



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Hon. Nic Street MP

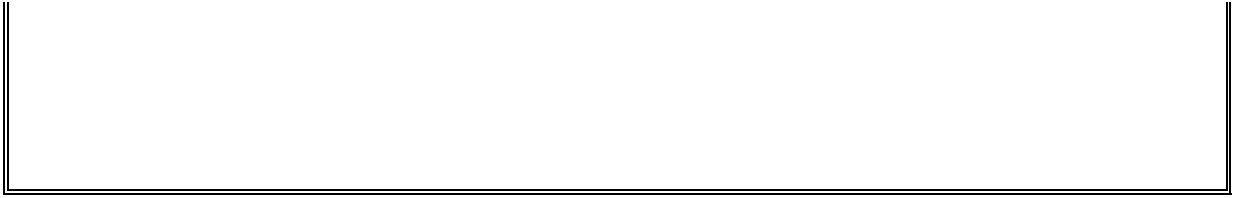
Thursday 26 September 2024

MEMBERS

Mr Simon Wood MP (Chair)
Mr Josh Willie MP (Deputy Chair)
Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP
Mrs Rebekah Pentland MP

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Mr Dean Winter MP
Mr Vica Bayley MP
Mr Mark Shelton MP
Ms Rebecca White MP
Ms Anita Dow MP
Ms Helen Burnet MP
Mrs Helen Beswick MP
Mr David O'Byrne MP
Ms Kristie Johnston MP



IN ATTENDANCE

HON. NIC STREET MP

Minister for Finance, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Sport and Events

Tim Lovibond

Chief of Staff, Ministerial Office

Gary Swain

Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance

Jonathon Root

Deputy Secretary, Revenue, Gaming and Licensing, Department of Finance

Dean Burgess

Acting Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Governance, Department of Finance

Mathew Healey

Acting Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Mike Mogridge

Acting Executive Director, Office of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Craig Limkin

Secretary, Department of State Growth

Denise McIntyre

Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Housing, Infrastructure and Planning, Department of State Growth

James Avery

Chief Executive Officer, Stadiums Tasmania

Anne Beach

Chief Executive Officer, Macquarie Point Development Corporation

PUBLIC

The Committee met at 9.00 a.m.

CHAIR (Mr Wood) - Good morning, everyone. The time being 9.00 a.m., the examination of Estimates of the Minister for Finance will commence. Welcome, minister. Could you please introduce the persons at the table?

Mr STREET - To my immediate left is my Chief of Staff, Tim Lovibond. To his left is Jonathon Root, Deputy Secretary of Revenue, Gaming and Licensing. To my right is Gary Swain, Secretary of Department of Treasury, and to his right is Dean Burgess, Acting Deputy Secretary, Economic and Financial Policy.

CHAIR - The time scheduled for Estimates of the Minister for Finance is two 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 the 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 that it can be included in correspondence to the minister.

I would also remind everybody that the microphones are sensitive, so please be careful of knocking them when you're moving paperwork around your desk space. Also, it is difficult for Hansard to differentiate when people are talking over each other. I would ask members to please speak one at a time to assist with this. Thank you.

Would the minister like to make an opening statement?

Mr STREET - I have a very brief opening statement. I am pleased to be here today as the Minister for Finance. When I took on this new portfolio responsibility, I was aware of the challenge that lay ahead in developing the 2024-25 Budget. I am conscious of the need to carefully balance the responsible management of the state's finances with the need to continue to invest in essential services and infrastructure, and provide cost-of-living relief to Tasmanians. As the Treasurer has made clear, now is not the time to pull back from supporting Tasmanians. National inflationary and global supply chain pressures have impacted the cost of living and the cost of doing business.

As the Finance minister, I'm very aware that revenue from state taxation is an important source of funding for the government. In 2024-25, state taxation revenue is forecast to be \$1.8 billion, increasing across the forward Estimates. Offsetting this revenue is the cost of providing relief through a range of targeted tax concessions to provide support for Tasmanians when they need it the most. A number of these concessions are, however, time-limited and this is reflected in the revenue profile across the Budget and forward Estimates. That doesn't mean that the concessions will cease, but more that the policy decision is yet to be made, which we will do in full consideration of the economic climate at the time.

Ensuring more Tasmanians are able to own their own home is critical. I'm proud to be doing my bit as the Minister for Finance. We provide a range of concessions and exemptions from stamp duty for first home buyers, as well as land tax relief and also payroll tax exemptions for employers who hire Tasmanian apprentices, helping more young people into work. Providing relief from state taxes is one key way this government can assist Tasmanians, from those buying their first home to businesses looking to employ young Tasmanians.

PUBLIC

I'd like to quickly note that the Treasurer has already been before the Estimates committees for this year, so if there are any questions that are better answered through that portfolio, the Secretary will likely be able to provide some high-level commentary.

Mr WINTER - Minister, your government announced a mandatory card-based play arrangement for electronic gaming machines (EGM) a couple of years ago. It's been delayed but I understand from the recent consultation paper that the government is still committed to it. I asked this question last year to the former minister. It was about budget paper 2, volume 1, page 106, which shows the revenue stream flowing from gaming taxes. It shows that it's relatively flat. I wanted to understand - I understood last year why it hadn't been updated, because it was relatively new, but we're 12 months down the track. Why have those revenue estimates not been adjusted given that the very intention of your policy is to reduce turnover in gaming?

Mr STREET - I'll defer to Jonathon Root for that answer. We got this question in the Legislative Council as well.

Mr ROOT - Thank you, minister. It is certainly the case that there will be an update to the revenue projections once we get to the stage where we've got the final design signed off and the time frame confirmed. As you would see from the consultation paper, the first phase is in venues, the second phase is in casinos. We haven't put down the time line for casinos at this stage. We have kept the projections pretty flat, as you identified. In other circumstances there may have been a smaller amount of growth through there, but until we have both the time lines and the final design set in stone it's difficult to come up with precisely, particularly in the first year, what those numbers might look like.

It is also the case that there are challenges around doing these sorts of projections, but there are some things going on nationally which will give us a better insight so that we can come up with a more accurate estimate. For example, Crown Casino has a mandatory pre-commitment system in place that came in December and we certainly anticipate through this year that we'll be seeing some numbers on the impact of that. Obviously that's an important estimate for industry as well as for care and concern in seeing what the anticipated impact would be.

Mr WINTER - Minister, I understand it's very difficult to predict exactly what the impact of the policy is going to be. I understand that. I also understand that it is completely not plausible that these estimates of revenue could possibly happen if you have the system in place, there is going to be a reduction, that's the design of it. Has the government done any work to model the impact the card would have on state revenue?

Mr STREET - Again, I'll defer to Johnathon, but as he was saying, they are looking at the impact that the card will have with its introduction at Crown Casino in Victoria. That will inform some of the work that they do.

Mr WINTER - I understand that bit, but has the government done any work itself or is the government aware of any work specific to the design of your card system that would tell us what the impact is going to be?

Mr ROOT - The first thing I'll say is that the policy intent of this harm minimisation initiative is not around specific revenue targets or player expenditure targets or anything like that. This is about harm minimisation and a player protection initiative. With that context, as I

think the government has said a number of times in the previous minister, this really is a first for a system that is both card-based with pre-commitment across multiple venues.

Mr WINTER - Is that a first in the nation or first in the world?

Mr ROOT - Norway had a similar sort of program. The approach they took was very different and so it's not really a correlative. What they did was shut down all of their machines and then they built this system around pre-commitment and so on and then started it all up again, so a really different sort of thing and that's not what's going to happen here.

There's been a voluntary system in Victoria, as I touched on; there's a mandatory system, so it's a very different sort of program, but we have certainly been keeping a close eye on and done background work on what's happened around the world and where things are going in other jurisdictions. We do have a mandatory pre-commitment system in Tasmania in the premium player lounges in casinos and that's been in operation for some years now. I don't have specific numbers around the impact in that environment. Where we collect data, it doesn't go to individuals who are in those environments. As an anecdotal observation, the premium player lounges in casinos are doing quite well; it certainly hasn't been a significant impact.

There have been a number of inquiries from going back to 2010 with the Productivity Commission inquiry into gambling that have come up with a range of numbers. Industry has made estimates itself. They've ranged from downplaying the number of problem gamblers that are actually in the system to some quite large numbers when the policies around mandatory pre-commitment have come into play.

We've got a fair bit of background work done. We have some sense of where things might play out. We are not in a position to come up with some actual numbers at this stage.

Mr SWAIN - If I could, I was just going to make the point that state tax revenue is forecast to be \$1.8 billion in 2024-25. Of that amount, something between 13 to 15 per cent comes from gambling-related activities, of which we're talking about a subset of 15 per cent. In the context of the overall state revenue, bearing in mind taxation in totality is 20 per cent of state revenue, we're talking about a fairly small element of the total state revenue base.

Mr WINTER - Thanks. The other question that I got to last year but we didn't get to fully explore was the net impact of the Future Gaming Market reform on state revenue. Last year, Mr Root might not remember, we went through what the net impact of the changes had been on the budget; if I recall correctly, at the time the bill went through the parliament, the estimation was that the state would be around \$20 million better off per year. Have you looked at that number in terms of the net impact of the reforms on revenue? And can you give us an update as to what the impact has been?

Mr ROOT - Yes, I do recall that conversation. My answer at the time was based around taking the 2022-23 numbers. Just to dial back a little bit, the government's policy announcement when it came out around future gaming markets, at that stage because of COVID, the only numbers we had were 2018-19. The treasurer at the time, who was the relevant minister, was talking about an uplift of about \$8.5 million in terms of taxation. When we crunched the numbers last year on 2022-23, I think the number was \$9.5 million.

PUBLIC

If you look purely at the same year and applying the previous tax rates and the new tax rates to that, the outcome for 2023-24 has been an uplift of \$7.5 million in taxation and CSL and the movements there have been a little bit lower than the anticipation for two reasons. Basically, the Keno operator had some difficulties when they changed their system last year and it led to some outages and keno revenues have dropped slightly. The other thing that's happened is casino EGM players have done quite well and when you're comparing apples with apples in the same year, if the tax rates went down in casinos and then revenues go up, then the gap becomes higher. That is essentially what went on. The \$20 million number you may be thinking of is the commentary around the impact on the Federal Group of losing the network gaming, which was \$20 million.

Mr WINTER - That's in line with your expectation, the \$7.5 million?

Mr ROOT - Yes.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, I want to stick with the mandatory pre-commitment cards. When it was announced by the Treasurer, Mr Ferguson, apart from vested interest in the industry, there was near-widespread support for it and the recognition that it would ease the pain on vulnerable Tasmanians. We did genuinely see the human side of the Treasurer and his commitment to this as a system, and I think we all acknowledge that he was driving it strongly. Just two days ago, community advocates released some data they believe there's \$1.4 billion worth of community losses that have been sustained since the 2018 election, on poker machines. In my electorate and in Mr Willie's electorate in Glenorchy, it's estimated to be \$125 million alone since 2018.

All the way through this, vested interest like the hotelier's association have aggressively campaigned against this card, have claimed that it can't work and won't work, and earlier in the year when the delay was announced, they again attacked Mr Ferguson for this card with very much an 'I told you so' type approach. There's a lot of fear that with Mr Ferguson no longer responsible for this card, the government's commitment to it and its ability to deliver it will be lost with him. Minister, I'm looking for an ironclad guarantee from you that it is still government policy, you are still pulling out all stops to overcome the challenges and get this card in place as soon as possible, in the interests of vulnerable Tasmanians.

Mr STREET - I've had this question when I was sworn in as the Finance minister, Mr Bailey, and I have had it in the media since then. The government's commitment to implementing this card has not changed. My commitment is the same as Mr Ferguson's commitment. The delay was unfortunate but necessary. I would make the point that it wasn't me who signed off on the delay. I was on leave at the time and Mr Ferguson was acting as the Finance minister at the time as well. So, any correlation that people tried to make between me becoming Finance minister and the delay being announced is erroneous as well. We are absolutely committed to the introduction of this card.

What I will say is that when you're dealing with an external organisation that is developing a bespoke system like this, MaxGaming will do everything within its power to deliver it to the time frame that it has set and we will keep the Tasmanian public updated on the progress of it. But I can sit here and look you in the eye and tell you that the government's commitment to the PCG has not changed.

PUBLIC

Mr BAYLEY - That's very welcome. Can you give us a bit of an overview of some of the - I think they were described as - challenges from MaxGaming? I guess it's a recommitment by them to a time line. Can you talk us through some of those challenges and progress in addressing them?

Mr STREET - I'll defer to Jonathon on that to talk about that because they are the ones who to deal day to day with MaxGaming.

Mr ROOT - There's a bit of context in the lead up to the government's policy announcement that's important to understanding the time lines. The government policy announcement came following the Liquor and Gaming Commission's inquiry that came out of the legislative amendments. At the time that inquiry was underway, there was a tender process in play to appoint the network operator, and as part of that tender process we asked tenderers to commit to being able to deliver this sort of player card, cashless gaming infrastructure. Through that process, however, because the inquiry was still underway, we didn't have a clear idea of what the system requirements were going to be.

The government policy announcement came out in, I think, late 2022, at which point the operator was fully engaged with rolling out the new network around the venues. They basically had nine months to completely retool all of the venues in Tasmania, cut over to the new system, do any customisation of their system to meet Tasmanian requirements for a drop-dead date of 1 July 2023 to switch over.

They took the opportunity to basically rebuild their network operating system for Tasmania, so we have a very up-to-date system running the network in Tasmania. But one of the outcomes of that was that it was difficult for them to start the development of the player card gaming system until they'd rolled out the underlying network infrastructure. Their design work commenced following that.

There are a couple of things about the Tasmanian policy that are very different to the sorts of systems that are operating around Australia at the moment. One of those is that it's a mandatory system. If you look at, say, a voluntary system in Victoria, the requirement for its availability is lower. If the system fails, games keep going. Whereas with a mandatory system, it has to have really robust, high-level infrastructure design and so there was a requirement for extra work in there. The other component that's very unique is the cashless system. Generally, where these systems happen, say in Crown Casino, it's one entity. You're not allowing for money on a card to be moved across venues and there are complexities with that. In working through with MaxGaming on the best way to approach that, they're looking to get a payment services operator, a banking provider rather than building it themselves a banking provider, rather than building it themselves.

Those complexities are the design complexities that we've been going through. They basically turned around the initial design between when they bedded down the new system around 23 September 2023; by December, there was a consultation paper that went to industry. The time line on that was to give consultation by the end of January. Then a design paper came back to government in February. That was signed off after the election, and then things have been progressing.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, supplementary to that is that MaxGaming, as they are rolling out the system, they're an industry partner for the Hospitality Association. They're part of the

system. They are profiting from the system as it stands at the moment. Can you understand and don't you think there's scepticism in their motivations for actually delivering a pre-commitment card model? What are you doing and what can you do to ensure that the very real conflict of interest that sits with MaxGaming is addressed? We are seeing these delays and we are concerned that the conflicts of interest embedded in contracting them to deliver it are potentially unsurmountable.

Mr STREET - That's a contract matter for Treasury. I'll go to Gary.

Mr SWAIN - I can answer generically. I think if a profit-maximising firm is providing services, they stand to make more revenue and more profit once the services are fully rolled out, and they have a brand to protect in terms of future opportunities across the rest of Australia, given some of the findings of the national study into gambling points to the kind of system that Tasmania is already moving to.

I don't know if Jonathon is able to add detail but, broadly, yes, they're part of the industry, but they get paid for providing services.

Mr STREET - With other states looking to potentially roll this out, there is an incentive for MaxGaming to get it right in Tasmania to demonstrate its effectiveness.

Mr BAYLEY - You acknowledge that there's a conflict of interest there though?

Mr STREET - No, I wouldn't acknowledge that there's a conflict of interest. I think it's a fee for service with a commercial company.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, as part of the government's 2030 Strong Plan, you committed to increasing the frequency of responsible conduct of gambling training. Can you please provide an update on this?

Mr STREET - Our government is committed to poker machine harm reduction while also providing the opportunity for people to exercise their free choice. That's why, as part of our 2030 Strong Plan, we committed to implementing a number of poker machine harm reduction initiatives, along with the PCG.

We've committed to \$100,000 to promote awareness of the Gambling Exclusion Scheme, which includes third-party exclusions. We're examining the option of implementing automatic responsible gambling systems as part of gaming machine software for the detection of potential problem gambling behaviour in real time, and engaging with venues interested in using facial recognition technology to help identify excluded persons.

Regarding the frequency of training that you're talking about, Mr Shelton, I've recently issued a ministerial direction requesting the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission implement a requirement that responsible conduct of gambling training be undertaken every two years. This was published in the *Tasmanian Government Gazette* this week.

Employees that interact with patrons are currently required to complete a Responsible Conduct of Gambling course approved by the commission within three months of commencing their employment and every five years thereafter.

PUBLIC

The commission is best placed to determine what is required from a practical perspective to increase the frequency of the training requirement. I understand that an amendment to the commission's Responsible Gambling Code of Practice and other regulatory instruments is likely to be required.

In implementing the direction, I've requested the commission consider how more frequent training is to be provided, the cost to employees of the additional training, the ability of registered training organisations to deliver additional courses, and opportunities for industry to support the training requirements.

The government's expectation is that this increase in the frequency of training should occur as soon as practicable, and this has been included in the direction issued to the commission.

The government will work with key stakeholders to implement this commitment to ensure responsible conduct of gambling training meets the needs of industry and helps to minimise harm from poker machines.

Mr WINTER - I'm just making a point. This committee, I think, is quite genuine so far in trying to extract information. I'm not sure why we need Dorothy Dixers in this circumstance, but perhaps the government could reflect on that.

There's a lot of interest in the card-based player system and I'm interested in the implementation of it. The Player Card and Cashless Gaming Public Consultation Paper points out on page 18:

There will be a phased approach to the introduction of a player card in gaming in Tasmania. The first phase will be implemented with a new system in December 2025.

That is 14 or 15 months away. Can you take me through the time line for implementing this? It seems very tight to get from a consultation paper in September this year to actually having it rolled out in December next year. That seems potentially impossible to do. Can you step out for me the time line for implementation?

Mr STREET - I'll defer to Jonathon on that.

Mr ROOT - It is a tight time frame, there's no doubting that. I would say in defence of MaxGaming's capacity to deliver, they delivered a more complex role which was completely retooling the entire network in nine months from their appointment as the preferred tenderer in late 2022 until 1 July 2023, and they had a drop-dead date, because on 1 July there was no alternative. It was either have it running in every venue or switch it off. So they have a good record of delivery.

The time line broadly looks like this: the consultation paper will close in the middle of October. We will also get an updated design brief from MaxGaming at around that time. The commission will then go through what's come out of consultation and what that says about any changes that might need to be made to the design work, and the design will be finalised and signed off. MaxGaming is looking at a nine-month period to finalise the implementation and do the rollout, so that'll commence in March. From what I said earlier, this is a similar sort of

PUBLIC

time frame to what they took to do the previous block of work, so it's certainly doable, assuming that no major hurdles come out in the interim. That's the time frame, and it is achievable.

There is a bit of flexibility in there, but there are risks around acquisition of hardware and those sorts of things. Obviously, the task involves procuring 2500 card readers, installing them on the sides of all of the machines that are out there, hooking those up to the network, and rolling out card writers in venues. On the government side, it's doing education work; with the commission, it's doing guidelines and rules and so on. There's a lot of work there, but it is doable.

Mr WINTER - I would call that ambitious. When did the government or commission make the determination that it was unachievable to roll this system out by December this year?

Mr STREET - Again, that was an operational decision, so I'll defer to Jonathon.

Mr ROOT - It was effectively when the first-phase design brief came through. MaxGaming had put in there some time estimates around what would be required. There was some uncertainty around some of the strategy for things like testing and piloting the system.

Mr WINTER - When was the first-phase design?

Mr ROOT - The first-phase design was received by Treasury in February. Obviously, then there was an election. It was signed off in April by the government, and with that effluxion of time it pushed things out a bit. The December 2024 time line was quite ambitious, and with the delays that were inherent in what was going on at that time, it did naturally push it out, and I think we've built in some additional time for consultation as well.

