



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP

Wednesday 25 September 2024

MEMBERS

Mr Simon Behrakis MP (Chair)
Ms Ella Haddad MP (Deputy Chair)
Mr Vica Bayley MP
Ms Kristie Johnston MP

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Ms Jen Butler MP
Ms Cecily Rosol MP
Mr Rob Fairs MP
Ms Meg Brown MP
Ms Tabatha Badger MP
Mrs Rebekah Pentland MP
Ms Janie Finlay MP

IN ATTENDANCE

HON. MADELEINE OGILVIE MP

Minister for Science and Technology, Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Arts (including Heritage), Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence

Kristy Bourne

Acting Secretary, Department of Justice

Christopher Carney

Executive Director, Community Corrections, Department of Justice

Rod Wise

Deputy Secretary, Corrective Services, Department of Justice

David Jackson

Acting Director of Prisons, Department of Justice

Dave Sudmalis

Director Arts Tasmania, Department of State Growth

Jason Jacobi

Secretary, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Melissa Ford

Director, Heritage Tasmania, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Mary Mulcahy

Director, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

PUBLIC

The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.

DIVISION 5

(Department of Justice)

CHAIR - The time now being 9.00 a.m., the scrutiny of the Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the Committee. I'll invite the minister to introduce persons at the table, including names and positions, for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - I have Kristy Bourne, acting Secretary. I have Rod Wise, Deputy Secretary of Corrective Services. In the back of the room, we have Colin Shepherd, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Governance, Major Projects. We have David Jackson, acting Director of Prisons, and we also have in the back of the room, Christopher Carney, Executive Director, Community Corrections. We also have, if needed, Gavin Wales, Director of Finance. I think I've captured everyone.

CHAIR - The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation is two-and-a-half hours. The resolution of the House provides for a minister to provide additional information to a committee either later that day or in writing as an answer to a question taken on notice. To submit a question on notice, the member must first ask their question to the minister, and the minister must indicate they will take it on notice. The member must then put the question in writing and hand it to the committee secretary so it can be included in correspondence to the minister for answer.

Minister, would you like to give an opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - I certainly would, thank you very much. The 2024-25 state Budget continues our government's track record of responsible investment in Corrections and Rehabilitation, supporting our commitment to improving community safety and offender rehabilitation.

As part of the funding allocated to the commission of inquiry response, \$4 million has been provided over four years to deliver treatment programs for both offenders and others at risk of sexual offending. This includes the establishment of preventative groups and one-on-one counselling treatment programs for people who identify themselves as being at risk of such offending, and those who are no longer under a correctional order but require ongoing treatment to prevent risk escalation.

Following my announcement last month, the Budget discontinues funding for the construction of the northern correctional facility, however, the government will continue to invest in expanding and upgrading our correctional facilities to ensure we provide a physical environment that aligns with our operational approach. To this end, the Budget provides \$15.9 million in additional funding for capital services over three years for the Risdon Prison construction program.

This program will include construction of the new Risdon kitchen, building improvements to facilitate an expansion of drug and alcohol programs, the delivery of more rehabilitation programs to prisoners, investment in prisoner self-service technology, as well as

co-funding the purchase of a property to accommodate north-west based female prisoners following their release from custody.

This capital investment is supported by further allocation of \$4.1 million over four years for the Tasmanian Prison Service to improve intervention and rehabilitation services across the state as part of our correctional improvement program that runs parallel to the capital works. An additional \$1 million per annum has been provided to expand Community Corrections, successful home detention and electronic monitoring services to support the objectives of Changing Lives, Creating Futures: a Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania 2023.

Recognising the natural variations in project progress, some capital funds have been rolled over from the last financial year to enable a range of capital works projects to continue in 2024-25. These include the new Risdon Prison kitchen, the additional maximum security accommodation unit within the Risdon Prison Complex, the electronic security system and mobile duress alarm system replacement, and Risdon Prison critical infrastructure maintenance.

While not exclusively within the Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolio, the 2024-25 state Budget provides \$25.4 million across the next four years for ongoing operational costs of the Justice Connect - Astria - system, which I'll refer to as Astria going forward, and the provision of operational support for use of the system once it goes live. Once implemented, Astria will significantly improve information management across both the justice and correction systems. Staff in the Tasmanian Prison Service and Community Corrections are expected to have access to the system in the first half of 2025.

We recognise that our correctional staff are central to achieving our rehabilitation outcomes, and I would like to place on the record my personal appreciation for the work that staff across the Tasmanian Prison Service and Community Corrections undertake. The 2024-25 Budget provides funding for two key initiatives to support our workforce, both in the Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolio and across the Department of Justice more broadly.

The first of these is an allocation of \$3.5 million per annum to provide support for injured correctional officers and state service employees who have a workers compensation plan, which is very important. Further, \$800,000 in annual ongoing operational funding is provided for the department's Wellbeing Support Program, which provides all departmental employees, including those in the Tasmanian Prison Service and Community Corrections, with a range of services and support, including health and wellbeing checks, mental health awareness, incident support and case management. We are focused on continuing to make the improvements we need to make, and I look forward to this session.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, I understand there are critical shortages in Community Corrections. Can you provide an update on the number of employees by head count and the establishment figure, and break this down by region?

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly, I will seek that information.

Ms BUTLER - Can you provide the number of probation officers in this figure? I can take all of those on notice.

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - I think we'll have that information. I think Kristy can answer that one for you.

Ms BOURNE - We have staffing levels at the end of each financial year for the three years to 30 June 2024. At 30 June 2022 there were 132.1 full-time equivalent positions; at 30 June 2023, 125.3 full-time equivalent positions; and to 30 June 2024, 121.4 full-time equivalent positions. For the past decade, the Community Corrections workload has remained relatively stable. I do not have before me a breakdown of probation officers that I am aware of, but we may be able to find that before the conclusion.

Ms OGILVIE - If we can seek to get that information and bring it to the table.

Ms BUTLER - You will bring that to the table before the end?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes.

Ms BUTLER - Thank you. Can you provide an update on the number of probation officer employees who have left Community Corrections this year?

Ms OGILVIE - We don't have it to hand. We will bring it to the table.

Ms BUTLER - Thank you. Is the lack of staff impacting on program delivery, such as the family violence program for offenders deemed to be high risk and likely to offend? How many offenders have been supported by this program over how many years?

Ms OGILVIE - I think it might be worth having Mr Carney join the table. I will introduce Mr Christopher Carney, Executive Director, Community Corrections. Mr Carney, the question asked for detail about the staffing numbers, but also whether services are impacted.

Mr CARNEY - To answer the Family Violence Offender Intervention Program question first, in 2021-22, we had 115 people commence that program and we had 73 complete. That was 63 per cent. In 2022-23, we had 62 people commence the program and 35 complete. In 2023-24, we had 54 people commence and 39 complete, so it was really a COVID-19 spike that we saw that earlier year. That 54 commencing in 2023-24 was a 22 per cent increase on the 44 who commenced the program in 2019-2020. We only had 44 commencements in 2019-2020. We had 54 commence last year, but this 115 was a spike that we saw associated with COVID because more people were at home, and there was certainly more risk associated with that.

We have 34 probation officers in the south and there are eight current vacancies, as well as 2.9 FTEs that we're managing through flexible work practices. There are 18.5 probation officers in the north of the state with four current vacancies, and there are 14.4 probation officers in the north-west with 3.8 current vacancies.

We have ongoing recruitment in relation to all of those, and we've also established a fixed-term register for the probation officer and casework support officer roles that we have recently established. Casework support officer roles were established just in the past couple of years, and that was to take away a lot of the administrative load from probation officers. They do a lot of reports, they do a lot of assessments, they do a lot of home assessments and they do

weekly activity planners for home detention orders, so we reduced the administrative load there.

We've also increased the support staff that we have in place. We've established three new therapeutics roles that offer support across the entire state, and we've also established a practice lead role, which is about enhancing the practice support that people can get. These are the supports that we have increasingly built around them.

We have just finalised the interview process in relation to a probation officer position in the north-west yesterday. That should be finalised this week, so we'll get some more staff in that area. We've recently advertised permanent positions in all three regions across the state. There's been a big change this year, which has been great. We've had really large pools of people applying for the roles and they're back to pre-COVID levels.

We're building up our capacity to appoint staff all over the place, and one of the things that we've done - I did raise this - is the fixed-term register. We've had that in place for a couple of years, but we didn't necessarily manage it well - I would take that on board - from a Community Corrections perspective, but last year the department supported us to get a business services manager in place, and she has been a godsend. She has built our processes around how we can manage that in a very measured way to ensure that we are continuing to tap into that and building up our capacity to draw from it. What that's going to do and what we're starting to see now is a reduced timeframe lag between when somebody leaves and when we get new staff come in.

In relation to separations, we had 13 per cent separation in 2021-22. We had 11 per cent in 2022-23. We had 15 per cent last year, but that increased separation figure was actually due to retirements and officers who accepted promotions to higher-level positions in the state service. We actually saw a spike in promotions to higher-level positions in the State Service, and I want to talk about that because at the beginning of last year - I'm sorry if I'm talking, but I want to talk about that -

Ms OGILVIE - We're here to hear from you. I think they're more interested in what you have to say than what I have to say.

Mr CARNEY - We had a look at the support that we were providing to our staff from a management perspective, and one of the key figures that was not a good reflection on us was that we only had 24 per cent of our staff who had an annual plan, which is not okay. They deserve better from us, and so we really invested in building up capacity to and frameworks of supervision and support that we're providing to our staff to make sure that we have annual plans in place for everybody, to make sure that we are focused on their learning, to make sure that we're focused on their development.

We got that up to 88 per cent, which I have to say I was very proud of. We did really well to move the needle there. What that allowed us to do was to better understand the needs of our people so that we could design, implement, procure and deliver enhanced training so that they were better positioned to do their job. The reason why I raised that is because we designed and procured and delivered a range of additional staff training packages, mainly to do with soft skills and working within the human services field.

We did a vicarious trauma training package; professional boundaries; trauma informed practise; reflective practice; defensible decision making. We did case management training; motivational interviewing training; sex offender criminogenic assessment training. We did how to work with sex offenders; how to work with people affected by drugs and alcohol; risk assessment tools. We actually sent two people away, one to Melbourne to become Australia's second only master trainer in a level of service suite of a criminogenic assessment. That's the criminogenic assessment tool we run. The second only ever master trainer and the first one that's actually attached to a corrective services organisation. The other one is a professor at a university.

We also sent an officer away to become a trainer in a suite of sex offender training tools, because we need to increase our capacity for our people to be able to identify criminogenic risk there and deliver those tools. We also sent officers away to become trainers in the programs that we deliver, the eclipse suite of criminogenic programs, and the year before, the family violence offender intervention program as well. We have trainers in those programs. We also delivered training packages in relation to performance management and planning, business planning, and leadership and management to our managers.

The reason why I raised that is because we've invested a lot in our people to enhance their soft skills, to enhance their core skills, to enhance their capacity to be able to deliver better service. What that does is it naturally sets people up to be able to gain promotion. I have to say, universally, I believe all of them were able to transition to promotion positions within the State Service. We've still kept the expertise within the State Service even though I may have lost a couple of them.

Ms BUTLER - The Sober Driver program has been delivered by Community Corrections for some time now. How many years and how many people has it supported?

Mr CARNEY - We actually looking to review that program. That has been delivered since around 2007 I believe. I don't have the numbers here.

Ms BUTLER - Our information, due to the staff shortages there will be no more programs of any type run until 2025, is that right?

Mr CARNEY - Do we want to talk about the Sober Driver program specifically or do we want to talk about programs more generally and then address each one?

Ms BUTLER - Sober Driver and overview.

Mr CARNEY - The Sober Driver program has been run for a number of years. It was developed by the NSW Department of Transport, I believe, and we procured it. It's an information program that tells people drink driving is bad and it gives them some information around their alcohol use and how that can affect their driving.

Last year, we invested additionally into this program to get some 'beer goggles', so that we can have additional resources so that people can actually see it rather than just sitting in front of a PowerPoint. The program is a little outdated, I do have to say. It's good, it certainly does give people the sort of information they're looking for, but we're hoping to enhance that.

PUBLIC

We've set up a partnership with UTAS to try - and one of the things we're doing through that partnership is trying to get both a Sober Driver program to talk about alcohol, alcohol-associated effects on driving and decision-making, but also one for drugs as well so we can have an information program on how some of these intoxicants can affect your decision making. We still do run this Sober Driver program.

In EQUIPS, 52 people started in 2021-22 and 45 completed; in 2022-23, 51 started and 45 completed; and in 2023-24, 35 started and 37 completed.

Ms BUTLER - Will there be any more of the Sober Driver and the family violence programs for the rest of 2024? Or will they not start again until 2025?

Mr CARNEY - No, they are still running. When I was talking to you about our programs more generally, one of the things that we did - I spoke about it before - is we sent some officers away to become trainers in the family violence program and we also sent a couple of officers away, six I believe, to become trainers in the EQUIPS suite of programs.

We manage programs through wait lists and what we do is we wait until there's a certain number of people because they're all group programs. We need to wait until there is a certain number of people to commence programs being run because part of the learning associated with programs comes from sitting in a group and hearing about others' experience and getting them to challenge your beliefs and your ideas.

We've always managed programs through wait lists. What we have done by sending these people away to become trainers is we're trying to change our model of service delivery to enhance our capacity to deliver programs. I now have people who can train people to deliver programs; our focus is to look at getting all of our probation officers capable and ready to facilitate the delivery of these programs so that we can roll them along more generally and make sure they're continuing to run.

The issue with a wait-list design the way we've always done it - and we've had to because we're a relatively small jurisdiction - is that someone can come onto an order and there may not be a whole bunch of other people who get the program condition at the same time. They can just be sitting there waiting until we have enough to run a program for them to get on. We want to try to get them in early because if we can get them in early, it addresses their risk early and we can start to move them forward.

We're still managing programs through wait lists, but we are also moving toward a rolling model of program delivery. They have started a rolling family violence program. It's already started, which is great. We have separate programs that are booked in other regions across the state that are going to occur this year.

One of the areas that was highlighted for us when we sent staff to attend the trainer program in the EQUIPS suite is there are four parts to the EQUIP suite program. There's an addictions program, there's an aggression program, there's a domestic violence program and there's a foundations program.

The prison has been great. They have always run the foundations program. As Community Corrections we never did.

PUBLIC

The idea with this suite of programs is that everyone gets a front door through the foundations program because it sets them up to be program and change ready. It gives them some of that change in mindset around why we would accept change and how we would build on that.

It really sets them up well, but we've never run it at Community Corrections because we focused on drug addiction, family violence and aggression as the main ones. Because we sent these staff away, one of the things we're looking to do is set up a rolling foundations program as well. Hopefully what that will mean is, not only are we increasing our ability to facilitate programs because we've got far more staff able to do it, but it'll mean that far more people will get the benefit of this program intervention in the first place. If they don't necessarily roll on to one of the other EQUIPS programs, that's okay because it makes them change-ready or it supports them to engage in the external services that we might send them to in a more effective and proactive way. So our focus here is around building our capacity to deliver a more meaningful suite of programs. There are programs that are continuing to run throughout the rest of the year and, as we have always, we will be managing wait lists, but our intention is, across the next 12 months, to also start to establish some of these rolling programs so that next year and the year after we should be looking at building on some of these numbers quite significantly.

Ms ROSOL - Minister, in last year's annual report, the Custodial Inspector said:

I regularly hear about matters of concern in custodial centres from people working or housed there, but unfortunately some people who have raised their concerns with my office have also reported that their actions in speaking with my office were sometimes not well received. There are no protections for people who do come forward to report issues to my office, and there should be.

Your government has rejected this call. I'm just wondering why. Is it because you'd rather people didn't come forward? Or is there another reason?

Ms OGILVIE - No, and I don't accept the premise of your question, which is that I might have a personal view about people exercising their legal rights, which they're absolutely entitled to do and I'm fully supportive of that, clearly.

I meet regularly with the Custodial Inspector and I'm very supportive of their work as well. It's a key part of the process that we have in running the system. I understand also that the Director of Prisons meets regularly with the Custodial Inspector, at least on a quarterly basis. We're always listening and hopefully doing what we can to have the most contemporary approach that we can have.

I know that there are recommendations from the Custodial Inspector Report. Senior TPS staff recently met to allocate the 120 recommendations from the two recently released reports to various TPS staff members. But I do note, as you have, that not all of the recommendations were supported. Some, of course, will be allocated to the Department of Health for actioning, and from those recommendations and from all of the other reports to date, there have been 545 recommendations made. Of those, 34 recommendations were not supported.

PUBLIC

I would actually like to ask the question whether we have a view or any information in relation to the ability of people to make appropriate contact and complaints. Have we had some feedback on that?

Mr WISE - We don't think that additional protections are necessary for staff and indeed the Dry Cells Report, which the Custodial Inspector issued not too long ago, stemmed from a staff member approaching the Custodial Inspector and making that reference, so I don't think that there's any need for it. Staff are welcome to contact the Custodial Inspector and we welcome that as well. We try to act in a transparent manner and our staff are absolutely free to contact the Custodial Inspector.

Ms OGILVIE - Having said that, though, if you have a specific instance or a concern, I'm always open to listening to that.

Ms ROSOL - As a supplementary for that question, I guess my question was also relating to those people who are imprisoned there, whether they have protections, because at this stage they don't have legal protections if they do raise concerns. I don't know if you've got a comment on that.

Ms OGILVIE - I think my only comment would be, I'm very happy to hear if you have a specific instance or if there's more we can do. I'm really genuinely interested in making sure that we have the best system we have, so very open to listening.

Ms ROSOL - The Custodial Inspector has also noted that consultants and specialists that they employ are required to obtain a gate pass in advance from the Prison Service. At Ashley Youth Detention Centre that's not required, so that limits the capacity of the inspector to conduct unannounced inspections. Why is that situation in place? Why hasn't that been changed? The Custodial Inspector has recommended regulations be made to address this issue. Do you intend to change that?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you for the question, which is important. I actually don't have any overview of the Ashley centre, so I don't know what arrangements -

Ms ROSOL - My question is about the Tasmania Prison Service, where they do have to get a pass in advance.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm just coming to that. I don't have any purview over what happens in other areas, in relation to what we do, particularly the Risdon site. You would be aware that it houses a range and diversity of prisoners. I imagine that's part of the reason we have some careful guidelines around passes, but I will ask the department to provide some additional information.

Mr CARNEY - We naturally have a range of requirements in place so that people can't enter our prison facilities without proper identification, those sort of things. There is no issue and I've passed this on to the Custodial Inspector's team if they were to engage in an unannounced inspection and had an expert with them who we weren't previously aware of. It only takes a phone call for me to say 'Can we arrange for this person to be granted access immediately?' and I would grant it. So it's not an issue as far as we're concerned.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you.

PUBLIC

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, I've had concerns raised with me regarding the staffing levels at the Remand Centre. It's been indicated to me that the demand on the Remand Centre has increased significantly through family violence incidents where people who had to be remanded, and that there is insufficient staffing to meet that demand. Can you give us an indication of the current staffing levels for the Remand Centre, please?

Ms OGILVIE - It is an operational matter so we'll ask for you.

Mr WISE - Can we ask one point of clarification please? Minister, when you're talking about the Remand Centre, are you talking about the Southern Remand Centre or were you perhaps taking about the Hobart Reception Prison?

Ms JOHNSTON - Both. Can I get both figures, please?

Mr WISE - Yes, maybe Mr Jackson would know.

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Jackson, would you mind, if you can add some information?

Mr JACKSON - I've recently spoken to the unions, who have raised this point with me. We are now looking at what we might do to add an extra person at the HRP, the reception prison in the watch house for detainees. At this point in time I'm unaware of staff shortages in the Southern Remand Centre. It seems to be open quite regularly, so I don't have any more information on that, sorry.

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly. If you have a specific concern though, please feel free to -

Ms JOHNSTON - Could I then ask, as a follow-up, and you might need to take this one on notice, what is the staffing allocation per shift and particularly the night shift, and how many times has that not been filled in the last financial year?

Ms OGILVIE - Is that information that you would have to hand here?

Mr JACKSON - We could get that information.

Ms OGILVIE - We'll bring it to the table if we can.

Ms JOHNSTON - By today or do you think -

Ms OGILVIE - Today, if we can and if not, then we will take it on notice.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you.

Ms OGILVIE - We're trying to get as much information as we can to the table as we sit here.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you.

PUBLIC

Mr FAIRS - Minister, can you outline how the expanded use of electronic monitoring has already enhanced community safety and how this technology will offer sophisticated sentencing options, please?

Ms OGILVIE - I was really pleased that Mr Carney was able to join us and give a big overview of the hard work that's happening. I thank you for that, because that's a really good sort of precursor to talking about the work that we're doing with our nation-leading electronic monitoring. It truly is nation-leading. We have a lot of interest in it from around the nation but internationally too, so we're doing some remarkable things. It does represent a major step forward in how we can effectively respond to the needs of the community, but also victim-survivors, which is very important. We secured a \$4.7 million extension to this initiative, which I was really pleased about, and it does reflect our commitment to maintaining a program that offers, as we'll hear from Mr Carney, sophisticated real-time tracking technology which provides a safer alternative to traditional forms of detention and allows courts to impose electronic monitoring. By doing that, we give them the tools to make more informed, more flexible, more agile orders that ensure public safety remains a top priority. That gives a little bit more control over the sorts of orders we are providing. One of the standout features of the program is how it actively supports victim-survivors of family violence and by issuing discreet duress alarms, we provide a safety net that is always within reach. This technology offers victim-survivors a greater sense of security, knowing that they have immediate access to assistance if they need it. It really is a crucial aspect of our broader strategy to prevent family violence, and it demonstrates how technology can be used in ways not just for monitoring offenders, but also to protect those who are most vulnerable in our community. I can't tell you how supportive I am of this program.

The use of electronic monitoring extends beyond just ensuring compliance. It does play a really important role in the rehabilitation process by maintaining connections with family support networks, employment opportunities - elements that we know are essential for reintegration - and by allowing offenders to serve their sentences in a structured way within the community. I know you have a passion for this area too.

It reduces the likelihood of reoffending and, ultimately, we hope, creates a safer and more cohesive society. We have also ensured that the program is backed by legislative reform, which was needed, so that we make it clear that tampering with or attempting to remove an electronic monitoring device is a serious offence, sending a strong message. Our partnership with technology experts has allowed us not only to put what we have today into place, but I know Mr Carney and his team also have been looking at new technology, different sorts of apparatus that we can provide to assist with things like alcohol monitoring and other innovations that we know are coming down the pipeline.

I'm really pleased to share that we have had even international interest in what we're doing here. The German police are currently in communication with our department. They're coming to see what we're doing. I'm really pleased to see that we are leading globally in this area and we're looking to provide that holistic approach. Safety concerns and long-term solutions are part of what we want to do. I think it's an excellent example of innovative thinking. I want to give a great deal of credit to the department for going down this pathway. I think technology has a huge amount to offer in this sector and we are leaning into that with a great deal of success.

PUBLIC

Ms BUTLER - Minister, magistrates rely upon the operation of family violence and sober driver programs so they can send offenders to participate in them. Do you think it's reasonable that somebody might be placed on an order then released with no supervision because of these high vacancy levels, which have just been outlined, in Community Corrections to provide that?

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, just ask that question again about magistrate's orders. What was your question?

Ms BUTLER - Magistrates rely upon the operation of family violence and sober driver programs. They can send offenders to participate in them. You understand that? Do you think it's reasonable that somebody might be placed on that order and then released with no supervision because of these high vacancy levels, which have just been outlined, in Community Corrections, to provide that? They are high vacancy levels.

Ms OGILVIE - I'll just seek some advice on that. Because we have Mr Carney here and I understand he is in communication with the magistrates on this issue, I will ask you, Mr Carney -

Ms BUTLER - Can I also ask, through the Chair - and I really like listening to your answers - that we limit the response time, just because we're mindful of time today.

CHAIR - The Standing Orders do allow for one-minute questions and three-minute answers. It hasn't been the practice so far to be super strict in enforcing them unless people start feeling it's unreasonable. Given that it seemed that people were getting value out of the detail of the answers, if people call, I'll draw attention to the time limits, but if people are happy with what's being provided, I'll let it go if members are happy with that.

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Carney, would you be able to provide some information in relation to this issue?

Mr CARNEY - Yes. Community Corrections manages orders to support people to effectively manage their criminogenic risk in the community.

So, our approach is really built upon a framework of understanding what someone's risk is and what their criminogenic needs that arise from that are, and what the responsibility considerations around the kind of intervention we can provide are.

We have a sliding scale approach to how much contact somebody needs to have with us, depending on how much work we actually need to support them with. What we try to do - the best we can do - is we get people in and we assess their risk and their needs, and then we try to link them in with existing community supports and services, so that they can address their immediate risk and they can also establish relationships with those services, so that if they ever come across those same risks or issues in the future, then they have a contact point that they can go to. They don't need to come back into our service and think, 'Oh, they're the only people who can help me'. So, we try to build up this framework around them.

The question you're asking is really big and complex, so I'm trying to -

Ms BUTLER - About the magistrates' orders for programs.

Mr CARNEY - When magistrates give us orders - programs are different, so I think there's a bit of a challenge there. When magistrates order that someone undertake a program and they need to undertake that program, and we work with them - and I think all of the programs that we deliver actually require ongoing engagement with them throughout the program delivery. It isn't just about attending a program and sitting in a group, it's also about an ongoing supervision model that we have to understand: they've gone to the program, they did the first session, these are the kind of learnings they should have got from that. What did they get from that? That's a question we actively ask them.

