental health services provided by government can dovetail better with our longstanding community organisations, which is why we are providing \$150 000 to the Salvation Army for a master plan to redevelop its ageing New Town site to a purpose-built village providing tailored care and support to vulnerable Tasmanians, including alcohol and drug rehabilitation, crisis accommodation, parenting programs, new social affordable housing units, a common community centre and garden and extended family violence support.

Tasmanians deserve a health system they can be proud of. Since coming to government we have grown our Health budget to \$9.8 billion, a 70 per cent increase since the last Labor-Greens budget, with 1500 additional FTE staff, over 800 new nurses, 230 more doctors, 170 more allied health professionals and over 170 more FTE staff at Ambulance Tasmania.

Coming to government we inherited significant legacy issues from underspending and underinvestment, but brick by brick and service by service we are building a better health system. Whilst not specific PESRAC recommendations, there are a number of further health measures I want to comment on today that we intend to implement.

We know pressure needs to be relieved on our emergency departments so that those most at risk can get the care that they need when they need it. That is why we will make it even easier for Tasmanians to access medical care close to home by working with the primary health

sector, with the \$3 million support and encouragement program for primary health services and local GPs to provide after-hours services for their local communities. This will complement other initiatives, including community rapid response and secondary triage and, subject to consultation with the primary care sector, we intend to have these initiatives in place by the end of June this year.

We will also build on our 50 per cent increase in Ambulance Tasmania staff recruited since 2014, recruiting two new paramedic crews with an additional 12 FTEs each and new vehicles to support increased access to ambulance services in the Greater Hobart and Greater Launceston areas.

We also know that the oral health waiting list has increased in the last 12 months as a result of COVID-19 due to the inability for practitioners to conduct appointments and the reduced availability of dental students from interstate due to lockdown and border closures. To support more Tasmanians to get the care they need sooner, we will be providing a funding injection of \$5 million in addition to this financial year's \$1 million boost, with extra capacity sources through the existing and very successful private dental sector outsourcing program. This will deliver 20 000 additional dental appointments for public patients across emergency general care and denture clinics. We will work closer with private practices and organisations like the RFTS to ensure that the care can be received where it is needed most.

We have also been considering improvements in access to Tasmania's controlled access scheme for medical cannabis. I can confirm we will allow GPs in Tasmania to prescribe medical cannabis subject to necessary approval from the Therapeutic Goods Association, with the commencement of the new scheme from 1 July this year. We will also remove requirements that medical cannabis is dispensed only from Tasmanian Health Service pharmacies, allowing other pharmacies to dispense throughout the state, and we will continue to review the controlled access scheme to ensure it continues to provide an appropriate specialist-led pathway alongside the new process of GP prescriptions.

Before we leave the Health portfolio, I want to touch on the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) legislation which passed through the lower House with amendments last sitting. It is my view that through a conscience vote by the Liberal Party, we have delivered more robust legislation, offering both choice and protection for Tasmania's most vulnerable. However, I am also committed to ensuring we have better palliative care for Tasmanians. Our funding for palliative care has consistently increased since we came to government, with over \$12 million in state funding per annum for specialist palliative care services as well as the refurbishment and delivery of new palliative care spaces in our hospitals through the \$10.5 million King Island redevelopment and the \$35 million Mersey Community Hospital redevelopment.

However, we know there is more to be done, and in the lead-up to the August budget we will work with peak palliative care and health bodies and the community sector on the best approach for additional and expanded hospice and home services and the expansion of statewide after-hours palliative care support. This will be a substantial investment to ensure Tasmanians continue to have improved levels of care.

PESRAC clearly notes the challenges inherent in our housing market at this time, with Tasmanians saying that access to affordable housing was one of their concerns for the future. This Government has set in place the most comprehensive affordable housing strategy focusing

on social and affordable housing that any government has attempted, especially supporting low income Tasmanians. Yet Tasmania is seeing unprecedented demand for housing across all sectors, which is why we support the PESRAC recommendation to develop a broader housing policy framework that looks at the full array of housing market issues across both the public and private sectors, to drive practical actions and deliver more sustainable housing market outcomes across Tasmania for all Tasmanians.

We will commission this work immediately while we continue to take targeted action to boost supply, support home ownership and put downward pressure on rents. As I have said on many occasions, we must build more houses and with regard to the supply, Tasmania is building houses at a rate not seen in nearly a decade.

Home builders delivered with over 2600 applications received and 1763 applications already conditionally approved by the State Revenue Office. In total, in the 12 months to January, there were 3538 new dwellings approved the most approved in a quarter of a century. But we need to build more.

Currently, there is around 5000 hectares of privately-owned vacant residential zoned land across Tasmania which could deliver around 60 000 lots to residential development across the state. However, for various reasons this land is not being developed. That is why we will take immediate action to remove barriers and costs and encourage further land activation.

Landowners who wish to activate residential zoned land that is not currently being developed, will benefit from a \$10 million headworks holiday for new residential subdivisions. This includes up to \$5000 per residential lot for power and up to \$5000 per residential lot delivered for water and sewerage infrastructure

Tasmanians are seeking different types of housing, yet current planning settings do not cater well for infill developments in our cities and towns where services and transport are already developed. To address this need, we will finalise an apartment code to establish appropriate permitted and discretionary assessment pathways for medium density residential development to provide certainty, consistency and transparency for developers, councils and the community to get these developments going sooner.