The government was quite responsive to some criticisms around the degree of consultation that had occurred previously and asked to do a broader consultation, so that's been added into the system as well. It's essentially around providing the capacity to ensure that the technical design is right rather than pushing -

Mr WINTER - Given that the government was aware that it wasn't possible to deliver this program by the due date of December this year in February, why was the Treasurer, Michael Ferguson, on radio in March telling Leon Compton that he thought it was deliverable by December?

Mr STREET - Chair, I can't possibly answer that question. That's a question for the Treasurer.

Mr WINTER - It always seems difficult. I have to say, I think the time lines you're talking about here are extremely ambitious. Just to go back through that time frame, you will be getting a design brief in October, which starts in four days. Then you are going to provide that design brief - when will MaxGaming get the design brief?

Mr ROOT - MaxGaming are building the design brief. They're the ones who are doing the design. They're the operator who will be -

Mr WINTER - So you provide the brief to them to do the design. Is that right?

Mr ROOT - All of that's already done. The consultation paper sets out essentially how it will all work. There was a previous consultation paper in December, which again set out at a high level how it will all work. The technical design work is not what the government does, because that's talking about how you turn those functional requirements in the system design - how it will work - into a technically implementable system. MaxGaming is doing that work now.

What will happen once the consultation process closes is that we will go through that consultation to see if there are issues raised by industry, care and concern groups or the general public that speak to some change required in that design. We don't anticipate that will be major. We'll then work with MaxGaming to tweak the design that they're already working on. We're anticipating to get the next-to-final technical design at about the same time the consultation closes, so that then we can merge them both together and then there'll be a final design.

Mr WINTER - Just to follow up - it is the last one on this; I appreciate your allowing me to do that, Chair and the Greens - when you talk about the design, are you talking about them actually having already commenced the development of the software that will underpin the system? Because earlier you talked about this being quite a unique system. Are they currently writing the software that underpins the system at this point in time?

Mr ROOT - They're currently finalising the specifications at a technical design level that would then enable their programming changes and so on to occur -

Mr WINTER - So they do the software design completely and wholly from October to March? They'll have that period of time to -

Mr ROOT - That work will flow. The March period will encompass also some further software design work and so on. They have a system currently that they operate in Queensland. There's some further work required to make that sort of system work for Tasmania.

Mr BAYLEY - I let that go because I'm really interested in MaxGaming's involvement in writing the programming and delivering this, but I want to go back to my previous line of questioning. I hear that there are opportunities for MaxGaming around the country and other jurisdictions are looking at this, but the reality is we've seen how hard the pokies and the gambling lobby nationally have focused on Tasmania, because they are so afraid that if Tasmania breaks the mould and starts to put in positive steps in terms of harm minimisation and starts to rein in problem gambling and the harm that it does to communities, the gambling lobby is going to lose a hell of a lot of money.

We know that there was national money that went into the 2018 elections, so hearing this hasn't given me a whole lot of confidence around the delays that we have had. The government has chosen an industry partner to deliver an activity that, at the end of the day, will cost industry itself hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The rest of the country is looking at Tasmania and putting a lot of their effort in. The other hotel associations, and the clubs and hotels associations and so forth are looking very closely at Tasmania. How can Tasmanians have confidence that these delays are not just kicking the can down the road and, at the end of the day, delaying the card to death because there's not the commitment there to deliver it in the first place?

Mr STREET - Because I'm sitting here telling you that the government's commitment has not changed to implementing this system, Mr Bayley. The decision for who was contracted

PUBLIC

to do the work is perhaps a matter that Gary can speak to. I've got every confidence in MaxGaming delivering this system. As I said before, it is a fee for service. As Gary also pointed out, there is reputational damage for MaxGaming if they don't get this right as well, and deliver a program that works.

Mr BAYLEY - Our concerns are around the government's commitments to the hoteliers' association. We understand the Premier, Mr Rockliff, met with the hoteliers' association prior to the election and gave them two commitments. One was that the mandatory pre-commitment card system would be scrapped and two would be that Mr Ferguson wouldn't be minister post-election. Now, obviously, Mr Ferguson isn't Finance minister post-election. The first has come to pass and we're deeply concerned about the second. Are you aware of this meeting? Have you got any knowledge of that?

Mr STREET - I'm not. You would have to ask the Premier about that. What I'm telling you is, sitting here as the Finance minister with responsibility for this policy, that the government's commitment to implementing the PCG has not changed since I became Finance minister.

Mr BAYLEY - Have you met with the hoteliers' association since becoming Finance minister?

Mr STREET - I had an informal meeting with Steve Old in my office after a particular media appearance where he felt that he was misrepresented and wanted to come and clarify his position. That's the only meeting I've had with him. I've also met with MaxGaming in the last month as well.

Mr BAYLEY - Was that the extent of the conversation with Steve Old? Just the misrepresentation of him in the media?

Mr STREET - My Chief of Staff just reminded me we talked about the JackJumpers as well, because he's the chair of the JackJumpers. But yes, it was to clarify his position.

Mr BAYLEY - Did he ask you to abandon the pre-commitment card?

Mr STREET - He did not. He understands my commitment as Finance minister and he understands the government's commitment and my responsibility.

Mr BAYLEY - Does he completely accept that this is happening and needs to happen and will continue to happen irrespective?

Mr STREET - I have no way of being able to read anybody's mind, let alone Steve Old's.

Mr BAYLEY - He didn't ask you directly to scrap the system?

Mr STREET - He did not.

Mr SWAIN - I was just going to say my understanding is MaxGaming, and Jon is going to be able to talk to this, were selected through competitive processes. I think the other thing that's worth pointing out is, there is significant employment in this space. In getting up to speed with this, I went through the previous socioeconomic study, which I think identified some

1200-odd people involved in the sector. Jonathon's comment before was that it's a mandatory take-up, so we also need to make sure that this works practically. It has to deliver. I think the minister is articulating the government's position on wanting to get on with this, but there's also a practical consideration that we have to make sure the system works smoothly when implemented.

Mr STREET - Just for absolute clarity as well around that conversation, he obviously made it clear that he disagreed with the card-based system. He did not ask me. He understood my commitment to it and didn't ask me to renege on the government's commitment. He's been very clear with me in the past as well on the industry's position as you would understand.

Mr ROOT - While we're on this output, I would like to clarify one thing that I said earlier to Mr Winter around the time line and the receipt of the design in February. I would say that was not to the government. The commission reviewed that design to qualify that it met with the requirements that they had set prior to that document going to the minister.

Mr WINTER - Are you able to tell us the date the government received the information?

Mr ROOT - It was once the new government was sworn in that that minute went down to them.

Mr WINTER - The government wasn't aware that there would be a delay until after the election?

Mr ROOT - That's correct, yes. That paper didn't go to the government until after the election, because that was the process.

Mr SHELTON - Can you please advise the committee how many Tasmanians are on the Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme?

Mr STREET - I can. For people experiencing difficulties with their gambling, the Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme provides a means for patrons to exclude themselves from gambling. We don't want any Tasmanian to lose more money than they can afford. The Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme allows for self-exclusions, venue exclusions and third-party or Tasmania Police exclusions. As of 31 August, 369 people were listed on the Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme. This included 272 people recorded as being self-excluded, 106 venue operator exclusions and one third-party exclusion. For those who are quick with their maths, this includes 10 individuals that are recorded as having both a self-exclusion and a venue operator exclusion.

Self-exclusion is organised through a counsellor who, in addition to assisting with the self-exclusion process, is able to help the person with their gambling problem. Anglicare provides for Gamblers Help counsellors who are available for in-person support across Tasmania. I commend the work Anglicare Tasmania does in this space to provide the support to those in our community. Anglicare service extends not just to those experiencing problems with their gambling but also to those who may be directly impacted, such as family members.

We've committed \$100,000 to promoting this exclusion scheme and I've had discussions with Jonathon and the department about making improvements to make it easier for people to get themselves onto that exclusion scheme. At the minute, you have to make an appointment

with an Anglicare counsellor and then go through a filling-out-a-form process to exclude. We know it would be far better if people were able to exclude themselves at the time when they were under most pressure. That means by being able to, potentially, use their phone to take a photo of themselves and upload themselves to the exclusion database at the time -

Mr WINTER - In real time.

Mr STREET - In real time, when they're under the most pressure. We know somebody will have a terrible day on the pokies, will make an appointment with an Anglicare counsellor, that appointment might be five days, it could be seven days away. The pressure they felt under to exclude themselves has dissipated and they might back away from putting themselves on that exclusion scheme. We're investigating how to increase the ways to get people onto the exclusions.

Mr BAYLEY - I think a point to be made there is that it's better not to have the temptation there at all. Some people just can't manage those temptations.

Mr WINTER - Just going back to the timeframe, I was clear on the timeframe and now I'm less clear. On 16 February, the then Finance minister, Michael Ferguson, put out a statement in relation to card-based play. He said:

The scheme is an important initiative which allows a person with a close personal interest in welfare to apply for a commission in order to prevent them from gambling for up to three years. Importantly, we also remain committed to harm minimisation and will implement a mandatory card-based gaming system for electronic gaming machines as soon as reasonably practicable. We acknowledge implementing such a system is a complex task and, as such, the development of full and efficient implementation may take more time than originally anticipated.

If the government wasn't aware in February, what was that government statement based on? The delay in the rollout was announced on 16 February. If the government wasn't aware that there would need to be a delay, why were they announcing the need for a delay?

Mr STREET - Again, that's a question for Mr Ferguson.

Mr WINTER - It's this portfolio. It's a question for the government.

Mr STREET - I understand that, but I wasn't the Finance minister at the time. If Jonathon has any more information on the timeline, I'm happy for him to provide it.

Mr ROOT - I think it was just a reflection and, again, it was the Treasurer's view, it was a reflection of the complexity of the design work.

Mr WINTER - He didn't know about that, though. If he didn't know about the complexity, if he hadn't had that advice there would need to be a delay, then how was he announcing the delay?

Mr ROOT - He wasn't announcing a delay. He was simply flagging that it may take longer than 24 December. The firm timeframe -

Mr WINTER - They're the same thing.

Mr ROOT - Well, there's a specificity versus a generality. Essentially, the Treasurer, in my mind, was simply reflecting that this was a complex task. He had, at that time, a target in mind of December 2024 that everyone was working towards. The design brief that came through subsequently had a view of the operator around what a firm delivery date might be and it wasn't locked in until the government agreed to it. That's the reflection. At the time, we were all working to the December 2024 date, noting that it may take longer due to complexities in any system design and development.

Mr WINTER - Last year I requested a briefing on the implementation of the Mantra card-based play scheme as well as the social poker issue. Social poker has been resolved so we won't need to go there.

Mr STREET - I thought I did a terrific job with that to be honest, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Very good. I was denied a briefing by the independent commission, which I'm still a bit shocked about. Can I ask why the independent commission would deny the shadow finance minister a briefing about the implementation of a major reform like this?

Mr STREET - We're going to have to defer to Gary.

Mr SWAIN - I don't know the detail of all that but they are independent. I don't know if that - when was the request?

Mr WINTER - Both in December and February. Ms Cranston wrote to me in February to tell you that she was not going to, she had nothing further to say and wouldn't brief me on the government's plan. Really the question is - I think I know what you're going to say, but was there any push from the government that Ms Cranston not brief the opposition about this matter?

Mr STREET - I wasn't in the portfolio at the time. I'm not aware of any direction from the government. I wouldn't think that a minister would be in a position where they would be issuing directions to an independent commission either.

Mr WINTER - I would have hoped so. In relation to the mandatory card-based play system, will it be a chip card, a radio frequency card or what sort of card system will it be?

Mr STREET - That is an operational matter, so I'll defer to Jonathon.

Mr ROOT - The current design brief has a magstripe card.

Mr WINTER - I think you answered this earlier, but will the card system be external to the machines? And how many of the current electronic gaming machines (EGMs) in Tasmania's fleet, if you like - I'm sure you'd call it something different, already have hardware capable of accepting that card?

Mr STREET - 'Fleet' is as good a word as any.

PUBLIC

Mr ROOT - Yes. We'll go with 'fleet'. Currently, all of the machines in Tasmania are coin-operated, so there aren't machines in the venues. In the casinos, there are card-based machines. We'd anticipate, when we get to the subsequent phase of incorporating the casino systems into the pre-commitment gaming card (PCG) network, that that infrastructure will use a similar sort of magstripe card. We'll be looking to make those work across. But all of the machines in venues are coin-operated at present, so they will need to be retrofitted.

Mr WINTER - How many EGMs are there?

Mr ROOT - The limit is 2350. I think there are about 2200 out there at the moment.

Mr WINTER - So, in nine months you're going to install card readers to 2200 machines and update their software in order for them to accept card-based play and not coin-operated?

Mr ROOT - These are chassis that are built to have card readers in them. There's a logistical exercise to procure the readers and insert them into the machines. That's something that's been taken account of in the time line that's been developed.

Mr WINTER - You are actually quite far into this.

CHAIR - Mr Bayley.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, you've mentioned you've met with the Australian Hotels Association (AHA). Have you met with Federal Group or any of our other pokies interests in relation to the card since you've taken on the portfolio?

Mr STREET - I met with the Federal Group and that was to accept an invitation to go down to Wrest Point to have a look at the facial recognition technology system they've put in place. They showed me the front of house - how it looks, how it presents to the public, and then took me out the back and showed me what happens when somebody who is on their exclusion scheme is identified and how they handle it.

Mr BAYLEY - Any discussion of the pre-commitment card in that context?

Mr STREET - No.

Mr BAYLEY - What about some of the organisations working to pick up the pieces from gambling, Anglicare and others?

Mr STREET - I have met with Charlie Burton and Adrienne Picone from the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS). Much like you, they were looking for a recommitment from the new minister that the PCG was still government policy, which I was able to give them. It was a very short meeting because that's all they wanted. I said exactly what I said to you earlier this morning and they were happy with that and left. That was the only issue they wanted to discuss. I believe I've met with Anglicare since I've been in the portfolio as well. They expressed their support for the PCG system, but we also talked about the counselling systems that they run outside of that as well, and the success of them and what they could be doing to improve that as well.

PUBLIC

Mr BAYLEY - The 2018 election stands as a low point in terms of gambling money coming into the political system and buying elections. We've passed some reforms in terms of donation reform and declaration since then, but it hasn't come into play as we know. Do you know, can you confirm who and how much gambling donations were received by the Liberal Party in the lead-up or as part of the election context? That's this year?

Mr STREET - I don't have that information. That's a matter for the Liberal Party. Just going back to your previous question as well, though, I just want to make it clear that I'm happy to meet with any group that has an interest in this particular policy as well. Doesn't have to be TasCOSS or Anglicare. Any other group that's got an interest.

Mr BAYLEY - Have you personally sat down with any problem gamblers who have lost their house or lost family members or who have suffered real harm at the hands of pokies?

Mr STREET - I want to be very careful here. I've spoken with a parliamentarian who has had experience within their family and told me their story. I'm more than happy if there are organisations that would like me to sit down and meet people with lived experience, more than happy to take that on board as well.

Mr BAYLEY - Do you have any concerns, then, just coming back to the delay and to MaxGaming. MaxGaming, as we discussed earlier, provides services to the gaming industry around the country. We don't necessarily accept that they'd suffer reputational damage when it comes to delays or inability to deliver this particular mechanism, because their key business is in the gambling space and, so, in some ways you could say that their reputation would be enhanced in many ways. Do you have any concerns whatsoever that inside the system and the organisation that they are playing Tasmanian government and this is just obfuscation and delay in order to ultimately kill this as an initiative because their key interest is in servicing gambling providers and producing and providing and managing these machines and their various updates?

Mr STREET - Having met with three members of MaxGaming's executive, there was no discussion around anything other than the implementation of the PCG. I'm absolutely convinced from that meeting of their commitment to the implementation of this system, but to getting it right. What the government wants is to reduce harm to those who have a gambling problem whilst having as little effect as possible on casual users who don't have a problem.

I'm absolutely convinced from that meeting with MaxGaming that they are of the same mind, that they want to deliver a system that works and is effective both in terms of reducing harm but also not damaging the businesses

Mr BAYLEY - Even though that will come at a cost to their main clients, which are the gambling providers themselves?

Mr STREET - They have been contracted to do this work. I am absolutely convinced that they will carry out the contract to the best of their ability to make sure that this system is implemented as quickly as possible, but as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

Mr SHELTON - I have some questions to interrogate you on land tax and payroll tax and that sort of thing, but, as the theme so far this morning has been on gaming, a question around social poker, which hit the media a few months ago. My question is that the government

PUBLIC

is committed to ensuring genuine social poker tournaments can be played in Tasmania without wagering and without low entry fees paid by players. Can you please advise if Tasmanians are back playing social poker and under what conditions?

Mr WINTER - They are? So, there you go.

Mr STREET - You can either ask the questions or you can win an election and sit on this side and answer the question, Mr Winter, but you can't do both at the same time. Thank you for the question, Mr Shelton. Social poker tournaments are back up and running in venues across Tasmania. Feedback received today has been positive. Tournaments at venues on the north-west coast and in Launceston are being run every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday night with entry fees ranging from \$30 to \$60. Legislative amendments to the *Gaming Control Act* were not required to get

Mr WINTER - Just have to write a letter, as it turned out.

Mr STREET - As the responsible minister, I was able to direct the commission to declare social poker an exempt game under the act. Our government worked with the social poker community to deliver on this commitment -

Mr WINTER - To write a letter.

Mr STREET - To understand all that's important to Tasmanians in being able to participate in this genuine social activity. You're making it very hard for me to read this, Mr Winter.

The three main operators of tournament poker in Tasmania were consulted as part of determining limits and controls which will allow genuine social poker tournaments to operate effectively and responsibly. On 17 July, I issued a direction to the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission to declare social poker an exempt game under the *Gaming Control Act* with a Gazette notice on 21 August the commission declared social poker to be an exempt game.

The direction's subsequent exemption notice defines the parameters for what constitutes a game of genuine social poker and outlines conditions that the operators of a social poker tournament must adhere to.

It's important to note that social tournament poker is very different to what you'd expect to see in a casino. For starters, it isn't played with cash-value chips; players pay a fee to enter a tournament and there is a prize pool available to the winners. It's a genuine social activity for many Tasmanians and is described by many players as a real family. Just because I'm feeling a little bit bipartisan at the minute, I'm happy to acknowledge Mr Winter's advocacy for this move and for social poker.

Mr WINTER - The point, minister, is that at least three businesses were effectively shut down for nine months because of the commission's decision on social poker, on their new position that they decided to establish, and what we learned, after nine months, was that all it took for the government to fix it was to write a letter to the commission to direct them.

PUBLIC

What do you say to those businesses who lost thousands of dollars, to people who lost their jobs, about the government's snail-like response to this and refusal to listen to business in the first place?

Mr SHELTON - Mr Winter, you just took the next question.

Mr STREET - The commission made the decision that they made, and the government rectified that position.

Mr WINTER - After nine months.

Mr STREET - We think that we've done it in a balanced way. We're glad that social poker is back up and running. We're sorry for the inconvenience that was caused.

Mr WINTER - Job losses, inconvenient job losses?

Mr STREET - As minister, I acted to reinstitute social poker and it's now available to those people who enjoy it in Tasmania.

Mr WINTER - Back to the card-base play system, minister. We've heard a bit about the implementation and that we're up to the design, that there's a design going on, the consultation leads into the final design, and then the rollout from March.

Where in the Budget is the allocation of funding to pay for this? How much is it going to cost in total?

Mr STREET - I'll go to Jonathon.

Mr ROOT - We're working through the commercial negotiations at the moment. The model will likely be similar to the current monitoring network whereby the costs of the network have been amortised across the 20-year life of the licence.

Mr WINTER - Is that CapEx or OpEx you're talking about - the operational cost of the scheme?

Mr ROOT - That's all of it.

Mr WINTER - All of it?

Mr ROOT - The monitoring scheme currently I'm talking about - not the PCG scheme yet - but how that works is it is amortised across the life and there's a daily charge per machine for the operation of that. That's the model we're working through at the moment. There may be some other costs that are more specifically related to government, but generally the base cost of the system will be amortised across the life of the licence and there'll be a daily charge on operating that to machines.