When somebody has a programs condition that they're required to complete, we continue supervision and management throughout, and we would even increase it throughout the periods of program participation, just to make sure they're getting the good outcomes that they can. Does that answer your question?

Ms BUTLER - Has the department communicated with the magistrates to inform them that there are limited programs operational due to those vacancies, though? Because you do have the vacancies, and part of the magistrate's ruling is for the alleged offender to undertake these particular programs, has that been communicated through to the magistrates that there is a delay or that there are staff shortages in that area?

Mr CARNEY - I have regular contact with the administrator of courts; I have regular contact with the Registrar of the Supreme Court. Just five weeks ago, I was sitting in a meeting with the Chief Magistrate. I go to the magistrates conference; I went to their last one and I'm doing the next one. Also, four weeks ago, I went to their weekly catch-up. These are conversations that are ongoing. They are aware that we manage wait lists through our programs; they are aware of the programs that we have been running; and it is something that - again, we certainly do have conversations about it - and I'm also talking to them about this, trying to increase capacity within the model of programs delivery and the rolling programs that we're trying to set up. They're aware of where we're up to and they're aware of our future plans, as well. We're continuing to engage through that.

Ms BUTLER - What does it mean for those offenders who have been sentenced to participate in programs? Can they be deemed as failing to comply and subsequently punished for not complying with those programs because of the vacancies within Community Corrections? Is that a kickback, or would there be measures taken on those offenders if they're failing to comply with the orders from the magistrates? Does that make sense?

Ms OGILVIE - I think I understand what you're saying. I might ask Kristy to perhaps talk about that.

Ms BOURNE - It's my understanding that if there were a delay in the commencement of participation in a program, that wouldn't reflect negatively on that individual. Again, it would be a discussion between the Community Corrections personnel who are in the court at the time that that order is made, in terms of providing submissions to the court about the wait list or other factors that might impact upon the commencement of that sentence, for lack of a better term. There should be no negative impact on the individual, and that's where I think the benefit is of Mr Carney and his team's ongoing communications with the court. There should ideally be a no-surprises approach, noting of course that the workload of community corrections will ebb and flow, and magistrates will have concerns about the impact on people coming before

PUBLIC

them, but that ongoing discussion means that we can hopefully work through that and find an appropriate outcome for each individual person.

Ms BUTLER - Can you provide this committee with how long that wait list is and how many people are on that wait list?

Ms OGILVIE - That one we'll have to take on notice.

Ms BUTLER - Also, those programs have been ordered by a magistrate for a specific reason and that is the ruling of that magistrate. Isn't it a breakdown of the orders of a magistrate if Community Corrections can't provide those programs due to staff vacancies? Is that an issue for community safety?

Ms OGILVIE - I would just say I'm not responsible for the magistrates. That's a different output.

Ms BUTLER - We did ask the Attorney-General this and he said it was to be taken up in this committee.

Ms OGILVIE - That's another minister's output, but I think we have not heard that things are unavailable. I think we've heard that things are being managed, but I'll ask Kristy to pick up on that.

Ms BOURNE - That's correct. I think it's inaccurate to characterise programs as not being available. Participants may need to wait, and we will provide that information on notice as the minister has undertaken to do, but I'm not aware of any instances where magistrates have not been able to order people to participate in particular programs.

Ms BUTLER - It's not the orders as such that I'm querying. It's the direction and the time that it takes for those orders to be implemented from the magistrate to Community Corrections, and the impact that could be having not only on the judicial system but also on community safety.

Ms BOURNE - Further clarification to the question is that magistrates often provide an 'if directed' component to their order. Community Corrections will work, as Mr Carney has outlined, to make sure the best suite of services are provided to that individual to address their offending behaviour, and that can include internal services provided by Community Corrections, but also potential referrals to external services to make sure that those needs are addressed.

Ms ROSOL - I'd like to come back, minister, to the custodial inspector's recommendations, because the inspector has made a number of recommendations about legislative amendments in their annual reports, some of which I've touched on already. I understand from your responses that you are happy for people's rights to be protected and upheld, so do you have any intention of progressing legislative change and regulatory changes to protect those rights and formalise them?

Ms OGILVIE - The short answer is, at this time, no, I do not. I haven't turned my mind to that. I'm very open to making sure that legislation - our response - is fair and best practice.

PUBLIC

If there's something specific that you'd like to discuss - you've raised one particularly today - I'm very happy to do that, but the answer is no at this time.

Ms ROSOL - I think the custodial inspector's been quite specific in the recommendations they've made. To another question, the custodial inspector notes in their annual report that the process of sending a young person in detention to prison arguably should be a matter that's determined by a court rather than Ashley Youth Detention Centre and the Tasmania Prison Service.

That's to do with the transfer of young people between the two facilities. At the moment my understanding is that that's facilitated between the two without the court being involved in that at all. Is that a reasonable reflection of what's happening? Do you have a view on it and will you look into that?

Ms OGILVIE - It might be helpful, I think, just to hear exactly what that process is and how it works.

Mr WISE - The commission of inquiry made a similar recommendation, I seem to recall. That is being worked through at the moment. It's already had an effect, although the recommendation hasn't been affected, the transfers of young people from Ashley to prison have essentially stopped. In 2023-24 there were no transfers of young people into prison custody. The notion is being observed and we'll wait to see how that plays out in terms of legislative amendment down the track.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you, Chair. Minister, do corrections use private security companies to transport detainees?

Ms OGILVIE - For you David?

Mr JACKSON - Through you, minister, the simple answer is no. We don't use private companies to transport prisoners unless - the only way we would do it is probably by patient transport, that would be -

Ms OGILVIE - Private ambulance?

Mr WISE - Maybe private ambulance if it's a low level -

Ms JOHNSTON - So, the transfer of young people from the reception centre to Ashley that's coordinated through?

Mr WISE - I don't work with the young people. They might have their own system. I believe that they send people down through an on-call basis, through you, minister, but as far as using private firms with secure vehicles? Not to my knowledge.

Ms JOHNSTON - Okay. Thank you; that's it for me.

Mr FAIRS - Minister, how would the introduction of advanced in-cell technology including educational platforms and also secure video-calling help reduce repeat offenders by

ensuring prisoners stay connected to a central family and support systems during rehabilitation which I know is very, very important as you do?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you very much, Mr Fairs. Yes, it is and I'm really happy to share how the introduction of advanced in-cell technology, including secure video-calling and educational platforms will be a significant step forward in our efforts to help reduce recidivism and to support the rehabilitation of prisoners in Tasmania's correctional system.

In our government we are very committed to ensuring that our correctional facilities are places not just of a confinement but environments that actively contribute to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders back into society so the introduction of in-cell technology - I believe - will be a game changer in this regard. By providing prisoners with access to secure video-calling we will enable them to maintain meaningful contact with their families and loved ones. We know that prisoners who maintain those family ties during their time in custody are far less likely to reoffend upon release. They have stronger support systems to guide them on their journey to rehabilitation and these connections foster a sense of hope and motivation for prisoners to work towards positive change across a range of fronts and we know that's a key factor in successful rehabilitation.

This initiative, which will be explored as a pilot initially, also reflects what we've learned in a post-COVID world where digital connections have proven to be invaluable in maintaining relationships when in-person contact is limited. We've learned a lot. By incorporating this technology, we're ensuring that prisoners - particularly those who are geographically isolated from their families - will be able to maintain those important connections despite the challenges of distance, travel restrictions, or other barriers. This approach aligns with our understanding of the vital role that technology can play in maintaining social bonds and support networks which are essential for rehabilitation.

We hope to build digital literacy skills through this initiative as well, to help prisoners understand and keep up with the technology-driven world, both when they're in custody and upon release, and to equip them with the knowledge and capabilities that they need on their rehabilitation journey. Digital means more access to education; prisoners are supported to continue their education and gain valuable skills while in custody; things like literacy can also be addressed. So, some really good stuff that's able to be done.

We want to equip prisoners with knowledge and skills. They need to find employment, of course, when they're released and to become productive members of society. We also think that technology and this ability to communicate more freely will enhance prisoners' access to justice, to their lawyers, video-calling, legal appointments, and consultations without the delays and challenges that might come with arranging in-person visits and their engagement with the justice system more broadly and, of course, it does help with their engagement with the justice system more broadly too.

The approach we are taking aligns with our commitment to evidence-based rehabilitation. What we want to do by making these opportunities readily available through in-cell technology is to ensure every prisoner has a chance to participate fully in their own rehabilitation journey regardless of their background, circumstances, location, or location of their families. We have legal access, family contact and ability to access education. We are trying to deliver a more holistic approach, and we're using modern technology systems and tools to do that.

PUBLIC

As I say, we're starting with a pilot. I'm very excited about this. I know that other facilities on the mainland and internationally are using this to great effect.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, can you confirm that the two probation officers who used to be stationed in the Southern Magistrates Court to give immediate answers to magistrates have been removed? When did this happen and what was the reasoning for that?

Mr CARNEY - I think there's a bit of history here that I need to explain. About 15 years ago we placed two officers down at the Magistrates Court. Their role was really about managing the prosecutions of community corrections orders in that court, because we had a lot coming through. We have multiple offices down in the south. That's not a system that we set up anywhere else in the state.

Across that time, they continued to be tapped by magistrates and by various courts - that is, asked to come in and provide point-in-time information right there on the spot.

Ms BUTLER - Saving time.

Mr CARNEY - No. I would challenge that. I think the reason for that is twofold. One, because they were being called from one court to the other all of the time and providing assessments and reports that were oral in nature, which required them to jump in and have a look at a couple of case notes and come to a determination, it was a quick turnaround, but it was very interrupting to their work. It moved them away from actually being able to manage the prosecutions, which was actually the core part of their role.

We were adding to the court backlog because we needed to manage breaches of orders and they had to continue to be held over, and we were late in the day to being able to get them in just because we did not have the resources there available.

The other issue that we had - well, there were a couple of issues from a staff management perspective. They were dislocated from the office, so we weren't able to offer them the right kind of support and engagement. They weren't involved in team meetings. They weren't getting a lot of the up-to-date information there. They were also being asked to hang around late for after-hours courts, so they were getting lots of flex time and it was becoming quite an impost on them. We were getting a lot of challenges from those courts.

The major issue that we had with it is that they were being brought in at a moment's notice to a court and asked to provide an update around whether someone's suitable for an order or whether someone's suitable to be given bail. Those officers had a specialised role that wasn't around case management, and they were being asked to give point-in-time information based on a couple of case notes, rather than something more invested and involved.

What we do in the rest of the state is, when we get those questions from the court, the information is asked of the person who actively works with the offender in the first instance. If there's a requirement for an assessment, that's done by a duty officer at the time, and what they are able to do is undertake a comprehensive assessment. They are able to undertake collateral checks. They are able to review all of our case files. They are able to come up with an informed, involved and invested opinion that's actually built on evidence, and that's able to go through a bit of a quality assurance process, which is a couple of things that we were missing by having those two officers just being called in and pushed out of courts one after the other.

It became a bit of an issue both in terms of what we were asking of our staff and their requirement, and then also the advice and support that we were giving courts. I have complete confidence in these officers. They are highly experienced officers, but even if you were asked 70 times this week to give an opinion and move on, it creates the potential that our advice may not be the best advice to support the decision-making of the court.

Ms BUTLER - So that's the reasoning - when did this happen?

Mr CARNEY - This occurred earlier this year. We've been talking about this with the courts as a potential for a number of years. This has not come up recently. Because we were able to offer staff additional training, we were well-positioned for it to occur. We were taking up space in the court, which as we all know is a bit of a premium. They had a new officer come on board and we were going to have to move from our space. There was another space that we could share with a whole bunch of other court users. What we decided to do in conjunction with lots of people is to remove those officers back to our office, which is about a block from the court, so that they could start to get some of that better stuff, management stuff.

We took this duty around immediate notification to the court off them. We invested additional resources in the support that we can provide to the court. We ensured that that went to the officers who were actually working with them, or to duty officers, so that we had additional resources to be able to provide this point-in-time information, and so that we could make sure that the information we're providing is comprehensive, engaged and fully informed when we're providing it to the courts.

I think instead of us building up this backlog of weeks and weeks because we're holding up prosecutions and we're not as fully involved in there, we've brought the resources back into that prosecution space. We can have a turnaround time of a couple of hours back to the court for this additional information we're providing. We're trying to give them the best possible.

I do have regular conversations with the courts. I know that this is a point of friction -

Unknown - This is an issue.

Mr CARNEY - Because it's a change. It's a change from what we used to have down here. We are changing to what they had for the rest of the state. The real benefit it's given us is that - and I know I'm talking, so people just have to close me down if they need to - we have had a structure of the reports that we provide to the court that's been in place for about for about 20 years. It's always the same reports and it's always been the same way. The most minor report we can provide has a turnaround time of about three hours. Because of this change, and because we've been having some conversations with other courts across the state and other offices that we have, we're actively looking to see whether there's any other kind of report types or information return types that we can add to this to be a little more proactive in ensuring the courts get the information.

I will also say that most of these questions that arise around how someone is going on community corrections orders, the ones that are that are causing most concern, really revolve around bail decisions and bail applications. My staff are always available to defence solicitors and prosecution if they're looking to get this information ahead of time. There's an opportunity

when a defence solicitor is going to be applying for bail, to contact our staff and to have this information available to be able to provide at the time.

Ms BUTLER - Our advice, which our shadow attorney-general put to the attorney-general in this Estimates round, is that that process and the removal of those probation officers from the Magistrates Court is leading to delays in the court process. The only way to access information the probation officer used to be able to give the Magistrate immediately is for formal requests to be made in writing, which a probation officer then replies to in writing and submits to the court. That's slowing down the work of the court. There's frustration coming from the Magistrates Court in relation to this changing process.

Is the government going to reverse this decision, this change in procedure which Mr Carney's just outlined? What is the average turnaround time on those probation officer reports to the Magistrates Court now?

Ms OGILVIE - I am happy to deal with the question of the average turnaround time, as you put it, of probation reports. Secondly, I think we have a new process in place, and that's what we're working with.

Ms BUTLER - Okay.

Mr CARNEY - We've had this existing framework in place for many years. The quickest turnaround time report that we have gives us a minimum of three hours. What that does is it gives us an opportunity to interview an offender to undertake a comprehensive criminogenic risk assessment, to undertake collateral checks, review our case file, write a report and also have that quality assured. There's a bit of a process to it, but it is a relatively quick turnaround time of a few hours.

Ms BUTLER - If I put that question on notice, would the average turnaround time of those reports be able to be provided to us?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me just seek some information. Sorry, before I do, what exactly do you need?

Ms BUTLER - The turnaround time from when that advice is sought by the magistrate to when the probation officer provides that report back to the magistrate, for them to be able to make a decision.

Ms OGILVIE - For a specific period, or averages?

Ms BUTLER - Over the last two financial years would be great.

Ms OGILVIE - Let me seek some advice.

Mr CARNEY - We will return it the date requested by the court.

Ms BUTLER - On the same day, is it?

Mr CARNEY - If the court requests it that day. The problem with these things is, we're required to get a minimum of three hours, but if the court says, 'Oh, I don't want it for six

PUBLIC

weeks', we're not going to give it to them. Three hours is the answer. If they request it that same day, we will provide it that same day.

Ms BUTLER - Whilst I have you at the table as well, around community corrections, it's my understanding that there are flaws in the electronic monitoring system. People can trick the charging devices, sending a message to the electronic monitoring centre that they are at home, when in fact they've slipped the bracelet and have actually committed crimes. How many cases have occurred where people on home order detention orders with electronic monitoring bracelets have been able to beat the system?

Ms OGILVIE - Firstly, can I just ask, if you have details of anybody who's done that, please may I have them?

Ms BUTLER - I have already gone through those channels.

Ms OGILVIE - To my office?

Ms BUTLER - Not to your office, no. I have that advice.

Ms OGILVIE - Okay, well, I'd be very keen to hear this.

Ms BUTLER - Can I put that question on notice, because it is an issue.

Ms OGILVIE - No, I think we're going to hear about that. That does concern me. If you have evidence of that, I think we would like to see that.

Ms BUTLER - I'm being very careful with the way I'm asking this question, because I understand that this is publicly broadcast.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand the confidentiality issue, so maybe that's something you would communicate to me.

Ms BUTLER - No, insofar as it's a community safety issue, I want to make sure that I'm not providing too much information around this issue.

Ms OGILVIE - Right. It makes it difficult for me to respond. Let me see if Mr Carney can help. I think the question is, have you had any reports of tampering with ankle monitoring devices?

Ms BUTLER - These are the new ones, not the previous ones. The new monitoring device.

Ms OGILVIE - Have you had any reports of tampering?

Mr CARNEY - I'm sorry, I think there's lots of different ways - the system is quite intuitive and the service provider continues to build up capacity for the system to identify people who are attempting to circumvent the system in a range of ways, including by trying to circumvent the GPS technologies. The system provides a range of alerts that indicate potential risks that the system itself is identifying.

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - Just to interject, I have had some information that we do have details of the numbers of attempted removals. I'll ask Kristy to speak to that.

Ms BUTLER - It's not 'attempted', but where they actually have been able to trick the system.

Ms OGILVIE - She has some information about this.

Ms BOURNE - Thank you, minister. For the past three financial years we do have a breakdown of device removals across the various order types, which I can go through or provide a total. I'll go through them; I think that would be of benefit.

- For the 2021-22 financial year for home detention, there were eight unauthorised device removals: three for family violence orders, four for parole orders and zero for high-risk offender orders.
- For 2022-23, there were three unauthorised device removals for home detention orders: three for family violence orders, seven for parole orders, zero for high-risk offender orders.

In a total sense, for 2021-22 that was 15 unauthorised device removals; for 2022-23, 13 unauthorised removals, and 2023-24, 15 unauthorised removals.

Ms BUTLER - How many cases where they have been able to beat the system, of sorts, and have committed crimes whilst under those home detention orders with those electronic monitoring devices fitted?

Ms OGILVIE - We'd have to take that one on notice.

Ms BUTLER - Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR - Ms Rosol.

Ms ROSOL - Before I start, I just want to provide a warning to people watching or reading that I have a series of questions about a coronial investigation into a suicide in custody.

I have some questions about the coronial inquest into the death of Robert Harold Gerard. The report quotes Dr Darjee:

The level of resource in the prison mental health service is the lowest I've come across in any developed country.

There's no funding in the Budget for prison mental health services, and are you content leaving the resourcing at levels that have been described as the lowest in any developed country? Can you confirm that the current resourcing is .8 FTEs of a psychiatrist, three nurses and a .4 FTE registrar?

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - Firstly, let me express my condolences to the family. It's a terrible thing when these things happen. Suicide is a terrible thing. It touches so many people. So, my personal condolences.

In relation to the death of Mr Gerard, Magistrate Robert Webster handed down findings into the death - he died by suicide on 23 May 2022.

Throughout the coronial hearing, evidence was given by Dr Rajan Darjee, Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist and Deputy Statewide Specialty Director of Forensic Health and Mental Health and the Community Mental Health Service, that in his view, the level of resources in the mental health services provided to prisoners is the lowest he's come across in any developed country. Notwithstanding, Coroner Webster concluded that the medical treatment and care provided to Mr Gerard was reasonable.

Magistrate Webster also commented that the response from the TPS staff was 'swift and professional'.

I acknowledge, of course, that more resources could be put into these services. We are working to ensure adequate resources are available. The Department of Health is currently developing a new Prisoner Mental Health Service, and the service is being established to address the key recommendations from the Prisoner Mental Health Care Taskforce.

By way of giving you an update on what's occurred so far, approval has been given to recruit permanent positions within this team to include: a consultant psychiatrist, career medical officer, team leader, clinical nurse specialist and two case managers, along with a fixed-term project manager.

Recruitment has been initiated. Fixed-term appointments are in place in the interim while permanent recruitment progresses. As the above-mentioned positions are currently unfunded, a budget bid has been initiated as part of the Department of Health funding bid. You would appreciate, obviously, work across departments in relation to that.

Ms ROSOL - The coronial inquest recommended an urgent review - sorry if you've answered this already - be conducted into the current mental healthcare services and that the recommendations of any such review be implemented. Has that review commenced? Do you intend to do it?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me seek some information on that. That is a question for the Minister for Health, given that the services sit within his purview.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you. The coroner also recommended that the Tasmania Prison Service (TPS) continue to develop and implement plans to remove all, or as many as are reasonably possible, hanging points in the accommodation and communal living areas of the medium precinct of Risdon Prison Centre. Are you able to advise the committee on any progress towards implementing this recommendation?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, thank you. I would ask that Rod make some comments.

Mr WISE - There were three major recommendations. One of them you have already touched on, which was the mental health review. It is a matter for the Health department, but

PUBLIC

there is also a large degree of overlap between the Custodial Inspector's recent review of health and mental health services. Combined, those mental health issues are being picked up.

There was also a discussion about shoelaces. I have instructed that the Tasmania Prison Service phase out shoelaces, even though we are a little sceptical about the efficacy of that recommendation, given that there are other potential ligatures that prisoners can access.

The final one is the more problematic one for the department, I must say. I have written to the Coroner directly some weeks ago, and sought an opportunity to discuss that with him. It's a very, very expensive thing to do to remove all the hanging points. The location where Mr Gerrard sadly died is a lower security area, which is a more normalised environment. For example, in cell accommodation we ensure that there are no hanging points. In a lower level security accommodation there are hanging points on doors, for example, that the prisoners have to their bedrooms. To go back and remove all of those would lose some of the benefits, we think, of the more normalised environment. It's a discussion I think we ought to have with the Coroner, and I have invited him to do that.

Ms JOHNSTON - The *Mercury* recently reported that Mark - and I won't use his full name because we are publicly broadcast - from Risdon Vale has been renting out rooms and most recently tents in his backyard for approximately \$125 a week. Mark has indicated publicly that a number of his tenants - and I use that word loosely - are recently released persons from prison. Has correction staff ever contacted Mark to request or confirm housing options availability for recently released prisoners?

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, I am not quite sure, is your question -

Ms JOHNSTON - Has the correction staff ever contacted Mark?

Ms OGILVIE - Mark, who's renting out tents in his backyard?

Ms JOHNSTON - Yes, to request or confirm housing options availability.

Ms OGILVIE - I will see if I can get some information for you about that.

Mr JACKSON - Not that I am aware of that we reached out to Mark, but we could make inquiries, to see if there's information.

Ms OGILVIE - We will consider that.

Mr JACKSON - I've never been made aware of that.

Ms OGILVIE - I think the answer is no, they have not.

Ms JOHNSTON - Would you to be able to take that on notice to confirm, or are you categorically stating no at this point in time?

Ms OGILVIE - He would like to take it on notice.

Ms JOHNSTON - Perhaps as a follow-up to that particular question, and maybe again take it on notice, could you outline the frequency in which corrections staff need to liaise on behalf of prisoners for housing options for them leaving?

Mr WISE - In just about every case we have discussions with prisoners who are about to be released about their housing options. We release around 1900 prisoners every year. A large proportion of those people do not have suitable housing accommodation. Many of them will go to couch surfing and other arrangements that might not be optimal. But we do, particularly where we have some notice of their impending release, work with them and the various housing organisations to try to find them suitable housing prior to release. That's not possible in every case.

We understand that the whole issue of housing for ex-prisoners is really tricky in any event. Public housing has to cater for not just ex-offenders, and we know that providing secure accommodation can reduce the risk of people reoffending. But the housing organisations also give priority to victims of family violence and people who have been evicted from their homes, a large number of people who are very worthy recipients of housing, so it's finding that balance. But, we work with the available organisations to try to get people into better housing upon their release.

Ms JOHNSTON - Do you have figures on how many just-released prisoners you need to broker housing for, and how many of those end up having no option, that you can't find suitable housing for them?

Mr WISE - The difficulty we have in that sort of data is that, in very many cases, the prisoners will indicate to us prior to release that they're going to suitable housing. We're not in a position to check on whether it's suitable or not, and in some cases it might prove suitable only for a couple of days. Some people have fractured relationships with their family, for example. The family will put them up when they're first released from prison, but then that relationship breaks down again very quickly, and they're back to couch-surfing or living with friends, and those sorts of things.

Ms JOHNSTON - Would you have data on those who haven't indicated that they've got suitable housing?

Mr WISE - In many cases, we have no formal relationship with that person who's been released into the community. If they're on a community correction order, if they're on parole, we can maintain some sort of information. But for most of them, if they've been released on bail or released on a straight sentence, we've got no mandate to work with them to get an appreciation of how frequent that is.

Ms OGILVIE - I will note also, because I think it might be helpful towards where you're headed, that the Department of Justice and the Salvation Army have an agreement for the ongoing delivery of a specialist through-care reintegration program called Beyond the Wire. This program offers assistance, particularly for high- and complex-needs individuals who are leaving custody and who have chronic accommodation and support needs. It might be worth having a look at that. The government has also introduced the Prisoner Rapid Rehousing Program to provide transitional accommodation back into the community to help maintain long-term stable accommodation. These programs are delivered through collaboration between

several NGOs, including Anglicare Tasmania, CatholicCare, Colony 47, Hobart City Mission and the Salvation Army.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, over the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years, how many times has a young person been held at the Hobart Reception Prison?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll seek some information on that. Kristy?