The code will make it easier, faster and simpler to build infill, medium density apartments to meet demand near existing transport routes and services. Complementing this, we are also providing a no-permit required pathway for landowners to construct ancillary dwellings on their properties.

Ancillary dwellings are extra living quarters with a floor area of less than 60 square metres which is self-contained but additional to the primary home on a block, such as a granny flat. Ancillary dwellings will allow home owners to accommodate changing family needs and they also add value to the family home.

To help meet demand for rental properties, today I am announcing that the first 250 new ancillary dwellings that are made available for long-term rental for more than two years, will receive a \$10 000 payment. These changes will make it easier, faster and simpler to build and meet demand and put downward pressure on rents in Tasmania.

When it comes to social housing, we have added 1138 more long-term homes and supported accommodation places for applicants on the social housing register since coming to government. Contracted right now in our pipeline, there are 552 new dwellings to be added to social housing and supported accommodation and 103 more places in homeless accommodation, as well as a further 764 social houses currently being contracted.

We will continue building on this ambitious pipeline. The HomeShare scheme opens the door to home ownership for those who have enough income to make the step but need a helping hand. This is a fantastic program that enables the Government to co-invest with purchasers by taking an equity stake in the home of up to \$100 000 or 30 per cent of the home's value, whichever is the lesser.

There are income and asset limits to meet; however they are very generous. For example, a couple with two children and an income of up to \$133 242 and up to \$100 000 in financial assets, would qualify for the program. We want to help more Tasmanians to understand and access this program so we will ensure that it is widely advertised during the course of this year and funding will be increased by up to another \$10 million meaning at least another 100 households can realise the dream of home ownership through the program.

Furthermore, given the strong growth in housing prices we will provide further support to Tasmanians to buy their first home or pensioners to downsize by increasing the conveyance duty concession threshold from \$400 000 to \$500 000 to reflect current market conditions, providing relief of 50 per cent on duty, effective immediately.

We recognise that the private rental market remains challenging for many. During COVID-19 this Government has provided significant support for tenants and landlords including \$2.3 million to support tenants and \$1 million to support landlords, helping to keep people in homes and helping them to insulate landlords from financial liability.

We are currently waiving land tax for commercial land impacted by COVID-19 and to incentivise the availability of long-term rentals, providing land tax exemptions of three years for newly-built housing and one year for former short stay accommodation.

While as a share of total state revenue, land tax in Tasmania - along with Western Australia - is the lowest of all of the states, there remains a need to contemporise our land tax thresholds. That is why we will reset the land tax thresholds to reflect today's strong property market. We will double the land value on which land tax becomes payable from \$25 000 to \$50 000 and we will increase the maximum land value threshold by \$50 000 from \$350 000 to \$400 000. These changes will save around 70 000 Tasmanians up to \$613 in their land tax bill. It will also mean an additional 4100 landowners will now pay no land tax in the year ahead putting downward pressure on the need for rental increases to be passed on.

In addition, we understand that the impacts of COVID-19 along with rising property values have created challenges. Currently, there are already a number of mechanisms to assist landlords to meet their land tax liabilities but these need contemporising as well. We will halve the premium rate of interest charged on unpaid tax from 8 per cent to 4 per cent and we will also allow for land tax over \$500 to be paid by three instalments over the year. We will introduce legislation for the land tax and conveyance duty measures before June this year.

The impacts of COVID-19 meant for many weeks we spent time isolating and apart at a time when we longed to be together. The PESRAC report focuses on the importance of place-based recovery strategy centred on improving and enhancing community outcomes as well as the importance of digital inclusion and access.

The Tasmanian Government supports this recommendation to proactively seek out and fund additional initiatives and increased community connection, primary prevention and early intervention in areas such as family and community violence and models that support new and innovative strategies to engage volunteers and support leadership development.

To ensure that our supports are ongoing, yesterday I wrote to our specialist family and sexual violence service providers extending their funding at the increased level of COVID-19 funding until the 30 June 2022 so that they can maintain their operational capacity to meet demand and continue to support our communities.

The most recent Australian Digital Inclusion Index Report shows that off the back of the Tasmanian Government's Digital Ready for Daily Life Program our state has made progress with digital inclusion in our community, even factoring in the challenges presented by COVID-19. The PESRAC report highlights the need to continue making improvements with digital inclusion and infrastructure.

We support the recommendation by PESRAC of a review into coverage gaps, future investment priorities and pursuing enhanced collaboration between the federal government, telecommunication carriers and other local providers so that more Tasmanians can participate in an increasingly digital society. The findings of this review, which will be conducted in coming months, will be used to inform the development of the August budget, where additional funding will be made available for digital infrastructure projects to close the digital divide and strengthen connectivity and access.

Many regions have events that help celebrate and define their identity and that enhance and bring their community together. Tasmania's events landscape has been hit hard through COVID-19 and while we have invested \$4 million under our Events Attraction Fund to strengthen the regional events calendar, we know that as we recover further support is needed. In line with the PESRAC recommendation to support community-based events, \$1.5 million will be made available in the Regional Events Recovery Fund to support organisers to undertake activities that contribute to the sustainability of these rich events in regional areas.