There may well be other charges such as standard EFTPOS transaction fees and things like that that'll be inherent in the system.

Mr WINTER - The plan is for the operators to pay the vast majority of the costs here.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - The government's policy is to keep the operational daily cost to as small an amount as possible.

Mr WINTER - Do you know what that cost is going to be - or an approximate amount?

Mr ROOT - We are currently working through the commercial negotiations with the operator, so we don't have a precise cost.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, the operator meaning the LMO rather than the operators of the venues?

Mr ROOT - Correct. MaxGaming, which is running the system, is essentially an infrastructure provider in this context. It will recover the cost of running that infrastructure.

Mr WINTER - To clarify, you don't know how much the implementation is going to cost, and you don't know what the impact will be on revenue, and yet you are going to roll this out by December next year, is that correct?

Mr STREET - That's correct.

Mr BAYLEY - We spoke a little bit earlier on the harm minimisation. We are advertising to promote \$100,000 in the Budget. Every day this scheme is delayed comes at a cost to Tasmanians. For some it could be catastrophic. It could be incredibly deep and have a wide-ranging effect across their family and friends. Have you made provision for further delay, and boosting the temporary or interim harm minimisation activities that the government can support? Our line of questioning has been sceptical about the motivations, the capacity, and the interest of MaxGaming to deliver this. Clearly, as we are hearing, this is also an incredibly technical challenge. Putting aside any cynicism or scepticism about the motivations, it's not unrealistic to expect a further delay and that this won't be in place by the end of next year. What have you got in place, or what are you prepared to advocate for in your role as Finance minister, for additional harm minimisation activities that can at least try to stem the pain and bleeding for vulnerable Tasmanians?

Mr STREET - There are the items that we took to the election in harm minimisation. One of the most important things that we have is a doubling of the community support fund as well, which has gone from 4.1 to 8.3, roughly. Of that, 75 per cent is dedicated to harm minimisation programs that departments can bid for to run programs. There has already been a significant investment since the new arrangement we'll put in place to double that fund and double the amount of money that's available for those programs - 25 per cent goes to Active Tasmania for sport and recreation, that's in the legislation. The other 75 per cent is available for harm minimisation programs. We believe that we're already making a significant increase in investment in those harm minimisation programs. Gary or Jonathon, do you want to speak any further about that?

That fund is available for any government department to put a bid in to access that money. For example, DPAC might put a bid in for a specific amount of money to go to the market for organisations like TasCOSS or Anglicare to run additional harm minimisation programs.

Mr BAYLEY - Have you set yourselves a threshold or a point where if you don't get progress on this card, and you keep getting delays, and MaxGaming keeps highlighting the

problems or challenges, is there a point where you have to completely review this as an option and go to more effective ways of delivering safety for Tasmanians, which is clearly taking poker machines out of pubs and clubs? Is that something that you're willing to consider if MaxGaming keeps putting on the table these delays and inability to address the challenges?

Mr STREET - Our commitment is to introduce the gaming card system. We're still aiming for December next year. At this stage we haven't contemplated any other action outside of that because we're confident that we can meet that time frame.

Mr BAYLEY - What are you going to do if it can't be? What happens in June next year when MaxGaming says, 'These challenges continue, we haven't fixed XYZ' - what are you going to do there?

Mr STREET - That's a hypothetical that I'm not prepared to even enter into at this stage.

Mr SHELTON - I did mention about the payroll tax earlier on. I have a granddaughter who's a first-year building apprentice, and another grandson that's about to hit the employment market. I'm interested in finding out about the one-year extension of the payroll tax rebate that's available to businesses that employ new apprentices, trainees and youth employees. Can you please outline the support this provides to Tasmanian businesses in helping to grow Tasmania's skilled workforce?

Mr STREET - Thank you for the question, Mr Shelton. Obviously, as part of our suite of tax concessions, we've extended the payroll tax rebate scheme by a further year to 30 June 2025. The rebate provides payroll tax relief to businesses that employ apprentices, trainees and youth employees. It's designed to foster skills, create more jobs and help more young Tasmanians into work. The rebate for apprentices and trainees has expanded to all industries to include youth employees from 1 January 2021 in response to recommendations made by the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council. The payroll tax rebate is available for a two-year period from the date that apprentices and trainees are employed. Importantly, any youth employee under 24 qualifies, for the employer, for a one-year rebate.

The continuation of this scheme recognised the need to support Tasmanian businesses as they train our next generation of workers, but also continues the government's support for the employment of young Tasmanians statewide. The scheme supports around 3300 apprentices, trainees and youth employee placements each year. Employers can claim the rebate on a monthly or annual basis depending on how frequently they lodge their payroll tax returns. The average rebate pay per employee for the period end of 30 June under the scheme was \$1741.

This is an important investment that will support the delivery of our ambitious infrastructure program by training a pipeline of future builders, tradies and industry leaders. Not only are we helping young Tasmanians into these trades through our infrastructure investment, we're creating a pipeline of work for years to come.

Mr WINTER - Minister, I'm a bit flummoxed by your last answer to my question around the costs, the spread of the costs, and also the revenue or loss of revenue. Has there been any work at all done by the government in terms of assessing the impact that this might have on - I asked you about revenue for the budget earlier - but say for business and also the impact it might have from business if large costs were to attach and is there a sovereign risk issue here

given that they signed licences, what three years ago, and now presumably you're going to add additional cost to those licences?

Mr STREET - Look, I'm not sure about the last part of your question, but I know that the Premier is the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality; he has been in discussions with the industry about the costs associated with implementing this program.

Mr WINTER - So, I had assumed until this that the government would be paying for the implementation, particularly for the capital costs. There are 2000 card readers or thereabouts being implemented, presumably that's a significant capital cost. Are you saying that the government isn't going to make a contribution to that at all?

Mr STREET - I'm not. That's still being worked through as to what contribution the government will make towards the implementation of the policy and the actual installation and what have you.

Mr WINTER - But there's no money in the Budget for that. There's no money in the Budget for the capital costs of the rollout, is that correct?

Mr STREET - Yes, look the costs are being contemplated. I mean as Jonathon said in his answer, the costs are still being worked through. We may make a contribution from the Community Support Fund as well.

Mr WINTER - The CSL to pay for it.

Mr STREET - Potentially that might be an option, but there are other options that are being explored as well.

Mr WINTER - I understood that there were some quite significant regulatory hurdles around the use of the CSL. Would that require a legislative or regulatory change in order to use the CSL in that way?

Mr STREET - No, the 75 per cent that's available is for harm minimisation and so I don't think it would be completely out of bounds for a portion of that to potentially be used.

Mr SWAIN - That's my understanding, minister. I'll just make a couple of comments, just to follow on for what Jonathon said before. It's not the case that the cost of a machine is an unbounded discussion; it's a 'how low can we get it' discussion that's underway, so, there's some boundaries around what those costs might be that are live commercial negotiation. In relation to Treasury's advice to the minister, generally, I am being careful what I say, we would be advocating for a self-funding system as the end point. However, if you needed to look at transitional costs for a smooth implementation to occur, we would practically consider that in our advice to the minister.

Mr WINTER - Can you take me through what the CSL is currently being expended on or planned to be expended on?

Mr ROOT - As the minister touched on earlier, following the reforms to the *Gaming Control Act*, there was a new framework around expenditure of the CSL and there are regulations that set out the appropriate areas in which that can be expended. There is 25 per cent

PUBLIC

hypothecation for sport and that goes to Active Tasmania and the remainder is open to bids for activities that are within those regulated appropriate expenditures.

For example, in 2023-24, out of the monies allocated in that remaining 75 per cent pool, there was \$938,000 winter specialist gambling support services, \$460,000 went to community education, \$380,000 to research, \$800,000 to community grants - and these are grants that assist in community resilience, particularly in areas where there is a risk of gambling harm - \$2.2 million went to Neighbourhood Houses and to Neighbourhood Houses' engagement program and \$283,000 went to gambling support program operations. Those are the sorts of expenditures that are currently coming out of the CSL.

The criteria for distribution from the fund, as I said, are set out in regulation and that is that there is a link between the location of gambling losses and the location of where the money to be distributed is spent. It is distributed to support partnerships and collaboration; long-term programs; major initiatives aimed at reducing gambling harm; provision of specialist support for people impacted by gambling; investment in programs, infrastructure and activities including community engagement, and health and wellbeing; and research into an evaluation of gambling prevalence, risk factors, and so on.

Mr BAYLEY - This is some of the most alarming news I have heard all day. To think that you would raid CSL - money that is going to a whole range of important community support opportunities - to fund an infrastructure commitment - to implement this kind of card-based -

Mr STREET - It is only one option that would be considered.

Mr BAYLEY - Why would you consider it when this card is not going to automatically end problem gambling across the board? It only tackles one part of the gambling sphere. We know that online gambling and a whole range of other gambling activities are incredibly problematic. Why on Earth would you raid the Budget for community organisations that are helping support people through a whole raft of gambling challenges to put this single piece of infrastructure in?

Mr STREET - The bids to the community support fund are made annually as well. I would not see that we would be not funding any particular organisation that makes a bid to that fund in order to spend money on this. However, there have been cases of money being left over in the fund. I do not think you can be wholly supportive of the PCG as a harm-minimisation measure and not acknowledge that it is going to reduce problem gambling and that, maybe, there is a case to be made for some money to come out of the community support fund for targeted assistance towards the installation of this program.

Mr BAYLEY - That assumes the community support fund is adequately funded all the time.

Mr STREET - It's gone from \$4.18 million to \$8.36 million.

Mr BAYLEY - Sure, and problem gambling is also a significant issue that's escalating as well. That's not to say that \$4.1 million is enough or that 8 odd million dollars is enough either.

On it, would you need to change the regulations for the government to raid that fund to invest in implementation of the card?

Mr STREET - Under the Gaming Control Support Fund Regulations, discretionary distribution to the Fund in addition to money otherwise payable out of the Fund. Under these regulations, money may be paid out of the Fund in accordance with Regulations 6 for any of the following purposes:

Gambling harm prevention and harm-minimisation programs or initiatives.

Direct support program services or initiatives aimed at the minimisation, prevention of gambling harm, or both.

Research activities relating to the minimisation of prevention of gambling harm.

Community capacity building and community development projects, programs or initiatives aimed at the minimisation of prevention of gambling harm or community sport and recreation activities.

Mr BAYLEY - Most people would read them in the context of community support organisations and their eligibility for those funds, as opposed to government itself. You've got control of the Treasury books. You can find this money and invest it in parallel with maintaining the CSL.

Mr STREET - The community organisations don't bid, the departments do. Then the community organisations bid to the departments.

Mr BAYLEY - This is a piece of infrastructure as opposed to education or other initiatives.

Mr ROOT - I would say, minister, currently funding comes out of CSL for the Gaming Exclusion Scheme, which is a piece of harm-minimisation infrastructure, so it's not a new concept. I can't speak to where the government will land, but, as the minister said, within the regulations there is approved allocation for investment in infrastructure that acts as a protective factor against gambling harm, which is what the minister was getting to.

Mr SWAIN - Treasury's advice would be that it has to be needs-based, targeted, and usually of a fixed duration. Typically, if it was focused on anything, it would be a capital component. It would not generally go to ongoing operations that you would look to the industry to fund. Having been involved in a few major reforms, and this is a significant reform, it's very important to reach the new end state, but there's usually some practical considerations to get there.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, the cost of living is a big issue for everyone out there, all communities and individuals, and it hits in different ways. It particularly hits those people who are either buying or wishing to buy their first home. For some it can seem out of reach.

PUBLIC

Reading through the Budget, I noticed a few incentives there for first home buyers. I'd be pleased if you could inform the committee about what's in the Budget and how it provides for the first home buyers through tax concessions or grants.

Mr STREET - You're right, this Budget does contain a number of tax concessions designed to help first home buyers purchase their first home. Our Stamping Out Stamp Duty Plan is helping a huge number of Tasmanians enter the property market. This policy waives stamp duty on established houses valued at up to \$750,000, making it easier for Tasmanians to enter the property market.

The exemption doubles the previous 50 per cent stamp duty discount that was available for first home buyers and it significantly increases the property value cap from \$600,000 to \$750,000.

This change took effect retrospectively from 18 February 2024 and is available until 30 June 2026. This will save eligible first home buyers up to \$28,935 and is a key priority of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's future.

The support provided by the government to first home buyers through this duty exemption is estimated to be \$80.6 million over the 2024-25 Budget and forward Estimates period. Combined with support offered through schemes such as the government's MyHome shared equity program, it is now easier for people on lower incomes to enter the property market.

Mr WINTER - Chair.

CHAIR - Mr Winter.

Mr STREET - First home buyers have told me - I was pausing for effect, Mr Winter.

Mr WINTER - Thank you.

Mr STREET - First home buyers have told me -

Mr WINTER - Oh, you are still going.

Mr STREET - that without this government's support, they would still be renting, spending years and years trying to save a deposit at the same time. A First Home Owner Grant of \$10,000 is also available to eligible applicants who purchase or build a new home. The First Home Owner Grant reverted to this base level on 1 July 2024.

We also cut stamp duty in half for many Tasmanians - not just those buying their first home, but those who purchase a new apartment off the plan or one that's under construction, up to the value of \$750 000. This doesn't just help the buyer - it also assists the developer. Incentivising people to purchase a home off the plan gives more certainty to the people and businesses constructing them, and it's these types of medium-density developments we want to see more of.

I'm pleased, Chair, that these initiatives in the Budget make it easier for first home buyers to enter the property market and realise their dreams of home ownership.

PUBLIC

Mr WINTER - I think the minister has touched on this earlier, and apologies if I'm asking something you did cover. I want to ask whether there was a financial services partner engaged to work with MaxGaming - whether one was required in the first place, and if there had been one, what sort of role did they play?

Mr STREET - Whether one would be required or not was part of the discussion that I had with MaxGaming when I met with them, but Mr Root will be able to elaborate further on that as well.

Mr ROOT - There are obviously options for how to give effect to the cashless infrastructure. The view of [inaudible] working through it is that the most effective way of delivering this service is through a specialised provider. If you go back 10 or 15 years, a lot of these network-operating companies would have built this infrastructure themselves, but there are people out there who's day-to-day job is doing this and they are looking to engage with a partner who will do that component, and similarly, with a partner who will deal with the card-based infrastructure side of things.

Mr WINTER - Will that be a subcontract with Max? It won't be directly through the government?

Mr ROOT - Correct.

Mr WINTER - What's the time line around them needing to engage a partner, in terms of your delivery dates?

Mr ROOT - They're working with potential providers as we speak, so we would expect that they would have engaged that partner once the final design work is signed off, post the consultation process.

Mr WINTER - Minister, this scheme will involve the collection of a lot of personal data from people. Is the plan that the data will be stored by the government, Max, or someone else?

Mr STREET - That's an operational matter for the system, so I'll pass to Mr Root.

Mr ROOT - The expectation is that it would be stored centrally by Max as the provider. There are a whole range of contractual controls around security of information and there are legislative controls around security of information as well. It won't be the case that venues will have ongoing access to individual personal data, it will be stored centrally and controlled through contractual and legislative requirements. MaxGaming is currently managing the data for the network operating system itself; that's the current model.

Mr WINTER - Is that data likely to be - obviously it'll be a data centre somewhere - is that likely to be held here in Tasmania on island, or in Australia, or elsewhere? Or is it? I suppose you're already aware, given the rollout has started.

Mr ROOT - The storage location is probably going to be in some sort of redundant data centre infrastructure - you don't tend to store everything in one data centre these days. It's on island, and currently- I'll just check this with Ms McIntyre - Currently, the data is stored within Australia.

Mr WINTER - Okay.

Mr BAYLEY - We had the information from community advocates earlier in the week, I think it was around \$1.4 billion being lost to pokies since the 2018 election. I'm interested if Treasury's done any modelling on the cost to Tasmanians from poker machines, and modelled what you believe the savings would be going forward. We had the conversation earlier around taxes and what's in the Budget and so forth, and it being flat, but have you done any modelling on the real-time harm that's happening to Tasmanians from poker machines and the impact of this scheme when it's implemented.

Mr STREET - To start with, I know for a fact that part of the community support fund is used by Treasury to fund the social and economic study that's undertaken. I believe the frequency of those has changed. I think it's been lengthened out to try to improve the data and the ability to compare across time. I'm more than happy for Gary or Jonathon to add to that in terms of the research they do as part of their work.

Mr ROOT - As the minister said, the principal piece of work that's done is the social and economic impact study. Those studies have looked into the economic impact of gambling in the past, and I have to say, they've been fairly equivocal on whether it's a net positive or a net negative.

Mr BAYLEY - The impact of gaming?

Mr ROOT - As an economic impact across the economy, because obviously there's economic activity and there's the cost of the harms that are caused. Past studies haven't been clear. They've tended to give ranges that have been from negative to positive. There will be another SEIS due in 2026, and that'll certainly be in a position to look at the impact of this.

Mr BAYLEY - How often are they?

Mr ROOT - They're every five years.

Mr BAYLEY - And they're publicly available?

Mr ROOT - That's correct. It's an independent study. We engage experts in this area to undertake it. The base study is done on a fairly consistent basis so that we can look at longitudinal impacts of initiatives, and the impacts and harm on individuals and families.

Mr BAYLEY - Do you plan to conduct these more frequently in the wake of implementing the scheme so as to be able to properly track the efficiency and the effectiveness of it, and make sure that it's actually having the impact you want?

Mr STREET - The next study is due in 2026. I don't know whether there's any intention to change from that particular schedule in light of the changes that we're making, is there, Jonathon?

Mr ROOT - That's right. When the legislation was amended as part of the gaming reforms, the period for the SEIS was actually pushed out. The reason for that was that the time taken to undertake - it takes about 12 months to do the study - there are a lot of interviews with gamblers, there's telephone surveys and things like that that go into it. By the time we'd work

through a process of doing the tender, appointing an operator, getting the study done, considering it, the government responding to the findings, then evaluating the nature of those responses, we're already deep into the next SEIS.

It was extended to allow for a more rigorous understanding of the impact of initiatives. I think the 2026 one will be a very useful baseline and, whether there are further studies done, it would be a matter either for the gambling support people in Health and DPAC or the government itself to determine. The SEIS is a major study, but there is other research going on frequently, as you know.

Mr SWAIN - Minister, I thought you might be interested, if you haven't seen it already, that the last survey found that 0.4 per cent of Tasmanian adults were classified as problem gamblers, which I think goes to the minister's statement of government intent to identify problem gamblers but not prohibit people who don't have a problem with it.

Mr BAYLEY - I guess this goes to the concerns in terms of the economic modelling and how wide it reaches. It looks at the cost. We know this is having a significant cost. The economic modelling is one thing, but then the human suffering and -

Mr STREET - That's why it's referred to as the Social and Economic Impact study, because obviously it needs to consider both.

Mr BAYLEY - Yes. It's hard to hear that you're willing to trade off the economy versus some of those social costs though - the very real human costs of this industry. That's effectively what this study does, doesn't it? It takes into account the economic benefits of jobs and services and turnover and the like, and then it might stack it up against the social impacts of it. But I'm hearing -

Mr STREET - Not 'might'. It does.

Mr BAYLEY - I guess the question is: how do you value them? People do, I know, but how do you value a life that's ruined by these machines?

Mr SWAIN - I take the point, but there are lots of activities that we engage in routinely that have the same features. Driving a car is the most obvious one where there's a significant economic and social benefit, but there's also an extreme cost to individuals.

Mr BAYLEY - I don't necessarily accept the analogy, Mr Swain, but I see what you're getting at. These are machines designed to addict. They're put in our most vulnerable communities and at the end of the day, they're stripping millions and millions of dollars out of people's bank balances.

Mr STREET - The reason that we're introducing the PCG is reduce the harm that these machines cause to people who have that problem.