Ms BOURNE - I have figures for both of our watch houses, the Hobart Reception and Launceston Reception prisons. Between 1 January 2024 and 30 June 2024, there were 166 admissions of young people in the state's two watch houses, in Hobart and Launceston. This figure does not reflect a count of separate individuals admitted, but rather than number of times a young person was admitted. There are a number of young people who have been admitted to watch houses a number of times. In comparison to the 2023 calendar year, there were 344 admissions of young people in the state's two watch houses, and it's likely that the number of young people admitted in this current financial year will be similar to previous years.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, are the young offender cells in the same corridor and section of the Hobart Reception Prison (HRP) as the adult prisoners?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes.

Mr WISE - The cells in which we detain young people are in the same corridor as the adults, which does cause us some issues. Fortunately, we're able to ensure there is no physical contact between the young people and the adult offenders, but there is verbal contact between them, which we try to deter and make efforts to minimise the impact of that.

Ms BUTLER - Are the younger people provided therapeutic care whilst they're at the HRP? And are their names written on the cell door at the HRP, their surnames?

Mr WISE - There is no therapeutic intervention with the young people. The young people should only be in the watch house for a very short period of time. They are people who have been arrested by the police and are awaiting their attendance at court or awaiting an interview with police, or potentially waiting for the transport to arrive to convey them to Ashley. On some occasions, they are inebriated and are held in custody until they're sober. In many of those cases, therapeutic intervention would not be appropriate. The young person is not in a fit state to engage with therapeutic programs. It is really just a matter of holding them safely until such time as they can attend court, be seen by the police or get on a van to Ashley.

Ms BUTLER - Could the minister provide information as to the duration of time on each occasion a young person was held at the HRP?

Ms OGILVIE - The duration of time, but for what period are you seeking?

Ms BUTLER - The last two financial years, or to match up with the statistics that Ms Bourne previously provided.

Mr WISE - I'm not sure that we - we've got spreadsheets we could interrogate but it would be a fairly onerous task, I think. In most cases, as I've explained, it is a short-term placement only, for a matter of hours. Sadly, sometimes young people are held over for a day

or two. That might be because of transport difficulties; it might be because it seemed to be inefficient to transfer somebody up to Ashley on a Sunday evening only to bring them back again on a Monday morning so they can attend court. So, unfortunately, some are held for a couple of days. But we push really strongly to get them held outside the watch house environment.

Ms BUTLER - Maybe it might be better to ask: how many occasions have those young offenders been held at the HRP for more than two days. Could that be provided on notice?

Mr WISE - Again, I think we would have to go through the spreadsheet and identify line by line over those last 400 cases.

Ms BUTLER - Over the last financial year if that's okay, because it is a really important line of inquiry.

Mr WISE - We could endeavour to do so.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, could you take that on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - We can take that on notice. I'm very aware of what's been said about the nature of the task, so we'll take it on notice and we will look at what's possible.

Ms BUTLER - Under the Child and Youth Safety Organisations framework, standard 8 of the framework relies on physical and online environments to promote safety. Are you responsible for those young people whilst they are in the Hobart Remand Prison, minister?

Ms OGILVIE - I will respond to that by firstly asking perhaps Rod and David to talk through the process of handoffs, how it works between the police, the prisons and the HRP, and throughput, and then I can respond to your specific question about myself.

Mr WISE - It is a complex situation in that some of the young people that come into watch houses are part of DECYP's remit, some of them are initially in the custody of Tasmania Police. At some point in their transfer to the watch house, custody is transferred to officers of the Tasmania Prison Service, but they are not part of the Tasmania Prison Service. So, it's a sort of a strange position to be in. The custody is certainly transferred to correctional officers of the Tasmania Prison Service, but they're not part of the Tasmania Prison Service.

Ms BUTLER - Who is responsible for those young offenders? Which minister would be responsible for those young offenders when they're at HRP? Why wasn't this practice of holding young people at HRP included in the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings? Why was it missed?

Mr WISE - I'm afraid I can't answer the question about the commission of inquiry. Some of the principles that have been articulated by the commission of inquiry have been able to be used in the way that we manage young people in custody. If the young person is transferred into TPS staff custody, then the Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation is essentially responsible. We also have a memorandum of understanding with Tasmania Police that if a young person, for example, needs to have medical attention, then that will be transferred back to Tasmania Police. We share that custody a little bit.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, I was just going to add, the final piece of the question was around my ministerial perspective on this.

Ms BUTLER - Why was this not part of the commission of inquiry, because you've got young people in a correctional facility that aren't being given that therapeutic care. That is an institution. It just seems like it was missed.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand your question, but I'm obviously not the minister responsible for the commission of inquiry. I don't have oversight or understanding of how that process occurred. What I will say is that as minister in this area for Corrections and Rehabilitation, I do take my duty of care to all people who come through our process and are under our stewardship incredibly seriously. I recognise that there are handoffs that occur between departments, whether it's medical assistance, whether it's provision of support, therapeutic services, going to court, moving to Ashley. Those handoffs are managed carefully as well. Whilst people are in under my remit, I take that very seriously.

Ms BUTLER - We do know that in August there was a case -

Ms ROSOL - I've got a few questions about the Custodial Inspector's adult healthcare inspection report. The Custodial Inspector recommended that a needle exchange program be provided. The government's refused this recommendation to provide a needle exchange that would reduce current high levels of blood-borne virus transmission. The department claimed this might interfere with rehabilitation programs.

I'm wondering if there's any evidence to back this up. There's a wealth of evidence that shows that needle exchanges don't increase drug use. We know that in the report, it described current addiction treatment in prisons as woefully inadequate. On one hand we have inadequate addiction treatment, but on the other hand, we're also refusing to provide a needle exchange that would help to keep people safe. Are you able to explain that contradiction and why that decision has been made?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I'll seek some advice, if you'd like to make comment.

Mr WISE - Needle exchanges in prisons effects questions nationally and internationally. The difficulties are compounded by a case in New South Wales, I think towards the end of around 1987 I think, where a correctional officer was stabbed by a prisoner who had a blood-filled syringe and he subsequently died from AIDS as a result of it. Industrially, prison officers and correctional officers across the country are very loath to engage in any practice that might encourage the presence of needles in the correctional environment, lest they be subjected to a similar attack. In the Australian Capital Territory, which I think is the only Australian jurisdiction that indicated that it would introduce needle exchanges, that was unable to be proceeded with after some years of discussions, and it continues to be resisted in, I think, every jurisdiction. What we can do is improve our capacity to give bleach to prisons so that needles can be cleaned and that more safe-injecting practices can be adhered to.

Ms ROSOL - Needles are there; they're not clean. You'll provide bleach for them to clean them, but you won't provide them with clean needles because of the risk to staff even though they already have needles? Surely, providing clean needles and a needle exchange doesn't increase the risk for staff because the needles are already there, but it does decrease the risk to people who are using them of bloodborne transmission.

Mr WISE - You're right and every correctional officer knows that there are needles in the environment and we take significant steps to reduce the risks of needlestick injuries as a result of that, but the correctional officers generally will say that they would prefer that small number that they try to discover and eliminate than to provide prisoners with new needles which could be then used with contaminated blood.

Ms ROSOL - That could happen anyway. What you're saying is the safety of the custodial staff is important and you don't want to provide needles, but the safety of prisoners having dirty needles is less important.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not sure that that's exactly what he said.

Mr WISE - Thank you, minister. We do recognise the risks obviously to prisoners and discourage any sorts of intravenous drug use. One of the things that we have done recently is to introduce body scanners, as you might be aware of, and one of the benefits of that is that if people have secreted syringes and so on, then we've got a much better chance of detecting them and preventing them from circulating through the prison environment. We're doing everything that we can to keep the needles out of the prison and I think the body scanners will be a really strong weapon in achieving that.

Ms ROSOL - Meanwhile, they have bleach.

Minister, just another question about the Custodial Inspector's Adult Health Care Inspection Report. It was scathing of the command and control culture of the senior leadership team and the culture was criticised for the current staffing crisis. The report noted that it's a rigid, inflexible structure leading staff to be often afraid and required to follow orders regardless of their merit. The report also noted that the senior leadership team have a misplaced pride in this culture and are completely unaware of the negative impact this had on staff. I note the department rejected this categorisation, but do you accept recommendation 12 of the report, minister, to engage a management consultant? Will this occur?

Ms OGILVIE - I note that the characterisation has been rejected. I would ask Rod to speak to this.

Mr WISE - There are a number of parts of that report that were hotly contested by the Tasmania Prison Service. In this case, I think I'm able to talk from personal experience because I think that I was present at the meeting where Dr Petch formed the view that command and control is the prevailing management style of the service. It is my view, and certainly the view of the TPS, that the comments about command and control were taken absolutely out of context, that there is a place in prisons for command and control in prison emergencies, throughout our COVID experience, and there's no doubt that our staff take pride in the way that emergencies are managed inside the prison system.

The meeting that I attended certainly placed the command and control elements in that context and did not suggest that there was a more overarching pride in command and control and that was the prevalent way of managing staff. It may be that Dr Petch, independently of the meeting that I attended, gained that view, but it's not a view that either the Tasmania Prison Service or I would subscribe to.

PUBLIC

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, there is a plethora of evidence that shows that strong parent and child connections and bonds are a protective factor against reoffending. What access to prisoners have to parenting programs?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I'll get that information for you. We certainly have some work that is occurring.

Mr WISE - I don't have all the information in front of me, I'm afraid, minister, but there are two elements to this. I think one is the Mother and Child Program, where we allow mothers to apply to have their children under the age of two in custody with them and, in that process, they get access to some additional parenting support. I've been speaking to the Department for Education, Children and Young People about how we could bolster that support for children and their parents coming into custody. There has been a parenting program also run by an organisation that has recently gone into liquidation and we're just trying to work out how we can potentially resurrect that program, but we agree that parenting programs are a useful part of the suite of programs that we deliver in prisons.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, what about men in custody? What access do they have to the parenting programs and to contact programs with their children?

Ms OGILVIE - That's probably a two-part question. I do have some information around personal contact with families, family visits, et cetera, which I can give you, but in relation to specific programs, I think Circle of Security is what you might have been referring to, Rod, that included men?

Mr WISE - I'm not sure that it included men, minister, but the parenting programs have been shown in other jurisdictions not to reduce the risk of reoffending in the way that we would like them to, so it's probably a bigger question that we need to explore further because we would want to see some link between the programs and a reduction in reoffending or a reduction in intergenerational offending, which is a little bit difficult to gauge.

Ms JOHNSTON - Then to the second part of my question about contact and facilitating contact, particularly for men in prison with children.

Ms OGILVIE - I can give you some information I think is helpful to have on the record. We understand the importance of the connection with family. The department and our government work hard to help prisoners maintain that, and also with community. Prisoners can stay in touch with friends and family through mail, telephone, email, virtual visits via Zoom, at the moment, and in-person visits, ensuring there are flexible contact options that cater for almost everyone. Since virtual visits were first introduced in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have proved so popular that they have continued, alongside face-to-face visits, with some people preferring them, for many different reasons. New wireless access points have been installed as part of the video conferencing upgrade project that provide quality wi-fi connections for prisoners to access Zoom visits. As we know, popular time slots book up quickly, but most weeks there continue to be sessions that go unused, so that gives you a sense of the demand, capacity and the supply. It's very uncommon for all sessions to be utilised. Some prisoners will exhaust all their visits and some prisoners have very few visits. I'm very keen, as I've said at this session, to explore the use of technology to improve, amongst other things, prisoners access to family outside unlock hours. On a weekly basis there are approximately 248 contact visits, 375 non-contact or zoom visits. I think it's helpful to know this information,

and it does not include the facilitation of compassionate or into inter-prison Zoom visits. On average, since November 2023, 60 percent of these visit spots have been utilised.

Mr FAIRS - Minister, could you elaborate on what it means to have a people-focused approach in the Budget for the correction system and how this human-centred approach will benefit both prisoners and staff in our correctional facilities?

Ms OGILVIE - I think it's a very timely question given what we've been speaking about. At a personal level, and also from our government, a people-focused approach is absolutely at the core of what we want to do. We want to create a correctional system that's contemporary and that prioritises safety and security, but importantly also focuses on rehabilitation and positive outcomes for everybody within the system. This commitment is clearly outlined in our Corrections Strategic Plan 2023 Changing Lives Creating Futures, which represents our vision to provide offenders with a solid foundation to adopt law abiding lifestyles, ultimately making Tasmania a safer place for everybody.

Our goal is to create genuine opportunities for rehabilitation through treatment programs, vocational skills development, education and transitional support. This approach goes beyond just confining people. It's about equipping them with the tools they need to support reintegration successfully back into the community. It's also really about people, the staff and the workforce making sure that they get the support, training, and resources they need to perform their roles well and to be happy in their jobs.

We also recognise that one-size-fits-all does not succeed when it comes to rehabilitation and we need to take an approach that is person centric, that takes into account the context of the individual, the specific challenges, circumstances and potential that each person has and they bring into this environment. We have a facilities-based interventions and reintegration team in each of our prison facility and these multidisciplinary teams provide a holistic and tailored service to prisoners ensuring that this rehabilitation journey is not just a process but is supported by program, facilitators, case managers and clinicians.

Our ongoing commitment to being person-focused, or people-focused, is evident in our dedication to recruiting and reinvesting in our correctional officers. They are the backbone of our system. They do an incredible job and I'm absolutely a strong supporter of our staff and what they do. They play a crucial role in maintaining safety and security, but not only that, we know that the work that they do makes a difference, is important, and it is a challenging environment and I'm so pleased that we've been able to boost the number of correctional officers. That's been a key priority. We have 53 new recruits. I'm always delighted to go out and see the graduations and to engage with them. They're really good and decent people. Full marks there.

We're also committed to providing ongoing training and support to our staff. Each of our correctional officers is offered the opportunity to obtain nationally recognised Certificate 3 in Correctional Practise, delivered through TAFE, which is our partner in education. We're also investing in staff through the Department of Justice, Wellbeing Hub - I spoke a little bit about that in the opening session - and targeted programs such as alcohol and other drug services, family violence interventions, increased support provided by skilled multidisciplinary teams are available. We want to help individuals to transform their lives if we can to break that cycle of reoffending and we know that this has a significant positive impact on community safety when we get it right.

Our plan's priority to build environments for change reflects our dedication to creating correctional settings that are humane but also effective. The development of new infrastructure is important, and I want to mention this specifically such as the 52-bed maximum rated unit and upgraded security systems designed to meet contemporary standards in corrections; physical infrastructure creating spaces where prisoners can engage in rehabilitation in a secure and supportive environment.

Safety for everyone is essential, we have body-worn cameras for reception prison staff engaging with young people which will enhance safety and transparency within our facilities and our recruitment strategy, we need to ensure we are delivering a robust and capable workforce, people with the right skills, the right values and commitment.

We are strengthening our capacity to support a rehabilitative environment and we've been able to recruit 372 correctional officers and we have lost 185 due to retirement, transfer or resignation. That demonstrates our commitment.

Ms BUTLER - I'm just going back to the holding of young, alleged offenders at the Hobart Reception Prison (HRP) in light of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings and the amount budgeted in this year's budget to ensure that our young people are safe. At the HRP, I understand in August just gone, alleged youth offenders were placed in a cell directly next to a cell with an alleged child sex offender some three metres away. This, I'm advised, is not an unusual practise and it's certainly not a reflection on the correctional officers because there is nowhere else to place these young offenders in the HRP because that investment hasn't happened by your government. Do you consider that that is best practise, minister?

Ms OGILVIE - As I mentioned before, I take the safety and security of all people under my stewardship very seriously. You've mentioned a very specific example. I don't have the details of that, but I will seek some advice around that one in particular and whether we have -

Ms BUTLER - It's quite easy to trace, even through *Mercury* articles, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - In relation to your question about the commission's recommendations, I can provide some answer on that. We, as Corrective Services, primarily manage adults in custody and our staff do have contact with children and young people as you have identified, most significantly in watch houses and in the Mother and Baby Program.

Department of Justice is taking a number of proactive steps to implement the Child And Youth Safe Organisations Framework. As members would be aware of, the Child and Safe Organisations Framework was recommendation of the 2017 National Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which was supported by Tasmania's Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

We have made some progress in implementing the framework. We'll continue to progress implementation in relevant areas of corrective services and just to give the members an update of initiatives undertaken to date, these include engaging the Australian Childhood Foundation to develop and deliver trauma informed training to reception prison staff and senior managers on managing young people in custody.

The training was delivered in a seven-day full session in Hobart and Launceston in August 2024. Reviewing and amending relevant policies and procedures to reflect the ten Child and Youth Safe Standards and Universal Principal concerning Aboriginal cultural safety, which is incredibly important as we know and further policy work will be undertaken over the next 12 months.

And as I've mentioned previously, we've acquired body worn cameras for reception prison staff who engage with young people in watch house facilities and making some small improvements to the accommodation for young people in watch house facilities which we might be able to speak to a little further providing staff with information and resources on the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Then, I can say at an agency-wide level, the Department of Justice has launched its Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and is undertaking consultation on a professional conduct policy. As I said, I'm absolutely committed to the safety of children and young people who engage with corrective services as well as ensuring that staff feel safe and supported at work when they're engaging with children and young people. We'll continue to work with all stakeholders, union staff and explore how to incorporate the voice of lived experience into implementation of the framework across relevant areas of corrective services. Having said that, I might also see if it's possible, Rod, perhaps through you to David, just to talk a little bit about the work that has been done to improve the cell situation.

Mr WISE - Modifications to some of the cells has been fairly minor but trying to make them more trauma-informed and we have some plans to do more of that work and provide things like furniture that wouldn't be available in a cell that was set aside for adult offenders.

I think that one of the things that we're pleased about is that the training that the minister referred to by the Australian Childhood Foundation and the work that the department has done in alerting our staff to the new legal requirements and reportable conduct and those sorts of things has absolutely increased their awareness of what they might be able to do to assist young people. I am seeing and I'm very heartened by the receipt of reports from correctional officers that weren't previously sent to us where they have expressed concern about the management of young people, particularly where they are being abused or threatened by other prisoners. Mind you, I was also in the Hobart Reception Prison the other day when I think a 13- or 14-year-old young person was received and everything was required except for that young person who was abusing all the adults around him. We have some responsibilities to ensure the safety of those young people and those reports are coming through to me and they're being able to be actioned and sent through to the police for follow-up where appropriate. Clearly, the government is open to exploring other alternatives for the placement of young people in that sort of watch house environment.

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely. If I could just add a little bit more information you might wish to have, we also have \$1.9 million over two years to enable my department to become a child-safe organization, including the design of suitable roles, recruitment of staff, new and enhanced technology, employee screening processes and procedures.

The commission-related response policy development that you referred to, training, data management and sharing, and engagement with the reportable conduct scheme and code of conduct processes. That's at that strategic layer.

Ms BUTLER - None of that which you've just outlined, and I do thank you for that, is dealing with the fact that you have, and it is happening, child sex offenders in a cell three metres away from young offenders in a cell. They can hear each other and can communicate with each other. You have a child sex offender next to young people potentially - well, in August, I know that did happen, and also the surname of those young people is written on that cell door because I've seen that myself and there's nothing to stop that alleged sex offender as they are entering noting the name of the young offender in the cell next to them.

Now, I think, it's not the fault of the correctional officers. They are doing the absolute best they can and they are uncomfortable as anything about that situation as well. How can that, in light of all of the information and our commission inquiry into sexual abuse of young people, be acceptable in 2024 in Tasmania, minister? It is just not acceptable. Can you explain how this has been overlooked and how that practice is still happening?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you for your question, which had a lengthy preamble -

Ms BUTLER - Well, it is a very important issue. It's harmful.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm just trying to answer your question.

CHAIR - Ms Butler, I'll let you ask a follow-up, but if the minister can answer the question in silence, and then you can follow up?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. We've given you quite a lot of information about how we're trying to manage the scenarios that we currently have in place with the existing infrastructure. I have, of course, also visited the facilities. The existing infrastructure is challenging. We need to deal with the infrastructure-level work. That is something that we are doing through our infrastructure program. That's at that layer.

In relation to the specific instance that you mention, I have not been informed about this. I would be grateful if you are able to give me more details. Obviously, you may not wish to do that in this public environment, but I'd be very happy to -

Ms BUTLER - I can send them to you.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. If you could send those to me, I'm happy to have a look at it. I am really open to making changes, improving things. We have staff who are working really diligently and carefully in a challenging environment. We want to do all we can to make it better. If you have constructive ideas and you have suggestions, and you have challenges and problems that you have raised today, if you're able to send those to me, I would be grateful. We're happy to do more work. We're all ears.

Ms BUTLER - Going back to my question, how was this situation overlooked between holding of young offenders - by placing young offenders in the same cell area as sex offenders? How was that overlooked?

Ms OGILVIE - As I've said, I'm not aware of the specific scenario that you seem to have information on, but I'd be very happy for you to provide that to me, and then I can give you the answer.

PUBLIC

Ms BUTLER - Minister, I don't think it's actually up to me to provide you with that information. I think your department should have that information. Would you provide us or the committee that information on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm very happy to see what the department can do.

Mr WISE - It is a complex issue. Our staff do have the capacity to - if they identify that there is a person who is accused of or convicted of child sex offences - move them to another part of the watch house so that they are not in such proximity to a young person. Notwithstanding that, as I've said previously, the physical safety of the young person is ensured at all times. There is no contact between the young person and the adults. We do have some capacity to move prisoners around to lessen the risks.

Ms OGILVIE - Having said that, I do take on board your comment about the names on the doors. Having visited, that is quite available to see, and that is something I'll take up with the department.

Ms BUTLER - Thank you. I also want to ask you a question around the inmate to correctional officer ratio for 2022-23, and what is considered best practice. Could I take that on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - Is your question 'What is the ratio?' or 'What has the ratio been?'?

Ms BUTLER - What has the ratio been in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and what is considered best practice?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. Two parts to that question.

Mr WISE - There probably isn't a 'best-practice ratio', in that no ratio will take into account the different physical environments, the different classifications of prisoners, and so on. You would expect, for example, that a minimum-security environment will have fewer staff for the prison population than a maximum-security environment. Even in maximum-security environments, it depends a little bit on the physical environment - whether there are sightlines, whether there's reasonable CCTV coverage, all of those sorts of things where the technology can assist in the supervision of prisoners. It's probably unhelpful to rely on a standard prisoner-to-staff ratio.

Ms BUTLER - So, there is not an inmate-officer ratio at the moment that you work to as a department when you're going through different areas within the prison?

Mr WISE - No, but all the staffing levels are arranged after consultation with the unions and so we get to a position where we believe that they're safe and appropriate.

Ms BUTLER - Have some of those staff shortages contributed to that excessive use of overtime over the last financial year and the previous financial year?

Mr WISE - The unavailability of staff for whatever reason contributes to overtime.

Ms BUTLER - Can you provide the amount of overtime shifts accrued by correctional officers in 2023-24, and how many hours does this equate to?

Ms OGILVIE - We can assist with that information, yes.

CHAIR - Then we'll move on to Ms Rosol.

Ms OGILVIE - For 2023-24, the figure was \$12,286,789.

Ms BUTLER - How many hours does that equate to, minister?

Ms OGILVIE - I don't have that. We can take it on notice.

CHAIR - Ms Rosol.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, just to interject, I think we can have an approximation from our finance person. If you'd like to join the table.

Mr WAILES - An approximate answer would be about 135,500 hours across the financial year.

Ms ROSOL - I have some questions around workers compensation. What percentage of Tasmania Prison Service staff have been on workers compensation in 2022-23 and 2023-24? Do you have a figure for the number that are currently on workers compensation?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll give you what I've got and see if that answers your question. We could do more of a deep dive if we need to. The Tasmania Prisons Service has established processes in relation to identifying risks and hazards to address them. As part of our focus on safety and wellbeing, the WHS team has been working on 19 health and safety initiatives.

We have a raft of those, including wellbeing initiatives and I can run through those. I am getting to the health and safety reps. The next page, thank you. I want to give you the specific information as I can. We take work health and safety seriously. From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, 122 workers compensation claims were received from employees of the TPS. This represents an increase from the 106 claims in 2022-23.

There has been a downward trend in the number of claims made in the first couple of months of 2023-24. There is more information that might be helpful to you by way of context. The department's injury management unit, which is part of the agency's human resources branch, oversees and provides case management for TPS employees with workers compensation claims.

The injury management unit continues to work closely with the TPS and the Department of Justice workplace health and safety teams to identify risks and implement controls to reduce work-related injuries. I believe that answers the question.

Ms ROSOL - Are you able to give that as a percentage? You have the staff numbers and you said a downward trend in 2023-24; did you mean the first couple of months of 2024-25?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me confirm.

Mr WISE - That is correct; in 2024-25 there has been a downturn.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, I might have a typographical error in my notes. Yes, it is a typographical error, 2024-25.

Ms ROSOL - Thanks. Are you able to give percentages of staff who are on workers compensation? You've given figures of the numbers of claims.

Ms OGILVIE - I'll see if we can get that information for you.

Mr WISE - I haven't got that in front of me, but I can say that, as you've already indicated, the number of claims this financial year has dropped markedly by more than 3 per cent, which is encouraging.

There are still a lot of claims, clearly. It's a little unhelpful to identify the number of claims because some of those people are actually at work but still receiving medical treatment. Some of them are at work but doing adjusted duties. Some of them are at work in other agencies, so they're working but not with the Tasmania Prison Service.

It's a reasonable number of our staff and that is concerning. The good news is that the claims this year have dropped, that the overall cost of claims has reduced over the last couple of years, and the amount of time people spend away from the workplace has reduced also.