In addition, we will provide support to our creative and cultural sector through a \$1.5 million investment to aid the ongoing recovery efforts of this important industry. This package includes additional funding for arts organisations along with assistance for performing art production companies and venues to stage live events and performances in a 2021 COVID-safe environment.

As Tasmania continues to cement itself as a premium destination for creative screen productions - many of which are filmed on location in regional Tasmania - we will provide \$3 million to attract and support the production of filming in Tasmania of works that showcase our state and build on our successful Tasmania brand.

This Government recognises how critical a good education system is to strengthening and connecting communities. We have been steadfast in our commitment to build a better

education system to give our young people the best start to life. Since 2014, 56 high schools have now been extended to years 11 and 12 in all regions of Tasmania and there are 35 new education infrastructure projects currently in planning, design or construction around Tasmania, including two new schools, four major school redevelopments, six new child and family learning centres and five new kindergartens. We have boosted staff with 269 more FTE teachers and 250 FTE teacher assistants.

Tasmania's school expenditure per student is now above the national average and our schools have a teacher/student ratio better than the national rate.

We are also aware of the need to decrease pressure on popular schools in some areas, such as Taroona High School, which is why we have taken the steps for Ogilvie and New Town to go co-educational in 2022. While the full master planning process will get under way to assess the medium- and long-term capital spend required, we will provide \$1.6 million immediately for essential projects, including co-educational toilet facilities and refurbished general learning areas. These works will be completed before the 2022 school year.

There is always more that can be done and it is often the little things that can make the most difference. Last year, a 14-year-old student wrote to the Government asking for free sanitary items for girls in our schools, explaining that many students struggled to buy these products and sometimes even missed school because of that. We need to remove barriers to learning so I am pleased to say we will make sanitary items freely available in all government schools from term 3 of this year.

We have proven we can keep Tasmanians safe during the pandemic and a major continuing priority for our Government is to keep Tasmanians safe in our communities with a stronger law and order program. We are on track to deliver 258 more police officers. Since we came to government we have recruited 200 more correctional officers since 2016. While we must ensure the safety of our correctional staff as well as prisoners and detainees at our custodial facilities, we accept we must minimise as far as possible personal searches in these facilities. That is why we are strengthening the Youth Justice Act to support this. Today, I can announce we will invest \$1.3 million in body scanning technology in the Hobart and Launceston reception prisons, Risdon Prison and the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

We also want to work hard to stop the revolving door of prison as our reoffending rate remains too high. That is why we are actively working on a plan to reduce the rate of reoffending through an increased focus on rehabilitation and reintegration. The Minister for Corrections will lead this body of work as a priority. We will also extend Project Vigilance, Tasmania's electronic monitoring of family violence perpetrators, following recent successful trials where an evaluation demonstrated increased safety of victim survivors with an overall 82 per cent reduction in high-risk incidents. An additional \$2.4 million will be provided to allow for up to 100 devices to be fitted whilst also providing police supervision and monitoring.

During COVID-19 we implemented a range of support measures to meet the needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families, including support for informal kinship carers who play a vital role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children who cannot live with their parents. Part of our response was to conduct a review of supports currently placed to understand where support can be enhanced. Today we are releasing the summary of the review report and are providing \$500 000 to immediately commence implementation of recommendations. I am pleased to say we are installing an informal kinship carer support

liaison officer in the north-west and opening up access to more concessions, training opportunities and an information portal, as well as respite and increased brokerage funds for families who need that support.

We will also invest \$500 000 to begin the work needed for a new Tasmanian-based therapeutic residential care program for Tasmanian young people with exceptional needs as an alternative to the Many Colours 1 Direction program in the Northern Territory.

Underpinning all of the consultation that PESRAC undertook was a need for our recovery to be sustainable, to not compromise our competitive strengths and the importance of our environment to our wellbeing.

One of the greatest strengths right now is renewable energy. We are a global leader and one of only a handful of jurisdictions in the world to achieve 100 per cent self-sufficiency in clean, reliable and affordable renewable energy. This has been a key Liberal Government commitment. We have reached it through our nation-leading energy policies to attract investment in jobs, particularly in our regions, but we need to do more to seize our state's immense potential, which is why we have a bold plan to double our renewable generation to 200 per cent of our current needs by 2040. We will deliver this by progressing the Marinus Link and Battery of the Nation projects and our \$50 million Tasmanian Renewable Hydrogen Industry Development Funding Program to inject billions into our economy and create jobs.

The transition to net zero emissions is a global economic transition and represents an economic, environmental and social opportunity for this state. Thanks to our unique landscapes, renewable energy and our climate action to date, we are well placed to grasp this opportunity. We have already achieved our net zero target by 2050 four years in a row and our target climate change plan and act are currently under independent review. We are also developing our next climate action plan to guide our actions over the next five-years which will be informed by the modelling we are undertaking to understand both the economic and the environmental implications of more ambitious goals. However, it is my firm belief that we hold a unique opportunity to raise our ambition. Later this year, I look forward to introducing to this House a new climate change bill with bolder targets, along with the release of a new comprehensive climate action plan.

We already have a target to have the lowest rate of litter in the country by 2023. We will continue to support up to \$30 million of investment in waste management recycling facilities statewide and we will introduce legislation for our container refund scheme this year.