Mr BAYLEY - Yes, I understand that, but the reason we're so concerned is that we've now seen a delay announced. I take your commitment to it, but we know the power of the pokies lobby. We know the influence it's had. We know the amount of money that it's given to the Liberal Party and others over the years. We know that they've had taxpayer funds returned,

literally, to their organisation. We're now hearing that the CSL is going to be raided in order to implement this policy.

Mr STREET - To go back to that, when I mentioned the CSL - there is no intention of raiding the CSL or jeopardising the harm-minimisation programs that are funded out of the CSL by accessing money out of that. I simply wouldn't sign off on a bid that did that.

Mr BAYLEY - You give your commitment here that implementing the card and making sure that it is rolled out across every poker machine in the state will be paid for outside of the CSL?

Mr STREET - No, what I'm saying is that it is only one option that is on the table. When the government has worked through the total cost of implementing this, there will be a number of discussions around how we pay for it.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, can you please outline what is included in this year's Budget to provide assistance with land tax bills?

Mr STREET - I can, Mr Shelton. In recent years the government has made changes to land tax rates and thresholds in response to strong growth in the Tasmanian property market, because we recognise that while people's property values have increased significantly, their capacity to pay land tax has not necessarily increased at the same rate. For anyone paying land tax in Tasmania, we've taken action to relieve land tax pressures by increasing the tax-free threshold for land tax by a further \$25,000 to \$124,999. This will save around 60,000 property owners up to \$112.50 on their land tax bill. It also means that an additional 4450 taxpayers will now pay no land tax at all in the year ahead.

In addition to these, two land tax incentives designed to increase the number of properties available for long-term rental have recently been extended for a further two years until 30 June 2026. In 2018, we introduced a three-year land tax exemption for a newly built home that is made available on the long-term rental market, encouraging both new housing supply and availability to Tasmania's rental market. For those who build to rent, land tax will be waived for up to three years.

In addition, we've incentivised property owners renting their property as short-term accommodation to instead make their property available on the long-term market. For anyone who makes this transition, they will pay no land tax on their property for 12 months. These are fantastic incentives aimed at making it easier for more Tasmanians to secure high-quality rentals. We're continuing our efforts to support the many Tasmanians who are renting a home.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, during the election you made some commitments around stamp duty concessions and we've heard about those today. The government was very quick to implement those changes. However, you linked that policy to a short-stay tax, and you accounted for \$11 million per year over four years, so \$44 million. My question is, does it concern you, given the terrible state of the Budget, that there's now a revenue hole in your policy?

Mr STREET - In terms of the short-stay levy, it is under active development. We are also monitoring the legislative changes that Victoria is potentially bringing in by bringing in

PUBLIC

the same levy as well. I don't know whether Gary has anything further to add in terms of a timeline.

Mr SWAIN - I can say that Treasury had given advice to the minister around the merits of perhaps sitting a little bit behind Victoria. They will have a range of conversations with the affected parties and it may actually be practically an easier and quicker pathway to follow on what they've already negotiated for Victoria. I can say that Treasury gave advice to follow Victoria rather than the government saying to Treasury that that was the preferred timing.

Mr WILLIE - That's an explanation for why we don't have the \$11 million revenue accounted for this year. Are you planning to introduce it for the next financial year?

Mr SWAIN - It's \$11 million. There will be a partial impact if this is delayed by some months. It is important to lock it in for the long term, but in this year's revenue, it's part of \$11 million out of \$1.8 billion, so it's pretty tiny.

Mr WILLIE - The next question, minister, is how can you say that the government won't introduce new taxes or increase taxes when clearly you went to the election with a new tax?

Mr STREET - Because this is a levy whose proceeds are entirely dedicated towards offsetting the stamp duty concessions that we've offered to first home buyers, Mr Willie. No new taxes and no increased taxes were introduced at the same time as the levy.

Mr WILLIE - Can you explain to me what the difference between a levy and a tax is, minister?

Mr STREET - Tax income goes into general revenue. The money from this levy is entirely dedicated towards offsetting the cost of the stamp duty concessions that we're making.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, I'm going to ask again about the CSL and paying for this implementation. I hear you say that it's just one option that's currently under consideration, and I also hear that the CSL has in the past funded other structural initiatives, but I think most reasonably minded Tasmanians would expect that the Community Support Levy would go into supporting people and supporting the organisations that support people, and that this piece of infrastructure is the responsibility of government to implement. It is a government commitment. It's a standalone piece of infrastructure that is yours to implement and pay for.

We're seeing a situation where efficiency dividends are being imposed across departments and across the public service. It's almost impossible to think that you wouldn't take up the opportunity to raid that fund in order to at least absorb some of the cost of implementing this.

Why aren't you prepared to rule it out to give some confidence to organisations in the bidding process for the CSL, and to make sure that Tasmanians can have confidence that you'll put dedicated and real money into that piece of infrastructure? It is a standalone initiative that needs to happen and has now been a long commitment for government.

Mr STREET - Again, Mr Bayley, I only mentioned that it was a potential option.

Mr BAYLEY - I realise that.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - There was \$1.235 million of unspent money in the CSL last year that rolls into this year. I believe in the PCG as a harm-minimisation program. There will be contributions from the government and contributions from the industry towards the implementation of this. Like I said, the Community Support Fund is there as well as an option, but that's all. I will not sign off on money coming out of the CSL that puts in jeopardy the harm-minimisation programs that are funded from the CSL.

Mr BAYLEY - The question is: when will the taxpayer stop paying for the implications of the 2018 election? When will we stop? We're giving money directly to the AHA; we're paying taxpayer money to support vulnerable Tasmanians through this scheme. When are we going to stop paying for the harm that's caused by these machines?

Mr STREET - I understand that that's your position, Mr Bayley. I would have thought that the government's position on implementing the PCG is a pretty fair indication that we disagree with the THA on this particular policy as well.

Mr BAYLEY - Is that why you pay them taxpayer money direct into their coffers?

Mr STREET - It's not. There is money paid to the THA for a number of worthwhile programs that they run including Clubs Tasmania in my Sport and Recreation space, but other programs as well, training programs et cetera as well.

Mr BAYLEY - We just see and taxpayers see money continually flowing out to ultimately support people who are suffering at the hands of an industry that should not and could be dealt with by virtue of getting them out of pubs and clubs. Simply because of the outcome of the 2018 election and the commitments that were made there and the funding that was given to the Liberal Party, we're in this situation.

CHAIR - Is there a question? If not, I'll go to Mr Willie.

Mr STREET - Again. I understand your position but the THA is a representative organisation of a number of businesses who are significant employers and contributors to the economy in Tasmania as well. I understand that our positions on certain matters with the THA differ, but I think that the investments that the government makes into the THA's programs are worthwhile contributions to the community as well.

Mr BAYLEY - The question is when our taxpayers going to stop paying money to support this industry that is so destructive?

Mr STREET - The government made election commitments to support the THA and we will fulfil those commitments, Mr Bayley.

Mr WILLIE - The government's tried to make out like the short-stay tax won't impact Tasmanians, but are you aware of the Parliamentary Budget Office in Victoria's paper on the Victorian Government's levy?

Mr STREET - I'm not.

Mr WILLIE - Okay. Well, in that they do talk about, 'We expect that most property owners would absorb some of these tax burden through a reduction in returns and it would be

PUBLIC

market conditions on how much they could pass a proportion on to the consumer through higher prices'. Do you acknowledge that Tasmanians will be impacted by this?

Mr STREET - It is certainly not the intention of our levy. Our levy is going to be designed to be paid for by the users themselves, not the property owner.

Mr WILLIE - It sounds like it's a very similar levy to Victoria and this is what the Parliamentary Budget Office is saying.

Mr SWAIN - Victorian levy is going to be at a 50 per cent higher rate.

Mr WILLIE - It might be a higher rate, but it's a similar levy and they're talking about an impact to property owners, which would be Tasmanians.

Mr STREET - We don't think that it will have an impact on property owners in Tasmania. We think that it's a reasonable levy for visitors to be paying. The intention is that it will be broken out on an invoice, I believe, that's provided so that they can see that the levy is being paid for by the user and not by the property owner.

Mr WILLIE - The tourism industry is a very important industry to Tasmania, a big industry in Tasmania. They're opposed to this. What consultation have you had with them?

Mr STREET - The consultation with the tourism sector has happened through the Premier as the minister for Tourism and Hospitality.

Mr WILLIE - You've had no consultation with them as Minister for Finance on how this will work?

Mr STREET - I haven't met with them. But this really demonstrates the Finance portfolio in a nutshell in that I have the mechanics of implementing the policy, but the policy itself sits with the Tourism and Hospitality minister and he's the one who's been doing the consultation with the industry.

Mr BAYLEY - One of the many recommendations from Saul Eslake's independent review of the state's finances was to increase the rate of mining levies, noting that Tasmania can do and, I quote:

without rendering mining operations uneconomic, noting that mining royalties are deductible against federal company tax liabilities.

He's saying we can do this without significantly impacting them. Mining levies in Tasmania are some of the lowest in the country and disproportionate to the incredible wealth that the mining industry extracts from Tasmania's natural resources, but the government has continued with the refrain of 'no new taxes'. With our finances in such dire straits, shouldn't you be doing anything that you can to ensure that companies are paying their fair share, or are you happy to give Tasmania's resources away to the lowest bidder?

Mr STREET - The Treasurer has made it clear that he'll deliver a comprehensive response on behalf of the government to the Eslake Report and all of the recommendations. I don't know whether Gary wants to add anything to that as well?

PUBLIC

Mr SWAIN - The only thing I can say is I think the Treasurer's comments made clear in this place a couple of days ago that the settings that were in the Budget reflected the circumstances of the time, and weren't set in stone for all time. There are particular cost-of-living pressures which are contemplated in the Budget. The effect of interest rates through into rental housing and rentals is contemplated in the Budget. There's a whole set of current circumstances that would be reviewed as you go through each future budget.

Mr BAYLEY - Do you see that, minister, as opening the door? Surely, you recognise the difference between raising new taxes for individual Tasmanians? I think he also talked about car registration and other initiatives versus raising taxes for corporations like Grange Resources who made \$151 million profit in the last financial year, predominantly from its Savage River Mine. Don't Tasmanians deserve to be compensated for the resources that companies extract from public land?

Mr STREET - Again, that's a policy decision for the whole of government. Much like Mr Willie's question, I'm responsible as Minister for Finance for the mechanics of collecting this revenue, but it's a whole of government decision. It's something that I would imagine the Treasurer in his response on behalf of the government will address.

Mr BAYLEY - Do you read that as a commitment to review mining levies, the comments from the Treasurer the other day, or are you willing to give a commitment on behalf of government to review mining levies?

Mr STREET - No, I'm certainly not going to be giving a commitment sitting at this table without having discussed it with Cabinet and as a whole of government, but Mr Eslake's report has a number of different recommendations in it, all of which I imagine, the Treasurer will address in his response.

Mr SWAIN - We had in-principle conversations with the Treasurer about that, the need to give advice. We haven't got down to the level of recommendation by recommendation where we'd go in that advice at this point.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, do you see the benefit of it or do you see it as a real option to be increasing the royalties that companies like mining companies pay? \$151 million from Savage River, that's a lot of money.

Mr STREET - I'm not going to give it definitive opinion sitting here at the table today, but I can acknowledge the difference between what you're talking about in terms of Mr Eslake's recommendations around car registrations and things that affect Tasmanians directly versus some other recommendations that he made as well.

Mr BAYLEY - That sounds positive. We urge you to have a look at that. Mining revenues and royalties are clearly an option going forward.

Mr WILLIE - On Mr Eslake's great report, as Finance Minister did you take an interest in the Parliamentary Budget Office recommendation and if so, do you have a view on it?

Mr STREET - I think I'll go to Gary. I think that that's a matter for the Treasurer more than it is for me as Finance Minister.

Mr WILLIE - It will impact financial matters and debates.

Mr SWAIN - I think we need to think that through carefully. I've talked to Mr Eslake about that. He has worked extensively with those offices and other jurisdictions and sees significant value in them. There is again a practical consideration in Tasmania in relation to our scale. We would need to have a solution if the government chooses to go in that direction, which is practical and commensurate with our scale, which is probably code for, I don't want to see half of the budget branch moved into a different function because I really need them in the budget branch.

Mr WILLIE - The model he talks about is placing a person in the federal parliamentary budget office and then scaling-up prior to an election. Is that something that's feasible, minister?

Mr STREET - Again, like I said in answer to Mr Bayley's question, the Treasurer will deliver a comprehensive response and my view is I imagine it will be canvassed at Cabinet in terms of forming up the response as well, and that's where I'll give my opinion, not at this table.

Mr WILLIE - Are you open to this suggestion by Mr Eslake?

Mr STREET - At this stage, I don't think the government has ruled in or out any of the recommendations that Mr Eslake made. What we've said is that we will read the report in its entirety, consider the recommendations and then the Treasurer will provide a response on behalf of the government overall.

Mr WILLIE - It could be a positive for the state though; where these officers have been introduced in other jurisdictions, it does bring up the level of economic discourse and it gives all members of parliament access to a resource that is currently only accessible to the government.

Mr STREET - It may do, and that may form part of the discussion that we have for firming up our response.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, the government's Fiscal Strategy includes a target of greater than 37 per cent of total general government sector own-source revenue as a percentage of total expenditure. It's currently sitting at 32 per cent, so it's 5 per cent down. Not only are you not enacting any of Mr Eslake's recommendations, but you issued a third round of land tax cuts. What is your plan to improve this performance indicator, or are you content to continuously underperform against your own fiscal targets?

Mr STREET - We do see the need to grow own revenue as a percentage of the overall budget, Mr Bayley. That's why we need to make sensible and considered decisions about where we forgo revenue. They need to be considered in the same light as new expenditure decisions. I would imagine that any decision about forgoing revenue would go through the budget committee process just like any consideration of increased expenditure. We know the volatility of the GST receipts that we receive each year. That's why we need to work towards that 37 per cent to give ourselves some more surety and we're absolutely committed to doing that.

Mr SWAIN - I could add to that if you would like, minister. In the current Budget forward Estimates there is a GST reduction that is not quite offset by an uplift in own state

taxation in the budget, but it's reasonably close. It's 390[39?] versus 33-40, from memory. In the Budget already, there is a trend upwards from 30.4 per cent in 2023-24 own-source revenue outcome to 36 per cent in 2027-28. With the current tax settings and exemptions, it is trending back towards that 37 per cent level.

Mr BAYLEY - Have all your past trending forecasts always come to fruition on review or when you get to - ?

Mr SWAIN - I wouldn't want to mislead you in that regard. I mean, the budget is an estimate. The elements of tax revenue have various degrees of accuracy in terms of time - some of them are moved around more than others so and the compliance sheet is one of the ones that moves around, for example. They are a combination of projections and forecasts.

Mr BAYLEY - I have a bit of a niche question in relation to the coronial inquest into Robert Bo Xu and Jarrod Robert Davies. The recommendations in this report crossed over a couple of portfolios and there's a few relating to liquor and gaming. Are you able to outline the government's position on the recommendations and any progress on implementing them and, specifically, that the Commissioner for Licensing give consideration to attaching a condition to a venue's out-of-hours permit requiring the implementation of real-time CCTV monitoring?

The second one is the Liquor and Gaming Branch, Tasmania Police and CBOS so that regular random spot checks of licensed premises are conducted, any potential breaches are fully investigated and, if appropriate, prosecuted, and any proper disciplinary action is then taken against the licensee under the *Liquor Licensing Act 1990* or against the licensee or crowd controller under the *Security and Investigation Agents Act*. I know that's pretty specific. I apologise.

Mr STREET - That's okay. I will pass to Jonathon. Obviously, I'm aware of the tragedy that led to the coronial inquest. The details of the response I'll leave to Jonathon.

Mr ROOT - Just to clarify my response, I am the Commissioner for Licensing. We have taken on board the Coroner's findings and I did give evidence to that particular coronial inquiry. We have done a lot of work with police to improve both our communications on incidents that might require liquor disciplinary action, noting that police have a role under the *Liquor Licensing Act* as well. We have been undertaking dual inspections with police and in the past have done it with CBOS. We've stepped up that activity and I've met with Adrian Bodnar as the relevant senior police officer and discussed the findings with him.

With regard to the conditioning, that is certainly a recommendation that I'm keeping in my mind when I'm looking at conditioning. It's a fairly narrow set of venues where it might be relevant because, essentially, the requirement is not simply to have CCTV, which I have imposed on all venues that trade past 2 a.m. due to the that higher risk, and I do apply to other venues in response to disciplinary action. If there's a badly performing venue that doesn't have CCTV, I will often require that to be in place. The real-time monitoring is a step up from that and, in my view, is not something that I would do unilaterally for all venues, but in specific circumstances that may be appropriate and I'm bearing that in mind. I haven't done it to this stage but certainly it's a recommendation that I'm taking on board. We do have quite a rigorous compliance program and there are regular disciplinary actions taken against licensees where they breach the act.

PUBLIC

Mr BAYLEY - Just as a follow-up, if I may, I understand that you can - while we've got the commissioner here - order alcohol through Uber Eats, through BWS. I'm interested in your take on that, minister and commissioner, on that, as a notion in the context of the responsible service of alcohol. It seems like a relatively unprecedented and new initiative and capacity in terms of getting alcohol.

Mr STREET - I'll defer to Jonathon, but I would say at a high level that we've had an initial discussion about a review of the liquor licensing provisions; the fact that we've got such significant changes in the market in how you can access alcohol is one of the things that has prompted these.

Mr BAYLEY - Is this one of the things that you'll look at?

Mr STREET - It's one of the things that has prompted the initial discussion with the department around a potential review. There are significant technological changes that are allowing different service of alcohol that would never have been foreseen under the current arrangements as well. I don't know whether Jonathon wants to add anything to that.

Mr ROOT - I'd simply confirm what the minister has said there. The act is fairly old now and didn't envisage particularly the same-day delivery aspect of liquor sales, which does increase the risk and does bring into question the sorts of controls that are needed around who can deliver, to whom and what controls you should have around it. There are controls in the act around online sale of liquor currently; we do apply those and certainly I've conditioned licences that are doing same-day delivery to try to minimise the risk of harm there. But it's always been the case that the capacity to do this has sat within the act because there's nothing that really restricts it particularly. It's an issue on the minds of all regulators around Australia, and I know there's been action in other jurisdictions to put in place initiatives around the hours at which it can occur, how it should be done and what training should be provided to delivery drivers and so on.

CHAIR - The time for Estimates of the Minister for Finance has expired. After a five-minute break, we'll proceed to the examination of the Estimates of the Minister for Local Government.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

The Committee suspended from 10.59 a.m. to 11.04 a.m.

CHAIR - Thank you. The time being after 11.00 a.m., the examination of the Estimates of the Minister for Local Government will commence. Welcome again, minister; could you please introduce the people at the table.

Mr STREET - Directly to my right is Mike Mogridge, Acting Executive Director, Office of Local Government; and to his right is Mathew Healey, Acting Deputy Secretary of Strategy and Delivery; and to my left again is my Chief of Staff, Tim Lovibond.

CHAIR - The time for Estimates is scheduled for one hour.

Mr STREET - Chair, our government remains committed to making sure our local councils can serve their communities well now and into the future. We want our councils to be

PUBLIC

in the best possible position to support the wellbeing, sustainability and prosperity of all Tasmanians. We want to work alongside the local government sector in achieving this goal. It's for that reason that back in 2021 we announced the Future of Local Government Review with the interests of Tasmania's local communities front and centre.

The review provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to consider how to shape a flexible, adaptable and sustainable local government system that can respond to the growing demands and changing needs of our communities in the decades ahead. The board's final report recommendations outline a suite of measures to improve the overall governance of councils, the transparency and the sustainability of the sector.

The recommendations have required careful thought and will take a long-term commitment and collaboration with all levels of government and our communities to be successfully implemented. This Budget has allocated \$250,000 for the Office of Local Government to continue their work with the Future of Local Government Review. This allows them to lead the priorities of our response to the review as they work with our 29 councils as well as our peak bodies in Local Government Association Tasmania (LGAT) and Local Government Professionals (LGPRO) to ensure our councils are in the best position to serve their communities.