Our injury management team has been really successful in getting people back to work more quickly and into suitable duties more quickly, and that is paying dividends. The average cost of the claims has come down markedly.

Ms ROSOL - Are you able to provide a breakdown of some of the key reasons that people are on workers compensation? Is it stress-related, burnout, bullying and harassment, assaults, workplace injuries - do you have data on that, please?

Mr WISE - I can say that in terms of the physical type injuries and the psychological injuries, in 2023-24 there were 88 of the musculoskeletal injuries and 34 of the psychological injuries. The psychological injuries have reduced by about a third since 2021-22 and, sadly, a lot of the physical injuries are incurred during training for new staff when we go through control and restraint training, and they amount to a significant proportion of the physical injuries.

Ms ROSOL - You referred earlier to an incident in New South Wales in 1987 of a corrections officer being injured with an inner sharps incident. How many assaults are there of corrections officers?

Mr WISE - I do have that information. In 2020-23, there were 30 assaults on staff, three of which were serious. In 2023-24, there were 21 assaults on staff, so a significant decline and only one of those was serious.

There are assaults that result in some sort of physical injury. There are others which we don't record in that way, for example, someone brushes past the staff member and gives them a nudge or a cup of water is thrown over somebody's legs and those sorts of things. These are injuries sustained by staff where there was some sort of physical injury.

Ms OGILVIE - Could I just add a comment as well to say we take workplace safety incredibly seriously and it is something that I take a personal interest in as well. I know that work is being done to improve the safety and security of all in our facilities.

I can also add, you asked after a percentage of claims per headcount. The headcount at 604 with 122 claims in the 2022-23 year gives us 20 per cent. I've just been advised of that calculation.

Ms ROSOL - With staff off on workers compensation and other types of leave, are there times when you're needing to bring in contract staff from other states? How are you staffing the prison service?

Mr WISE - We certainly don't bring in contract staff from other states. Most of those vacancies are filled with overtime by our staff. We have spoken to the unions about employing a casual workforce. We haven't had much traction on that, but that seems to be an obvious area which might deliver additional staff into workplaces quickly. We certainly don't contract staff in.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, in the budget papers, under the heading Correctional Improvement Program, it states:

Additional funding has been allocated to the Tasmania Prison Service to improve intervention and rehabilitation services across the state with an initial focus at the Risdon Prison site. This will include additional drug and alcohol treatment programs in the TPS and a new program in the north-west to support female prisoners to transition back into the community.

That's all welcome. However, minister, can you please outline and elaborate on whether there are any programs that prepare prisoners for release that deal with issues such as domestic violence, gambling addiction, financial literacy and consumer credit that they have to deal with when they are released?

Ms OGILVIE - Your question is what programs are available now?

Ms JOHNSTON - Yes, to deal with domestic violence, gambling addiction and financial literacy.

Mr WISE - Certainly we have family violence programs and they are operating well. In terms of the gambling, I am not aware of any, but we have a team of clinicians who do a lot of one-on-one work with prisoners across our five prisons.

Most of those are centred at the Risdon Prison complex, the Ron Barwick prison and the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison. They are in a position to do that one-on-one work for other issues that aren't addressed by specific programs.

Ms OGILVIE - I can add a little bit more information, particularly in relation to the family violence query that you had. Obviously we have a suite of intervention programs available to family violence offenders, and we know that rehabilitation and reintegration teams concentrate on interventions focused on the drivers of crime, including family violence treatment.

In the 2023-24 state budget, the government provided \$1 million to expand and prioritise the delivery of family violence intervention programs within Corrective Services. The TPS has recruited two specialist case managers to provide comprehensive and specialised case management support to family violence offenders. This funding complements the Commonwealth Government's \$1.5 million to develop innovative interventions for people on remand and serving short sentences.

The Family Violence Program is currently being delivered in the Ron Barwick facility targeting family violence offences. This is a moderate to high intensity program aiming at reducing recidivism by targeting controlling behaviours in interpersonal relationships.

The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Program is being delivered to prisoners in the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison and the maximum precinct of the RPC. That's teaching and practising emotional regulation skills and coping strategies. In 2024 the Friends Not Strong Enough resilience program is being delivered to remandees at the Southern Remand Centre and male prisoners in maximum RPC. The program has been developed to provide prevention of and early intervention in anxiety and depression, to address attachment emotions, and physiological, cognitive and learning behaviour processes.

In our maximum-security prison facilities, the TPS primarily delivers individualised versions of the recommended program for any prisoner based on their assessed criminogenic risk and need and, in addition, where possible, group-based programs are delivered including resilience and dialectical behaviour therapy.

Ms JOHNSTON - Quite clearly, there's a range of family violence programs, but not specifically gambling programs. It's more individualised. Can you give me an indication then around financial literacy and consumer credit issues? Obviously, when prisoners are released, sometimes they can be released out into a situation where their financial affairs are in disarray and of significant concern. Is there any assistance or programs offered to prisoners in relation to financial literacy and consumer credit assistance?

Mr JACKSON - We use some non-government organisations such as Anglicare. They work with prisoners to get their financial stuff all in order prior to release and provide some assistance once they have been released.

Ms JOHNSTON - Is that funded through Corrections, or how is Anglicare funded to provide that service? Surely they don't do it out of the kindness of their heart.

Ms OGILVIE - I am advised it is part of their base funding. We don't fund specifically for that program. It is something they provide out of the overarching funds that we give them in their base funding.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, how many prisoners approved for parole by the Parole Board were rejected on the basis of suitable housing in the last financial year? It is our information that this is a significant issue.

Mr WISE - The answer is none, Ms Butler. The Parole Board does encounter issues in relation to accommodation options for prisoners that they are considering to release on parole. In some cases the prisoners have no accommodation set up, and in others they have identified

that they want to live in unsuitable premises or with people that the board thinks will increase their risk of reoffending. In those cases, they adjourn the matter and ask the prisoner to provide other options if they can. I am advised that the Parole Board has refused parole for no prisoners on the basis of inappropriate accommodation.

Ms BUTLER - Apparently, according to the Parole Board's annual report, 36 per cent or 71 applications were adjourned due to the applicant not having suitable accommodation. What is the number? Does that lead to additional time in prison for any of those parole applicants due to that inadequate housing? Is there any delay at all in that adjournment process?

Mr WISE - Yes, it can, in some cases. In some cases, you will appreciate that prisoners will nominate their home address where there might be an outstanding family violence order, for example, so they cannot go back there. Until such time as they can arrange alternative accommodation, they will be held in custody, so it can result in delays. If there is early discussion with a probation officer about those sorts of issues, then the prisoner gets the opportunity to try to source alternative accommodation prior to their earliest release date.

Ms BUTLER - Could you provide to the committee the number of applicants or parolees whose applications were adjourned due to the applicant not having suitable housing? Could you provide the length of those adjournments over the last financial year?

Ms OGILVIE - It was 73 people.

Ms BUTLER - And the length of those adjournments?

Mr WISE - I don't think that we would keep those data at all.

Mr CARNEY - I suppose there are a couple of considerations there. One is that the Parole Board makes an independent determination to adjourn matters, often to allow for accommodation, but accommodation is only one part of an entire assessment that we undertake. What we are trying to do is find accommodation that is suitable for that person at that time. The Parole Board considers a range of factors in determining whether that accommodation is going to be suitable, but they may also require somebody to undertake further courses, further programs or further intervention, or address a range of issues.

Ms BUTLER - I am only asking about when housing or lack of housing has been an impediment to someone being able to start their parole. I am only asking about the accommodation side of things.

Mr CARNEY - It depends on the reason that the housing was found unsuitable. A house, in and of itself, is seldom found unsuitable. It could be who's living there or it could be who visits. It could be a range of factors that may not have anything to do with the housing needing to change, or with the housing in and of itself being deemed unsuitable. I suppose that's why there's a complex consideration and assessment that we need to undertake.

The Parole Board makes an independent determination around the adjournment of those matters and the assessment of someone's suitability, but they've never actually refused anyone - well, they have, but not for the past number of years - for a lack of suitable accommodation, because it exists within this broader patchwork of risk assessment that they're undertaking.

PUBLIC

Ms BUTLER - Minister, is the housing crisis leading to more people staying in jail longer, to parole applicants being rejected and adjourned due to lack of accommodation?

Ms OGILVIE - I think we've just heard that parole is not rejected.

Ms BUTLER - No, adjourned.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, but in relation to adjournment, your specific question is?

Ms BUTLER - Is the housing crisis contributing to parolees' release being adjourned due to lack of suitable accommodation?

Mr CARNEY - As Rod raised, the majority of people can find housing. It's about whether that housing is suitable and appropriate to support them to manage their risks safely on parole. It's not necessarily that there's a lack of housing. Almost everybody leaving prison who wants a house is able to find it, and they're able to find it with the support of the TPS. It really is about whether that housing option meets their risks and needs within the context of the parole order conditions.

Ms BUTLER - How many can't find accommodation?

CHAIR - Ms Butler, I've been doing my best to give people a full line of questioning, but we have five minutes left, and in the interests of fairness and keeping to the ratio of questions, I'll go to Ms Rosol.

Ms ROSOL - Minister, last year the IPA released their report The Cost of Prisons in Australia 2023, which noted that in 2022 Tasmania had 232 non-violent offenders incarcerated at an annual cost of \$47 million, with non-violent offenders meaning offenders who committed offences against organisations, government and the community in general. Our understanding is that in 2022 this was close to half of the prison population. What proportion of the current prison population is made up of non-violent offenders and what's the total cost to the Budget of detaining them? What other non-custodial and rehabilitative options are available to reduce the financial burden?

Ms OGILVIE - I will just open by saying that in my opening statement and during some of these conversations, I talked about the fantastic work that we're doing with technological advances to manage and monitor people to alleviate the strain in the system. I won't go over that again, but I am very happy to provide more detail at a later time. I think that Rod might be able to assist with the overall figure, but I can tell you that the cost per day, per prisoner, is \$472. What was the other part of your question?

Ms ROSOL - What proportion of the current prison population is made up of non-violent offenders?

Ms OGILVIE - Do we have that?

Mr WISE - I don't think so, minister. Again, it's complex. A lot of the non-violent offenders are people who are active drug users, and the courts are of the view that they might commit further serious offences if they were released back into the community under the throes of a drug addiction. We can get that information for you.

PUBLIC

Ms ROSOL - Are you able to take that on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, we can take that on notice.

CHAIR - The time being 11.30 a.m., the time for scrutiny has expired. The next portfolio to appear before the committee is Women and the Prevention of Family Violence. We'll now take a short break.

The Committee suspended from 11.30 a.m to 11.39 a.m.

DIVISION 9

Department of Premier and Cabinet

CHAIR - I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce persons at the table, including names and positions, for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I have with us today Mel Gray, Deputy Secretary, Policy and Reform and Rebecca Pinto, Executive Director, Community Partnerships and Priorities.

CHAIR - The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for Women and Prevention of Family Violence is one and a half hours. Would the minister like to make an opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - I certainly would. As Minister for Women and Prevention of Family Violence, I take gender equality as fundamental to the success of our state. I'm really proud to say that Tasmania is a great place for women to work, live and thrive.

Our government continues to deliver Equal means Equal: Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-2027, which ensures we continue to foster a society where women and girls are equal and able to thrive in all facets of life. That document outlines our government's commitment to ensure women have access to the necessary resources and opportunities to fully participate in economic, social, political and community life. It's so good to see so many women members at the table today.

We know our efforts to support women's leadership are working. We're trying to lead by example. Women now hold 48.3 per cent of positions on Tasmanian Government boards. We know that it's critical to strive for gender equality across a range of issues and particularly in relation to leadership. We are partnering with Healthy Tasmania to deliver the latest round of Women's Leadership Scholarships. We're very excited about this. Through this program, more Tasmanian women, particularly those in male-dominated industries, will be supported to build their leadership skills and grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

I brought today, and I'm sure you've had a chance to have a look at it, our budget statement. I hope we get to do a deep dive in relation to that. It's an iterative process, but I'm pleased with how it's coming along. Certainly, I would like to thank my colleague and Treasurer, the honourable Michael Ferguson and his department for the support and that we've brought it in House. This is a good thing that we've done. Not only is it cost effective, but it actually gets us closer to the data that we need to use.

We are leading the way in closing the gender pay gap, currently at 5 per cent in May 2024, down from 8.3 per cent in May 2021, which is significantly less than the national average of 11.5 per cent.

Our gender budget statement in particular highlights some of the commitments that we've made. I won't go through them all; you'll have a chance to look at that. Certainly the \$15 million commitment that we've made to the Breast Diagnostic Care Centre is a very good one. I look forward to really building this document. I'll talk a little bit more about some of the other work we're doing that underpins the information that's flowing into this.

In relation to Prevention of Family Violence, which is the second part of today's discussion, we are on track to meet our target under the National Action Plan's 500 Workers Initiative, with 24.6 FTEs additional workers commenced by 30 June 2025. Since 1 July 24, it is anticipated that a further 5.4 FTE workers will have commenced by the end of September 2024, taking the total from 15.6 FTEs to 21 FTE workers. Recruitment action is continuing for the balance of 3.6 FTE workers.

Ultimately, the impact of family and sexual violence for victim/survivors, women, and children and young people are widespread in the community and across government in terms of prevention, responding, healing and recovery. It is a large issue.

Areas of impact include education, health, housing, justice and police; therefore, we have adopted an inter-agency and coordinated approach. We know that that's incredibly important. I acknowledge, our government acknowledges, and I think our community acknowledges, that while much has been done, we can and must do better. Eliminating family and sexual violence is a key priority of our government. We have our Tasmania's Third Family Violence Action Plan 2022-2027: Survivors at the Centre in place, supported by funding of \$100 million over five years to deliver actions.

Some at the table today have already heard of our nation-leading electronic monitoring program, not only holding perpetrators to account and addressing risk and safety, but also providing victim/survivors with the option of a discrete monitoring device that alerts them when their family violence offender is nearby. We have multidisciplinary Arch centres in the north and south of the state. We're building a third one in the north-west. Since 2015 we've funded three comprehensive whole-of-government family and sexual violence action plans.

Given the priority focus in addressing family and sexual violence and ongoing efforts through national Cabinet, we have recently realigned the Family Safety Secretariat with the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence portfolio is now placed within the Keeping Children Safe reform group, with the Department of Premier and Cabinet reporting through to the Chief Reform Leader and Secretary. This realignment acknowledges the synergies between the work of the Family Safety Secretariat, harmful sexual behaviours, and implementing the recommendations from the commission of inquiry.

A central aspect of Survivors at the Centre is the establishment of the Victim/Survivor Advisory Council, which has been undertaken through a trauma-informed approach. Ten people have been appointed as members of the advisory council following an expression of interest process. Council members are undertaking induction and training this week to support

PUBLIC

their participation and advocacy journey with the council. We anticipate and hope that the council will meet later this year following this training. It's a big step forward.

We have a vital role also in coordinating ongoing cross-jurisdictional work to achieve the shared goal of ending gender-based violence.

Ms BUTLER - Chair, this is a really short committee.

Ms OGILVIE - We know that a key part of our future is keeping women and children safer. I'll wrap it up.

CHAIR - I was going to say, I did get some advice after this morning. The orders are silent on the opening statement, so it's not classified as an answer.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm almost done.

CHAIR - If the minister can wrap up quickly, that would be appreciated.

Ms OGILVIE - That's just to give you the highlights across all of the areas that you might like to ask questions on, anything that you're interested in. I will be taking a leading role through the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council, which oversees the collective response to the rapid review report Unlocking the Prevention Potential, and reports back to national Cabinet on progress of this response. It's a vital council. I look forward to having inputs from people.

Finally, national Cabinet has agreed for the council to negotiate a renewed five-year national partnership agreement on family, domestic and sexual violence responses to commence on 1 July 2025. This will deliver over \$700 million in a new matched investment from the Commonwealth and states and territories. I'll close there.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms BROWN - Chair, can I have some clarification? I'm hoping to start with prevention questions. Are you happy for us to be fluid in that?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm very happy, which is why I put the opening statements together, so that we could roam across the topics. I'm comfortable with that. I'm in your hands. It's your committee.

Ms BROWN - Fabulous. How will the budget efficiency dividend be managed in this area?

Ms OGILVIE - I will ask Ms Gray to make some comments.

Ms GRAY - The budget efficiency dividend applied to the whole Department of Premier and Cabinet in 2024-25 is \$969,000, increasing to \$1.9 million in 2025-26, and \$2.9 million by 2026-27. DPAC is well on track to meeting this dividend. We're currently undertaking an extensive review of DPAC staffing establishment management practices in order to meet the efficiency requirements. Through an active establishment management project, DPAC is

investigating improvements on processes around salary budgeting, and looking to opportunities to optimise staffing resources, and how they're used to meet government priorities.

The initial work from this project has identified that budget efficiencies can be achieved through funding staffing establishments based on workload variation. That is how the staffing establishment is actually being paid. Changing the basis of the staffing budgets to this methodology will deliver the savings on the department's 2024-25 Budget in excess of the \$969,000 target. It's important to note that this isn't a vacancy control process and it won't result in any job losses because it's simply funding the FTE for the amount that it works. So, if I work 0.8, at the moment the department funds one full FTE for that, but across the entire department it will still allow for flexibility if an employee wants to increase from 0.8 to the one FTE. It's not a vacancy control process, it won't result in any job losses, and it won't impact on the delivery of any key government priorities. That's the methodology that DPAC's looking to employ to meet its savings across the board.

Ms BROWN - The Premier and other ministers have committed to tabling their savings strategies. Minister, will you do the same?

Ms OGILVIE - The saving strategy that we've just heard? Yes, I think we're very happy to do that.

Ms BROWN - Yes. And itemised?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me just see what format we've got it in.

The advice I have is it's just simply what has been read out, but if you would like a more formal statement tabled, I guess we can do that for you.

Ms BROWN - Okay, great. Thank you.

Ms OGILVIE - It's a simple approach. Thank you.

Ms BROWN - Minister, in order to protect victims of family and sexual violence, will you commit to ensuring that all organisations have the funding necessary to provide the community with timely services? And that under your watch no cuts to staff will occur due to budget requirements?

Ms OGILVIE - Do you mean no cuts to government staff or -

Ms BROWN - Organisations.

Ms OGILVIE - Organisations. Well, I can't control what organisations do with their decision about internal staffing.

Ms BROWN - But, if it's a funding requirement.

Ms OGILVIE - What I can say is we've got the budget we've got at the moment. I am working very closely with a couple of groups, particularly Laurel House and SASS, to see what we can do to meet their - what I think are very sensible - arguments around the level of demand

PUBLIC

that they're dealing with and the need to expand services. That is work that's happening at the moment. I'm in dialogue with them.

There is additional funding. So would you like - can I borrow this? Thank you - just a bit of extra information in relation to job cuts internally? We just heard that that's not how we're approaching things in this area at all.

Ms BROWN - No, just limiting the employment though, really.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, I think it's managing the – okay. I'm just getting some advice that there will still be flexibility because the savings identified for implementation are much less than the work will deliver with those realignments, so, no job cuts.

I do take your overarching point that this is such an important area. We want agencies and groups and organisations that provide services to be fully funded and to be funded more. This work happens both at a state and federal level and I was very pleased to see National Cabinet make it a priority issue and certainly our Premier was at the table for that.

I have just received a little bit of extra information that since 2021 we have provided significant additional funding to specialist sexual violence services to respond to increased demand and the additional funding represents an over 200 per cent increase in funding for these organisations since 2019.

This budget continues that funding with no funding decreases at all and that is part of our \$423 million investment to deliver the recommendation also of the commission of inquiry over the forward Estimates. I also take your point - there is a lot more to do.

Ms BROWN - Just to confirm, you will commit to no job cuts for organisations if it's due to budgets.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm in dialogue with organisations as is the department. I will actually ask Ms Gray to talk a little bit about that, particularly about Laurel House and SASS?

Ms GRAY - Yes, through you, minister, we work very closely to monitor the wait list and demand data for both SASS and Laurel House. We work in close collaboration with them and take any needs that they may have back through the department and through to the minister.

Ms BROWN - I'll take that as a commitment of, yes, you will make sure that there are no job cuts due to Budget requirements.

Ms OGILVIE - I will continue to work really carefully with organisations to make sure we're doing all we can to meet demand.

Ms BROWN - So, no. That's fine, thank you.

Ms BADGER - Minister, I just want to circle back to some questions from the Legislative Council Estimates yesterday and whether we can have some more clarity over the funding for the family violence peak body. There's \$170,000 for this financial year from the Tasmanian government, then you said there was \$200,000 from the federal government for the

following two financial years. Is that \$200,000 in addition to another, and ongoing, \$170,000 from the State government each year? So, we should see a total of more than \$200,000?

Ms OGILVIE - I've just received some information on that. There is \$170,000 annually in the Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan as part of the \$12.5 million to fund the alliance. It was allocated from 2022-27 and was approved by the then-minister for this purpose. The \$200,000 funding is in addition to the above, in recognition of the feedback from the alliance members that the allocated amount was not enough. It is \$200,000 annually for 2024-26. Ms Gray, is there anything you'd like to add to that?

Ms BADGER - Just to be clear, because it wasn't in the line budget, that is ongoing, the \$170,000 - plus the \$200,000 from the federal government?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes.

Ms BADGER - Following on, I'm also after a bit of clarity around the composition or the breakdown for the funds of the financial year 2025. Specifically, holistically there's just over \$19 million for the Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. What of each of the services is going to be funded? I'm happy for this to be tabled on notice - but I'm after a breakdown of what part of that funding is going towards policy in DPAC. I know yesterday in the Legislative Council Estimates you said 5.7 full-time equivalents would go in, and I know you're committed to a high-level breakdown. We're just wondering, for the sector, if we can have that itemised a little further so they've got clarity. It goes a little bit to Ms Brown's question, because obviously you can't control the employment the sector's doing. They'd just like to know what allocation they have and what they can work with.

Ms OGILVIE - I want to help, obviously. Let's see what we can provide you. What we've been trying to do is provide information at the table as you ask the question so as to reduce questions on notice, and you get the information. We can't always do that but we'll just see what we can provide at this stage.

Ms BADGER - I'm also just very conscious of time. I'm more than happy to get it later if it means more people can get questions in.

Ms OGILVIE - Let's see if this answers it, then if we have to provide more. The 2024 total expenditure budget for Output 7.5 is \$19.4 million, which reflects a \$6.9 million increase on 2023-24 (\$12.5 million) and relates to the additional funding provided through the national partnership agreement for family, domestic and sexual violence responses.

Under the federation funding agreement, the Australian Government has allocated more than \$21.1 million to Tasmania, which is in addition to our own investment of \$100 million under our 'third action plan' to address family and sexual violence, and we've increased core funding to our specialist family and sexual violence services by 37 per cent, which we've just discussed.

Then in 2024-25, I can add core funding to services is \$4,702,459, and Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-27: Survivors at the Centre is \$12.5 million. I think that gets you there.

Ms BADGER - No, that's still that high level. I'd like a breakdown for the sector. The sector is more than capable of reading the budget papers. They need a breakdown of, specifically, what is going to be funded throughout that. I'm happy to take it on notice.

Ms OGILVIE - Which organisations - is that what you're seeking? It will help me get the information you want. An itemised list?

Ms BADGER - Itemised for the Sexual Violence Action Plan of exactly what's been broken down.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I understand what you're saying - itemised. We'll probably need to take that on notice.

Ms BADGER - I hope so.

Ms OGILVIE - I could read it all out, but -

CHAIR - Order, order. Sorry, I know there's been a bit of trying to get clarity on the questions. For the benefit of Hansard as much as anything else, can we not have members taking over each other because it makes it impossible to differentiate who's speaking.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm very happy to get that information for you, but we'd have to compile that, so we will take that on notice.

CHAIR - Mrs Pentland.

Mrs PENTLAND - Minister, first of all, I just wanted to congratulate you on the Gender Budget Statement. I did thank the Treasurer and he did say that it was an initiative from yourself. I think it's a very good document. Well done.

In regards to that, it confirms that around 11 per cent of girls and women aged 15-24 are not engaged in work and study. That's way above the national average of 7 per cent. We have heard about the High Vis Army, which is helping with that age for men getting involved with employment and study. How are we advocating for women in this space to try and get them involved with study and work?

Ms OGILVIE - What was the age bracket you mentioned?

Mrs PENTLAND - It's 15-24.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, it's a critical part.

Mrs PENTLAND - Yes. It is a page in the document.

Ms OGILVIE - I'll see if we have a bit more information about what we're doing to address that exactly. I think I can assist with that. Bear with me one second. Fifteen-year-olds ought to be probably at school. I should say that, first up.

Mrs PENTLAND - Or apprenticeships perhaps.

Ms OGILVIE - Or apprenticeships, depending on the trajectory.

That's what I was looking for. So, lifting female participation in the workforce is incredibly important and I know, particularly in your electorate, there are many great opportunities to do that, but we need to make sure that we're finding the people who need the help to do that. It's critical and, in my view, this is one of the key challenges we need to address nationally - that we tackle this issue of women's economic independence. It's never too early to start, particularly at the younger stage of life and also the older stage, when family life is concluding, to make sure that women in retirement are economically independent as well.

Since 2020, we've committed approximately \$4 million in women's workforce participation activities. This investment has supported the delivery of lots of initiatives under the Leadership and Participation Action Plan for Women, and Equal means Equal Tasmanian Women's Strategy. The documents always have such long names. I apologise for that.