PESRAC has recommended that we develop a sustainability strategy for Tasmania with ambitious goals and actions. The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead this work in concert with other agencies and will consult widely on this strategy later this year. In the meantime, one concrete action that we can take right now is to set a goal to phase out the use of single-use plastics, as a number of local governments, including the Launceston and Hobart city councils, have already done. The Government, as a first step, will consult with local government on the best way to implement and phase-in the removal of single-use plastics from government and council facilities and events held on publicly owned land across the state by 2023.

Madam Speaker, in terms of our environment, one industry leading in this area is tourism. The industry, through the T21 Industry Recovery Action Plan released last year, identified a

goal for Tasmania to become a carbon-neutral destination. Today I can announce that the industry has set a target to achieve this goal by 2025. To assist businesses to start the journey to carbon-neutral, \$1.5 million will be provided to support carbon audits and formulate a pathway for them to achieve a standard of operation that will be globally recognised. This is a massive opportunity with more travellers than ever before proactively selecting climate-positive destinations.

In addition, as this industry has been hardest hit by travel bans and restrictions, we will provide \$8 million in innovation and development grants to continue to enhance Tasmania's world-class experience reputation, and a further \$500 000 to extend the Business Planning Support Program. Additionally, we will also provide \$4 million in direct financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses identified as critical to regional visitor attraction which remain in acute financial stress as a result of the restrictions on travel due to the COVID-19 response. This will include grants of up to \$100 000 per business with a go-live date of 4 April.

There is no doubt travel agents, which have been hard hit through COVID-19, will be instrumental in helping to drive demand. We will also provide \$1 million in grant funds to support Tasmanian travel agents with a program to be rolled out through Business Tasmania, again from 4 April. The funding that remains unspent of around \$5 million from the successful travel voucher scheme we ran last year, which underpinned nearly \$30 million in additional spending, will be used as I said it would - to support the industry it will be rolled in to support these new grant programs.

In addition, along with further funding from Austrade's Recovery for Regional Tourism initiative, Tourism Tasmania will invest \$3.5 million to deliver our most aggressive winter season campaign ever. Complementing the Australian Government's \$1.2 billion tourism recovery package announced last week delivering discounted flights to the regional areas, we anticipate Tasmania to be red-hot this winter. This activity, coupled with initiatives like the free vehicles program through the Bass Strait passenger equalisation scheme will make a winter holiday in Tasmania more accessible and compelling than ever before and will contribute to the rebuilding of our very professional and resilient tourism industry.

Madam Speaker, we have a long-term plan to secure Tasmania's future for all Tasmanians and to ensure they receive the services they need, but to continue this efficiently and effectively we need the right governance and processes in place. This is identified by PESRAC in its report and we are moving ahead with the review of the Tasmanian State Service to ensure we have a contemporary framework to enable the continuous improvement necessary to provide services to the Tasmanian community which are fit for purpose in this rapidly changing world.

Dr Ian Watt AC is leading the review of our State Service, with a final report due at the end of May. I thank Dr Watt for his work to date and also the public sector unions for their engagement through this process. While I am certain there will be differing views on the final report when it is available, I want to provide an assurance to the public service that I see this as an opportunity to ensure we have the best framework in place supported by the best system so we can service Tasmanians effectively as we recover and rebuild from COVID-19. I also want to especially thank our public servants for their outstanding work over the past 12 months

as they have supported the Tasmanian community through this most challenging period. This Government will not forget your efforts and hard work.

PESRAC has also recommended that local government reform should be considered. They have recommended that the two Houses of parliament work together to set terms of reference for a reform process that will run over an 18-month period. However, they are of the view that local government reform should not be used as a political football and that unless there is agreement in this place as well as the Legislative Council that reform is needed and that a process should be established, there is no point in considering it further. I accept that advice. I have no interest in expending energy on a political bunfight that ultimately does not lead to improvements in the sector and only leads to a divided parliament and divided communities.

The position of the Government on this recommendation is that across this Chamber we will establish a cross-party working group as well as the Independent member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, to discuss and decide on whether we wish to move collectively forward on this matter. I will write to the leaders and Ms Ogilvie in coming days to arrange our first discussion.

Madam Speaker, I thank PESRAC for their considered and comprehensive work and assure the 3500 Tasmanians who were consulted throughout this process that they have been heard and we will take action.

Tasmania is in a great place. We have emerged from the pandemic with a strong economy and business confidence leading the nation; yet when we talk about our greatest assets, it is not our infrastructure, our resources or our environment, it is our people. Our people have shown great strength, resilience, courage and also, importantly, great compassion and kindness. This year the Government is firmly focused on delivering our plan to rebuild our state to ensure we learn from our shared experience, and, importantly, that we secure our best future.

There is work to be done. With the PESRAC recommendations strengthening our resolve, this Government will continue to provide the decisive leadership needed to keep building a strong economy, to deliver the essential services Tasmanians need, to create jobs, and to put in place the very best skills and training pathways so more Tasmanians can benefit today and well into the future. When I first became Premier, I said I would lead a government of conviction and compassion, a government that ensures that opportunity is there for our people. I said that no matter where you live, no matter your circumstance or your background, this Government will help you grasp the opportunities this great state provides.

My resolve is firm, my commitment strong. This Government will deliver the plan I have outlined today to secure the future of every Tasmanian.