Chair, I'm proud of the government's priority on legislative reform program that's being developed in response to the Future of Local Government Review. It is an important body of work and has never been about quick fixes. I look forward to releasing a formal response to the review in the coming weeks. Tasmanians should have confidence that their local councils are delivering for them where it matters, and I look forward to working with our sectors to deliver these lasting changes. I recognise that there is plenty more work to be done and I'm up for the challenge and for your questions.

Ms DOW - Minister, how much has your government spent to date on the latest local government reform process?

Mr STREET - The actual budget for the Future of Local Government review was \$3.186 million. To date we have spent \$3,002,779.

Ms DOW - How much has your government spent over the last 10 years on your local government reform iterations that you've undertaken?

Mr MOGRIDGE - We have to take that on notice to get a sense of what that might be.

CHAIR - Would you like to put that on notice?

Ms DOW - I will put that on notice. You have said that there is \$250,000 allocated in this year's Budget for the local government reform process. Can you outline for me what the next steps in that process will be and how that money will be allocated?

Mr MOGRIDGE - The \$250,000 is a body of money that provides the Office of Local Government the ability to begin to have a conversation with councils in relation to the structural reform opportunities but also to provide some targeted reforms to the sector that we've heard are acutely in need.

The Director of Local Government Reform will remain within the Office of Local Government over that 12-month period. One of the core functions of that staff member will be to provide support to the sector in relation to the government's proposed structural reform proposals where, and I believe we spoke about this yesterday, the government is proposing a three-phased approach to structural reform for those councils that are interested where councils - off the back of the final report for the Future of Local Government Review who are interested in structural reform - step forward and work with our office to develop reform proposals in relation to the sorts of reform that they might see are of benefit in their communities. That's phase 1. It's developing a proposal for the government to consider.

Phase 2 is bringing that proposal to the government. That would be identifying the level of community interest and appetite for the sorts of technical analysis that might be relevant so that the government has a clear sense of the strategic opportunity for that region. Government decides to provide some funding in relation to that proposal and that's Stage 2, at which point we undertake the analysis. That would be supported by the government and I believe there'd be a component of it that would be supported by the sector to undertake the technical analysis and prepare a report in relation to the viability of that reform proposal.

Phase 3? would be setting up a local government board, and this sounds very bureaucratic, but it's technically necessary in order to proceed through to a final amalgamation proposal. There would be a local government board process that would be undertaken to look at the report that's prepared and make a decision or recommendation to the minister about the amalgamation.

Ms DOW - There are a number of initiatives that are outlined in these recommendations that require legislative change. Back in 2019, your government initiated a review of the *Local Government Act* that has just sat on a shelf.

The process that's been outlined by the director, obviously, is going to take some time including the allocation of resources, but there are things here that could really improve the governance and structure of local government right now if they were just given some priority by your government to move those legislative changes through.

Mr STREET - The first two priority areas of responding to the Future of Local Government Review are around lifting standards of professionalism, conduct and integrity and driving a high-performing, transparent and accountable sector. They would be the two main items that drive the legislative agenda for next year for the Office of Local Government.

The wholesale new Local Government Act has probably been put on hold for the time being while we work through these priority areas.

Ms DOW - So, you'll just be doing piecemeal-type adjustments to legislation rather than reviewing the entire act?

Mr STREET - At this stage, the feedback that we've had from the sector, having gone through this review, is that they would like to see some of the changes enacted as quickly as possible, and that means working within the current *Local Government Act*.

Ms BURNET - Minister, I just wanted to ask a few questions around local government reform. There have been significant concerns around the lack of progress on local government

reform in the sector and in the community over many years. I know that there is a lot going on, but it's still not necessarily landing. We know that communities guard their local representation jealously so forced amalgamations are not welcome across many parts of Tasmania. This is one of the proposals your government was pushing hard to deliver and we need clarity on whether or not you have completely dropped forced amalgamations.

Could you say what steps you are taking to allay these concerns and what ways your government is looking at strengthening regional approaches whilst retaining community connection with local reps?

Mr STREET - There will be no forced amalgamations under this government, Ms Burnet. I can't be any clearer than that, and that is why we have developed the three-phase process that Mike just went through.

It was made abundantly clear to me at any meeting with councils or local government representatives that the last thing they want from the state government is a top-down approach to the relationship. They want to work with us. They want to be respected as an independent sphere of government so we think the process that Mike outlined - where it's the councils and the communities themselves that initiate the process around potential boundary adjustments or amalgamations - is the best way of getting community buy-in for any of those proposals. I don't think forced amalgamations was ever going to work anyway. It was going to lead to a stand-offish approach with the local government sector. We recognise that we need sector and community buy-in for any reform around boundary adjustments, amalgamations, whatever term you want to use.

The only way they're going to work is if we can stand up a business case for a particular proposal that demonstrates to both local government representatives and the municipality that they represent the benefits that we think will flow from that particular reform. That's exactly why we've put that particular three-phase approach together with a recognition that there is going to have to be state government investment in that process as well, in terms of engaging consultants or external people to help put the work together. As I acknowledged in the Legislative Council Estimates last night, I'm acutely aware of the amount of time and resources that local governments have put into this review that we initiated, in terms of resources, staff time and commitment.

I take every opportunity I can across the state when I'm meeting with councils to thank them for their engagement, because when we started this process back in 2021, we weren't sure that we would get the level of engagement from the sector that we got. The sector's been far more open-minded and proactive in terms of looking at the sort of issues that the review went to.

Ms BURNET - My second question follows on with the amount of interest there is from the state government in this local government reform. Local government as an instrument of the state parliament is often picked over, under review, and is set higher standards than even this House. In a recent survey of local government representatives across Tasmania, one respondent said that they were incredibly poorly remunerated and yet held to a higher standard than state parliamentarians, who are often on three times their pay, and some of the smaller councils get a pittance, really.

PUBLIC

One of the proposed reviews is to look to require professional development before candidates are even elected, which I find extraordinary. Whilst professional development is important for any occupation, and arguably any tier of government representative, do you see this as a possible hindrance to having a broad assortment of representatives in the local council?

Mr STREET - I do, and there has been pushback on any form of screening. What's not intended is some sort of screening of people for suitability to run for council. We want as broad a range of Tasmanians running for local government as possible. What we're talking about is possibly having some sort of system where individuals who are running for council for the first time are able to educate themselves on the role that they are stepping into.

We've had numerous examples since the last lot of local government elections where people have been elected for the first time and have walked away in less than three months because either the job wasn't what they expected it to be, or they didn't feel like they were up to the job that was expected of them because it was different from what they perceived it was going to be. There's no intention of having some sort of test or screening process for people who run for local government.

We want not just a broad a range of people, but in terms of numbers, I would like to see more people running for local government. It is not healthy when there's nine seats available on the council and only 10 people in a municipality run - that's not giving the municipality choice, either. So, we need to find a way to encourage more people to run, but I want to make sure that those people who do run understand what the role is and the expectations that are going to be placed upon them if they're elected.

Mrs BESWICK - Minister, you've spoken about these three stages. What's the time frame that you expect those to occur?

Mr STREET - It is a 'how long is a piece of string' question, only because we don't know how much interest we'll get at the first phase and when we'll get it. When we deliver our response to the 29 recommendations, we will again outline the process that I outlined at the LGAT conference. That'll be, basically, the open door for councils to take advantage of the process we're putting in place. It will then be up to the councils and communities to bring those proposals forward. How many different proposals we get from across the state and when we get them will, I guess, determine how long the next phase of work is. The money we put in the Budget is there to staff the Office of Local Government to be able to assess those proposals as efficiently as possible, to be able to bring them to the government to make a decision on whether we think it makes strategic and monetary sense for us to invest in the next phase of work.

Mrs BESWICK - So, when you've got that \$200,000, is that going to be stuck in this year or will that roll into, depending on how much -

Mr STREET - No, it's \$250,000 in this year's Budget. We'll have to make a decision in the preparation of next year's budget around any allocation of extra funding to the Office of Local Government. Some of that might be dependent on what happens in the next five or six months, before the development of the next budget. If we get a heap of proposals that we think are worthy of consideration, I'll have to go to the budget committee, as Local Government minister, and argue the case for the amount of money we need to flesh those proposals out.

PUBLIC

Mr SHELTON - Minister, I expect that most around the table have heard concerns from the community around council behaviour. I know the Future of Local Government review did not specifically capture this. Can you please outline what, if anything, the government is doing to improve behavioural standards across the sector?

Mr STREET - Thanks for the question, Mr Shelton. I recognise that many local councils are frustrated by the damage being done by the persistent poor behaviour of a minority. The community rightly expects the state government and the sector to work together to not only reduce it, but hopefully eliminate it altogether.

All councillors should behave in a way that represents community standards, which is why, earlier this month, I announced the commencement of a new code of conduct process. This will bring into effect the provisions of the *Local Government Amendment (Code of Conduct) Act* from last year, which was passed in September. These changes modernise and improve the code of conduct framework by implementing a single code of conduct which now automatically applies to all Tasmanian councillors. The code itself has been adjusted to include provisions to make clear that councils must not engage in prohibited conduct in accordance with the *Anti-Discrimination Act of 1998*.

Being a former councillor, I also understand the importance of ensuring that only genuine conduct matters are subject to a formal complaint. Through the amendments we've made, the government has introduced provisions aimed at supporting councils to manage disputes and behavioural issues at a local level. This includes requiring all Tasmanian councils to introduce dispute resolution policies within the next year and improving the initial assessment process of a code of conduct complaint. While I recognise that many Tasmanian councils do their best to manage behavioural matters in-house, it is important that there is a consistent approach across the sector. The Office of Local Government and the Local Government Association of Tasmania have worked with the sector to produce a model policy that councils can choose to adopt.

To complement these improvements, our government will bring into parliament amendments to the *Local Government Act* to clarify the obligations, duties and powers of council, the mayor, other elected members and senior council staff under our work health and safety legislation. New provisions included in the *Local Government Act* will define behaviours that constitute serious misconduct and will establish new offences with stronger sanctions for managing them. The potential role of TASCAT in investigating and enforcing the serious misconduct provisions will also be considered. The community should have confidence that their councils are delivering for them where it matters, and that their local councils are representing their interests and upholding appropriate standards of conduct.

I want to emphasise that point about TASCAT. There have been a number of different suggestions of how we can deal with the most egregious levels of behaviour of local government. One council I went to suggested that the Local Government minister just be given the power to dismiss people from council unilaterally.

Ms BURNET - You wouldn't want that, would you?

Mr STREET - Did you say I would love that?

Ms BURNET - You wouldn't want that.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - I absolutely made the point, be careful what you wish for. Though I used this example with the Legislative Council committee yesterday, I'll use it again. I think the council where that was suggested was West Tamar and I was sitting next to Geoff Lyons. If I got into a position where I had to dismiss Geoff from local council, the automatic story and assumption would be that a state Liberal minister has dismissed a former Labor federal member of parliament from council.

Ms WHITE - Shame.

Mr STREET - Exactly. So, at this stage, TASCAT looks like the best possible approach for putting a legal framework around this. There needs to be appeal rights and there needs to be a sturdy legal framework. If we're going to be dismissing people from elected office, that's a really serious process that needs a legal backing behind it. That's what we're looking at, at the minute. We're not completely there, but it's something we'll be looking at legislatively potentially next year.

Ms DOW - You've talked a little bit about how you plan to address the culture, but right now in local government, there are cultures across councils that are absolutely toxic, which I'm sure you're aware of. I don't think those changes can wait until the new year. This government has had 10 years to address the culture across our local government in this state, and arguably it's got worse in those 10 years. It's fair to say that not only extends across elected officials, but it also extends across workplaces in some instances.

The reason why I'm so concerned about it is, as someone who was formally involved in local government, it deters people from being involved in what is a very important level of government for your community. It diminishes the reputation of councils. It diminishes trust and confidence that communities have in their councils. It absolutely needs to be dealt with, minister. I'm not satisfied by you saying that you're going to do something in the new year. You've done this extensive review process which really didn't even touch the sides of the cultural issues across local government, which is something that needs to change in local government if we are to have a good solid foundation of local government across Tasmania into the future.

Why are you waiting till next year to start implementing some of these changes? The evidence is there, you know what the situation is. At the moment, why would anyone run for local government in Tasmania?

Mr STREET - We have made changes to the code of conduct process already, which I've just outlined -

Ms DOW - Which are very minimal.

Mr STREET - But important. We acknowledge that there are issues with culture at some councils and we're determined to work with the sector to make sure we improve it. But it requires buy-in from elected members and staff in the local government sector as well. We can put in all of the changes we're talking about -

I'm more than happy to have a conversation with you offline about other changes, or any member of parliament, anybody who has an interest in the local government sector, about what they think we can do to improve the behaviour and culture. Part of it is about the elected

members actually respecting the position they've been elected to and the role they are there to play. There's any number of legislative changes that we can make, but if we don't get buy-in and better behaviour from local government representatives, we're not going to change the culture without their help.

Ms DOW - You have to start somewhere.

Mr STREET - We do have to start somewhere. When I say next year, I'm talking about introducing legislation next year. That means the work that needs to be done to formulate that legislation is happening right now. But again, I cannot stress enough that some of the issues with culture in local government can be sheeted entirely back to the individuals within that sector and the way they behave. They need to take responsibility and ownership for that. That goes for all four corners of the state, Ms Dow. I think, without putting words in your mouth, you would agree with me that - how long have you been out of the local government sector?

Ms DOW - Six years.

Mr STREET - Yes, so I've been out since 2016. The behaviour in local government meetings has deteriorated immeasurably since I was a member of the local government sector.

Ms DOW - Why don't you go back then?

Mr STREET - You're sick of me?

Ms WHITE - You're one of the better ones.

Mr STREET - There is a number of factors at play here. When I was a member of local government, meetings weren't televised, for a start, you could act like a clown or you could misbehave and nobody would see it. I think there are people now who are playing to the camera, I've got to say as well, and actually want their behaviour to be publicised.

I think social media has been a terrible thing for politics at every single level, but local government is the closest entity to the people, which means that social media, I think, probably has the worst effect on that level of government as well.

There are legislative changes that we want to make, but I cannot stress enough that we need the help of the sector itself and the people within it to change the culture of local government. And you're right -

Ms DOW - As you've said, the majority of people involved in local government are there for the right reasons and want to represent their communities. I'm absolutely certain that they would be looking to their government for leadership and to actually put some things in place that will better support them in their role, but also give them a better framework to refer to and to protect them in their roles.

Mr STREET - That's exactly what we're looking to do as well.

Ms DOW - Just one last one on that, please, Chair, around working with vulnerable people. This is something that comes up and is raised with me as shadow minister a lot. I just wanted you to just update the committee on the government's current position on that matter.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - I completely understand why people look at the Working with Vulnerable People card as some sort of panacea.

The government's position hasn't changed that a mandatory requirement to have a Working with Vulnerable People card for those that serve in local government isn't what it was designed for. The application for a Working with Vulnerable People card is a point-in-time assessment; it doesn't have ongoing investigative processes behind it. So, we're reluctant to go down that path, you might want to add to that as well in terms of the advice that the department's given me about -

Mr MOGRIDGE - I think you've nailed it. I don't think the design of that particular policy is about a general character test to be a barrier to democracy per se. I suppose what will be good to explore with the sector, when they come forward with that formal recommendation for discussion, is what is the problem we're trying to solve and is the problem, going back to some of our earlier discussion, how responsive our current frameworks are to core conduct when it is identified. If that is the problem we're trying to solve, then let's make sure we get the right tools for that. I think that's just at an overarching level - some observations around the idea of using that as a general character test.

Mr STREET - Cards have been cancelled simply from an allegation that's been made before it's even been investigated. I'm not sure that we want to get into a position where elected members of any sphere of government can't perform their duty simply because an allegation has been made against them before it's been tested and examined thoroughly.

Ms BURNET - Minister, I'd really like to talk some more about that, but we only have an hour, so it's very frustrating that local government only has an hour. I just want to put that on record.

Mr STREET - I'm happy to put on record that I'm more than happy to have a conversation offline with you about that issue as well.

Ms BURNET - Yes, thank you. Perhaps we can have a local government interest group. There's plenty of us here.

Mr STREET - Parliamentary friends of local government.

Ms BURNET - Minister, there was considerable concern during the local government reform process about planning powers being stripped from local councils, and minister Ellis is still threatening the introduction of development assessment panels. Yet, we know that another component of local representation dear to the hearts of many Tasmanians is having their voices heard, especially when it comes to potentially inappropriate unsympathetic development.

What are you doing to ensure that planning decisions remain with local councils who are close to their communities?

Mr STREET - I'm afraid that's a matter for the Planning Minister, Ms Burnet.

Ms BURNET - I thought you might say that but I thought I'd ask anyway. I just want to talk specifically around council land, decisions around council land and uncertainty for communities and councils that are likely to lead to frustration, particularly when considering

what might happen with public land that might be council-owned. We could talk about the stadium development proposal or even the proposed High Performance centres. I want to focus on Kangaroo Bay. After eight years, Chambroad's hotel development proposal in Kangaroo Bay is still before the Supreme Court, costing Clarence ratepayers thousands of dollars.

Minister, given the legal matter is not resolved, do you agree any move towards an assessment as a major project is inappropriate, and will you support the local community and Clarence City Council who want their land back?

Mr STREET - That's a matter for the planning minister and for Clarence council.

Ms BURNET - It is certainly an issue.

Mrs PENTLAND - Minister, I've been informed about a new housing development in Huntingfield in the south of the state, which includes blocks as small as 130 metres squared. In contrast, other local governments still require much larger minimum block sizes, for example, City of Launceston general residential zoning is 325 metres squared. I am wondering if you're having any discussions with local councils about reducing block size requirements for new developments to help boost housing supply and increase multi-dwelling developments?

Mr STREET - That is a matter for the planning minister. The development at Huntingfield is being conducted by Homes Tasmania, and I know that they have an integrated approach to that entire development, so there is a suite of different block sizes to accommodate a range of different developments. I only know that because I was the housing minister for a while, so I won't go any further than that and tread on Minister Ellis's toes.

Mrs PENTLAND - You don't have those conversations with local council about the sizing of their blocks?

Mr STREET - Again, that's a planning matter.

Mr SHELTON - I raised the cost of living just a while ago, but again, I'm sure all members around the table understand that many Tasmanians are experiencing challenges associated with the cost of living. One of the things that is hitting people hard is the increase in council rates. Can you please advise what the government is doing to support Tasmanians?

Mr STREET - I recognise there are many Tasmanians in our communities who are facing cost-of-living pressures, and among them are increases in council rates. We hear this a lot from older Tasmanians. Through the Budget, one of the commitments our government has made is continuing to deliver the Pensioner Rates Remission Scheme to provide financial support to many Tasmanians in need. To be eligible for the rates remission you must hold a Services Australia Pensioner Concession Card, a Services Australia Health Care Card or a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card with certain endorsements.

These eligible pensions are entitled to the lesser of 30 per cent of their rates or the prescribed maximum amount. This means that for this financial year, the remission is set at a maximum of \$379 if you're a TasWater client, or \$559 if you're not. The difference is due to TasWater clients being able to access to the state government funded discount on their water and sewerage bills.

PUBLIC

I am pleased that this program is continuing, with just over \$21 million allocated in this year's budget. The rate remission scheme is funded by the government and administered by local councils. Each Tasmanian council has information available on their website, and I encourage Tasmanians to reach out to their local council if they have any questions about eligibility for making an application.

These remissions are an important part of the assistance we offer Tasmanians, but I know the bigger issue can be council setting huge rate increases. Local government is a separate and independent tier of government, and councils are often required to make complex and difficult decisions as part of their responsibility to their communities. Part of this responsibility is to provide essential services to their municipal area and they need an appropriate level of funding to deliver that.

The setting of rates is a matter for councils and, as Minister for Local Government, I'm unable to intervene in these operational matters. However, it is critical that the community understands where their rate dollars are going and have the ability to assess their council's performance against other jurisdictions. That's why it was recommended in the Future of Local Government Review that we seek to bring in new minimum requirements for rate notices to improve public transparency, accountability and confidence in council rates.