We are making progress. We know that the gender pay gap continues to fall. I've spoken a little bit about that in the opening statement. It's now 5 per cent, down from 9.1 per cent - significantly below the national average. There are 139,400 women employed in Tasmania and our unemployment rate generally for women is at an all-time low.

We are seeking to find more ways to reduce the barriers to seeking employment in stable and good work, and one of the things that I know we're doing really well is working across the sector. It's not just what we do with government, but working with TAFE, working with schools, particularly working with trades as well. I've done a bit of a deep dive into the electrical trades and they're doing incredible work around women's workforce participation, particularly in that apprentice side.

NECA, in particular, I can mention, they have a great women's program. What I'm seeing as I get out and about around the sector with businesses, government, local government and the not-for-profit sector, is there is a great deal of interest in building up what we do to support women to come into these areas. I often say government can learn a lot from that.

The leadership programs we do, apprenticeships. I was just talking the other day about getting interns engaged across the tech sector. It's often a sector which women might not feel it's a natural place for them to go into. The games and gaming sector's really interesting for younger people generally.

So, there's a lot of work we can do. I try to take a leadership position on this across government to say for each of our sectors: it's work we can all do, and work we can do in the community, too, to reach out to the young people, to young women in particular, and encourage them to engage with some of these projects and programs. But particularly when it comes to the advanced manufacturing areas and all those great things that are happening in your neck of the woods, if you look at TMEC and the work they're doing, it's quite incredible. So, we've very open to doing more, and love to hear great ideas from everyone. Thank you.

CHAIR - On the timing, just a reminder that there has been the order on questions taking a minute and answers taking three minutes. We have had some pretty comprehensive answers in the previous session as well. It hasn't been called out, because I think members were appreciating the detail. I'm leaving it so that if people want to call the timing for answers, they can do so. Otherwise, I'll let them go if people are satisfied with the answers that they're getting.

That was Mrs Pentland's first question. Did you have an additional question?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, on the Youth Jobs Strategy. I won't be offended if you cut me off, just go right ahead.

Mrs PENTLAND - Minister, the Equal Means Equal: Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-2027 outlines important goals for gender equality, particularly around cultural change and empowerment for women and girls. Could you provide an update on what specific measures the government has implemented to drive cultural change across Tasmanian society since the release of this strategy?

Ms OGILVIE - I believe we can assist with that. Let me just get that information for you. Just bear with me a moment. I'm just locating the information. We have two sets of documents here because we're dealing with the two areas.

The Tasmanian Women's Strategy which you've referred to is our vision for a gender-equal Tasmania, and it does outline a vision for Tasmania where women and girls have access to equal choice, equal opportunity, resources to participate in economic, social, political and community life. I had the great joy and benefit of launching this originally, and I was pleased to do so. Equal Means Equal seeks to embed gender equality in our culture, attitudes and practices. I think that is the question that you're asking. We do need to recognise the diversity of Tasmanian women and girls - not just diversity in cultural aspects, but there's geographic diversity, there's capability diversity, and there's aspirational diversity. So, we are dealing with an area which is fantastic but can also be challenging.

The 2022-23 State Budget did allocate \$800,000 over four years to support the implementation of Equal Means Equal. As I've mentioned, economic security, leadership and participation are key elements of the work that we're doing. We're continuing to roll out some key deliverables which you might be interested in, including a gender impact assessment toolkit which sits alongside our new gender budget statement. We'll talk a little bit more about that. I think you'll be interested in that. It will help us to really analyse the impact of work on different genders and to enable government agencies to use that toolkit to do so, and with that, we will be able to build this gender budget statement in relevance as well.

We have the annual gender budget statements, with the latest iteration being released, pleasingly, alongside the 2024-25 state Budget. This was a good thing and a timely thing to do - a bit of a win for the statement. One area that I'm really keen on developing is our annual Women in Leadership program which helps women in male-dominated industries to build their leadership skills. As we know, being women in senior roles, it can sometimes be quite challenging to do that.

That's at the heart of what we're doing. I impress upon everybody here. I think we would all like to walk the talk, but as women in leadership roles, and I include our partners and friends, it is important to bring young women on the journey with us. So, thank you for being allies, Mr Fairs and Mr Behrakis.

We have the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women and International Women's Day as well to provide that cultural and inspirational piece.

Mr FAIRS - Minister, how will the combined investment from the Tasmanian and Australian governments under the national partnership agreement enhance the delivery of initiatives outlined in the Survivors at the Centre Action Plan, ensuring that family and sexual violence prevention efforts are effectively implemented across multiple agencies, and meet the diverse needs of the Tasmanian community?

Ms OGILVIE - Eliminating family and sexual violence is a key priority for our government. I've said this a few times and we are genuine in our absolute resolve to address this. We are resolute in our commitment to ensure that every Tasmanian can live in safety, free from violence. It's just a non-negotiable aspect.

Our investment in Tasmania's third Family Violence Sexual Action Plan, Survivors at the Centre, demonstrates this dedication. Over the next five years, we will invest more than \$100 million to deliver actions that directly support victim survivors, prevent violence before it starts, and ensure perpetrators are held to account. This action plan represents the most significant reform in this area that our state has seen, and our focus is on delivering a whole of government and whole of community response.

We've got support from the Australian Government through the National Partnership Agreement, which has been pivotal in amplifying our efforts. With their investment over \$21.1 million, we have been able to enhance and expand our initiatives enabling us to take significant steps forward in the fight against family and sexual violence. It is something that we are resolute in addressing.

We know we need to deliver coordinated, integrated responses that span multiple agencies. This is where some of the challenges come in - ensuring that our efforts are comprehensive and tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities across Tasmania. Our investment allows us to introduce and expand critical initiatives such as the Arch centres - which I think you're all very familiar with - which are game changers, so to speak, in the way we provide holistic and integrated services. Indeed we are building a new centre.

We also want to ensure that funding reaches the frontline services where it needs to be placed and this is crucial in providing immediate support to those in need at the frontline. We have increased core funding to our specialist family and sexual violence services by 37 per cent over a five-year period which is a substantial increase. We know that they provide what is often lifesaving support and assistance in times of great stress and duress. This funding boost means that services such as Safe Choices, Engender Equality and Laurel House can continue to provide counselling, advocacy and support that we know they need to do.

We're working with Our Watch, which is embedding respectful relationships and consent education across schools. I think this is a good step so that people learn about healthy relationships, the importance of consent and the unacceptability of violence in any form.

We've had a recent decision by National Cabinet to provide additional funds to Tasmania and we're very pleased about that. The Premier has taken the baton up to National Cabinet and he has worked to push for this and I would like to give him a great deal of credit. We remain committed to consultation with victim/survivors and we have established Tasmania's first Victim Survivor Advisory Council. I'm really proud of this work and I thank the department. I'm just one of the number of ministers who have helped bring this to fruition, but it is the people within the department who have really shepherded that through.

Ms BROWN - Minister, what funding is provided to SASS and Laurel House to support victim/survivors and children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll get that information for you. I have the exact figures for you. In 2018-19, SASS received \$1.5 million in annual funding. In 2024-25, SASS will receive more than \$5 million in funding across various funding streams. In 2021-22, Laurel House received \$2 million in funding and in 2024-25, this funding will increase to more than \$3.5 million.

Ms BROWN - Did SASS and Laurel House put in a budget submission?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes.

Ms BROWN - How much for?

Ms OGILVIE - Let's see if we have that information for you. I have mentioned I have met with them on all this. We'll just see if we can get the exact figure for you.

Ms BROWN - If you'd like, you can take it on notice.

Ms OGILVIE - They don't have the document with them, so we'll take it on notice.

Ms BADGER - I've got that figure here. They requested a total of \$2.72 million for the 2024-25 delivery of the past Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) program. They've been informed that they'll be provided \$1.2 million, which is for Laurel House and SASS combined. That is a shortfall of \$1.52 million, which I believe you acknowledged yesterday in the Legislative Council. So, they're going to be awarded funding of \$1 million for every \$6 million of service delivery they need. In real terms, this means that the uplift in staffing they were able to achieve due to the announcements last year will now not be able to be sustained.

Could you further elaborate on what is currently available for the therapeutic services as per Laurel House and SASS's budget submission? These have come under the HSB in table A2.2. What's being delivered in terms of the children's services, children and family and detail that? Again, I understand that's quite detailed information, if you want take that on notice as well.

Ms OGILVIE - Let me see if we can answer that. Would you like to respond to that?

Ms GRAY - Yes, we do have a breakdown, but we would like to take that on notice just so we can be confident and verify all of the figures there relating to funding that's coming not only through the state but through the national partnership agreement for both SASS and Laurel House.

We are continuing to work closely, as I mentioned previously, with what we see as deeply valued service providers. We've worked very closely with both SASS and Laurel through the response to the commission of inquiry. That close working relationship will continue to monitor demand and need. This, too, is to inform our negotiation with the Australian Government on the new national partnership agreement for family, domestic and sexual violence. Those negotiations have commenced. Also through the delivery of related recommendations on the commission of inquiry - the recommendations relating to workforce,

service gap analysis and future funding needs, which are due by 2026. We continue to work closely with both of those organisations so we can inform how that funding relating to those recommendations is implemented, as well as the national partnership.

Ms BADGER - On the first question, as part of taking that on notice and that breakdown of the budget items in that table, can that also include the difference between the national partnership funding and what's been contributed by the Tasmanian government?

Ms GRAY - Yes, that's fine.

Ms BADGER - Thank you. My second question is, given that shortfall in funding for HSB and the services, we know there's an increasing demand for those services and that will continue. What is the government going to do to support children and young people across this state when they desperately need those services?

Ms OGILVIE - We rely very heavily on the specialist services provided by those organisations. I've got a deep level of respect, and their dedication to the task that needs to be done is huge. But as you correctly point out, the demand is increasing. I find this incredibly sad for our state. As to how we best address that going forward in a contemporary environment, we have the National Cabinet work for this happening with additional funding. This budget is obviously set, but we continue to work very closely, particularly with Laurel House and SASS about a way forward. They have my support in that. Very supportive and want to assist.

Ms BADGER - No other set plans than continuing? Which is important, continuing work with Laurel House.

Ms OGILVIE - Mel Gray has a contribution.

Ms GRAY - I would note that SASS and Laurel House have been provided with additional funding through the Australian Government's 500 Workers Initiative, along with funding from the commission of inquiry, which increases support and extends the Harmful Sexual Behaviours Program. Recommendation 21.03 of the commission of inquiry is for the Tasmanian government to establish a peak body for the sexual assault service system, including therapeutic interventions for children who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviours. There are a number of priority areas in Change for Children, the strategy relating to recommendation 19.1 of the commission of inquiry. The government is working across government agencies, but also in close collaboration with both SASS and Laurel House in relation to the harmful sexual behaviours priority area.

Ms JOHNSTON - Arch is mentioned at several points in the budget paper, but it's quite difficult to identify where funding is going and to what service and what agency its coming from. Could you provide more clarification about what funding will be provided to Laurel House and Sexual Assault Support Service for delivery as special supports in Arch?

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, can you repeat that?

Ms JOHNSTON - Can you provide clarity about what funding will be provided to Laurel House and SASS for delivery of specialist supports in Arch?

Ms OGILVIE - We did have this question last night. The answer is that it sits within Mr Ellis's portfolio. This is a multi-disciplinary approach. I did ask him to check that. I spoke to him this morning

Ms JOHNSTON - Do we have an answer then, because it does sit across a number of portfolios?

Ms OGILVIE - I know. It's not you, it's the fact that it is highly matrixed. I'm not even sure that we can answer that specifically. It is a question for Mr Ellis. I did speak to him this morning to say to expect that question to be asked so that he could provide a response.

Ms JOHNSTON - Currently, family violence orders can only be obtained against an intimate partner. There's been a call from a number of people in the sector to extend that to other instances of family violence. I'm sure you'd be aware of an unfortunately high level of incidents between parents and children, siblings, other family relationships. Do you have an appetite to consider reform in this area and to match other jurisdictions by extending who a family violence order could be issued against?

Ms OGILVIE - I have some personal views around exactly the queries you raise. The act sits under the Attorney-General. Another example of the highly matrixed nature of this portfolio. But I have committed to having a conversation with him about that, which I'm happy to do.

Ms JOHNSTON - What are your views around that? Obviously, your advocacy in this space is important to the Attorney-General, so what's your views on that one?

Ms OGILVIE - I am very happy to look at this issue and I am very aware of the nature of what can happen within families. I'd like to have a look at it and I must say I have not done that yet because it does sit within the administrative arrangement under the Attorney-General's portfolio. But I'm happy to have that conversation and have a look at it.

Ms JOHNSTON - I'm assuming the Attorney-General wouldn't act without having consulted with you in the first place.

Ms OGILVIE - We try to work closely together.

Ms JOHNSTON - I am sure you do. Is this a body of work that you're looking at doing soon, or is it something that is on the backburner?

Ms OGILVIE - There's no backburner in my world, unfortunately. It's a 24/7 operation. My view is that we need the most contemporary legislation we can have. Yesterday, I was able to talk about some other areas in which violence against women is perpetrated in the online space as well and moves for legislative reform there also. I am very interested and, as I move across portfolios and find areas in which we can act, I try to do that work. This is one that is on my radar. I want to be very open that I have not been able to have time to sit down with the Attorney-General about it, but I will push for contemporary legislation.

Ms BROWN - Minister, when will the north-west Arch be operational?

PUBLIC

Ms OGILVIE - We might have that information available. I think in relation to the delivery of projects, particularly ones that are funded by Mr Ellis's department, that is where you would want that information, but let's just see if we have a projection.

Ms BUTLER - You've gone into Arch already within this.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, because it's a highly matrixed organisation.

Ms BUTLER - Exactly, so it's a fair enough question for this portfolio.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not saying it's not a fair enough question, it's whether we have the information at hand.

Ms BUTLER - For this allocation, I mean.

Ms OGILVIE - No, I don't think we can provide you with a date and certainly it does sit within Mr Ellis's portfolio, but I believe funding has been allocated.

Ms BROWN - Minister, in the commission of inquiry recommendations, and there are quite a few of them, it calls for the establishment of a peak body. However, the organisations are actually looking for a commitment for funding to scope the work of a sexual violence peak body. Are you willing to commit to that funding?

Ms OGILVIE - Is this outside of the alliance?

Ms BROWN - No, this is within the alliance.

Ms OGILVIE - We have made a commitment to funding. We have spoken about that with \$170,000. Is there more that you wanted about that?

Ms BROWN - No.

Ms OGILVIE - The answer is we want to support the alliance.

Ms BUTLER - They're getting the money.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, that's good, we're all happy about that.

Ms BROWN - Every one of our prevention of family and sexual violence organisations have wait lists that are months long and without more funding these wait lists will blow out even further. Do you know the average wait time for Tasmanians waiting to access these services?

Ms OGILVIE - I don't know the average wait time, but what I do know is that it is a long time. I just can't recall the exact figure that Laurel House and SAS have provided me with. It is a seemingly intractable challenge, the solution to which is the prevention of violence in the first place. That in itself is obviously a huge hill to climb, but when it comes to the increasing demand to which you refer, we want to do all that we can within the constraints of the Budget that I have to work with to support the delivery of services. As I've said, the department and I will continue to work closely with the providers on that.

Ms BROWN - Will you take on notice providing the exact wait time?

Ms OGILVIE - I would need to ask the organisations for that, which I'm happy to do. I think that's not information that I hold. I'm just referring to the department.

It might be that we do. If you want granular detail, we would actually need to take that on notice, but I understand, from information that I've just been provided, the combined wait list for Engender, Huon Domestic Violence Service and Yemaya was 318 people as at 30 June 2024. SafeChoices and RAIN do not hold wait lists. In the time between a referral being received by a service and first appointment, services generally maintain active holding of wait-listed clients which include check-in calls and reprioritising them. That's the information that I have at hand. If you want further details - there's a little more: on sexual violence in 2023-24, reporting showed that as at 30 June 2024, DPAC funded Sexual Violence Support Services were actively supporting 1947 clients, which was a significant increase from 787 in 2022-23. That increased demand has impacted the statewide wait list with a combined wait list of 607 at 30 June 2024, up from 167 in June 2023. But that does not give you the timing.

Ms BROWN - No, and that's really what I am after because if you are not aware of the timing, how do you know that you are actually adequately funding these organisations?

Ms OGILVIE - We will seek that for you.

Ms BROWN - Thank you.

Ms BADGER - Minister, we know there is a lot of work happening on police misidentification and I understand that is not in your portfolio, but you would be working with Mr Ellis to ensure that that is happening. As we learned earlier in the week, the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation is going to be running workshops with Tasmania Police about coercive control. What else are you advocating for and working with Mr Ellis on in the coercive control space?

Ms OGILVIE - My engagement with ministers in their portfolios by way of being the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence includes a range of advocacy pieces that I work on for the Arch centre, et cetera. In relation to work Mr Ellis is doing on that area, I am not yet engaged in that. I am always a little bit careful to make sure that as the minister who has the administrative responsibility for the act that he is looking at leads the conversation. No doubt I will be engaged.

Ms BADGER - I would hope so, as the minister for women that is very important.

Ms OGILVIE - DPAC, which I will ask Mel to speak to, has held a workshop on this at that organisational level. Are you happy to speak to that?

Ms GRAY - Thank you. Last year, DPAC held a workshop on misidentification of the predominant aggressor and this was off the back of a report from Engender, I think, from memory.

Ms BADGER - Coercive control or just -

Ms GRAY - Misidentification of the predominant aggressor.

Ms BADGER - Sorry, I'm not sure if my question was clear that it was about coercive control and what advocacy you are doing, minister, in that space.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't have information at hand, no advice in relation to coercive control and what we are doing about it, but I can say from a personal perspective that I understand completely this issue. I'm a strong advocate for being resolute in our efforts to provide legislation that deals with these issues. As I said, I have been looking at particularly the technology side of coercive control recently. We are doing a deep dive on tracking of women and taking of telephone numbers and those sorts of issues, particularly with the technology side of it. No doubt there's a conversation to be had, and if there are law reform proposals coming forward, I will be brought into that loop by Mr Ellis, no doubt.

Ms BADGER - Great. My second question, minister, this is the 10th year since we had the motion before parliament on White Ribbon Day for an apolitical approach to the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence. That was put forward by all the male leaders of the three political parties at the time. Will you work with Premier Rockliff, given that White Ribbon Day this year is on a sitting day, to rework that motion to recommit for another at least 10 years on that agreement and seriously upscaling the actions that we need to take for the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence in this state? Will you work on a cross-parliamentary agreement on such a motion with all independents and all political parties?

Ms OGILVIE - Of course, I will work with everybody who wants to develop an approach that is truly inclusive. I am not sure I was here when that original motion - I might have been, I just can't recall it. I would like to do that and I would warmly welcome everybody's input. We need to do it not just with the prevention of family violence, but in relation to the women's portfolio more generally. I have started some conversations around that with party representatives and others. I think we have a moment in time right now where the national conversation in relation to the prevention of family violence and women's leadership generally, and fairness to women economically, and security in retirement and all of those issues that we know are part of women's lives ought to be front and centre. There is nothing I would like more than to have us with one voice in the Parliament of Tasmania putting a stake in the ground on that.

Ms BADGER - You will work with the Premier to put that motion forward for family violence? That's everybody, inclusive, absolutely?

Ms OGILVIE - I am very happy to work with all of my colleagues. I certainly will speak to Premier.

Mrs PENTLAND - According to the *Mercury* article in July this year, Tasmanian women are three times more likely to experience relationship violence between the ages of 18 and 19 years against the national average. It also states that 32 per cent of Tasmanian women have experienced violence and emotional or economic abuse by a partner since the age of 15. Given how alarming these statistics are, can you please clarify if Tasmania does in fact have a domestic violence review team? If not, why?

Ms OGILVIE - To clarify, domestic violence review team in?

Mrs PENTLAND - Other states have a domestic violence review team. We're the only state that doesn't have one.

Ms OGILVIE - Let me find out what the rationale is. I'll see if I can get some information on that. I don't know that this has come across my desk before.

Is it in relation to coronial matters? I think other states and territories do this, where there has been a death and if it's -

Mrs PENTLAND - Yes, that's right. They review the deaths and they look at -

Ms OGILVIE - I've had some conversations about this with some of my colleagues. Having had some experience with the coroner's court, and understanding the really challenging, sad and difficult environment that can be for families, what I want to make sure of when we're looking at this issue is that we are understanding what the families also want. That's my being a human response.

In relation to the benefit that such a team could provide, I'm certainly happy to have a look at that. I think it does sit within the Attorney-General's remit, but I am very happy to add my, not interest, but my views to that conversation and consideration of that. I see the benefit. I want to make sure that things are handled sensitively also for family. Good question.

Mrs PENTLAND - Instances of police call-outs on family violence on the north-west coast are as high as the southern region, so by my calculation about 2.5 times by population. What is specifically being done in that region?

Ms OGILVIE - In relation to call-outs by police? Again, I don't want to do this because I know the north-west coast has a real challenge. I'm seeing it in the corrections and rehabilitation space as well, with the amount of crime, and prisoners that are now coming into the prison. I'm broadly aware of the challenges you have there. In relation to police call-outs, because it is Police portfolio, that would be Minister Ellis. We might be able to provide some information if we can. We're always happy to try.

I'm seeing if I've got a little bit of information that could help. I think what I can assist with, recognising that it cuts across a number of portfolios, I would point to the Arch Centres and the assistance with the north and north-west issue. \$15.1 million has been allocated for Arch Centres in Hobart and Launceston. There is an additional \$5 million to establish a third centre in the north-west.

You may not have had a chance to visit an Arch Centre. I think we will offer you that opportunity. It's eye opening, and it'll be helpful, I think, to understand what we can do when you get this multidisciplinary capability into a community, and what a difference it can make.

I think that's probably the best answer I can give you outside of police call-outs. We have specific commitments around Safe at Home, \$4.9 million. We've talked a bit about the technological advancements this morning - you weren't here in the earlier session - around the work we're doing with ankle bracelets and monitoring so that victims of family violence who need it can have a duress alarm and the technology that cuts across that.

I would like to just speak a bit about the building of the capability that we're doing in the technology area of Community Corrections that manages this. We really have some quite sophisticated capability to track offenders, and parolees and remandees and whoever we need to, to make sure that victims are protected and quarantined from the movement of perpetrators. That stuff is really helpful. Again, I am happy to take you on a tour or show you more of that, given you weren't able to come to this morning's session. We did quite a deep dive on that. They're two things that we're doing. I hope that is helpful.

Mr FAIRS - Minister, how will the establishment of the Victim Survivor Advisory Council under the Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan ensure that the voices of those who have lived experience are effectively incorporated into the Tasmanian government's policies and programs to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence?

Ms OGILVIE - The establishment of our first Victim Survivor Advisory Council represents a significant step forward in our commitment to ending family and sexual violence. The council will provide a direct platform for victim/survivors to contribute to shaping policies and programs that impact them, and to ensure that their voices are heard and are central to the decisions that we make as a government. I think we are the first state to deliver it.

We recognise that those with lived experience possess unique insights, and input is crucial in developing effective, responsive and compassionate approaches to preventing and responding to family and sexual violence. The council has been established as part of our \$100-million Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan: Survivors at the Centre to prioritise the survivor-centred approach. It is so that those with lived experience are able to share directly with us, helping make sure we get as much information as we can around how what we're doing meets their needs, and so that we understand the trajectory that we need to go on.

We're listening to their experiences and insights and recommendations so that, as we develop our policies, from this right through to how we deal with Arch Centres or technological innovation, we're hearing from people who've been through the complexities and challenges that victim/survivors face.

We've managed to secure remuneration for the council for the first time for their time and expertise, which I think is fair and good for women - well, it won't just be women, but it is good for people to be paid for the work that they do. Diversity within the council is a key feature. We know that people who've experienced family and sexual violence come from all sectors and all walks of life. We acknowledge that. We're looking for people and have looked for people from different backgrounds, communities and areas, and we want to be inclusive and have that representation.

We've got the council members undergoing induction and training to support their involvement and work, which I think is fair. It can be challenging work. Coming into this sector I've seen how challenging it is each and every day. The training will help provide them with the tools and effort that they need to make the contribution that I know they want to make. In achieving our vision, we want to make sure that everybody feels safe, supported and respected. The work of the council will complement existing initiatives with increased funding and support for specialist family and sexual violence services.

I want to emphasise in closing that it's more than just an advisory body. We feel that it's a true partnership. I know the work that's gone into it, and as one of a number of ministers who's been across this area, I know how long and deep the work has been. We really want to be listening to those with lived experience. We'll do this together. We'll take a step forward, creating a safer, more inclusive Tasmania.

Ms BUTLER - My question is around crisis accommodation for women fleeing family violence. From statistics I was given by the Hobart Women's Shelter, the total number of women and children requesting assistance between the years 2020 and 2024 was 2123. These are individuals, and each individual that comes in doesn't contribute to this total. For children, the number was 2401 out of a total of 4524. The total women and children receiving assistance was 951, and the total women and children not receiving assistance was 3573.

Their statistics are that 79 per cent of women and children that presented to the Hobart Women's Shelter over that four-year period were rejected, and they were rejected from seeking that crisis accommodation due to a lack of space. We know that in Tasmania, the number of women that we turn away from shelters is more than double the national figures.

I don't see accommodation highlighted especially in the gender budget, but it is a really big issue when it comes to the prevention of family violence. Can you run through for the Committee what you intend to do as the Minister for Women and the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence in this space?