Madam Speaker, I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the Address.

[3.21 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the debate be adjourned until tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I move -
That the House do now adjourn.

Make it in Tasmania
150 Years of Railways in Tasmania
Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association - Truck Run

[3.22 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Madam Speaker, I begin by welcoming Jayne Montague and Rick Fontyn to the House. They are the people behind *Make it in Tasmania*. This is a locally owned and produced series showcasing our state, our people, our industries, our products, our innovation and the things that make our state very special. They are showcasing it for Tasmanians, for Australians and for people right around the world.

I know Jayne and Rick very well; I know many members of the Chamber will also be familiar with their work. I want to encourage them for their fantastic efforts, for their passion, and for the way they are using their talents in a creative space to spread the word about Tasmania. In brief, I can tell the House that they have already showcased the Tasmanian Eye Institute; our own Richie Porte; Definium with Mike Cruise and the innovation occurring there; Josef Chromy, that powerful Tasmanian story which has had more than 20 000 views; and a range of businesses around the state doing very special things. They are to be congratulated and encouraged as they continue to make further episodes. On behalf of, at least on this side of the House, we congratulate them on their fantastic work and may it continue.

I also take the opportunity to tell the House about the importance of transporting Tasmania, the way in which our rail industry and our truck industry are keeping people and freight moving to support our economy and support our businesses.

On 10 February 1871, the first train travelled 45 miles between Launceston and Deloraine. This pioneering moment began a period of massive expansion of the rail network across our state over the 150 years to today. Rail has always been inextricably connected to the industries they support. In Tasmania railways have played, and continue to play, a key role in the movement of freight for industry.

Over the past 150 years, railways have been central to the development of industries and the expansion of our economy. Concentrated railway development and upgrades occurred throughout the state as new mining and forestry operations sought to establish themselves, particularly in decades past where motor vehicle access was not feasible or easy, or perhaps not possible. The fact that our state is so decentralised is testimony to the fact that rail opened up our regions and took people and cargo in and out of places that were not possible through any other way.

I believe it helps explain why most people in Tasmania do not live in the capital. Tasmania is the only state in the country of which that can be said. It opened up frontiers. The story of railways have many highs and many lows, but whether it be supporting the

establishment and operation of mines on our rugged west coast, the transport of forest products, the points of manufacture, agriculture products for export or the movement of people, rail has been part of the story of Tasmania. It might even feature in a future episode of *Make it in Tasmania*.

It is this history that a number of heritage rail organisations around the state are working to preserve. I am pleased that the Liberal Government has been able to provide a number of groups in Tasmania with support towards the cost of their public liability insurance.

At the weekend, at one of the celebration events, I was honoured to be able to join Lou Rae and Tony Coen in the launch of their incredible book, a beautiful masterpiece, that is a gift to our state. The book is *150 Years of Railways in Tasmania*. I encourage members to obtain a copy. It has the full story, researched over a long period of time, with more than 500 very powerful photographs. The launch was a wonderful event, joined by the TasRail family.

I commend TasRail. They are pulling more freight now than in my lifetime; indeed, more than in the 150 years of railways in Tasmania. Three million tonnes of freight is being transported by TasRail. They have moved from a fortnightly or monthly derailment record, to now no derailments in more than 600 days. Their safety record is up; freight volumes are up; employment is up; and investment in infrastructure is up, with the state and federal governments providing \$375 million to revitalise rail freight infrastructure. It is working, and the TasRail family was abuzz on Sunday. It was fantastic to see the men and women of that business and their kids, coming and seeing what mum and dad do at work.

I say thank you to TasRail and the management and board for putting that on, and celebrating the 150th with the TasRail team.

Finally, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association for yet another successful truck run. The truck run began in Launceston 34 years ago, with their blaring horns parading through the City of Launceston and culminating this year at Longford Showgrounds. There were hundreds of people. I have never seen so many people at the truck run. There were nearly as many raffle prizes as people. There were fistfuls of raffle tickets being drawn at the raffle draw. It was a very positive experience.

More than 80 trucks were polished and on display. A lot of pride in that industry was displayed by the owners and the operators, and also by the local community and their families. I was honoured to be there. It was fantastic that the association decided to use it as a fundraiser for the Royal Flying Doctors Service Tasmania, which has such a similar relationship with the regions around Tasmania. Congratulations to them. I am informed they raised more than \$25 000. I congratulate Robert Bales and Julie Wise and all of the members of the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association. It was a wonderful achievement, a brilliant day, raising money for a terrific charity.

Importantly, the day was a celebration of the often modest and humble people of the transport industry who do not ask for - or receive - much recognition; but they are keeping the state moving. They are making it possible for businesses in Tasmania to be as successful as they are right now, with the unemployment rate reflecting that. I make those comments with a great deal of gratitude and pride as Minister for Infrastructure and Transport.

March 4 Justice

[3.28 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this week thousands of women and allies joined together in marches and protests all over the country, coordinated by March 4 Justice to speak out about gender injustice, inequality and the need for women to be safe: safe in their homes, in the workplaces and on their streets; to be safe as children, and at every age.