While many councils already provide this information to their ratepayers, I know a consistent approach across the sector will create a sound comparative for Tasmanians to see more clearly the administration of local government in our state.

Ms DOW - Minister, one of the things that gets raised with me when I meet with general managers and mayors is the appointment and recruitment of general managers. I wrote to you recently about a standard template contract, and I'm pleased to see that's been released by the government. I'm sure local government will welcome that, but it is one of the processes that councils raise with me - the lack of consistency across each local government area around that process. If the relationship between a mayor and a general manager breaks down, it makes it very difficult around that appointment and recruitment process as well.

I'm interested in any improvements that you're going to make to that process - whether you've had that feedback yourself, and what you're going to do about it.

Mr STREET - We have had that feedback, and a new regulatory framework applied to the recruitment and performance assessment of council general managers is being implemented in July of this year as part of our second 100-day plan.

This complements the reforms achieved through the Local Government Amendment Bill we passed last year. The changes introduce a legislative requirement that councils appoint staff based on a merit-based assessment, and the changes also require councils to seek applications for general manager vacancies in most instances.

The framework released under the ministerial order provides the local government sector with guidance on how best to do that. The guidance materials created to guide councils were developed in conjunction with the Office of Local Government and the Local Government Association of Tasmania, and I'd like to thank them for their ongoing support.

Whilst I recognise that most councils meet these requirements already, this baseline requirement will support best practice across the local government sector. The recruitment and performance assessment of general managers is among the most challenging functions of councillors and mayors, who must complete these tasks without their ordinary means of professional and administrative support.

The order introduces the following: requires an appropriate framework to manage conflicts of interest in the recruitment of general managers; sets guiding principles; requires councillors to obtain professional support, and establishes an annual performance review cycle based on agreed success measures. The implementation of these measures will lead to enduring benefits for Tasmanian communities, and is an important part of our government's ambitious reform agenda for local government.

This is absolutely an area of local government that needs to improve. Most councils were doing it well; there were councils that had deficient processes that needed to be brought up to speed.

Ms DOW - You spoke about the staged-out process that will follow your local government reform once you hand down your response to the final report, but right now, you have four councils in the Mersey-Leven region that want to work collaboratively together. They've signed an MOU; they've called it a strategic alliance. How are you going to work with them, and are you going to seize this opportunity? It's taken a great deal of collaboration and change between those councils to get to that position. You don't want to lose that, minister.

Mr STREET - No, we don't. Like I said, once we release our final response to the recommendations, that will basically open the three-phase process that Mike outlined before. We would welcome those four councils in the Meander Valley putting something together and being part of the initial assessment process in terms of coming to the Office of Local Government.

Ms DOW - Another question I have is around rate capping. You previously made some comments in the media around your government giving consideration to rate capping, or that you were looking at it as part of some legislative reforms. Can you elaborate on that for me, please, minister?

Mr STREET - I stand to be corrected, but I don't believe that I've made any public comments on looking at rate capping. I know that LGAT has been very fierce in their position on rate capping. It's not something that we are actively looking at, I don't think, and certainly not from the Office of Local Government's perspective either.

Ms BURNET - I'll just go back to the issue around bullying and harassment in councils. It obviously seems to be on the increase both between elected members, staff to elected members and the general public. It's probably becoming more threatening and more frequent, and since the October 2022 election, there has been a significant number of resignations from mayors, deputy mayors and councillors. Of the 19, it's highly likely that there is a significant number of people who have been forced out because of this issue.

I conducted a survey recently, which was a just over 25 per cent sample of elected representatives. They say that when asked the question, 'Is bullying and harassment an issue in your council?', 41 per cent of those respondents said yes. This is just unbelievable, when you're

thinking you're in that sort of situation. 56 per cent of the respondents felt that the code of conduct was not effective. It was considerable concern for councillors. I'm wondering how you will measure the effectiveness of changes to the code of conduct and these reforms?

Mr STREET - Measuring the reforms is going to be through observation over a reasonable period of time as to whether what we're doing is working or not. Also through feedback from the local government sector, we'll quickly find out whether it's working or not. I know the Office of Local Government is currently engaging proactively with LGAT councils and WorkSafe Tasmania to develop guides material that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives and council staff in providing a safe workplace. As Minister for Local Government, I'll fully support the provision of safe and appropriate workplaces for everyone, not just for elected members, but for staff, and for members of the municipality who come in to use the council chambers as well.

We're developing the statewide Local Government Learning and Development Framework, implementing the agreed reforms to the code of conduct, exploring targeted legislative reforms to clarify work health and safety responsibilities for councils, and providing additional powers to respond promptly to serious misconduct. I admit that it's concerning that over 40 per cent of the people that you've surveyed feel that bullying is an issue in the workplace. It's another deterrent to what Ms Dow was saying about attracting people not only to run for council, but to work in local government as well.

Ms BURNET - I've been involved, as have other people at this committee table, probably, in ALGWA, Australian Local Government Women's Association forums for getting people, particularly women, interested in running, so that there is greater diversity. Unfortunately, those people who are likely to leave, or don't even consider council, because of poor remuneration, or the culture and the reputation that goes before them, won't even stand. How can you specifically say to women that you will be addressing some of these issues so that we do have that real diversity and a culture that is acceptable?

Mr STREET - I don't know how much was provided, but we did provide money to ALGWA before the last local council elections for forums to be run right across the state, encouraging women to run. But I agree, if the workplace that they're being elected to is unacceptable, then we've got a more fundamental problem than just encouraging women to run for local government. My commitment isn't just to women, it's to men as well, that we will do everything we can to improve the culture and the standard of behaviour in the workplace of local government, but it's going to take time. I think you would agree: there is no silver bullet to fixing this particular problem, as much as we would like to.

Ms BURNET - No, but presumably places like South Australia - they seem to have quite a good code of conduct framework. I'm just curious as to know how borrowing from other jurisdictions is likely.

Mr STREET - I know that South Australia in particular is an area that the Office of Local Government is looking at at the minute in terms of the processes that they have, because they do seem to be working better. The Office of Local Government is working across jurisdictions on this.

Mr HEALEY - The Office has certainly recognised the increasing concerns about the behaviour of a minority of councillors. As the minister pointed out, it's getting worse and the

office's attention to that issue has escalated significantly over the years. The code of conduct has received some complaints, but at times it has also worked. People have been suspended for their behaviour. The director has taken the unusual step, on two occasions now, lodging a code of conduct complaint against councillors. So, the office is escalating its response and the office is also working really closely with councils around how we utilise the provisions of the work, health and safety legislation to also remind all people within the workplace that they have an obligation to keep the workplace safe, including from psychosocial harm.

So, as the minister pointed out, we are continuing to escalate our response. We are looking very closely at the South Australian code of conduct system and we'll keep doing whatever we can to try to get on top of the issues.

Mr STREET - It coincided with me coming into the portfolio rather than being a direction from me, but the Office of Local Government has become significantly more proactive in these issues rather than waiting for them to come to. As both Mike and Matt have said, the office has become more proactive at responding to initial complaints and trying to nip stuff in the bud as well, rather than letting it get out of hand.

Ms BURNET - I might just say one last thing if you don't mind, but sometimes codes of conduct aren't lodged because there is a lack of confidence by elected members that it's going to be effective.

Mrs BESWICK - Minister, I've observed, just in general, that there are times when councils, particularly small ones - obviously they can be quite inconsistent in sort of procurement, you know, activities and very small ones, obviously there's a lot of conflict of interest in the community, councillors and things like that. Is there some action happening in this space to improve support in that area for small councils?

Mr STREET - The second priority that I spoke about at the LGAT conference was about driving a high-performing transparent accountable sector and that goes basically to what you're talking about - the processes that councils have in place for things like procurement, like you said, but also, we were talking about with general manager recruitment as well. But it's also about driving a higher level of the data that these councils are required to provide as well to hold them accountable.

When I was talking in the Legislative Council to Kerry Vincent about it, he made the comparison from being in the sector about comparing apples with apples and the fact that the Auditor-General brings out a report every so often that compares councils across a number of different metrics, but then there are councils that sit there and look at that report and feel like tearing it to pieces because they see where they're judged and they know that they're doing the right thing. Then they see councils who are judged on a graph against every other council that have outperformed them, when they know that it's because the data and the processes that they've got in place are hiding deficiencies that they've got within the management structures of their councils.

We absolutely need to drive better procurement policies for councils, more consistent, but it's about doing it right across the sector as well. Local smaller councils obviously have a harder time with these things. It's why there was a discussion in the Legislative Council again yesterday about shared services when it comes to asset management or internal audit panels et cetera, and there are things that we need to look at as well.

PUBLIC

Regardless of the amalgamation process that goes on, there are going to be bigger councils and there are going to be smaller councils and we need to make sure that we're assisting those smaller councils, that what we're doing to drive better performance in the sector doesn't have a detrimental effect on their operations as well, to the point where we're putting so much work on them that they're not able to perform the duties that they're actually put there to do for their municipality as well. So, there's a balancing act to be had there.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, many Tasmanians are not aware of how their council rate payments are used by their local council. Does the government have any plans to require councillors to be more transparent with the community?

Mr STREET - As I was saying, in terms of driving transparent and accountable sector, one of the things that we want to do is have a renewed Local Government Strategic Planning and Reporting framework that will be established for all councils, underpinned by more consistent and higher quality data.

The framework will establish new streamlined strategic planning reporting requirements, which will be supported by clear guidelines for the collection, recording and publication of council datasets. Guidelines will also be developed to ensure overall data consistency and integrity for all councils across the state.

In consultation with the sector, we will seek new minimum requirements for rate notices, like I was talking about before. Given the cost-of-living pressures many Tasmanians are experiencing, we feel it's critical that the community understands where their rate dollars are going and have the ability to assess councils against one another in a number of key areas.

To further increase the level of transparency within the sector, we'll introduce a legislative requirement for all councils to have an internal audit function, which is what I was talking about before. This isn't about red tape; it's about reflecting the responsibilities the sector has for managing significant public assets and brings councils in line with state government agencies. All Tasmanian councils should be striving for continuous improvement in delivering on what matters most to our communities.

I do want to make it clear, again, like I was just saying to Mrs Beswick, that we understand that there are going to be bigger councils and smaller councils regardless of the process that we go through. It's not about playing councils off against one another either, because we know that smaller regional councils provide a different level of service and different services than urban councils do, but we do want a more transparent sector in terms of how councils are operating.

Ms DOW - Minister, if you're going to expect councils to do all of these things, and you've outlined the fact that there is currently - for many smaller councils - an imbalance in meeting all of their regulatory requirements and actually being able to provide services to their community, you're going to need to address the critical workforce shortages that we have across local government.

It's pretty clear that individual council workforce plans and a whole-of-sector workforce plan is required for local government across Tasmania. There are critical skills shortages, as I said; there is high turnover and an ageing workforce. What is your government doing about

that? You've had lots of representation about this, I understand from LGAT and the Australian Services Union (ASU), but what is your plan to address some of the workforce challenges?

Mr STREET - We understand that we need to drive workforce development within the local government sector. The point that's always made to me is that if one council gains a new head of planning, the chances are that a nearby council very close to them has lost their head of planning as well. So, we understand that it's a problem.

Mr HEALEY - It is certainly a key issue that was raised in the Future of Local Government Review. So, it's an issue that will need to be considered as part of the recommendations and the response to the recommendations of the Future of Local Government review. It is certainly not lost on anyone that there is a skills shortage for local government as there is in many other parts of the economy and perhaps there needs to be some different solutions to how councils access resources through shared services and other arrangements to enable them to maintain the capability that they need to deliver the core services to the community.

Mr STREET - Having them in front of me, I think one of the 29 recommendations did focus on workforce development.

Ms DOW - Minister, the Minns government in New South Wales has funded 1300 new apprentices and trainees across the local government sector in recognition of the need to develop their workforce. Does your government have any plans to roll out any initiatives like that?

Mr STREET - Look, I can't make a commitment about that today. I can say that there are incentives within the system for the employment of apprentices in terms of payroll tax rebates and what have you for private businesses. Whether we need to look at something for local government as well, I'm not making a commitment today, but it's going to be an ongoing issue. As you said, we do have an ageing workforce in local government and we're only going to solve that by bringing people in at the other end, whilst we've still got those people with experience available to pass the skills and knowledge on that they've got as well.

Ms DOW - As part of that, obviously local government is such an important regionally employer across many rural and remote communities in Tasmania as well. So, it's absolutely essential for local economies that there is a workforce plan around local government workforce as well. I look forward to your further iterations of that, minister.

Another question that I have relates to recommendation 37 of the review, which talks about the Tasmanian government partnering and better supporting councils to build capacity and capability to plan and respond for emergency events and climate change impacts. How do you intend to do that? Given this recent spate of weather events that we've had, and the detrimental effect on many communities across the state, it puts significant cost on local government and on communities. Can you outline your plan for that?

Mr STREET - That goes across more portfolios than just Local Government. I'm happy to defer to Mike.

Mr MOGRIDGE - I just observed that one of the elements of the future role of local government is expressly naming up the responsibility of councils in relation to being responsive

to climate change. I think we're seeing that in part play out through councils' participation in things like the Climate Change Action Plan more recently, which is work that will be continuing with ReCFIT. Underneath that role in the development of associated strategic plans and so on, we would see the responsibility of councils being developed in support of the government.

Ms DOW - Do you envisage more resources being provided to councils to do that role?

Mr STREET - I'm not going to commit to that at the table right now. It'll be an ongoing discussion. You've seen with the recent weather events that we've had the state government stepping in with payments and what-have-you to assist with people who've been affected. Whether we need a more consistent approach to rolling out support like that is an ongoing conversation that we'd be having with local government.

Ms BURNET - On a similar theme, there is often cost shifting to local government. When we're looking at these, as you've just recognised, more frequent extreme weather events, bushfires, floods, how can the local government sector be assured that they won't be picking up the pieces of the road and infrastructure rebuilds? There has to be not only that response as a partner with state government with the fixing, but also that response to action on climate change.

Mr STREET - Again, that's about clarifying each level of government's roles and responsibilities in relation to dealing with climate change. I spoke in the Legislative Council yesterday that the biggest complaint I get from the local government sector when I visit councils across the state is being used as the service provider of last resort. As the sector closest to the people, local government is the one that gets the first lot of complaints, whether it's a state or federal responsibility.

That doesn't just deal with issues like climate change. We've got councils across the state that are providing GP services at the minute - a federal government responsibility. That takes significant municipal resources out of small councils that they can ill afford. Part of the response to the review is about clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each sector of the government, to be clear about what local and state responsibilities are. We should be clear now. We will make sure that it's clearer. We'll work with the local government sector on that.

Ms BURNET - Resilience building is another key element for people and communities to be ready for those impacts of climate change. I know that there have been a number of pilots in relation, like Sparking Conversations. That's a program with four of the greater Hobart councils which has been building resilience so that people are ready for when that bushfire comes over the hill. What is your government doing in relation to funding communities and local governments to building that resilience? It's just so important. LGAT did a fantastic forum on resilience building. I'm wondering what your answer is in relation to that.

Mr STREET - Mike can talk about Resilience and Recovery Tasmania.

Mr MOGRIDGE - Sorry, I'll pass to Matt, the Deputy Secretary, on this one.

Mr HEALEY - Members might be aware that over the last decade or so, the Department of Premier Cabinet has built quite a significant capability in Resilience and Recovery

Tasmania. This is a significantly larger capability than the state has seen before, focused on supporting local government, supporting building of resilience for disasters in Tasmania.

Tasmania is probably a little ahead of the pack in terms of mapping hazards and informing communities about the potential hazards, including those that are impacted by climate change. We're working really collaboratively with the Commonwealth, for example, on investing heavily in drought resilience at the moment, preparing communities to be better prepared for drought. We are significantly advancing those discussions, including with local government. We are working pretty collaboratively with the Commonwealth on funding arrangements to prepare communities and to support communities to recover from some of these emergencies.

CHAIR - The time for Estimates for the Minister of Local Government has expired. The committee will resume at 1 p.m.

The Committee suspended from 12.05 p.m. to 1 p.m.

The Committee met at 1 p.m.

CHAIR - The time being 1 p.m., the examination of the Estimates of the Minister for Sport and Events will commence. Welcome, minister, and would you introduce persons at the table?

Mr STREET - To my right is Craig Limkin, Secretary of State Growth; to my immediate left, Tim Lovibond, my chief of staff; to his left Anne Beach, CEO of Macquarie Point Development Corporation; and to Anne's left is James Avery, the CEO of Stadiums Tasmania.

CHAIR - Thank you. The time scheduled for the Estimates is 2.5 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 that 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. I remind everybody that, for the benefits of Hansard, not to speak over each other and to mind thumping the microphones when shuffling papers around.

Would the minister like to make an opening statement?

Mr STREET - I would. I'd like to start by saying I'm proud to be the Minister for Sport and Events. I'm pleased to be able to talk today about a Budget that includes significant initiatives to boost participation in sport and active recreation, our strong support for the event sector, as well as commitments that represent strong investment in infrastructure across the state.

This government has a clearly stated aim to get as many Tasmanians as possible involved in their choice of sport and active recreation pursuit. We want sport and active recreation to be accessible and inclusive, and we want the facilities and supports to be in place to ensure that, whatever your age or wherever you live, that you have the chance to get out there and be active doing something you enjoy.

PUBLIC

We know what a vital role sport and active recreation has in preventative health. The sense of camaraderie, friendship and release that can come from being involved in sport can make a world of difference to many people. It's for these reasons that this government made a decision at the election to back in our sports clubs so that they can continue building participation across the age groups.

I'm pleased to say that this Budget contains \$86.5 million over the forward Estimates to support active initiatives, sporting organisations and community supporting infrastructure across the state, projects that help Tasmanians feel part of something bigger than themselves. And the same can be said for events right around our state.

The Tasmanian government has always been a strong supporter of the event sector, providing funding to attract, retain and grow events that drive economic growth, tourism and jobs in every corner of our state. Events are fundamental to our visitor economy, both creating the reason people visit and ensuring that they also have a fantastic experience that makes them want to return time and again.

Our government is aware of the importance of stimulating our regional economies through events, particularly during the winter shoulder season. In line with the Tasmania Government Event Strategy of 2023-2027, we aim to grow visitor numbers through a regionally and seasonally balanced calendar of events, resulting in social, economic and brand value.

This Budget delivers \$68 million in support to events over the next four years to support their ongoing success. We've also made a provision to support new event opportunities with \$5 million over this year and next year as announced during the election.

Importantly, too, we're investing in the enabling infrastructure to bring our event sector to life, and that includes the redevelopment of Macquarie Point and the construction of our stadium. I'm proud of this development [inaudible] and I'm excited by it. I'm pleased that we provide the sport and event sectors with the support that we do as a government and I'm now keen to take questions.

Mr WINTER - On 22 August I held a media event at Mudbar Restaurant in Launceston, where Don Cameron poured his heart out to the media about the business conditions he was facing. In a *Mercury* article that appeared later, he reported a popular Launceston restaurant had laid bare as to the extent of the struggling hospitality industry pending a desperate call for more TT-Line sailings. He described the last 12 months as the operation's worst in 40 years, saying that Tasmania could not afford to forget its main economic engine room was tourism.

Minister, following that article, an event was cancelled in his restaurant the day afterwards. Are you aware of the circumstances and why the event which was to be held by the Hawthorn Football Club in concert with the Tasmanian government was cancelled?

Mr STREET - I believe it was held in concert with Stadiums Tasmania, so, I'll pass to James Avery.

Mr AVERY - My understanding is ultimately that event was cancelled given the industrial action that was taking place at the time around the venue. So, the Hawthorn Football Club was unable to attend as there was a shift in the slot of when the game was being played

and they were required to attend to the changes that were necessary in relation to that fixture change.

Mr WINTER - On Thursday 22 August, though, I understand that Mr Cameron received a phone call to say that the event had been cancelled. Are you or your office aware of why that event was to be cancelled the next day?

Mr AVERY - No. Again, my understanding is that the event was going to still go ahead. After that, it was ultimately cancelled as a result of the Hawthorn fixture change.