Ms OGILVIE - Firstly, let me say it's just completely heartbreaking that we even have this situation. I've been to the Women's Shelter and connected with them, and I understand how terribly difficult this is and what a blight it is on our state that family violence is leading to this situation.

As Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, I can give you some information around housing, but I speak in my capacity as the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. Minister Ellis is Minister for Planning and Housing and he does the shelter's funding, which is why, if you're looking for it, it will be in a different output.

But I'm very happy to speak to it, particularly as it is such a critically important issue. I'll give you some information, and then perhaps if you need more, you can let me know. Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan: Survivors at the Centre includes the following actions to address this. The Family Violence Rapid Rehousing Program, which is administered by Homes Tasmania, will receive \$6,334,000 over the five-year plan, including a funding boost of \$1.5 million in the 2024-25 state Budget.

Action 16 - Flexible Support Packages - will receive \$1,650,000 over the five-year plan, enabling individuals to access payments of up to \$6000 to assist with bills, relocation and other costs. We know that that's a critical issue as well.

Action 17 - Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes program - receives funding to support victim/survivors to stay in their own home when safe to do so. These initiatives support a longstanding criminal justice response to family violence designed to remove the perpetrator and, where possible, keep women safe at home.

Further to this, Tasmania's first 20-year Whole-of-System Housing Strategy 2023-24 and associated Action Plan 2023-27 prioritises support to people in need, and this includes a focus on service to women and children experiencing family violence, which I think was your question.

Ms BUTLER - Thank you for that information. It's my understanding that when a family has to flee their home due to family violence, there's a certain amount of nights' accommodation that's provided, either in caravan parks, motels or hotels, when the women's shelters are full. This is for women who need to find alternative accommodation, who don't have any friends and families to stay with, and for whom home is not a safe option. Do you know how many nights' accommodation are funded?

Ms OGILVIE - Through Housing Connect, is that your question?

Ms BUTLER - Is it through Housing Connect or is it Safe at Home?

Ms OGILVIE - I think it's Housing Connect, but I will just seek some information on that. I don't think it's in this output. I think it's through Housing Connect, but I would have to find information about that. I don't know if it's a specified number of nights.

Ms BUTLER - It's three. What I'm looking for is the total amount of nights that the government has funded for women and children fleeing homes because the shelters are basically full - so, having to flee to motels, hotels or caravan parks.

Ms OGILVIE -It's a really important question. I appreciate that.

Ms BUTLER - It builds into this portfolio because it's prevention of family violence.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand the highly matrixed nature of it. It is Mr Ellis's portfolio though, so I would want be very careful not to step across and give wrong information, or even to take on to seek it, because I think it has to come through Mr Ellis. I'm not sure if you've already had your session with him.

Ms BUTLER - No, we only had a short time with Mr Ellis and, actually it was in the police portfolio.

Ms OGILVIE - No housing portfolio yet? that's where it sits.

Ms ROSOL - Minister, a question relating to your role as the minister for women. Looking through the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27, there was an industry liaison officer that was funded under this strategy after the COVID-19 pandemic to encourage the role of women in the recovery of industries, to help them get into there.

I understand that role hasn't been funded in an ongoing capacity. Having said that, looking at the gender budget statement, there are many industries that have a low participation of women in their workforce. Is that role something that you'd be willing to commit to funding further? If not funding that role, what are you doing that will help women to participate in those workforces?

Ms OGILVIE - I just want to make sure I really understand the role that you're referring to. What did you say originally?

Ms ROSOL - It was called an industry liaison officer for women's workforce participation. It's on page 22 of the women's strategy. It seems to have been a short-term role. I would say there's capacity for that kind of position to continue even though we've kind of moved on from COVID-19 financially, one hopes.

Ms OGILVIE - Let me see if I can find some information on that. Did you find that?

Ms ROSOL - I found a SOD for January 2023.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm just trying to get some information because it's not clear to me that it's not continuing. I will just try to find out for you.

Ms ROSOL - That would be great.

Ms OGILVIE - It could be a win. So, let's see if we can find the information for you. This is the challenge of roaming across both outputs in one go. We're jumping around a little bit. If we can't find it immediately, we'll bring it to you.

Ms ROSOL - I can put it on notice.

Ms OGILVIE - I'd also just like to, again, in the skills portfolio area, which is Mr Ellis's, there is work being done on the Youth Jobs Strategy, which does assist with those issues as well. We'll see if we can get that information for you. I'm sorry we couldn't find it quickly.

Ms ROSOL - That's okay. This question is around reproductive health issues; it's another one that overlaps. Reproductive health issues like menstruation and menopause have physically and mentally debilitating effects on women, on trans men and gender-diverse people, and it impacts their ability to participate in the workforce and for some it leads to an early retirement with serious financial impacts.

Experts have recommended paid reproductive leave of 12 days a year to help women, trans men and gender-diverse people cope with the financial ramifications of those reproductive issues. Queensland has introduced it for their public servants. Will you commit to introducing paid reproductive leave, or advocating for that, on behalf of women?

Ms OGILVIE - I will turn to that question, but I think I've got that other information here, so we might just deal with that quickly if we can. I'll read this and see if this helps. Since November 2020, the Tasmanian government has invested just over \$4 million to strengthen recruitment, retention, advancement of women in sectors where women are traditionally underrepresented. This funding supported the employment of an industry liaison officer within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, whose role was to work with the industry to drive change and support the participation of women in sectors critical to Tasmania's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The role has concluded and this work is now embedded into the broader work program of the women and prevention family violence team within DPAC, and this team works closely with other agencies, including the Department of State Growth and the Department of Natural

PUBLIC

Resources and the Environment Tasmania to ensure that we can continue to work collaboratively with key industry bodies and support women's employment in non-traditional roles. The work continues but the allocated role is not continuing. Back to your other question.

Ms ROSOL - That was around the paid reproductive leave. Is that something that you would be willing to advocate for on behalf of people who have reproductive health issues that impact on their ability to work?

Ms OGILVIE - I am happy to have a look at it, particularly the menopause space. We forgot the fans. We were going to bring some fans.

Ms JOHNSTON - Touching on an issue and extending an issue that I believe Ms Brown raised earlier in relation to waiting lists, particularly for therapeutic services. My understanding is that Laurel House and SASS have been funded \$770,000 each, which is the total of \$1.54 million to deliver therapeutic services. This is a funding shortfall, they tell me, of \$860, 000 or \$430, 000 each.

This means in real terms, the uplifting of staffing that they were able to achieve during the announcement last year won't be able to be sustained moving forward. Given the wait list in the south and the north-west, they're telling us is around six months, if they are to fully fund, the service will see an increase in wait lists. What are you going to do to try to avoid the wait list from being exacerbated during those times?

Ms OGILVIE - We have touched on this topic a few times but totally appreciate your concern. I'm concerned too, and I care deeply about what's going on and the demand that we see and how we're going to address that. This Budget has been handed down. There is opportunity going forward in future budgets to look at more options.

I have said previously, and to reiterate, the department continues to work with SASS and Laurel House. I've recently met with them. I've received correspondence as well. I have phrased this directly with other ministers also who do take an interest in this area. We want to find a solution to this and we will work with them to find that solution.

Ms JOHNSTON - You probably didn't hear the response to a question I asked in the earlier portfolio with the Police Commissioner in relation to the number of callouts they had in a day. I'll give you the answer. I asked the Police Commissioner how many callouts a day were in response to a family violence incident and they were able to indicate that 23 a day on average is what they receive.

I'm told that the figures are around that only one in five instances are reported to police. There is substantial amount that isn't reported. On those figures you can assume that 92 instances a day of family violence aren't reported to police. If police are getting 23, you can assume that 92 at least aren't reported. That means that there's an enormous pressure on the community sector to respond to those instances, because often people will go to a community sector provider to seek support rather than to the police for a formal justice response.

The funding shortfall is significant. What assurances can you give to the community sector that you understand there is significant pressure on them to deliver services when the government's response is only at the pointy end of the one in five who are fronting up to police

services? How can you give assurances to the community sector that you understand the burden that they have is disproportionate to what the police response is? Does that make sense?

Ms OGILVIE - That was a long question, but I understand the premise. The premise is we have this huge demand and it is a real challenge for everybody in how we tackle this problem and the question of increasing demand and what's being reported, what's not being reported and extrapolating numbers. Very appreciative of all of that. We know that Laurel House and SASS are service providers are at the front line. They know it; they see what's going on and we back them in. My assurance around that is that we truly understand the work they do, how important it is and what needs to be done.

I will sort of again separate out the police portfolio which is not mine, so I don't know about callout numbers and those sorts of things, but I do know that the Arch centres are a good model as well. When we get this multi-disciplinary approach planted into our three regions, it does help. I want all people, all women, all family members, everybody of every gender to be safe at home and on the streets. This is the goal. Violence is unacceptable in all its forms. That is the goal. We are resolute in this effort.

Now I am constrained, like other ministers are, by budgetary pressures. We are doing everything we can with what we've got, but there is hope, and the hope comes by way of the elevation of this national conversation which we've seen right across Australia and globally, but right across Australia recently, to National Cabinet where we have a Premier who has his hand and shoulder to the wheel on this issue and that is really important.

My commitment is to continue to understand what is going on, to work closely with our department who are working closely with the providers and do more. We know there is more to be done. Funding is one thing, but it is a whole of community conversation, and simple things, such as, I think last year, I was out with the Tasmanian Netball League, who'd come up with some ideas about ways that they could participate genuinely in a conversation in an environment that is safe, particularly for women and for young women.

We all know we're all in it together. That's why I'm happy to work collaboratively across parliament on a number of these fronts. Money is one thing, culture is another - leadership, and that's up to all of us.

Ms BROWN - According to your own gender statements, sexual assault in Tasmania is getting worse. Given the shortfall in funding provided by your government, why have you not invested more in therapeutic services and harmful sexual behaviour services?

Ms OGILVIE - To get really specific about your question, are you talking about services as part of corrections or are you talking about generally in the community, because I can't force people to do programs, but what we can do is make sure -

Ms BROWN - I'm asking why haven't you provided more funds for therapeutic services and harmful sexual behaviour services to organisations, given the shortfall?

Ms OGILVIE - SASS and Laurel House in particular? We have had quite a lengthy conversation about this. We have provided the funding that we're able to provide in this budget. The department continues to work closely with them. I did sit with representatives from SASS and Laurel House recently. I invited them one by Zoom and one in the room to talk about this

challenge. I'm on side, I'm wanting to help, I will fight for them as well. This budget has landed, so we are where we are with this round but I truly appreciate the demand that is out there and increasing.

The question is, is it increasing in reporting, also increasing in the levels of sexual violence? I want to find a landing for this and I'm working closely with the department, which I know is actively looking to find a landing for the budget concern that they have.

Ms BROWN - So what is your long-term strategy for Laurel House and SASS to ensure that they are able to deliver these services without the budgetary requirements that you have.

Ms OGILVIE -We are always constrained by budgetary requirements on the government side so there will always be a balancing of what we have against what we need to deliver. But again, it comes to, I think this work that is happening currently within the department to find a landing for them. I'm just really hopeful that with the federal government funding, more money coming through the federal government that we will have more funds to deploy more generally as well. I'm getting nods from the department. Would you like to speak to this a bit?

Ms GRAY - Around the long-term strategy as well. I would point to the collaborative work that's going on around the commission of inquiry and the number of recommendations that I referred to earlier around that, including workforce service gap analysis and future funding needs. That work has to be done in collaboration with government agencies and with the community sector, and the great work that our community sector service providers do. It's part of a \$423 million investment, and as we work out how those recommendations roll out, that work is being done now, so that is part of the longer term planning for a sustainable community services sector, in addition to, as minister has said, the work with the Australian Government on the new National Partnership Agreement for family and domestic violence.

I would also note that the funding that has been provided to SASS and Laurel House is flexible in terms of how they use that funding. There haven't been constraints; we work with the sector to ensure that the funding to them is flexible and streamlined and reduces red tape. It's all part of us growing a sustainable sector that we fund in a way that we can achieve the significant systems and cultural change that's required to address not just family violence, but sexual violence as well.

Ms BROWN - How does the government intend to build trust with victim/survivors within institutions like SASS and Laurel House without maintaining suitable funding for these programs, if you're relying on federal funding?

CHAIR - Last, and then we'll see if we can get to Ms Badger with the time we have left.

Ms OGILVIE - We as a government, with all of our programs, are always welcoming of federal funding. It is important to the state of Tasmania that we do welcome that sort of funding. We've seen some funding recently for the Heart Centre in the north. So, it is good to get federal funding in the door. I understand the desire for everybody to have that security and certainty. I will say again that I completely understand. I will be a voice in support of SASS and Laurel House, particularly around this funding issue, and to the people that use those services, of course. I'm very aware of the sensitive and difficult conversations and support and services that are provided. Very aware of that, and I always seek not to politicise these issues.

We do have a budget constraint. We are working to look at that going forward. I am hopeful that federal government funding will provide that certainty over the longer term, but I'm not able to say yet what that will look like.

Ms BADGER - Just a question around the Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan and what measures you are using to indicate how successful that is to keep it contemporary, noting that there are a lot more indicators than just the wait times of any kind of service that we have. There is, of course, also the outreach programs that they're running, in terms of the prevention space as well.

Ms OGILVIE - So, the 'measuring' question?

Ms BADGER - Yes.

Ms OGILVIE - Let's just see. Perhaps, Mel, you might like to respond to that. I think we do have that.

Ms BADGER - If we run out of time, happy to take it on notice as well.

Ms OGILVIE - We'll see how we go. We're close. We'll see what we can find; there's a lot of paper.

Ms GRAY - Through you, minister. I think, we spoke about this the other day. At a very high level, we've really looked at other jurisdictions in the family and sexual violence sector, in particular Victoria, and learnt from the Victorian experience in relation to their Royal Commission, and monitored its performance as a lesson for the way we embark on reform in the commission of inquiry space. Because there's lots written about their approach to family and sexual violence, rather than being a tick-a-box exercise. So, 100 per cent agree jurisdictions are moving more to embedding long-term systems and cultural change, whether that's through government agencies and through partnering and working differently with the community sector and empowering the community sector organisations and lived experience to do that. The way that we're evaluating the strategy is also linked to the Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit and a framework that's going to be attached to that. So, rather than going from having really small teams trying to be the champions of this from within government or across the community sector, we're going more to a model where we educate and empower others and we partner with others to empower that -

CHAIR - Sorry, I've tried to drag that on as long as I can, sorry. It's a hard cut.

Ms BADGER - I'll just say, given that was the high-end view, if I can get the details that would be fantastic.

Ms GRAY - I can give you the details on the percentage of actions that have been completed against the milestones rather than go through that now.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, Chair. Are you able to get that today, Ms Gray?

Ms GRAY - Yes.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - The time being 1.09 p.m., time for scrutiny has expired. The next portfolio to appear before the committee is the Minister for Science and Technology at 2.00 p.m.

The Committee suspended at 1.09 p.m. to 2 p.m.

DIVISION 9

(Department of Premier and Cabinet)

Output Group 3

Electronic Services for Government Agencies and the Community

CHAIR (Mr Behrakis) - The scrutiny of the Science and Technology portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce persons at the table.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. At the table I have Dr Justin Thurley, Tasmanian chief information officer, Digital Strategy and Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC). I don't know if that's how it will be any longer. Jenna Cairney, deputy secretary, Business and Jobs, Department of State Growth. We have behind us Malcolm Smith, manager, Tasmanian Government Cyber Security, Digital Strategy and Services, DPAC, Noelene Kelly, deputy secretary, Community and Government Services, DPAC, and Dennis Hendriks, executive director, Business Tasmania, Department of State Growth.

Before I commence, I need to table this document for Ms Badger, as promised earlier.

CHAIR - Thank you. The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for Science and Technology is half-an-hour. Would the minister like to make a short opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes. Last time we came together to discuss this portfolio, I was pleased to advise that our science and technology sectors combined contributed more than \$1 billion in Gross State Product. It's a good amount of money this year. Estimates suggest this figure is around \$2 billion. Of this, around \$300 million can be attributed to the science sector and \$1.7 billion to ICT. What a great area that is, directly employing some 4000 Tasmanians. In science, we're proud to continue our support for events like National Science Week, Science Meets Parliament and the annual STEM Excellence Awards. These events alone saw around 20,000 people get directly involved in science in one form or another. Equally, we're proud to continue to partner with key organisations such as UTAS, CSIRO, the Antarctic Division and Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

We continue to focus on workforce development and growth for ICT. There's around 10,000 Tasmanian technology workers employed across our economy and this number is projected to grow to 12,300. Everybody, we know, will need upscaling in technology as it transforms our economy. That is why we're working closely with industry and the peak representative bodies, TasICT and the Australian Computer Society. In May, we signed the first-ever Tasmanian Technology Industry Skills Compact to shape our future workforce.

We are committed to digital transformation for our government - around \$80.3 million in 2024-25 to support ICT delivery and substantial progress of major actions on the Tasmanian government's digital transformation strategy. Our Digital Future is ensuring fit-for-purpose digital policy, strategy and whole-of-government services. Whole-of-government services

include cybersecurity, data governance, digital priorities, cloud services, digital literacy and inclusion, and digital workforce capability and career pathways within the Tasmanian State Service.

Whilst it was disappointing that the Australian Government was unable to support the connection of our proposed HyperOne subsea cable to Tasmania, the Tasmanian government has committed \$11.5 million towards this cable and the investigation of better connectivity. This investment ensures our telecommunications infrastructure is at a level of quality, reliability and performance required by the Tasmanian community, business and government services. While these opportunities are rare, we are ready to co-invest on new subsea cable proposals if the right opportunity arises.

CHAIR - Noting that there is only half-an-hour on this, I've been trying to be pretty flexible with the committee on times and whatnot, but I will try and keep to the times just so we can get through as much as possible.

Ms FINLAY - Minister, as an indication on how seriously your government, and under your ministership, you take this sector, we've got half-an-hour for scrutiny -

Ms OGILVIE - That's the choice of your committee.

Ms FINLAY - ICT is largely absent from the Budget and the flagship Advanced Technologies Industry Strategy is not funded. STEM is not mentioned, UTAS STEM is not mentioned. There's an emphasis on turbocharging TAFE but ICT is not mentioned. There's no communications infrastructure fund. The Technology Industry Skills Compact's not funded.

And I am not going to let you pass the buck to the federal government on you not fulfilling your election promise to fund the SMAP cable. The Budget does show significant investment in digitising health information. That will see us more heavily rely on the cloud and, therefore, our three submarine cables. From work done by Deloitte in 2022, we know there have been eight disruptions to broadband connectivity caused by incidents with submarine cables in the seven years since 2015. We know that fault and failure events put a share of economic activity dependent on digital connectivity at risk. Based on a moderate event or a catastrophic event, that risk is somewhere between \$51 million and \$1.6 billion. It's been recommended that you improve redundancy in Tasmania in the submarine cable network and strengthen the infrastructure to mitigate these risks.

My question is, given that we know all of that, what are you doing to manage the risk of Basslink turning off, to that failing, given it represents one-third of Tasmania's connectivity for everything, for our phones, for our internet, for our community and for business?

Ms OGILVIE - That had a very long preamble and there were a series of questions. What was your actual question?

Ms FINLAY - The question is what are you doing to manage the risk of Basslink turning off -

Ms OGILVIE - About Basslink or generally?

PUBLIC

Ms FINLAY - No. What are you doing to manage the risk of Basslink turning off, given it represents one-third of Tassie's connectivity for our phones, for our internet, for our community and for business?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I'm very happy to answer that question. Given the context you set, much of the premise of which I disagree with, I will set some context of my own, then I'll turn to the Basslink question.

I am hypervigilant and a strong advocate for better telecommunications to Tasmania. I've been working very hard on this, as has the department and everybody in the sector, plus industry has been at the table. We want to ensure telecommunications infrastructure is at a level of quality, reliability and performance required by our Tasmanian community, our businesses and government services. As the minister responsible for communications as part of the ICT part of Science and Technology, I sit at the Digital and Data Ministers' table at which I have these conversations. I can assure you -

Ms FINLAY - How many of those have been attended by government in the last three years?

Ms OGILVIE - I can assure you. I'm just answering the first.

Ms FINLAY - Well, don't make statements up at the table. How many of these meetings have been attended by ministers in the last three years?

CHAIR - Ms Finlay, as per the entire week so far, I'm letting members ask follow-up questions. There were interjections during your question and there's interjections now. I appreciate members are mindful of the time we have for this. We'll get through a lot more if we continue the hearing in an orderly fashion, as it has been so far. I'll give you the opportunity to follow up as well, Ms Finlay. Can the minister be heard in silence and then you'll get a chance to follow up.

Ms OGILVIE - As I was saying, it's a very important issue that goes to the very ability of our state to participate in a modern economy right across the nation. Those smaller states and territories do struggle with subsea cable and telecommunications provision. When I'm at those meetings with my colleague ministers and also federal ministers, it is the smaller states and territories that raise their voices in relation to making sure we get a fair go.

At the moment, Tasmania is not getting a fair go. The economic cost of a temporary shutdown of internet services and disruption to broadband connectivity to Tasmania is estimated at \$51 million per day or \$1.6 billion over 31 days. Knowing this, in response, we stepped in and worked with HyperOne, which is Australia's first national fibre backhaul network to explore an additional subsea cable link to Tasmania. The state, at my urging, made a commitment of \$11.5 million to support the project, subject to Australian Government co-investment.

The total project cost was \$177.5 million. The Tasmanian government made a commitment to contribute \$11.5 million, the Australian Government \$53.5 million and the project partner HyperOne was at the table for \$102.5 million. That commitment we've made from a state level stands. The project was rejected by the federal government, despite numerous entreaties by me as an ardent advocate for a new subsea cable. I'm very disappointed that the

federal government, which is responsible for telecommunications federally and in the Constitution, did not stump up.

You've asked a second question in relation to Basslink. I'm advised that APA is currently in negotiations to appoint a commercial operator to lease and operate Basslink. These negotiations are occurring on a commercial-in-confidence basis. I will ask Jenna Cairney if there's anything you would like to add to the subsea cable.

Ms FINLAY - I am satisfied with that answer, given the time we have before us.

CHAIR - It actually is over the three minutes, minister. Sorry. Ms Finlay?

Ms OGILVIE - That's fine, if you don't want more information.

Ms FINLAY - Well, I just think it's interesting with content included in the minister's response, there was no minister at the previous digital ministers' meeting. I'm not actually sure the feds rejected the offer. I would like to see that in writing if you've got something to confirm that and you could table that today.

Ms OGILVIE - I do. I have a letter from them.

Ms FINLAY - I'm wondering whether, as minister, you've heard that the company managing the telecommunications asset for Basslink has gone into administration. Are you across this? From the comments you just made, it sounds like you're not. And more importantly, if you are aware, what are you doing about it? If you're not aware, why?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, of course, I'm aware of what's going on. Comtel is the company to which you refer and I understand that it's in administration and it's on the market. They have the specialist resources and know-how in relation to Basslink's optical equipment, which I understand is Ericsson equipment.

On 5 September 2024, APA advised Comtel entered voluntary administration on 30 August 2024. It's understood that administrators have already received several expressions of interest for the sale of Comtel, but at this stage of process, it cannot be guaranteed that the business will remain a going concern that, itself, continues to provide services to Basslink. APA has advised that if Comtel is unable to provide services and a network failure did occur, commercial services on Basslink may not be able to be restored.

Consequently, the government is working closely with APA to determine a path forward while the administration process runs its course. There are currently three fibre-optic links connecting Tasmania to mainland Australia. Two owned and operated by Telstra, which you probably use yourself, and a third which forms part of the Basslink infrastructure owned by APA Group.

The Basslink fibre-optic cable currently supports Tasmanians through providing a tertiary fibre link to the state, hence mitigating the risk of Tasmania becoming isolated should the two Telstra cables fail - as occurred on 1 March 2022 - providing a commercially independent telecommunications link into the state which is not subject to Telstra pricing and other policies.

PUBLIC

As the Tasmanian government leverages the Basslink fibre-optic cable to support government service provision through its Networking Tasmania agreement with the Field Services Group Pty Ltd, Basslink fibre-optic cable also provides -

Ms FINLAY - Could you just please repeat that last statement?

Ms OGILVIE - The Tasmanian government leverages the Basslink fibre-optic cable to support government service provision through its Networking Tasmania agreement with Field Services Group Pty Ltd and the Basslink fibre-optic cable also provides redundant, for example, non-Telstra, capacity to telecommunication providers who deliver services to Tasmanian businesses and consumers.

Ms FINLAY - In that response, you just agreed that if that connection breaks with Basslink that it won't be repaired so what are you actually doing to ensure that there is a redundancy given that represents one-third of Tasmania's connectivity?

Ms OGILVIE - We have the Telstra cables which are fully in place and if the Basslink cable -

Ms FINLAY - There have been occasions where all of those links have been disrupted at the same time.

CHAIR - Ms Finlay, I'll let you ask a final follow-up. Can you please let the minister answer the question?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll just wait. What's your question?

Ms FINLAY - I'm aware that there's three cables. From old data, with information before, you said that you're investing heavily in health transformation as an example. We're going to be more reliant on these cables. It's already been recommended that you improve the redundancy and invest further in the cables, but this is actually a representation of the risks and the weaknesses in the current assets that we've got.

My question is, other than having conversations, what are you specifically doing to protect us against Basslink going down and not having that third cable, specifically?