The gathering on our own Parliament Lawns reached its COVID-19 capacity well before the first speakers took the stage. People lined the streets. Nala Mansell, Yvette Cehtel, Natalie Hocking, Jessica Munday and Grace Tame: strong women speaking truth, calling for action. They were joined by women from all backgrounds, from our First Peoples to our newest arrivals; younger and older; those fighting for the first time, and those who thought we would be done with this by now; those who could afford to leave their jobs for the protest, and those who could not.

Women chanted, cheered and cried, for our friends and for ourselves as we demanded a society that values us and our safety. I have had so many conversations lately. I have heard devastating personal stories from women. I have heard self-reflection from men who are genuinely trying to change their actions built from years of ingrained reinforced privilege. I have heard, not all men.

I take a moment to speak to those good men who are offended, who are hurt and who do not know how to respond. We need you to believe, we need you to hear our voices. We need you to use your voice.

We need you to call out the jokes, call out the catcalling, the demeaning comments, the removal of agency and the violence. We need you to stand with us as good men because at the moment, we do not know how to tell the difference. If you can help us know the difference between good men and those who perpetrate and condone violence, whether openly or by complicit silence then please do tell us, because we genuinely do not know how to tell the difference.

While good men and not so good men scream, 'not all men', we still do not know. We know it is not every man, but it is enough men. Overwhelmingly, violence is committed by men; one in three women are assaulted. Every woman knows someone who has been assaulted. But how many men know a perpetrator? Statistically alone you have to - you have to know them. If you do not know them, then welcome to our world and join our caution, because we do not know them either. If you do know them and you say nothing and you do nothing, then you are him.

So, do not say 'not all men', do not spend time being offended and blaming women, because you feel bad if we lump you all together, because we cannot tell the difference and we do not have time now for your hurt. Your hurt feelings are too much for us to deal with because women are being assaulted and women are dying at the hands of people that they know, at the hands of people that they should be able to trust, and at the hands of strangers: in their homes, in their workplaces and on our streets.

Jess Munday put it well yesterday at the rally. Men are surprised to hear the stories coming out of the parliamentary worksites and coming out of all worksites. Women are not; we are not surprised to hear their stories.

So what can men do? Good men and those who want to be, well, stop making it about you for a start. Recognise that women are speaking out because they are angry, because they are scared and because they are sick to death that this is our reality. Focus your response not on being offended by women calling out violence but on those men who commit the violence, who name you up that way. Listen to women. Believe them. Call out behaviours and act to make workplaces safe. There are practical things that we can do.

An important message from yesterday was that insecure work means that women are vulnerable in their work places. Act to give women enough security in their jobs to be able to say when they are unsafe. Act when complaints are made. Use your voice, use your privilege to call out the behaviours and to demand consequences. Do not be more concerned about his career than the alleged assault. Do not believe him over her just because you know him. Do not undermine women who speak out or their families.

Demand more funding for support services. Demand access to housing for those who are fleeing violence. Recognise that childcare is an issue for all of us and not just women. Demand better responses to sexual harassment and assault. You do not have to imagine that you know the woman to think that she should be safe, and please, believe women. Do not for one moment think that the implied threat that was delivered by our Prime Minister in parliament will silence women. I quote:

It is good and right that so many are able to gather here in this way, not far from here, such marches, even now are being met with bullets.

I do not know if I am more offended that he said it or that he spent time workshopping it as the best response that he could come up with to the voices that are being heard all over our country, led by the courage and storytelling of survivors. How great is Australia, because we do not shoot women for protesting? Well, actually, we do, we hurt them and we kill them. More than one woman a week dies due to gendered violence, at least eight this year already. One in three women have been assaulted.

Do not think for a moment that telling women they should be thankful that they were not shot for protesting against systemic discrimination and violence will silence the thousands upon thousands of women who are calling for change. We will not forget, we will not be silenced. We will not be intimidated by veiled threats. We will not be diverted; our purpose is clear. There are 10 million women in this country. We will be heard.

Head of the River - Lake Barrington

[3.34 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate all the parents, the participants, the organisers and the clubs involved in the most fantastic Head of the River at Lake Barrington last weekend which I attended with my family. We had about 4000 people

there - it was the most remarkable and amazing gathering of talented sportsmen and women that we have seen for a long time.

As people in this House may know, Head of the River last year had to be cancelled due to the pandemic and its issues, so it was amazing to see everybody back on the river; to see the colour and the movement; all of those schools; all of the kids racing again.

Unfortunately, the weather was a little bit tricky. I am not sure if it was wetter above the surface of the water or wetter below the surface of the water but certainly everybody ploughed on. It is such a beautiful and picturesque setting at Lake Barrington. As our national course we are rightly proud of it as Tasmanians, right across the state. We are very fortunate to have the nationals held here next week. Many of the students who rowed on the weekend will be rowing up there again in the national competition.

I congratulate the parents, in particular, who get up every morning at 5 a.m. to get their kids to rowing to do this sport. It is a big effort. It is coming for you, Mr Felix. It is a big effort. It is an effort for the kids; it is an effort for the families and that phrase, 'Oh, you're a rowing family' truly does mean something. It means you have resilience, tenacity, commitment to not let your team down and to be there rain, hail or shine.