Mr WINTER - Minister, I want to ask you again about this. My understanding is that Mr Cameron was told that, because of his participation in a media event with the Labor Party and because of the comments that he made in the *Mercury* newspaper, that the event would not go ahead.

Mr STREET - I'm not aware of that. I was going to attend that event and then pulled out because of ill health. I will pass to James.

Mr AVERY - As I say, I understand you didn't attend, minister, because of health reasons. My understanding was the event was going to go ahead and, in the end, Hawthorn was the one who cancelled it, given the fixture change.

Mr WINTER - You can categorically state that at no point did your government seek to cancel the event because of his participation in a media event with the Labor Party?

Mr STREET - I'm going to take that on notice as to whether my office had any knowledge of that or not.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, I wrote to you about this on the 27 June and I haven't received a response. Prior to your government announcing the stadium project, the ministerial statement of expectations for the Macquarie Point Development Corporation clearly articulated what your average person would consider to be reasonable elements regarding the spending of public money on a piece of public land. It said, and I quote:

3.3 commercial activities.

The minister expects the corporation to only carry out commercial activities that are:

1. Consistent with the corporation's principle objectives and functions;
2. Appropriately costed and carefully managed with the objective that, in the absence of a higher priority, the activities deliver a commercial return acceptable to the board; and
3. Compliant with the government's competitive neutrality principles.

Now, after announcing the stadium in July last year, there was a new ministerial statement of expectations written by minister Barnett, and it completely deleted this entire section. It's just absent.

PUBLIC

So, minister, do you expect the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to abide by these principles, to act consistent with its act to ensure commercial activities are appropriately costed and carefully managed and to meet your cost-neutrality project principles?

And is it because of the stadium project and the risk and the reckless decisions that that had to be deleted?

Mr STREET - As you pointed out in your question, these ministerial directions were given by a previous minister.

My understanding is that the department is drafting new ministerial expectations for Macquarie Point Development Corporation at the minute, so I'll pass to the secretary of State Growth.

Mr LIMKIN - Thank you minister. You are correct, the Department of State Growth supports the minister in the development of ministerial expectations for a number of companies. Macquarie Point Development Corporation is one of those. The department is currently working on an update to the statement, normally their financial years. The next one will be 2024-25.

We have made a deliberate decision to wait until the project of state significance was lodged so that we can provide the minister with the most timely and accurate advice in the development of that ministerial statement, which is currently underway and my expectation will be completed shortly.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, would you expect to put those important principles back in? I note that the current ministerial statement of expectations has already expired, so, the corporation is currently operating without one as we speak. Despite the fact that there are these really critical decisions and actions being taken, is it your expectation that those principles to act consistent with the act to appropriately cost and manage expenditure and to be compliant with cost neutrality will be in the ministerial of statement of expectations?

Mr STREET - Again, I'll take advice from the Department of State Growth in terms of the draft of those ministerial expectations.

Mr BAYLEY - Why wouldn't they, minister?

Mr STREET - As I am just being informed, they have to comply with those anyway.

Mr BAYLEY - That begs the question, why would they be there in the first place if they're superfluous? Because you'd have to abide by them and live by them already. Why would they have been deleted simply because the stadium project was announced as opposed to a more community-accepted redevelopment proposition?

Mr LIMKIN - Mr Bayley, I can't talk about previous ministerial statements of another minister. All I can articulate to you is that the department will ensure that the current ministerial statement complies with the Macquarie Point act, the relevant laws, plus also the government's current policy direction for Macquarie Point Development Corporation. I will also indicate that as part of this process, we do have to consult with the corporation and the board, and the minister has to consider their feedback. Ultimately, we will give a number of options to the

minister to consider and prepare a position forward, and we hope to be in a position to provide that policy advice shortly.

Mr BAYLEY - They're pretty fundamental -

CHAIR - Mrs Pentland.

Mrs PENTLAND - Minister, in terms of return on investment, how does the Hawthorn partnership compare with other major events? What is the return on investment with the partnership with Hawthorn?

Mr STREET - In terms of the return on the investment, I'll go to Craig. We went through a number of events in the Legislative Council Estimates committee yesterday that talked about return and investment. Hawthorn wasn't one of them that was listed, but we will get that information for you. The return on investment isn't in the brief. The team will get that information and we'll get that to you.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, premier Hodgman, in 2018, announced a multi-sport indoor facility to be built in the northern suburbs of Hobart. That was in 2018. It's now 2024. When are the basketball, netball, volleyball, futsal community going to get any information or any awareness around the building of a new facility?

Mr STREET - As you would expect, I received this question in the Legislative Council Estimates committee yesterday from the member for Elwick as well. When the commitment was made in 2018, it was made without a site identified.

We went through a process. I was a staffer at the time and Wilkinsons Point was chosen as the site at that time. This was prior to the JackJumpers coming into existence. When they came into existence and the need for a high-performance facility was identified, we made the decision to combine both of those facilities into one, hoping that we would end up with the four-court community facility, but also the two courts for the JackJumpers for community use as well.

It became clear through working with Glenorchy Council that the expenditure on development issues outside of the actual facility itself at Wilkinsons Point was going to make it cost-prohibitive for the budget that we had and, so, we had to make the decision to split the two projects, again. Obviously, the JackJumpers are at Kingston and we're doing due diligence at the minute on sites in the northern suburbs.

Like I said in the Legislative Council Estimates yesterday, I absolutely accept the frustration of people who have been waiting six years for this facility. We are very close in terms of the due diligence to be able to choose a preferred site for that facility and the commitment I made in the Legislative Council Estimates yesterday is the same one that I make today. We will get a DA lodged and get work started on that facility as quickly as possible once the site has been announced.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, it was 2020 when the then premier, following premier Hodgman, premier Gutwein, announced the site and announced support and the JackJumpers landscape was aware then. How can anyone - when you say you're going to get it done as quickly as possible - that's what was said back in 2020.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - And I understand that, and the only commitment I can give at the table is my word, Mr O'Byrne, which is that we're very close to having a site selected in the northern suburbs with designs. We're doing consultation at the minute with the stakeholders that will be using the facility as well around the site selection and we will have a site selected very soon and we will commence work as soon as possible.

CHAIR - Mr Shelton has the call.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, can you please inform the committee of the progress to deliver the Macquarie Point Precinct Plan, please?

Mr STREET - I can, Mr Shelton. I thank you for your question. I'm pleased to be able to provide the committee with an update on the status of the Macquarie Point Precinct Plan. The Macquarie Point redevelopment provides a unique opportunity to deliver something special for the people of Tasmania. The precinct plan provides a layout and guide for how the site will be developed to deliver a mixed-use precinct. If I can provide a brief history of the development of the Draft Precinct Plan, it was informed by over 2000 survey responses and written submissions, along with meetings with more than 100 individuals and organisations. Following this consultation, Macquarie Point Development Corporation released the Draft Plan in October 2023 and further consultation was undertaken. Importantly, members of the public and organisations were encouraged to provide feedback on the plan and input into its implementation.

Last week we achieved a significant milestone in relation to Macquarie Point Precinct with the Australian Government accepting the Tasmanian government's Precinct Plan. The federal government has committed \$240 million towards this exciting development, including that of Tasmania Stadium for Hobart. I thank the federal government for their investment in this project that will transform Hobart and specifically the Macquarie Point Precinct. I'd also like to thank the Macquarie Point Development Corporation for their hard work in developing the precinct plan. The federal government's acceptance is a milestone of the funding agreement between the state and federal governments. The federal funding agreement supports the delivery of the urban redevelopment of the Macquarie Point Precinct and speaks to housing, transport options, wharf redevelopment and stakeholder engagement.

Moving forward, a key priority for the partnership between the Australian and the Tasmanian governments will be the development of a housing plan to inform the development of the Residential Development and Public Foreshore Zone, along with the Antarctic Facility Zone and Complementary Integrated Mixed-Use Zone and Aboriginal Culturally-Informed Zone. For the benefit of the community, I'd like to table a copy of the precinct plan today - and it's also publicly available from today on the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's website.

Mr WINTER - Minister, back onto the issue of the big dinner that was cancelled following Don Cameron's media appearance. I accept you've had to take on notice the question about whether your office was involved in the cancellation of that dinner. I can tell you that Mr Cameron was told that the dinner, which was being co-hosted by the Tasmanian government and the Hawthorn Football Club, was being cancelled because of his statements in the media. Do you think it is appropriate that your office or the Tasmanian government would start cancelling events because the owner was critical of your government?

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - Again, I have to take this on notice, Mr Winter, I understand the question but I'm taking this on notice to clarify the matter with my office.

Mr WINTER - Perhaps you can also take this on notice. Did your office say words to the effect that the government won't be spending a cent at that venue this weekend?

Mr STREET - I'll have to take that on notice as well.

Mr WINTER - Was the Premier or his office aware of this cancellation or involved in the cancellation?

Mr STREET - Again, I would have to take that on notice. Mr Winter.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, the *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act* is really explicit in outlining the functions of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation and that's why we were so alarmed to see that the corporation act is inconsistent with its functions in the Ministerial Statement of Expectations. To read from the act, clause 7 says functions of the corporation: the corporation has the following functions -

- c) To redevelop and maintain or ensure the redevelopment and maintenance of (2) a corridor allowing transit through the site by means of public transport.

We have helpfully received a copy of the precinct plan, but I can't see a transit corridor for public transport through the site. Are you confident? How can you say that this finalised Macquarie Point precinct plan is actually consistent with the *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act*?

Ms BEACH - Through the minister, there were a number of things that we considered in developing the precinct plans. As the minister noted, there were extensive consultations. We had over 2000 submissions and just over 100 meetings with local businesses and individuals and organisations and we also looked at a number of compliance things. One of those was with our act and some other things were some of the requirements of the Commonwealth. As the member noted, there are some requirements in our act around the specific things that our site needs to be able to do. There is the northern access road that sits to the north of the site that comes through and there's a strip of land that continues on and connects out towards the Tasman Highway, which is a mixed-use area, so that allows for a continued transit connection. We do meet that requirement as set out in the act.

Mr BAYLEY - For public transport? What will run through that corridor? What public transport will run through that corridor, through you, minister?

Ms BEACH - Through the minister, it meets the requirements to have that transit connection.

Ms BAYLEY - According to who? Sorry, through you, minister. Ms Beach, who has done that assessment? It hasn't been discussed in parliament. The act is very clear. The act was clearly written and passed through parliament, when it did, with the vision of having public transport go through there. It is very clear. A corridor allowing transit through the site by means of public transport. Can you point to me in this precinct plan as to what public transport goes

PUBLIC

through the site because I cannot see any that actually necessarily goes to the site apart from coaches dropping off at the bus mall, and then they turn around and go back out again, don't they?

Ms BEACH - As noted, it does allow for that transit through - the way the site is laid out is for that to be provided for in the future and for that connection to continue. It is set out on our title to require that connection we have provided for that in the way the site is laid out. As I noted, there is that mixed-use corridor that connects through to the Tasman Highway -

Mr BAYLEY - I am sorry, but again, which public transport mechanism or mode is going to be passing through there?

Ms BEACH - It is a road; the connection there, and that leaves it open for future connections.

Mr BAYLEY - But a road is not public transport.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BAYLEY - With respect, Chair, a road is not public transport. A road is a public asset upon which a whole range of different users can use. Public transport is a bus or a light rail or a train. Which mode is going to go through that transit corridor because it explicitly says 'a corridor allowing transit through the site by means of public transport'.

Ms BEACH - Through the minister, it is a corridor allowing for transit and it is a site plan. We do not provide the services; we provide the space for those services.

Mr STREET - Just before you go on Mrs Pentland, the return on investment for Hawthorn in 2023-24 was five-to-one.

Mrs PENTLAND - Great, thank you. So, Hawthorn's partnership has been successful for UTAS and we know that the contract expires next year. It would be great to extend the contract for 2026-27, given that 2026 is going to be the 25th anniversary for Hawthorn playing in Tasmania. Minister, Cairns has established a partnership with Hawthorn's AFLW side and it is my understanding that they want the men's football as well and are prepared to pay big bucks for it. Is Launceston at risk of losing its valuable partnership with Hawthorn?

Mr STREET - Look, from my discussions with Hawthorn, they are very keen to maintain a relationship with Launceston as well. I am aware of the relationship with Cairns that you are talking about. You have indicated that we have a deal with Hawthorn for next year, for 2025. There is obviously then a two-year gap of 2026 and 2027 before the Devils come into the competition. We have already started discussions with Hawthorn about what that deal could potentially look like.

At the minute the deal with Hawthorn has game attraction in it, but it also has a sponsorship element in it. There are discussions about whether having the Tasmanian sponsorship element is still appropriate with the Devils coming in as well, and it will include the Devils in that conversation as well because we want whatever we are doing with Hawthorn to complement and not override whatever work that the Devils are doing to promote themselves in 2026-27 in terms of coming into the competition. We are very keen to do a deal for 2026

PUBLIC

and 2027 and I have already had informal discussions with Launceston City Council about the fact that they are very keen to see a relationship with Hawthorn beyond the Devils' introduction into the competition as well.

Mrs PENTLAND - Can you just confirm that the UTAS Stadium being in limbo between Stadiums Tasmania and the Launceston City Council is holding up the new deal with Hawthorn?

Mr STREET - No, it is not.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, back to the northern suburbs multi-sport facility, it is nearly getting close to four, maybe five years, between when the announcement of the commitment was made to where we are now and I take at face value your commitment and your drive to get this done, I do appreciate that, but how do you explain nearly four years of nothing?

Mr STREET - It is difficult to explain, it is uncomfortable to explain, like I said, it is the change in plans that we have had on a couple of different occasions for that facility as well. I admitted in the Legislative Council yesterday and I am happy to admit today that the delays have been unacceptable and that there are frustrated stakeholders in the northern suburbs who require access to these four courts. We put money into the Moonah facility, but it was just repatriation work to try and keep that facility going.

What they need is more courts; that is exactly what we plan to deliver. I understand people's scepticism around me sitting here saying that we will get it done. I will commit to getting the work done as quickly as possible because the delays are undeniable but that is all I can do, Mr O'Byrne, is giving my commitment that I will get this project moving as quickly as possible.

Mr O'BYRNE - So, if past behaviour is a predictor future behaviour. How can people be confident that, beyond your commitment, you've got a department that is incapable of delivering what is a significant project?

Mr STREET - I'll pass to Craig.

Mr LIMKIN - Thank you minister, and through you, the Department of State Growth only became accountable for this project within the last 12 months. Prior to that it was the former Department of Communities. Since this time, the department has really focused on delivering the original plan by the government to have it delivered at Wilkinsons Point. Since the government's decision to decouple the project, if I call it that, between the JackJumpers, the gymnastics -

Mr O'BYRNE - Well, they walked away out of frustration, let's be clear.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr LIMKIN - and the four courts, we have really focused on site selection. We have identified 17 sites with the council -

Mr O'BYRNE - That's fantastic, you've narrowed it down to 17 sites.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr LIMKIN - and key partners. We have narrowed that site selection down, Mr O'Byrne, to two and three.

We are currently undertaking geotechnical works in preliminary approvals do that when the government makes an announcement there is certainty for the community that this can be designed and delivered. I promise you that this is imminent in being finalised and we will be able to provide policy advice to the government shortly for the government to consider that and make further decisions. The minister has tasked the department to prioritise this because of the long lag from the community and that is exactly what the department is doing at the moment.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, I believe that Ticket to Play has been extremely successful in making sport and active recreation pursuits more affordable for families since it was introduced by this government in 2019. Can you talk us through the Ticket to Wellbeing program and how it will assist older Tasmanians access to activity to help them stay active and become more connected to the community?

Mr STREET - Thanks for the question. You're absolutely right about Ticket to Play. In the 2023-24 financial year just gone, a record 12,465 Ticket to Play vouchers were redeemed by Tasmanian families to help with the cost of participating in sport and active recreation. That's increased from \$10,799 in 2022-23. I'd like to point out that this Budget has provided an additional \$250,000 per year for the next three years to provide for a further expansion of the program. Active Tasmania has been opening Ticket to Play up to more sports progressively over the years so that it now includes activities like Scouts, learn to swim program and circuit sports, and this new funding will allow for an expansion of the eligibility criteria. It will mean that families who receive the Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement in the previous financial year will be able to access two vouchers worth up to \$100 each to go towards club membership and registration fees for children aged 5 to 18 years.

Previously, the program was open to those children listed on Services Australia Healthcare or Pensioner Concession card or in out of home care, and this expansion is expected to mean that something like 2500 more families will be eligible for Ticket to Play. Ticket to Play has been so successful that it's inspired a brand new pilot program for older Tasmanians that, in consultation with the Council, on the Ageing, we've called Ticket to Wellbeing. Ticket to Wellbeing will offer vouchers of \$100 to people over the age of 65 who are listed on a Services Australia Healthcare or Pensioner Concession card to use for registration and membership costs.

At a time when cost of living pressure is making extracurricular activities harder to afford, this pilot program will support older people getting involved in sport, active recreation and wellness activities by making them more affordable. The intention is to make sure that things like yoga and bridge can be included in the program along with traditional sports and we'll be seeking activity providers to register with Active Tasmania over the next few months so that they're set up and ready to go once the program starts in the new year. Chair, I'm pleased to release the guidelines for Ticket to Play and Wellbeing today. The program won't open until early in the new year, but it's important to get the guidelines out so that providers can understand the process from their side well before the program goes live and, so for the benefit of the committee, I'll table those guidelines, which I've got just here.

PUBLIC

Mr WINTER - Minister, to go back to my line of questioning, the issue is that a local restaurant, Mud Bar in Launceston, was to hold an event between the Hawthorn Football Club and your government the day following a media appearance with myself. The information that I have is that because of the negative comments they made in the article, they were told their dinner was getting cancelled by the Hawthorn Football Club. Do you understand that an attempt like this to inflict maximum financial damage on a business because they were critical of your government would constitute potentially a breach of the law?

Mr STREET - Look again, I understand the line of questioning. I'm asking for you to allow me to take these questions on notice so that I can clarify the position with my office as to what actually occurred.

Mr WINTER - The *Anti Discrimination Act*, for example, has discrimination on grounds of attribute: a person must not discriminate against another person on the grounds of any of the following attributes and any political activity. Potentially, we're talking about a breach of the *Anti Discrimination Act* on the basis of somebody's political activity. This is quite serious. Do you think you'd be able to come back to the committee before the end of this hearing?

Mr STREET - Look, I'm not sure whether we will be able to or not. I'm asking to please allow us to take this matter on notice so that I can consult with my office and find out exactly what happened from their perspective.

Mr WINTER - The Ministerial Code of Conduct also prohibits the improper use of information obtained within the course of official activities. Wouldn't the knowledge of the location of the dinner with the Hawthorn Football Club be information that could only have been obtained through your official activities? Wouldn't using this information to punish the business for speaking out negatively against your government constitute improper use of information under that code?

Mr STREET - Mr Winter, these are accusations that you're making and I'm asking to take the matter on notice so that I can clarify with my office their opinion on exactly what happened.

Mr WINTER - The problem I've got is that this is a -

CHAIR - Mr Winter, it has been agreed to be take on notice. The call goes to Mr Bayley.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, I'm keen to get completely up to date on the costs associated with the Macquarie Point stadium. It has been acknowledged, I think by the corporation, that a number of different costs weren't included in the original budget including \$48.4 million which takes the figure ultimately up to \$823.5 million for the stadium and there's an additional \$6.8 million for CCTV costs that weren't included. As you know, \$830 million is the figure that's been discussed for the last few days.

On top of that, there's a number of costs in the WSP transport study that don't seem to be factored into the capital cost estimate despite being essential infrastructure for the stadium. One of these is \$33.9 million for the northern access road and just to confirm that that's not included in the \$775 million estimate. That takes it up to \$864 million. Regardless of whether or not this was a pre-existing commitment, the transport study calls it the most essential supporting project

PUBLIC

for the multi-purpose stadium transport solution. There's no stadium without the northern access road. How can you not include it in the costs of the stadium?

Mr STREET - I'll go to Anne first and then come back to Craig as well.