Ms OGILVIE - So, there are three cables. Telstra cables are fully managed and that A-grade service that people know and expect from telecommunications providers. The Basslink cable is important and it is Basslink, owned by APH -

Ms FINLAY - APA.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, as a separate legal entity to government which is managing that cable.

We know that the service provider that manages, monitors, and provides the spares and management of that cable is now on the market. That is a conversation that is happening between APA and that service provider and perhaps their purchasers, if and when that happens. If it goes down, it will be a problem. I think there's no sugar coating that. We don't want that to happen and, consequently, that is why understanding our telecommunications subsea

PUBLIC

network as I do, I have put a lot of effort - and the department has put a lot of effort - into trying to provide another subsea cable, particularly the HyperOne option with the link and that was rejected by the federal government.

Ms FINLAY - Could you please share with the committee where the \$11.5 million that was previously allocated to the SMAP cable has been reallocated to?

Ms OGILVIE - That's not been reallocated. It's a commitment that's been made and is maintained as a commitment.

Ms BADGER - Minister, the federal government was running matched funding for all states for land-based fibre-optic cables specifically through the NBN. I suspect this is going to be something we'll need to table because it's very specific data. How much funding did Tasmania request through that matched funding scheme in the last decade?

Ms OGILVIE - Match funding for terrestrial fibre?

Ms BADGER - Yes, through the federal government.

Ms OGILVIE - To get the actual figure we'd have to seek that information, so how many years?

Ms BADGER - The last decade, so 10.

Ms OGILVIE - The last 10 years? We will take that on notice.

Ms BADGER - Great. Thank you. Back to the cables, this is the second private cable that has been rejected by either the state or federal government in the last 10 years.

Ms OGILVIE - Federal government.

Ms BADGER - Yes, I'm really looking forward to that letter being tabled because some claims have been made publicly that it was Tasmania that did it, not the federal government, so we'd like to clarify that.

Ms OGILVIE - I can clarify that.

CHAIR - Sorry, minister. Can interjections both ways stop?

Ms BADGER - The \$11.5 million remains as a commitment moving forward, but what other contingency plans do you have in place? For example, the old technology of the cables that we have means that there's not a circuit breaker in between, as you might see in more contemporary cables, so if a section of it does break, a boat has to go out and then it's going to take some time to try to fix it. Is that on hand? What's the Tasmanian government doing to ensure that if that goes down - bearing in mind we're only two failures away from the stone age in this state - what is in place?

Ms OGILVIE - Right, well, I don't think we're two failures away from the stone age.

Ms BADGER - I hate to break it to you, we are.

Ms OGILVIE - If I may respond, I think we have a matrixed level of services that are provided to the state, including satellite, Starlink, subsea cable, terrestrial cable; it's a complex network that we have in Tasmania.

In relation to the cables that are owned, at the heart of this problem is the fact that small states and territories that don't have deep commercial environments into which private sector telecommunications providers can come and get a commercial return on that investment, we are stuck with what we've got. It's not just us, it's the NT, SA, and rural and regional Australia is suffering from this problem. We're entering a zone where we've got a two-speed telecommunications economy in Australia and we know that to lift Tasmania up right across science and technology, education, environment, research, ICT, everything that we do in government, we need to be able to participate in that digital economy 2.0.

I'm going to say again, the federal government, which is responsible for telecommunications, we are urging them - and I will continue to urge them - to come to the table to help us find a solution to this challenge. Tasmania put \$11.5 million on the table. Our proposal was rejected. I haven't given up. We will keep going to find a solution.

Ms BADGER - That didn't really answer my question. What's on hand contingency-wise and mending the cables if one goes down?

Ms OGILVIE - I am in communication with them directly. They own the cable and they're responsible for managing the cable.

Ms BADGER - Okay.

CHAIR - Do you have another question, Ms Badger?

Ms FINLAY - Can I just ask exactly in the budget where the \$11.5 million is allocated to the cable? Can I ask a follow-up question, given that you've declared \$11.5 million publicly, we know that a moderate risk or a catastrophic risk would be between \$51 million and \$1.6 billion to the Tasmanian economy, do you think that \$11.5 million is reasonable?

Ms OGILVIE - Have you finished? I didn't want to jump in.

Ms FINLAY - Yes.

Ms OGILVIE - I just want to make sure we're not conflating the \$11.5 million, which is about a particular subsea cable project. That commitment remains. It's not in the Budget. It's a commitment.

Ms FINLAY - No, it's not in the Budget, so I asked that question previously and I will put on the record that the minister said that it was in the Budget.

Ms OGILVIE - Did I?

Ms FINLAY - Yes, you did.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't think I did.

Ms FINLAY - So, the \$11.5 million is not in the Budget? It is just words.

Ms OGILVIE - It's a commitment that has been made.

Ms FINLAY - How can it be a commitment if it is not in the Budget?

CHAIR - Ms Finlay, I allowed you to make that clarification. Can we stop with the interjections? You'll be able to ask follow-up questions.

Ms FINLAY - It's not a commitment if it's not in the Budget.

CHAIR - Every time I have to call people to order, that's less time that we have to take and answer questions. Minister.

Ms OGILVIE - We have an \$11.5 million commitment that the Tasmanian government has made towards a particular project that now cannot be progressed because the federal government refused to come to the party. I think that is unacceptable. It is absolutely within the federal government's remit on telecommunications for which they are responsible in the Australian Constitution to sort out this issue for small states that cannot afford to provide a commercial environment which attracts these projects. So, it is a challenge and it is a problem and I would really hope that a good opposition, a Labor opposition with a Labor federal government, would help.

Ms FINLAY - So, my question to you, minister, I have now confirmed that there is not \$11.5 million in the Budget, so, it cannot be a commitment. It might be an announcement, but as we know the announcements, if government, mean nothing without action or allocations in the budget, and I refer you again to the evidence that says that the risks to Tasmania are between \$51 million and \$1.6 billion. So, how is it that you believe that, as has been recommended in proving the redundancy and investing further in critical infrastructure, that that is reasonable given the risks and the quantum of the risk to Tasmania? You do not have one dollar in the budget for it.

CHAIR - Ms Finlay.

Ms OGILVIE - Minister, we have an \$11.5 million commitment -

Ms FINLAY - But not one dollar in the budget.

CHAIR - Order, look we have gotten to the second last session of the week and I have not had to read from the script about giving formal warnings to members. I know there is only a little bit of time left. The interjections are making it very difficult for Hansard and making it very difficult for us to get through with questions and answer. As I have been doing, I have been letting people ask follow-up questions if they are not satisfied with answers. It is at that point that I will either start to give proper warnings to members or I will take interjections towards people's question allocation. That is where we are at. Ms Finlay, ask your question and then can we have a question and an answer without any interjections, please?

PUBLIC

Ms FINLAY - Thank you, Chair. Could I please request that you table the document from the federal government rejecting the position of the cable? Could you please table that for the committee?

Ms CAIRNEY - Through you, minister. I do not have it in my hot little hands, but we can definitely table that.

Ms FINLAY - Is that something we might be able to get before the end of the day?

Ms CAIRNEY - I would say so.

Ms OGILVIE - I think so.

Ms BADGER - Minister, as you would be aware, the federal government is currently being encouraged to review their connectivity guarantee, which is currently through Telstra, and based on landlines, for those who remember what they are. What are you doing to encourage that review, specifically for Tasmania? We know that we also currently have the Black Spot program and the independent investigation that went into that. It is a serious problem in Tasmania - so, what steps have you been taking with the federal government?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, we have a program around that. I will actually ask Dr Thurley - sorry, wrong way, Ms Cairney - to talk about the Black Spot program in particular and, sorry, the first piece of it was?

Ms BADGER - I after what are you doing working with the federal government. I understand Tasmania's program.

Ms CAIRNEY - Sorry, so specifically on the current federal program, I do not have any information on that to hand.

Ms BADGER - Are you working with them on the improvements? That is the question

Ms CAIRNEY - I would need to check that with the rest of the team.

Ms BADGER - So, we do not know if we are working with the federal government?

Ms OGILVIE - The answer is yes, we do work with the federal government. The question is at which layer. So, as a minister, of course, at the digital data minister's meeting -

Ms BADGER - I will just reiterate on the review of the connection guarantee.

Ms OGILVIE - We will be able to table something for you. Dr Thurley is looking at that now.

Ms BADGER - Thank you, I appreciate that, and my second question is: there have been quite a few local governments that are concerned with the lack of land-based fibre rollout that have been proposing to me, as a new member of parliament - so, I would hope also to you, as the new minister - to run conduit under new roads so that we are prepared. It is a very straightforward way to do it, we are seeing a lot of new works being done. What are you doing

to work with State Growth or the Infrastructure minister to see that that happens and that we have the infrastructure in place?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, thank you. That is a question for the Infrastructure minister about conduit and pit and pipe work.

Ms BADGER - Sorry, I am asking what are you doing to advocate for it as minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Fortunately, I have a close working relationship with the minister. It is not always as simple as saying we need to run more conduit, do more pit and pipe. Telstra owns the pit and pipe network basically in Tasmania. They licence that so you are able to access that, for good reasons. There is some complexity, I believe, around other cable networks that we own that are subterrestrial, but some of the most interesting and important work that we have been doing is around telecommunications fibre that is aerial. So, I guess, in taking that conversation up, I would be somewhat agnostic to the method by which the fibre connectivity is delivered, recognising that aerial fibre is probably a lot cheaper to deliver to households. Then we have NBN networks and others as well. I appreciate your question about new roads and putting conduit in, I just don't have the answer to what their current program of work is. If it makes sense to do it in a telco context, we're very happy to take that up.

Ms CAIRNEY - The team has just let us know - I just wanted to confirm and put on *Hansard* - that the department is engaged with the federal government in relation to the regional digital infrastructure programs and that's an officer level within the department.

Ms OGILVIE - And that feeds into the Regional Connectivity Ministers' Roundtable that I sit at at that ministerial level.

Ms FINLAY - Can you please confirm, minister, that there are no funds allocated to the Advanced Technology Industries Strategy in the Budget?

Ms OGILVIE - My recollection, and coming back in as minister, is that the funding for the program of work that sits under that is in other outputs in business areas already funded in other outputs. So, it doesn't have a headline figure.

Ms FINLAY - Can you indicate how much that is in the other outputs for me?

Ms OGILVIE - I would actually have to seek that information. I don't think I have it. Let me check if I might have it. I don't know that I have it detailed.

Ms FINLAY - Is that something you're happy to take on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - Well, let's just see if I can give it to you now. I don't think I have a detailed breakdown of what that is.

Ms FINLAY - The other question really is whether there's any funding in the Budget for the Technology Industry Skills Compact.

Ms OGILVIE - The Technology Industry Skills Compact is Mr Ellis.

Ms FINLAY - Are you aware if there's any funding in it?

Ms OGILVIE - I think you would have to ask Mr Ellis about that. Yes, we can talk to the projects for this year.

Ms FINLAY - Just before we do, just my final question, because we might run out of time, is: do you make a commitment to personally attending the next digital ministers meeting since we didn't have a minister at the last one?

Ms OGILVIE - I love attending those meetings and I have a lot of friends there, so, I'd be delighted to be there.

Ms FINLAY - Well, it's not a social order. I'm actually more interested if you will attend.

CHAIR - Order, Ms Finlay.

Ms OGILVIE - I've given you the answer.

Ms CAIRNEY - There is \$30,000 committed in the Budget for TasICT and that is earmarked as part of the industry compact. There also has been, as part of the election commitments in the Budget, \$200,000 over two years for the Telstra tower at St Helens. I'm just going to look at the man in finance to make sure I don't get this wrong, but I can just confirm the total funding for the science and technology team for this year is about \$4.5 million, which is up from \$3.9 million last year. Just, in terms of the advanced tech strategy, while that is under development, there will be elements of that strategy that we deliver upon in different areas. It's a strategy that needs to talk to our advanced manufacturing plan, our defence industries strategy. But, while that is under development this year, and we really hope to complete that work as soon as possible, we're engaged with stakeholders. Once that strategy is finalised, there'll be an action plan that accompanies that and that will be subject to future budget submissions and discussions.

CHAIR - So, just under or over a minute left.

Ms OGILVIE - May I just finish on that question please if I could. It's on the Regional Connectivity Ministers' Roundtable. I'll be there on 23 October and, of the four meetings during my time as Minister of Science and Technology at the digital data ministers meetings, I attended three of four and I'm looking forward to attending the next one.

CHAIR - Do you want to try?

Ms BADGER - Is our tech sector 2030 Strong?

Ms OGILVIE - Our policy is 2030 Strong. We have a strong plan to deliver and let me say that this sector has the potential -

Members interjecting.

CHAIR - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm glad you find it so funny but it actually is really serious. The economic thing -

Ms FINLAY - Of all the things we have discussed, it is clear that our plan is actually not that strong in terms of protecting our -

CHAIR - Order. The time being 2:30 p.m., the time for scrutiny has expired. The next portfolio to appear is Arts.

The Committee suspended from 2.30 p.m. to 2.34 p.m.

Division 7
Output group 6
Heritage

CHAIR -I will start the broadcast. The scrutiny of the Arts portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce persons at the table, including names and positions, for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you very much, Chair. I have at the table Brett Stewart, Deputy Secretary, Culture, Arts and Sport, and Dr David Sudmalis, Director of Arts Tasmania, previous acting director of secretary for culture, arts and sport, and then I have some others in the room whom I'll introduce if we need to bring them forward.

CHAIR - Okay, great, thank you, minister. The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for Arts is one hour. Would the minister like to make a short opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - Sure. This is a sector that I know we all love and it is a sector that expresses who we are as Tasmanians, who we want to be as Tasmanians, where we have come from. It unlocks creativity and imagination, brings people out, brings people together. And what a blessing that is after pandemic times, to see the fun of going to a concert and attending perhaps the TSO or going to a pub and listening to some music.

It's the simple things that matter. And, of course, the arts sector is also an industry and also an employer and it's achieving great things. Last year, Arts Tasmania supported paid employment for more than 3300 artists and arts and cultural workers across the state and almost 430,000 people attended arts and cultural events across the year.

On screen, a great sector, we're achieving major ongoing success. For the second year running, we have broken the record for screen industry expenditure in Tasmania and we have invested more than \$2.7 million in the 2024-25 Budget for the screen industry. We've also been focusing on extending our screen reach and, excitingly, this weekend we are hosting - I hope to see you there, Mr Fairs, I see you smiling - the first ever Tasmanian video game development expo, Level Up Tasmania, at Princes Wharf No. 1. The showcase opens tomorrow at midday and all events are free. Remember to register, though. All events are free. I encourage you to go online, register and stop by to see the amazing work of Tasmanian games developers.

TMAG has also has had a hugely successful year with a total visitor engagement exceeding 510,000, including almost a quarter of a million visiting in person. That's really quite remarkable and continuing to play an important role in telling the Tasmanian story.

Overall, the Tasmanian government is dedicated to supporting the arts, as seen by two major election commitments that are reflected in this new budget, \$1 million dedicated to a youth arts grant program and a \$1.5 million uplift for arts organisations.

I really look forward to seeing our Tasmanian artists, performers, musicians and writers create and grow. Digital artists are a great emerging piece of this puzzle and I'm really pleased to be here to speak about supporting that sector today, which I know you all also love.

Ms BROWN - Minister, I believe you met with the Theatre Council of Tasmania recently and they confessed to you that without government funding they would not be able to continue providing services to Tasmania and, as you know, the TCT provides our vibrant, dynamic and extensive theatre community support, including the coordination of the Tasmanian Theatre Awards, as well as facilitating the judging process for them. I'm just wondering, why has no funding been provided to them in this current Budget, considering that they came to you in such dire need?

Ms OGILVIE - Theatre is so important, I really get that and I would love to see the emerging works that are happening. It's the kind of art form that provides so many opportunities for creative people, not just in acting but around that as well - from hair and make-up to set design to digital to sound and music and light. I understand the great importance of this, and kids love it as well. So, that really sings to my heart. I will and I have met with the Tasmanian Theatre Council and we have put some moves into place. I'll ask the department to speak to this. I think there might be some positive feedback.

Mr SUDMALIS - Thank you for the question. The Theatre Council of Tasmania, whilst being eligible to receive support at any time through Arts Tasmania's competitive grant programs, has over many years not, in fact, applied to Arts Tasmania for support. However, we have engaged in a number of what I would characterise as highly productive conversations about what we might do in future.

In the government's election commitment that provides \$1.5 million uplift to arts organisations, whilst there isn't a direct line to the Theatre Council of Tasmania, there is an opportunity for the Theatre Council of Tasmania to apply for something we're calling a strategic initiative in theatre for a peak body to undertake a piece of research for us, to continue to deliver capacity and professional development opportunities for us, and to promote, acknowledge and reward the work of theatre practitioners in Tasmania. In order to qualify for that, any eligible peak theatre body representative of the Tasmanian sector will be eligible to apply. The Theatre Council of Tasmania is one of those organisations that might be able to do that. We look forward to releasing those guidelines once they are approved. They're in the system and awaiting final sign-off.

Ms BROWN - What's the time line for that sign-off?

Mr SUDMALIS - We would expect the final sign-off to be imminent, probably within the next week to 10 days. We will then have a program open for a short period of time, then under assessment, and we would look to enter into an agreement with the recipient organisation by the end of the year.

Ms BROWN - Okay. Minister, can you please advise how much funding is spent on the arts per capita?

Ms OGILVIE - We probably have that information.

Mr SUDMALIS - We were asked this question yesterday. I didn't have those numbers on me yesterday but I do have them now. There are two sets of numbers I would alert you to and a qualifying statement. The source of these figures is through the statistics working group of the cultural ministers' meeting, which is a representative body that meets once, perhaps twice per year of all arts and cultural ministers across Australia and New Zealand. They have funded, between all of the states and territories and New Zealand, a statistics working group that works through numbers such as this.

The last complete set of data is for the 2021-22 financial year. There are two sets of data here that might be of interest. Arts, including heritage and libraries, for Tasmania is \$166 per head and arts, excluding libraries and heritage, is \$48.67 per head.

Ms ROSOL - A few years ago, we saw a very welcome commitment from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) to return rock art stolen from the far north-west coast of the state. Early last year, they were finally returned to Country. After meticulous research and preparation, they were repatriated to the exact same place from which they were cut. This was a really profound moment for palawa, the institutions and the broader Tasmanian community, which took years of advocacy, appeal and action.

TMAG holds other cultural material of the palawa and the case is just as strong for that material to be returned. Has TMAG provided a complete list of palawa cultural material in its possession to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community? And if it hasn't, can that happen?

Ms OGILVIE - It's a really good question and it goes to the heart of why we're here, I think. TMAG has been working closely with communities across Tasmania to ensure strong representation of Tasmania's First Nations people's cultural material in all of its programs and also working closely on repatriation issues. I did speak about this yesterday but I don't think you were in the session. It's not just cultural heritage objects. There are also human remains. The human remains, in particular, may have come from elsewhere internationally. It's quite a complex process they're going through.

TMAG returned the Preminghana petroglyphs to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community team. TMAG wishes to return and help with those transitions and wants to work with Aboriginal Tasmanians to ensure that happens. The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania has requested the return of the Greens Creek petroglyph. The exact process for the return of that petroglyph and a petroglyph from Sundown Point is still being investigated. That's one underway.

The return of the Preminghana petroglyphs followed successful consultations with the community and a permit process. The community collected the petroglyphs from TMAG and QVMAG on 23 November 2022 and they were taken to the car park at Preminghana. Then we understand they were put back into place.

As somebody who is a little bit obsessed with cultural heritage and the management thereof in museums, I've taken a deep dive into this question of how best to treat cultural heritage we hold that is not our own or perhaps should be returned to third parties. It is an issue

that is being worked on by museums globally, certainly across Australia. Dialogue between museums, between the federal government and museums, and also between nations, is occurring to make these things happen.

I have been advised that an audit was done on holdings. My understanding is that the museum is very warmly working with those who wish to have things returned so we can do this carefully and well. But it is no small task.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you. Minister, I come from Bass. In my electorate, there's the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, which has an impressive collection which, I believe, is one of the largest in Australia. They're doing a lot of work on strategy and planning so they can be the best regional gallery in the country.

However, being in Launceston, they're not far from kanamaluka and they sit on a flood plain where there's a risk of floods. We know that with climate change and the increasing frequency of floods the risk of flooding at QVMAG is very high and increasing in terms of climate projections. That could potentially knock out some of the collections there and cause damage to them. Are you aware of that risk, does it concern you, and are you engaged in seeking to find a solution for that risk for the collections?

Ms OGILVIE - I recently had the great honour of visiting QVMAG and meeting the senior leadership team, and what a marvellous experience it was. The work that's going into the strategic, the thought leadership about what QVMAG can and should be going forward is phenomenal. There are lessons we could learn here from that work, which was presented with some beautiful documents that were very intelligently designed. I wasn't specifically aware about the floodplain issue. QVMAG is a joint venture with the council. We put some money into it as well. I am concerned if there is an issue around potential impacts to holdings. It would be something I expect the senior management of QVMAG to be across. I encourage them to reach out to me if there is something I can do. I was not aware that was a major problem, but it may well be.

Ms ROSOL - My understanding is that they've got some solid plans for shifting that solution. Would you support those solutions?

Ms OGILVIE - Storage solutions, are you suggesting?

Ms ROSOL -Yes, so would you support -

CHAIR - Sorry, I appreciate we need to go back and forth about getting clarification but, for Hansard, can we try to have one person speak at a time, please?

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly. I'm always happy to help any arts organisation think through what needs to be thought through as to what that would look like. I would lean on the department for that engagement. Maybe they're already aware of this issue. If not, we can engage.

Ms ROSOL - Great, thank you.

Mrs PENTLAND - I, too, want to raise some concern in and around the theatre council. I know they met with you on 4 July, outlining their financial challenges. I know they're going

to run out of funds this month. I understand you've got this strategic initiative arts grant program now going for \$1.5 million, but I think we all know that's going to have a huge turnaround time as far as people applying for that grant. Could you give us some more information around the grant. Given the fact that they, you said yourself, are a not-for-profit and they haven't ever had funding in the past, and after 14 years of operating as a not-for-profit organisation, is there something in the Budget that could help them out in this dire time?

Ms OGILVIE - Yeah, absolutely. I'm very aware of those issues, very supportive of theatre in Tasmania, and I just see it bursting with creativity everywhere, particularly I have to say our schools which are doing amazing productions and it's such a good tradition in Tasmania and seeing those kids go through and have those opportunities in professional and amateur theatre, so very keen to help.

I think we have heard a little bit from Mr Sudmalis around what we've been able to conceptualise in the budget and to allocate some funds towards a peak body piece of work that certainly the Theatre Council could apply for. But I hear from your question that there is urgency specifically; did you say the next month?

Mrs PENTLAND - Yeah, they're going to run out of funds this month.

Ms OGILVIE - I might just ask Dave Sudmalis, if you might, to speak to that. You're probably aware of the circumstances.

Mr SUDMALIS - Thank you, minister, and through you, thank you for raising this issue. The Arts Tasmania team is across the need for timely support of the Theatre Council of Tasmania.

There are a number of things that I would add to the context around this. The first is to, if you'll beg my indulgence, suggest that the Theatre Council hasn't received any funds from us before. They have received some funds, very small amounts of funding through an industry development program to support some of the work that they do in providing scholarships for young Tasmanians to undertake other professional development activities. They haven't come to us in the competitive grant sense, if I can make that distinction.

I think the other distinction to be made is that, and this may sound pedantic, Arts Tasmania is, of course, not able to provide funds that is not in receipt of itself and doesn't have. Now that budgets are coming to us, we will be able to do that it. It would not have been proper, or legal, I suspect, for us to do that before now.

The other thing, on the back of the intelligence that you've provided, we will quite possibly need to undertake a little bit of financial due diligence there to ensure that under the *Corporations Act* we are indeed able to enter into an agreement with the Theatre Council, that is, ensuring that they are not trading as an insolvent entity. Timeliness is important and the right data to hand is equally important and I will be sure to progress that.

Mrs PENTLAND - Just expand on the \$1.5 million opportunity that the strategic initiative arts program, your grant program that you were talking about before. What is the turnaround time for that? When will that be up and running, when will applications close, and when can people expect funds in their bank account for operations?

Mr SUDMALIS - Through you, minister, that's yet to be determined. It will be a quick turnaround. The guidelines have not yet been approved as they need to be approved by the minister under the terms of the *Cultural and Creative Industries Act 2017*. The reason the minister has not approved them is because I only finished writing them yesterday, minister, so I thought I should just make that clear. The minister will consider the proposals that the Arts Tasmania team has put forward with regards to eligibility around that and other measures that are to be undertaken under that election commitment. We are not going to sit on it. We want to get that money out into the sector as quickly as possible.

Mr FAIRS - Minister, can you share with the committee how investment in the screen industry benefits Tasmania?

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly can, one of my favourite areas. Tasmanian Government support of the screen production industry has led to tremendous success in the 2023-24 year and it's positioned for further success in coming years. We have invested \$2.782 million in this 2024-25 Budget for the screen industry and Screen Tasmania will administer \$1 million to implement the Island Screen Incentive which will provide a 10 per cent rebate on Tasmanian expenditure on a scripted screen production of up to \$500,000. This program is designed to attract large budget shows to the state and is projected to attract a conservative estimate of \$10 million of expenditure on Tasmanian goods and services. This covers expenditure in the state on items directly related to the production such as accommodation, cast and crew, locations, technicians and goods providers all over the state, and this is all new money for Tasmania - money originating out of state but spent here.