I congratulate the winners and everyone who participated by very quickly highlighting how the races concluded. The Boys Open Quad Scull was Grammar; the Girls Open Fours - Fahan; Boys Under 16 Doubles Scull - Grammar; Girls under 16 Single Scull - Brendan Shaw; Boys Quad Scull - Scotch; Girls under 15 Double Scull - Collegiate; Boys under 13 Single Scull - St Virgils, with St Virgils making a great comeback with their club. Boys under 14 Quad Scull - St Virgils; Girls Open Single Scull - St Patricks; Boys Open Double Scull - St Patricks; Girls under 16 Four - Friends'; Boys under 16 Scull - Grammar; Boys Open Eight - Hutchins; and Girls Open Eight - Scotch Oakburn.

I will not read the rest of them but will get to the important ones which are the two Head of the River races for the Open Eights, both boys and girls. Of course Hutchins put in a huge performance, just tipping Friends' by probably a boat length or less. It was a great race to see that happening. For the girls, Scotch Oakburn came in extremely well. There was such good sportsmanship on the river. To see all of those kids interacting with each other, enjoying the day out and also the parents, many of whom have been to Head of the River races themselves as rowers.

Working together as a state during a pandemic to put on what is an iconic event for children in very difficult circumstances was truly amazing. I will be sending copies of this note to those people who have been involved - all the clubs, all the kids, the schools and also congratulations on the hosting of the nationals. That in itself is a major thing.

The future of rowing in Tasmania is enormous. The numbers are growing. Much like Australian Rules football, the women's side of rowing is, if not the same level of participation, accelerating as well. The girls are really good at it and we certainly need to start thinking about facilities for our women in some of those older rowing clubs, and I have a few in mind as well. As you know, I have done a lot of this work in football land.

I will wrap with that by saying, what a great job. Even the kids who fell in had a great time. My son, Charlie, was one of those but he got back in that boat and went off racing again. Well done everybody on a great event.

Tasmanian Devils - Roadkill

[3.40 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the shocking numbers of Tasmanian devils killed on the roads in the north-west of Tasmania has been brought to public attention by desperate locals in the area who have been collecting photographic evidence. Some recent and new analysis published in the journal *Ecology Letters* by doctors Callum and Cunningham have estimated only 17 000 devils are left in the wild compared to the 53 000 that were recorded in 1996 when the devil facial tumour disease was first discovered. The authors predicted there would be a continued decline of Tasmanian devils, stabilising, they hope or estimate, at 13 000 by 2035. We have seen a terrifying 74 per cent reduction in the population in the last 39 years and although the authors do not consider there is a short-term risk of extinction for the Tasmanian devil population, it is clear that this beautiful animal is on the brink of extinction and remains there. This is having a devastating impact not just on the devil and its populations but on the rise of feral cats and the flow-on effect to so many other animals in Tasmania.

Habitat loss and other environment pressures are a major threat. Roadkill was specifically mentioned as a priority by Professor Menna Jones, another author on that paper, and it must be addressed to save the species. This recent alarming information about deaths on roads in the north-west, particularly adjacent to the Woolnorth property which is now the location of Van Dairy Farms was shown by the ABC last week. What we are seeing is extremely distressing. Ten devils died within a five-day period and at least 30 devils have been killed on those roads since January this year. That is a staggering number. A DPIPWE spokesperson has confirmed this is not a new situation. Devil deaths have previously been recorded in summer months, which is just evidence that the extra seasonal threat that exists has to be identified and fought.

We have written to the director of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Tasmania and the Minister for Environment and Parks seeking their immediate action to protect these devils.

It is also the case that the Van Dairy company is under investigation for other serious environmental impact allegations in relation to effluent pollution leaching into the wetland areas of the Robbins Island passage. If they are to be found responsible for that effluent damage and these deaths, they must be held to account. Moon Lake Investments is the Chinese company that bought Van Diemen's Land Company for \$280 million in 2016. As part of an agreement to that, the federal government requires the company to make investments of \$100 million to employ locals and to make sure they protect Tassie devils, but there is no evidence that the company has honoured any of those commitments.

Tasmanians are sick and tired of hearing about private companies destroying wildlife without any accountability. It is clear that the Minister for Environment and Parks is not prioritising this portfolio. The last state budget confirmed that the Save the Tassie Devil program will no longer get any funding from this Government after 2021-22 when the initiative is said to be 'complete'. The Greens do not buy that. It is clearly not complete when you have

vast numbers of devils dying on the roads like this, seemingly from company milk trucks speeding backwards and forwards and other vehicles related to the farming activity.

There are solutions. The Minister for Environment and Parks and the EPA together must be involved in making sure there are permanent reductions in speed limits, putting in wildlife crossings, signage, having further trials of virtual fencing technology and placing virtual fencing technology in there. The locals demand that their area is protected and all Tasmanians want to know that the hard work people in Tasmania have been doing, children in schools and people all around this country, putting money into the Save the Tassie Devil program is not in vain. I remember standing at primary schools and collecting money for the devil program. It would be an absolute disgrace if large numbers of these animals are thoughtlessly killed when these deaths could be prevented. There are specific actions to hold Van Dairy and other bodies to account if they are responsible, but it is clearly the case that something should and must be done.