We know that investment in the screen industry provides a significant return for our state through the creation of jobs and through the influx of spending on Tasmanian goods and services and one of the best examples which I know we're all familiar with is the TV series *Bay of Fires*. In 2023, the locally-produced first season of the comedy drama series was the most watched drama on the ABC - go Tassie - and the Tasmanian government has provided support over several years along the development journey of *Bay of Fires*, including project development support, training grants, and funds for an entry-level crew training attachment program which is great to bring the young ones through, adding up to \$1.7 million. In that time, it is estimated the production has spent more than \$7.5 million on Tasmanian goods and services and provided in excess of 120 jobs for local cast and crew. We note that a majority of this spend has been in regional areas of the west coast with filming taking place in the winter when tourism numbers and jobs typically fuelled by visitors are at a low and this means more and better-paying jobs, roofs overhead, food on the table for those working on these productions.

With the increasing popularity of Tasmania as a tourist destination and its growing reputation as a viable shooting location for blue-chip comedies, dramas and documentaries, it just makes good business sense to continue to provide support and we cannot underestimate the value of the Tasmania that we know and love of having our beautiful landscapes, rich stories and unique talent broadcast around the world. Great question, Mr Fairs.

Ms BROWN - I'm about to ask some heritage questions if you'd like to bring any Heritage people in.

Ms OGILVIE - Are we finished with Arts?

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Does anyone else have any pressing questions on Arts or are we happy to go to Heritage?

Ms OGILVIE - We can go to Heritage.

CHAIR - Great.

Ms OGILVIE - We'll do a swap over.

Ms BROWN - Am I right to ask my question?

CHAIR - Yes, because you might have to restate it so if you could just wait one second, we'll get organised.

CHAIR - Minister, please introduce the people on the table with you.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I'm happy to do that. Just before we do, I note that I have the correspondence regarding the rejection by the federal government of our proposed project.

We have with us Mr Jason Jacobi, thank you for attending. Melissa Ford, Heritage Tasmania, Director; Michael Giudici, Acting General Manager, Surveyor General. Thank you.

Ms BROWN - Minister, for the first time since the heritage act was proclaimed in Tasmania, Tasmania doesn't have a heritage minister. Why not?

Ms OGILVIE - I sit here as the Heritage minister to answer questions.

Ms BROWN - Not on your portfolio.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, I'll do my best to answer your questions.

Ms BROWN - Okay. Why isn't it on your titles?

Ms OGILVIE - Why isn't it on my business card? I'm just doing the work. I just want to work. I love heritage, I'm here to provide the answers and I'll do my best to assist.

CHAIR - Another question?

Ms BROWN - Great. I'm glad to hear that you love heritage, so why are you allowing savage cuts to the Heritage budget?

Ms OGILVIE - You might have to give me some more information about what you propose 'savage' cuts to be.

Ms BROWN - The forward Estimates are dreadful for Heritage Tasmania. Which positions at Heritage Tasmania will be cut?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I will ask Mr Jacobi to speak to this.

PUBLIC

Mr JACOBI - If you'd like to indulge me. I can read through the budget efficiency dividend. Is that what you're specifically referring to?

Ms OGILVIE - Feels like it. Maybe start there.

Mr JACOBI - Alright.

Ms BROWN - We'll see what comes up from it.

Mr JACOBI - The 2023-24 Budget indicated the government will seek to achieve operating efficiencies while protecting frontline services, and in my department the efficiency dividend equates to a total of \$1.7 million in 2024-2025, increasing to \$3.4 million in 2025-26 and \$5.1 million in 2026-27. To give you an understanding of how that relates across the whole department, that represents approximately 0.53 per cent of the department's total budget in the first year, increasing to approximately 1.9 per cent in 2026-27.

Firstly, I'd like to say that I believe the savings are achievable and will not compromise the department's capability or the priority initiatives that we've been tasked with by this government, or the core and essential services that we currently provide to the Tasmanian community.

We've looked hard at where we can make savings, as we do every year to be more sustainable and efficient in our operations. We'll achieve these savings through a variety of measures, but those measures will be applied across the whole department. All areas of the department will contribute in some way to meeting these targets, but, most importantly, my executive team and I will be ensuring that these measures do not impact on the wellbeing of staff or compromise public good, or in any way compromise our long-term organisational capability.

Ms BROWN - What does that mean? You said frontline staff will be supported - there'll be no cuts to our frontline staff?

Mr JACOBI - To be very clear, frontline services will be preserved. We will capture our savings largely through vacancies in what I call natural attrition. Natural attrition are vacancies that occur each and every day across the agency. They're an important savings tool, and they occur when staff are transferred or are redeployed to other departments; they may be assigned alternative duties; they may leave or resign for other opportunities elsewhere.

Ms BROWN - Vacancy control.

Mr JACOBI - No, I wouldn't call it vacancy control.

Ms BROWN - I would.

Mr JACOBI - It's not a vacancy control process and it will not result in staff job loss. Nor will it impact on the delivery of government priorities. This really is simply capturing any savings that accrue when a position becomes vacant. It takes time to recruit a position and we're in a particularly competitive market. So, whether that recruitment takes a week or three months, the vacancy that arises will contribute to our savings target.

I think it's really important to take this opportunity to mention that we deliver a number of frontline services across the whole department, be that our biosecurity inspectors, our rangers at visitor centres, our laboratory testing scientists. I don't like to classify those as frontline positions, but they are frontline services, and my staff and I are very conscious of the importance of recruiting to those positions quickly, but we need to consider every position on its own merit and the importance at a particular point in time. We do that now and we'll continue to do that.

Ms OGILVIE - If I could just add, because I wasn't certain when you're asking the question, if you were also wanting to know about the funding for the heritage sector grants, which is built into the Budget and you'll see that ends. I think part of your question might have been around that, so I can provide you some information on that.

The 2023-24 State Budget allocated, happily, \$4.5 million of new funding over three years to support Tasmania's historic heritage sector and to revitalise our unique properties, which are key drivers of visitation to the state. This is known as the Built Heritage Grant Scheme, which you will see in the budget administered by Heritage Tasmania and it's a major component of this funding package.

The grant scheme comprises two programs: conservation and activation grants. Around \$1.5 million was allocated across both programs for successful applicants all over Tasmania, and the activation grant recipients were announced in May this year. It's run by a grants assessment panel, but the \$4.5 million is over the three years. At the conclusion of that, we would have to reassess whether we're able or would like to do another grant round in a similar vein or will we look at things from a different perspective? So, I think that also addresses that question.

Ms BROWN - Can you guarantee that not one staff member will lose their job at Heritage Tasmania?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I'm advised. Mr Jacobi has advised me. We guarantee that.

Ms ROSOL - Minister, The goods shed is now heritage listed and Heritage Tasmania's works manual unequivocally states that relocating a significant structure will, in most circumstances, be unacceptable. Location and setting context are an important part of a cultural heritage listing and moving the goods shed to make way for a stadium is, according to its nominator, unacceptable. Minister, we've learnt that moving the goods shed is unfunded and an option is to pull it down, store it, re-erect it some time in the future, jammed in under the stadium and Cenotaph hill.

Minister, there are funds in the Budget for a variety of heritage-related outputs including supporting Tasmania's built heritage, but can you rule out using any heritage-related funding in the Budget to move the goods shed or will it be all funded by Macquarie Point Development Corporation?

Ms OGILVIE - I do think we have some updated information on this and - are you able to assist me?

Ms FORD - The Budget that funds Heritage Tasmania and the activities of the Tasmanian Heritage Council are not designed for anything to do with what would be happening

at Macquarie Point other than the funding of the work of the team in my works team to assess the submission and inform the Heritage Council's submission to the Tasmanian Planning Commission's integrated impact assessment of the proposal. So, I think your question seems to be saying: is some of the money going to be used? The answer is no.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you. What do you think of relocating the historic heritage-listed building to make way for a structure that's got no heritage values and will have further heritage impacts, including on the war memorial, the Cenotaph? What are your thoughts on that?

Ms OGILVIE - The protection of Tasmanian heritage is a very important thing and we balance that with the needs of a growing community and a growing sector.

The work I know that the Macquarie Point Development Corporation has been doing, particularly in relation to heritage assessments - and specifically I'm thinking about Aboriginal cultural heritage and other overlays - I think that has been quite well researched and well done. In relation, as we've said, to the costs of dealing with cultural heritage issues on site, that is one for the Macquarie Point Development Corporation and Department of State Growth.

I think Mel was also going to add a little bit more information about the process and then I will top and tail that on the way back.

Ms FORD - The process that we've been made aware of from the Tasmanian Planning Commission is:

The project of state significance process is outside of the *Historical Cultural Heritage Act* and the Tasmanian Heritage Council will not be making a statutory determination under that process. The Tasmanian Planning Commission has advised that the Macquarie Point stadium assessment process will be a 12-month process from the date of acceptance of the applicant's submission.

We've been advised that has happened as of today:

As an agency with a relevant interest, the Tasmanian Heritage Council will have the opportunity for input at several stages, the first of them being a high level response within 28 days of notification of acceptance of the applicant's submission.

Which is now, today.

The second stage will be where the planning commission's assessment panel will engage with technical experts in heritage matters to inform its draft integrated assessment report. And that, in my team, will be our Heritage Tasmania works team and they have that necessary technical expertise.

The third stage will be an invitation for public submissions in response to the Planning Commission assessment panel's draft integrated impact assessment report, and we have been advised that the planning commission will also conduct hearings as part of that process.

So, that's the process as we understand it.

Ms OGILVIE - You did ask what my personal view was and I'm happy to share some thoughts with you. As I move around the nation and look at this issue that every country has in relation to built heritage and how we protect it and how we maintain it - falling-in roofs, very expensive.

Tasmania being a heritage state, I'm more and more drawn to what I think is bit of a global movement around activation of heritage sites. We're doing a huge amount of work on this to provide opportunities for those who own heritage buildings or care about heritage buildings to do more to derive commercial revenue from them - for example, Woolmers - to be able to buy a ticket and go in and have a look at it, those sorts of things.

Many different good ideas are around. In relation to the goods shed, I think about activation and think about ways of preserving cultural heritage. Getting that balance right is very important and I know that the Tasmanian Heritage Council has not precluded it being moved as part of its perspective on appropriate secure stewardship of that building. I just want to be in the centre with this. Let's see what the proposal becomes. Let's see what the Macquarie Point corporation actually proposes to do. I certainly have a keen eye on it.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, are you concerned about governance arrangements at the Heritage Council?

Ms OGILVIE - The Heritage Council, yes. I have some issues that I think we have spoken about - now forgetting who was there - yesterday in the Legislative Council. I'm sorry. It's all blurring into one. Governance issues come up from time to time. We did have dialogue yesterday evening about particular issues relating to training, a review of particular decisions that were made by people.

I think we have - and I will ask the department to add some value to this - but we are currently rewriting and negotiating the statement of expectations. This is the document by which we agree how we're going to go forward together. Governance is important. Having said that, I think Jason Jacobi might be able to add some value on what we have done and are doing.

Mr JACOBI - Thank you, minister. I thank the member for the question. I wish to advise the committee of a correction to a statement that was made at the heritage Estimates hearing yesterday. The committee was advised by the minister the internal review of the department was underway. However, it has in fact been completed. I'll expand on that if you like.

Ms OGILVIE - My apologies.

Mr JACOBI - In undertaking a review of the governance arrangements, I appointed an independent expert in this field, Mr Frank Neasey, and he provided me with advice in relation to the particular review of the governance policies and practices of the Heritage Council.

Mr Neasey's report was provided to the department on 17 June 2024. In the course of his investigations and inquiries, it would be normal for us to provide any relevant information of any investigations that are undertaken to the Integrity Commission if we believe them to be relevant or if they were requested. But, in this case, the process that Mr Neasey undertook related to matters involving the Heritage Council processes, in particular on governance and the declaration of interests and the induction of new members.

I'm pleased to advise that those matters have been incorporated, as the minister outlined, into an updated statement of expectations, and that's now been forwarded to the chair of the Heritage Council for consideration at their October meeting.

Once the updated statement has been considered by the Heritage Council, it will prepare a statement of intent in response, and both documents will be published on the THC website.

I'm also advised that THC members undertook additional training on identifying and managing risks in April this year, and that included governance and disclosure of interests. I think that adequately satisfies the question.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you, minister and Mr Jacobi for that answer. I'm particularly concerned about what appears to be a conflict of interest where the council refused to accept a property at a meeting on April 2023 and then it appears that the deputy chair of the council purchased the property and it was notified at the next council meeting of June 2023. You've just outlined that Mr Neasey has conducted a review of the governance arrangements, and I'm not sure whether you indicated that there's been an Integrity Commission referral as an outcome of that. You mentioned that it could have been an outcome. I'm not sure if there has been. Are you able to table Mr Neasey's report to the committee, and, minister, are you confident now that all conflicts of interest are managed appropriately with the Heritage Council.

Ms OGILVIE - I might just ask Mr Jacobi to speak to that.

Mr JACOBI - I'll be prepared to consider providing aspects of the report, but the report goes into some personal matters and circumstances and it would be inappropriate for that to be disclosed. I'm happy to go and look at the report and see what can be provided and take that as a question on notice.

Ms JOHNSTON - That would be appreciated. Do you want to put that as a question on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - How long do you think that would take? It might be worthwhile.

Mr JACOBI - It might take a little bit of time. We need to be careful about what we consider to be released.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, the last further question, are you confident now that conflicts of interest are appropriately managed at the Heritage Council at the moment?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I think so. The department, as you've heard, has done quite a lot of work in relation to that. So, I think we're in a good space. In the statement of expectations that we're working on, we'll lean on that question of governance as well. But we will always do what we need to do. There's training -

Ms JOHNSTON - That statement of expectations will be completed by?

Ms OGILVIE - That is a good question, I think it is sitting -

PUBLIC

Mr JACOBI - It has to be considered by the Heritage Council, so, it'll be a matter for the Heritage Council to table their response.

Ms OGILVIE - We want to get it right. Well, hopefully, soon.

CHAIR - Just noting the time, I will try to keep the answers from now on within the time limit.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry. How much time do we have left, Chair?

CHAIR - Pretty much exactly 20 minutes.

Mr FAIRS - Minister, very quickly - and thank you, Chair - can you update us on the new Discovery Heritage website and how to help Tasmanians and visitors explore and engage our amazing and rich heritage?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. Yes, and I do have some information that I'd like to table and provide. I'm absolutely thrilled to announce - and I will provide those for handing around - the launch of Discover Heritage, a user friendly interactive web platform that provides easy access to the thousands of heritage places and sites listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

This innovative platform marks a major milestone in our ongoing efforts to promote and activate Tasmania's rich built heritage whilst ensuring it remains accessible to everyone. We know Tasmania is renowned for our remarkable heritage, from our historical villages to early convict agricultural industrial sites. Now built heritage is not only a point of pride but a defining feature of the Tasmanian lifestyle as well as a key attraction for visitors to our state. Much of our heritage remains intact, setting us apart from other regions in Australia and offering both Tasmanians and tourists an immersive experience in our past.

With the launch of Discover Heritage, exploring this rich history has never been easier. The website provides multiple ways to search for heritage-listed places by location, architectural style, chronological period, designer or even notable people associated with the site. So, I encourage everybody to get on board, have a look at it. It's really interesting. A lot of work's gone into it, with great thanks to the department for the work that's been done.

It's a mobile friendly platform - you can use it directly from your smartphone. So, if you're out and about walking through a heritage place, you would be able to look up and find stories of the buildings and the built heritage as you go - and detailed information on 16 distinct architectural styles. Trying to keep this short because you do not have too much time, but also we wish to ensure that we can educate the broader community about the stories that are embedded in each and every house and each and every street and all of our beautiful heritage places. We want public engagement; we want people to enjoy it.

That is in line with our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. We are preserving and activating our built heritage and we want to save it, preserve it and ensure it's loved by future generations. So, I encourage everybody to have a look and enjoy a deep dive into heritage.

Ms BROWN - Minister, the online heritage database is very welcome and congratulations to all the staff who have put so much hard work into it. I can already see how

much hard work has been put into that. So, well done, Heritage Tasmania. But what of Tasmanac, the online website that has been funded? It's currently blank. So, what's?

Ms OGILVIE - I don't know what the answer to that is. Let's check. We're going to find somebody who can help with the answer. Mary Mulcahy, TMAG, has some information on this one.

Ms MULCAHY - It was a pilot that was funded and a pilot was released. We haven't done any further work on it. A lot of it's based on the Digital Cultural Experience work we've been doing with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, with UTAS and with Libraries Tasmania. The whole of that project is dependent on a platform that will allow all the digitised elements of collections to be loaded and made available to the public.

The project is that we have a platform. All the organisations received it last year and have been customising it to their own collections. TMAG has prioritised this year working on the current database and making sure it's actually safe because it's potentially a cybersecurity risk at the moment, so, it's taking time. The Tasmanac element of it was a pilot. It had been put out as, I guess, a beta case, it wasn't a final product. We're looking at, in the longer term, creating the platform that those four partners are working on, enabling that platform to be one that every single museum and art gallery in Tasmania can potentially put their collections up on in a digital space. So, it's a long-term project. That Tasmanac is one of the outcomes of that. It's a project that's, I guess, on pause at the moment but there's a longer-term vision for it.

Ms BROWN - Can you advise how much funding was put into that trial?

Ms MULCAHY - It started a long time before I started in the job, so I'm not sure. We could let you know if you would like that.

Ms BROWN - Yes, great. Thank you for that. Minister, can you please advise how members of the Tasmanian Heritage Council are still members after a decade?

Ms OGILVIE - My understanding is there's no limit on the number of terms a member can serve for. I'll just make sure I've got that correct. Yes, there's no limit. The Tasmanian Heritage Council, as prescribed in the act - I don't have the section in front of me, but my understanding is there is no limit on the number of terms people can serve.

Ms BROWN - Can you advise why the start dates for the heritage councillors have been removed from the Heritage Tasmania website?

Ms OGILVIE - No, we'd have to ask that. I have them here.

Ms BROWN - I believe they're not on the website, though.

Ms OGILVIE - We can table this. I don't know why that would be. We'd have to ask a question, but if you want them, you can have them.

Ms BROWN - I would love them. Thank you.

Ms ROSOL - The Hobart Cenotaph is 100 years old next year and, quite rightly, it's revered as a sacred ground for RSL Tasmania and many in its sub-branches. Its reverential

PUBLIC

ambience and sightlines are some of the values recognised and contributing to its heritage listing. Until now, that's been protected by provisions in the planning scheme and a 15-metre height limit at Macquarie Point. However, a 54-metre-high stadium, 25 per cent higher than assurances that were originally given, has now been shown to destroy three of those important sightlines at the Cenotaph. The Cenotaph and its values will be diminished by the stadium and the heritage report rates the impacts as very high.

Minister, have you sought advice as to whether the heritage listing of the Cenotaph is at risk? Should the protections for key values like sightlines not be enough to stop approval of the stadium and those values lost?

Ms OGILVIE - I have not personally sought advice, but the department has an update on this matter. The stadium doesn't sit under my ministerial purview but I have some information here in relation to the Macquarie Point Development Corporation and the Project of State Significance (POSS) process. My understanding is that process will include public consultation and engagement with relevant agencies, the Hobart City Council, key stakeholders, including the RSL, and all members of the public. The Heritage Council would probably wish to make a contribution at that stage as well. I understand that Mel may have some more information in relation to that specifically.

Ms FORD - The development of a stadium at Macquarie Point will be considered under the POSS process. Under this process, the Heritage Council is not a decision-maker. While it is a relevant regulator, it will be invited to contribute to the process but it has no statutory powers and provisions under its act.

I'm not sure how clearly this is understood, but the POSS process actually goes further than the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act* in terms of considering the impact of the stadium proposal on heritage places. This is through the inclusion of a 200-metre zone around the stadium area which will capture additional heritage-listed places, including the Cenotaph. Part of the POSS process is also to consider other factors that would be wider than what the Heritage Council would typically consider under a development application under its act. For example, the financial and economic impacts are not things the Heritage Council would consider. So, in terms of the process and what is being considered, it's much more rigorous than if the Heritage Council were looking at a matter just on its own, under its own act.

I guess that process needs to play out. At the moment, we're at the stage where the submission has only been formally provided to the Heritage Council today. There's now quite a bit of work to do to assess the thousands of pages in that submission.

Ms ROSOL - Are you confident you will have sufficient voice and opportunity? It sounds like you'll have several opportunities to feed into it. Are you confident that you'll be able to speak up strongly on behalf of the heritage values of the area?

Ms FORD - From the process that's been described to us, the Heritage Council will have that opportunity.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, the Tasmanian Transport Museum holds an incredibly important collection when it comes to -

Ms OGILVIE - It's fabulous.

Ms JOHNSTON - It's fabulous, absolutely, I'm glad you enjoy it, as do many Tasmanians. They are volunteer-based and, essentially, self-funded for their works. You can appreciate that the restoration of some of their exhibits is quite expensive. They have recently written to the Transport minister seeking funding for a range of projects, including reconstruction of the railway turntable, installation of 13 commercial-grade roller-doors to be able to protect those heritage assets, and asphaltting of the entry area forecourt, which is important to the tourism aspect of the business they conduct. They missed the 2024-25 budget cycle. Will you liaise with the Transport minister to try to ensure that in future budgets the Tasmanian Transport Museum's heritage collection is funded appropriately?

Ms OGILVIE - I sure will. I love their museum. I've been out there and had a deep-dive tour. It's fantastic, and the love and effort that goes into their exhibits is just incredible. It's beautifully positioned, too, for future tourism benefit as well. I think it would be great if the Transport minister would come on board, no pun intended but, of course, pun intended. Happy to speak with the minister to see what we can do. Yes, the Budget has landed, but there are future budgets and let's see what might be achieved.

Ms JOHNSTON - Thank you, and further to that, with reference to your answer regarding the Goods Shed and the importance of using heritage properties and activation, the Transport Museum has put a significant amount of time into activating its rail collection in terms of its engines and trying to ensure that the public can get an appreciation through experiencing train rides. Critical to that is access to the main line, particularly from Glenorchy, that at the moment they are heading north, but they would like to head south. However, that is under jeopardy if there is a bus rapid transit corridor. What actions are you taking to ensure that the important heritage aspects of the rail corridor are protected so that we can use them in the future?

Ms OGILVIE - I understand where you're coming from with that question. I will be very open with you: I haven't looked at this. I understand what you're saying. I know you've been a very strong advocate for this for a long time and I applaud your efforts. That is something that I would need to have a look at. I'm just getting a little note here that the Transport Museum is not registered on the Heritage Register, so there may be some steps that could be taken. I'm happy to have a look at it, but I want to be really clear, I haven't done that to date.

Ms JOHNSTON - Just to be clear, it's not registered because the site itself is not heritage, but their collection is and they have engineering heritage status as well.

Ms OGILVIE - Yeah, it's fabulous. Agree with you. Heated agreement.

CHAIR - Anything further? Given there's probably three minutes left, I might go to Ms Brown.

Ms BROWN - Thank you. Just bear with me one second. I had my question up and I've lost it. Minister, I wanted to have a chat to you regarding the heritage forum earlier this year that you attended. There were calls from the participants for more funding, not less funding in this Budget. I'm curious about how you are planning to attend the next forum considering the outrage from the participants who did attend asking for more funding and that you will be attending having provided less funding. Has the budget for the forum been axed for future years?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I just want to make sure we're talking about the same thing, which is the Heritage Summit?

Ms BROWN - Summit.

Ms OGILVIE – Yes, and isn't it fantastic? It's an innovation that we were able to get going in fairly recent years. I call it the 'Historic'. The second Historic Heritage Summit was held in Launceston, 17 May, following a successful inaugural event in 2023 which brought heritage stakeholders together to collaborate and discuss sector priorities for the coming year. It helps us to do that strategy piece of work, thought leadership right across the sector, bringing people together into one room. It's not only socially great, but it's great for thinking and collaboration as well. Many issues were raised at that summit and -

Ms BROWN - I assume funding was top of the list.

CHAIR - Ms Brown.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, we're saying the same thing, so that's fine. In particular, I think it's a great credit to everybody who worked so hard to get the \$4.5 million funding over three years, which I was really delighted to secure and announce and deploy. That is something I'd like to see continue, particularly on the activation side, as we've heard is so important. All of this work is based on work we've done and are continuing to do with Stenning & Associates - we call it the Stenning Report - around the value of our heritage and cultural heritage in Tasmania and what we need to do, how much investment we need to make to continue to love it and look after it properly, and that is something that the Heritage Summit is focused on.

I don't think there's a problem with actually funding a Heritage Summit gathering. We will absolutely be doing that. It's a highlight of my calendar and others', I assume. I think I speak on behalf of the department to say I don't think that's a problem. But I do agree with you that we need to all push hard for more funding for heritage and I will continue to raise my voice.

Ms BROWN - Great. I have one more question if there is time.

CHAIR - There's less than a minute, so go for it.

Ms BROWN - Great. I just wanted some clarification on the savings strategy, if it'll be shared equally between Heritage Tasmania and the Heritage Council.

Ms OGILVIE - I'll just ask Jason about that, no.

The Heritage Council is not subject to the efficiency dividend as an independent organisation.

CHAIR - Great, and on that, the time being, 3.34 p.m., the time for scrutiny has expired. Thank you, minister. Thank you for all members who have participated for their patience and cooperation.

The Committee adjourned at 3.34 p.m.