Medicinal Cannabis

[3.45 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will give my full response on the Premier's Address tomorrow, but I want to express relief on the part of every Tasmanian who has been wanting to see medicinal cannabis more freely available in this state that we now have some real progress on this very important medicine. Tasmanians who need medicinal cannabis - the parents of children with epilepsy, and people who have cancer, HIV and other pain-management issues - have been shut out of the medicinal cannabis scheme because a truly deeply conservative Health minister designed the scheme specifically to make it as restrictive as possible so that people simply could not access it.

We had a scheme in Tasmania which was called the controlled access scheme, but nobody could access it. If you talked to the parents, for example, of young people with epilepsy, there was this back-and-forth where it was very clear, for example, in the case of Lyn Cleaver and her son Jeremy, that the medicine Jem responded to was medicinal cannabis and yet that family was put through the wringer, given the run-around and shut out because the scheme was designed to shut them out.

Thank heavens, first of all, that Mr Ferguson is no longer the Health minister, because it would have implications for other areas of public policy too - for example access to reproductive services - because Mr Ferguson and a conservative bloc within the Health department refused to hear or see the evidence on the power of medicinal cannabis to ease pain and to heal. They would rather people who needed medicinal cannabis go down the mainstream medicine line and, in some cases, have some extremely intense medicines prescribed to them for conditions that would be substantially improved by access to medicinal cannabis.

In November 2014, I went to the first Australian medicinal cannabis symposium in Tamworth; it was organised by Lucy Haslam, the mother of the late Daniel Haslam, who needed medicinal cannabis because he had debilitating bowel cancer that took his life. At this symposium we heard from experts from all over the world. We heard that anyone who says there is no evidence of the efficacy of medicinal cannabis is simply not looking, and that is

what we had in our previous Health minister and that little nub of conservative bureaucrats in the Health department.

For example, we heard about the nursing home administered by the Israeli ministry for health. This was the subject of a documentary made by Zac Cline and looked at the lives of 27 residents in that nursing home who were suffering from loss of appetite, anxiety, depression, insomnia, dementia, Parkinson's disease, inflammation, PTSD - you name it, this small cohort of people endured it - and when specifically individually tailored cannabis therapies were given to each of those 27 residents of the nursing home, within six months 39 conventional medications had been tossed out and across all that cohort of people symptoms had improved. The heavy painkillers were tossed out, as were the sleeping tablets and antipsychotics.

The antagonism towards the cannabis plant from conservative forces cannot be justified. Medicinal cannabis is an important medicine and people in Tasmania have been wanting it and asking for it for a long time - and they have been shut out.

This plant has approximately 400 different kinds of compounds in it. It is an almost miracle plant. Thank goodness the Premier and, I hope, the current Health minister, have had the courage to move past that conservatism and embrace this modern but ancient medicine, for the benefit of people in Tasmania who have been suffering.

I have a friend with a chronic pain condition, who had been on heavy duty painkillers for years. They found medicinal cannabis, and it worked for them; but they have to order from interstate. We are subjecting people in pain to a rigmarole; or else they give up and go to their GP for something like Endone or Tramadol.

Wouldn't we all prefer that people who are unwell are given access to a safe, legal cannabis product? And they will be able to do so, as a result of the change announced by the Premier - who has finally fixed the problem created by the previous health minister. From 1 July, those people will be able to go to their GP for a prescription and they will be able to go to any pharmacy in Tasmania to pick up their medicine.

What a great day for Tasmanians who have been calling for this change for so long and to whom Mr Ferguson was wilfully deaf.

Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club

[3.51 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, surf lifesaving is a way of life for so many people right across Tasmania and Australia. One of the most heartwarming things you can see, is the community of people who gather around the surf lifesaving movement right across our state.

Surf lifesaving is about more than saving lives; it is about shaping lives. Children who are involved in surf clubs from the north to the south, are developing life skills, volunteering and being involved in their community. They are also being active, having fun; getting out on the waves and learning how to swim and how to surf, and enjoying all the beautiful environment we have around us, particularly in the north west.

I am a very proud member of Boat Harbour Surf Life Saving Club. I was delighted to go to the opening of the new facilities at Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club. Those facilities have been funded as part of a joint local state and commonwealth initiative.

The Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club is in a growing area, with a growing cohort of people getting involved on the beautiful Rubicon River. They now have new change rooms and the club facilities have been expanded. The deck has been extended out on the front of the club so that people can see the beach more clearly. It also means that as a community, people can relax and take in the beautiful vibe that you see in Port Sorell and Shearwater. It is truly a wonderful place to spend an afternoon.

One of the great things about the Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club is their new mantra about bringing the community to the beach. Port Sorell is the town of golden beaches. The community has come from many parts of the state and the country to live, work, raise a family and retire in Port Sorell. It is wonderful to be able to bring those people together. Whether you are a clubby and you are involved in surf life saving or nippers, or you are someone who lives in the local area, you can now come down to the Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club, have a drink, have a meal; get involved in the night markets; and enjoy some community camaraderie. The Club is bringing the community from right across the district to this beautiful place.

Thank you to the Port Sorell Surf Life Saving Club. It was a pleasure to meet so many parents and nippers, and people who have been involved with the club for decades. They have seen the club itself grow, as well as the region.

The work that our surf life savers are doing across Tasmania on any given weekend to save lives and to shape the lives of younger people coming through, is truly commendable. I firmly believe that if all of our society was much more like a surf life saving club, then we would be a far better place.

The House adjourned at 3.55 p.m.