Ms BEACH - The northern access road was identified in the Hobart City deal which is dated 2019 and that was identified to support the Antarctic sector. Currently the Port of Hobart is supported by access by Evans Street and in working with some of those key [inaudible] it was identified that as a single point of failure; Evans Street as the only access to the port represents some risk going forward into the future. The northern access road was identified primarily to support the Antarctic sector, which is worth around \$185 million to the Tasmanian economy each year. In working through the precinct plan, aware of that commitment we looked at opportunities for that existing planned road to connect in and support the development of Macquarie Point. That was part of our thinking as part of our engagement.

TasPorts were part of our project steering committee as part of developing the precinct plan. We work through the connection of that and their likely alignment to understand any opportunities to align with that road. Should the stadium not proceed, that northern access road would be required, so, as you noted, it isn't included in the project costing because it's not specific to that project.

Mr BAYLEY - But you acknowledge that it is considered the most essential supporting project for the multi-purpose stadium?

Ms BEACH - It is an important transport project to facilitate the development, but it is not specific to the stadium.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, you were absent on Thursday last week in the Chamber when I asked the Premier the question regarding the release of why the WT Partnership quantity surveyors report was not publicly available on the documentation lodged by MPDC on Wednesday last week. The Premier, I believe, took it on notice. It's still not available. Are you able to table the WT Partnerships quantity surveyors report today?

Mr STREET - Thank you for the question. I understand this is an area of interest for members and for the community. I've asked the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to work with WT Partnership's consultant expert quantity surveyors to prepare a summary of the cost plan as at the time of the concept design that can be released.

I'm advised it is not appropriate to release the detailed cost planning appendices as the detailed breakdown is commercial-in-confidence. This is because it may undermine our ability to seek competitive bids when going to market for the construction of the stadium, as it sets out the individual costings of the project, including contingencies, margins and trade works, which effectively provides the market with details on our pricing assumptions and may lead to inflated bids and less competition in responses. It also includes the methods the consultant firm uses to cost individual elements, which is the company's intellectual property. But I have asked the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to work with WT Partnership to prepare a summary of the cost plan at the time of the concept design that can be released and we -

Ms JOHNSTON - Do you have a time frame when that will be released? It's a critical document to understand the cost-benefit analysis and the KMPG report.

Ms BEACH - We should have that ready for the end of the week.

Mrs PENTLAND - Minister, on the urgency to sign a new deal with Hawthorn for 2026-27, given you acknowledge Cairns could be a rival bidder and the clock really is ticking, how soon could a new arrangement be sealed? And you say that the standoff between Stadiums Tasmania and the Launceston Council isn't getting in the way, but who exactly is involved in negotiating a new deal?

Mr LIMKIN - I want to be clear that it's the Department of State Growth through our Events Tasmania team who are currently having conversations with Hawthorn. I'll come to Stadiums Tasmania in a second, but whether the stadium is owned by Stadiums Tasmania or continues to be owned by Launceston City Council, we are in negotiations with Hawthorn to extend that deal at this stage.

Given Stadiums Tasmania is the proposed future owner of the stadium, subject to council agreeing to transfer the asset, which is, I understand, in final negotiations between Stadiums Tasmania and Launceston City Council, we are also involving Stadiums Tasmania in those conversations as the future owner to make sure that we are able to partner and deliver with the future owner. But I do want to make it clear again that the negotiations through the Department of State Growth are completely separate to whether the stadium transfers or not. It's been a consistent agreement between the state and Hawthorn, even when it's been in council ownership.

Mrs PENTLAND - When can we expect the deal to be sealed?

Mr LIMKIN - Negotiations have started. We are looking to finalise them as quickly as possible for a decision by government. I'm of the understanding that the Hawthorn CEO reached out to my team last week to continue those conversations. Those conversations have already happened. We waited until the season had finished because they were focused on finals football but we will continue to do that as quickly as possible.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, late last year, the government announced a partnership with DarkLab to deliver the Southern Tasmania Events and Festivals Infrastructure Audit and Strategy. Through the election, it was announced an equivalent northern strategy, which, as I understand it, is being delivered in partnership with Visit Northern Tasmania. Can you please outline the need for these strategies and what we hope to achieve and gain through them?

Mr STREET - Festival and event spaces are key to the success of our events sector and a key to events aligning with the Tasmanian brand.

I'm happy to say that through the 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, our government committed to the development of a culture and festivals infrastructure plan in the north of the state.

It will align with the work being undertaken by DarkLab towards a Southern Venue Strategy, which will collectively give a statewide blueprint of the needs of the sector. This is an important step for our events industry, which we know plays a significant role in growing Tasmania's visitor economy. It is key that we explore the needs of the events and festival sector so that we can forecast opportunities for growth and support events that all Tasmanians can enjoy and that will attract visitors to our state.

PUBLIC

The purpose of the strategy is to develop a strategic analysis of forecast opportunities for festivals and major events growth, together with the infrastructure, design, commercial and operational requirements to maximise upside and minimise risk.

Visit Northern Tasmania will manage development of the northern strategy in collaboration with Events Tasmania. A key part of developing the plan will be bringing together a steering committee from across the events and festivals, tourism, hospitality and infrastructure sectors as well as representation from the local government sector.

I expect this development work will include an audit of the current event and festival venues in the north of the state in consideration of opportunities to encourage more events. Importantly, it will analyse proposed developments and their cultural, social and economic impacts and fit within and for the region. If we want to attract and retain vibrant and healthy events and festivals in the north and across the state more broadly, we need to make sure the infrastructure is there and that's what we're examining.

I expect the Northern Culture and Festivals Infrastructure Plan will be completed in the next 12 months and I look forward to making a formal announcement when the work is completed.

Mr WINTER - Minister, I wanted to ask you about the stadium. There's been some confusion about the costs, what's included and what's not. I know a lot of these questions have been dealt with, but I've been following along and trying to understand exactly what the government's position is here. I wonder if you can tell me the total cost of the stadium as you currently understand it, including each item. In fact, could you itemise the components that add up to, I think, you're saying \$775 million?

Mr STREET - Part of that work is in relation to Ms Johnston's question about the breakdown of that \$775 million, so we're working to put together something that we can release publicly. Anne, if you want to add further to that.

Ms BEACH - The budget that we're working through includes the delivery of the stadium, which includes all resourcing, consultancies, it's the physical build, it's their approval costs involved in that - trade works, headworks, resourcing, the whole package. That includes the work that we've done to date; it is part of that project budget.

Mr WINTER - I understand that answer. I'm interested in the private sector component of this. Which of the components of either the stadium build or the stadium precinct build, more broadly, do you see as having the potential for private sector investment?

Mr STREET - I'll go to Craig on that as State Growth has been doing the preliminary work on investment attraction.

Mr LIMKIN - Mr Winter, as the Premier outlined earlier this week, and also as part of the government's election commitments, they have asked for advice on how to do market testing. Market testing can be multiple methodologies. There's market testing, where you can take unencumbered land to market to just sell it; you could take a proposition like a public-private partnership to market; you could take pre-approved DAs to market to do that. What the Department of State Growth is doing in partnership with DPAC, Treasury, Macquarie Point and Stadiums Tasmania is currently preparing advice for the government to fulfil their

PUBLIC

commitment and consideration on how they undertake market testing and the options that are available for market testing to occur. The Premier has indicated to the committee on Monday that following consideration of the policy advice from the department and our agency partners, the government intends to do market testing by the end of the year.

Mr WINTER - Of the components of the Macquarie Point site that you are currently committed to building, what, if any, of those components do you believe would be right for private sector investment?

Mr STREET - I think that there are any number of different opportunities within the stadium and the precinct itself for private investment, but Craig might want to add to that.

Mr LIMKIN - The Department of State Growth and government have received multiple approaches from the private sector on a variety of different propositions that could do, Mr Winter. Some of those propositions could be the build and operations of the stadium, the northern access road, some of the key transport projects. The private sector has indicated to the state that it would be interested in building some or all components, or a variety of components. There are private sectors that have indicated that they would be willing to build the stadium and a different proposition at a different site as well. What we're doing is trying to work through what is the best way to engage with the private sector to ensure that the state has competitive tension through that process. We intend to give that advice to the government shortly for them to be able to make some policy decisions on which way to take the market testing forward as per the Premier's commitment.

Mr WINTER - One of the things you mentioned as part - Chair?

CHAIR – Mr Bayley

Mr BAYLEY - Thank you Chair.

Mr WINTER - I think I get three, don't I Chair?

CHAIR - You've had three.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, we will respectfully disagree around the Northern Access Road, no matter when it was proposed. It's described as essential supporting infrastructure for the stadium and, according to the transport study, it is currently unfunded. Unless you've got the federal government, TasPorts, or perhaps the AAD funding it, it's clearly something that you are going to have to stump up for. On top of that, there's the Event Bus Plaza, which is essential for the 31 per cent of patrons who are forecast to be taking the bus, that's \$11.15 million and that wasn't included, so that takes the cost to over \$875 million. There's also a pedestrian bridge across Collins Street identified as essential supporting structure for the stadium, priced at anywhere between \$44 and \$56.5 million, that's not included in the capital cost, so that takes the cost to over \$919 million or potentially up to \$931 million.

The transport study also shows that there's a number of essential and highly recommended minor works to make the stadium functional and accessible to pedestrians and also a travel behaviour campaign. These are works costing around \$1.2 million, that's not factored into the cost. That makes it sit at \$933 million, which is getting very, very close to a billion dollars as everyone has been saying. It's also a fact that that then makes a funding black

hole, no matter how you argue it, of \$303 million. Do you accept that there's a funding black hole of well over \$300 million here?

Mr STREET - No, I don't accept that. We have been clear from the very start of this project that we will require private investment to make this stadium project work and we're very confident that we will attract that private investment.

Mr BAYLEY - Up to \$300 million, probably well over \$300 million. Do you honestly believe the private sector's going to do that? Their own modelling shows that the stadium itself is a loss-making venture, naming rights and other private investments for stadiums elsewhere go for the tens of millions, not the hundreds of millions. How on earth are you going to make this work? What is it that you're willing to give away? And, is the private sector - if you're going to shift this to the private sector, is the private sector going to be responsible for every single dollar of cost overrun because that is what the Premier signed us up for in the AFL deal.

Mr STREET - I'll go to you, Craig.

Mr LIMKIN - Through you, minister, Mr Bayley, as I said earlier on, we are currently preparing advice for the government on market testing. At this stage, I cannot give you a definitive thing of what the private sector commits to. To do that the government has to undertake market testing. The government has said they will look at that. The example we can use is Perth, where a PPP was used and there was a significant saving to the government based on the public sector comparator completed at the time. My understanding is that is on the web.

I want to talk about some of the transport projects you talked about earlier on, if that's okay, minister. A number of the transport projects that you talked about are identified in the Keep Hobart Moving plan, which is a government document that has been out for some time. Or, as Ms Beach said, a number of those projects were originally identified in the City Deal. The Department of State Growth, in our Budget paper, on page 350, there's a section called Urban Congestion Fund; that funding has planning work through a number of these key projects in there, including the Northern Access Road, rapid buses, some of the pedestrian pathways that you talked about. There is funding allocated in the Budget in partnership with the Australian Government consistent with the original City Deal for us to progress those key activities. They are outside the stadium -

Mr BAYLEY - But they're all described as essential infrastructure for the stadium. They are kit and kaboodle with the stadium and the stadium doesn't function safely - the transport study talks about safety issues and needing to take a lane out of Davey Street, for example, for safety reasons if bridges aren't built. These are critical bits of infrastructure for this stadium to operate, if ever it is built, and there is no denying that they need to be incorporated into the overall cost of the budget for the stadium.

Mr LIMKIN - My policy view, Mr Bayley, is that a number of these transport projects are required by our city to deal with urban congestion. That is why the Department of State Growth started these projects a number of years ago, has been working on these projects, and is, in the case of the rapid buses and the Norwood Growth Corridor, we're in the process of completing a strategic business case. So, a number of these projects have been established and identified as utilising the fixed urban congestion to enable movement to the stadium. My understanding is part of the reason the original site was selected was that these projects were already occurring that would actually be beneficial to that.

PUBLIC

I will comment that my transport team in the Department of State Growth worked very closely with Ms Beach's team and also the consultant in developing the transport study, which is why stage one of the Keep Hobart Moving was the base case for that attachment that you were referring to.

Mr BAYLEY - That document was written after the stadium was proposed?

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, I want to follow up an answer from your secretary who said that the northern suburbs facility had only transferred across to DSG 12 months ago. My understanding that it was transferred to DSG in 2021.

Mr LIMKIN - I will have to seek some advice on that. The advice I had, Mr O'Byrne, was 12 months ago, but I will clarify that and if it is wrong -

Mr O'BYRNE - It is on the 2022-23 Budget papers under DSG.

Mr LIMKIN - If it is wrong, I will correct the record, but I will seek some advice from the team who provided me that information.

Mr O'BYRNE - Just quickly then, on that last question there, how much has been spent on Wilkinson's Point trying to deliver that multi-sport indoor facility to date?

Mr STREET - We will check the number and bring it back to you.

Mrs PENTLAND - You have confirmed today that the Hawthorn deal provides a 5:1 return on investment. How does that compare to other investments in sports and events? What would rival that?

Mr STREET - That is a fair question.

Mr LIMKIN - We do have those in our return on investment, minister, that we can get.

Mr STREET - Do you mean for other sports events or for other events in general?

Mrs PENTLAND - Both.

Mr STREET - We will get those numbers and read them into the committee for you.

Mrs PENTLAND - A question about the high-performance venues. I know there as been a lot of back-and-forth between Rosny and Kingston. Why would you not put a high-performance centre in the one place where both the AFL and basketball could facilitate in that one place, when, you have a shortage of physiotherapists, sports psychologists - in the whole range of background services that you would need to obviously service those teams?

Mr STREET - I understand the question and your logic behind it, but there are a number of complex matters that need to be taken into account when deciding the location for the high-performance centre for the AFL team. We announced Rosny as the preferred site last year but, when we did so, we made it clear that Kingston had qualified on all the criteria as well and we committed to do due diligence at both sites so we had both options open for us. That work is still ongoing. We are very close to making an announcement, but there is more to it than just

whether locating it with another high-performance centre makes sense. I understand why you see that logic, but there is more to it than that in terms of the due diligence that has been done by State Growth, the AFL, and the Tasmanian Devils in choosing the site for the high-performance.

Sorry, before we go to another question, the return on investment for Hawthorn, as we said, was 5, the Netball Australia partnership was 3, in North Melbourne, AFL is 0.1, the return on investment for the supercars is 6.

Mrs PENTLAND - And they your lead events, then?

Mr STREET - Look, that is a range. In other events, Race Tasmania was a 4, the Hobart Airport Marathon that we sponsored with \$130,000 had an 8:1 return, Hockey Australia Championships for which we have a million-dollar contract over five years has a return on investment for that is eight. The Tasmanian Wine Festival, as another example, is an event with a 4:1 return on investment.

Mr SHELTON - We know that Tasmania is known as an event state and that comes down to how well events market themselves. What is the government doing to support events to market themselves and, in doing so, market the state?

Mr STREET - The Tasmanian government's a strong supporter of the event sector, providing funding to a range of events through multiple funding programs to Events Tasmania. Each program has a defined eligibility criteria and a set of grant guidelines to ensure events aligned with the Tasmanian Government Events Strategy 2023-27, resulting in social, economic and brand value to the state.

Events Tasmania's objectives are aimed at increasing the number of people coming to Tasmania, getting visitors and locals travelling around the state, and getting people talking and sharing about Tasmania through their own networks. Through Events Tasmania there are funding programs that are designed to focus specifically on marketing activity of events held in Tasmania that have achieve marketing outcomes while promoting events and maximising attendance.

The Event Marketing Tasmania Grant is designed to cater to both large and small events with two tiers of funding providing options for events with either intrastate or interstate visitation targets. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to assist event organisers with the marketing and [inaudible] activity for an established Tasmanian event. Applicants must be able to demonstrate how this funding will add value to their existing marketing strategy that is targeted to markets outside of the region in which the event takes place or outside of Tasmania.

In 2024, a total of 34 events received grants through the Event Marketing Tasmania Grant program, totalling \$260,000. These events were held statewide and are listed below:

- Spring in the Vines
- Good Gumnuts Festival
- Festival of Flowers
- The Devils Cardigan
- King Island Imperial 20
- The Think Big Run Bridge

There's an array of other events as well that received grants Mr Shelton.

In addition to support our commitment to the event sector in winter this year, a special round of Event Marketing Tasmania Winter 2024 was open to support events between April and September. The success of the Marketing Tasmania program is why we ran a special round of this program. A total of 11 events received funding through the winter edition of the marketing program, totalling \$99,099 in funding.

Mr WINTER - Going back to that answer around what components the private sector might be looking to invest in, I'll just pick one thing that was said, which was the road. Can you explain to me the arrangements? I'm not asking to go into commercial confidence, but in broad terms, why would someone look to invest in the road and what is the general approach to that?

Mr LIMKIN - Mr Winter, I can't talk about specifics in relation to each one because the private sector wouldn't want an individual package. What they're looking for is a broader package. As I said earlier, we are working with our agency partners to provide some policy advice to the government on this. As part of that, the value proposition, if we use that language, will be explored and tested so that we can provide policy advice to government to make some decisions.

Mr WINTER - The concern that I have, and heard it expressed, is that when you're talking about a PPP that you could be looking at an arrangement where the private sector provides you with the upfront capital, then the state pays it back. That is effectively a really expensive way to finance a project. Can you rule out a PPP like that?

Mr STREET - We won't do a deal that isn't in the best interest of Tasmanian taxpayers. When I met with Professor Gruen, who's doing the report on behalf of - I don't even know how to - the former JLN members. He made it clear to me that there are good and bad PPPs. We didn't have an opportunity at that meeting to expand on that, but I imagine that his report will identify what sort of arrangements are beneficial for these sorts of developments and what sort need to be avoided.

Mr WINTER - Can you rule out entering into a PPP that is effectively a financing arrangement, and what I mean by that is a financing arrangement where you're paying a higher rate of interest than if you financed it through TASCORP?

Mr LIMKIN - Mr Winter, maybe I can talk about a process for a PPP - maybe that will help. I'm not saying that's how the government will go or how the advice will go.

These are set - if you look at Victoria's guidelines and the New South Wales Treasury guidelines, or even Infrastructure Australia or Australian Treasury guidelines, one of the things you have to do is a public sector comparator. A public sector comparator is basically where you look at and identify the cost to government. If you look at the Western Australia stadium, for example - my understanding is it's on the web now because the deal has been completed - they did a public sector comparator that said if the state was to do this, what would be the cost that the state would have to incur to deliver this? That is the basis that market bids are then evaluated off to ensure that the government is able to demonstrate value for money.

PUBLIC

As I said, my understanding is that for the Western Australia stadium, the private sector offering compared to the public sector comparator was \$321 million better off over than the life of the contract. Should the government make a choice to do a PPP, we would prepare a public sector comparator to enable the assessment panel to evaluate the PPP and the market offering, and then that would normally be released publicly to the community following a deal being done. You wouldn't want to do it during a deal process because that would be limiting or impacting the state's commercial ability.

In the case of Western Australia, or even in the case of some of the New South Wales public/private partnerships - the northern beaches, the entertainment centre - that type of information were publicly released following the finalisation of the transaction to be able to be very clear with the community what the benefit is for that transaction.

Mr STREET - The Premier gave that commitment to Mrs Pentland in a question that she asked in the House the week before last.

Mr WINTER - Sorry, what was that commitment?

Mr STREET - That we would be completely transparent about the terms of the deal once it was done so that the Tasmanian public could see -

Mr WINTER - I appreciate that additional information that was provided, but it didn't really answer my question, which was will you rule out signing up to a deal that is essentially more expensive than a loan that could be obtained through TASCORP?

Mr LIMKIN - Ultimately, that is a policy decision for government, Mr Winter. Should the government choose to do a market testing through a PPP - because, first of all, the government has to make a choice about what form of market testing they would take - they would be given the policy options to be able to do it.

I believe part of the challenge at the moment is that the department with our agency partners is still working through what type of market testing would be done, so at this stage we haven't provided any advice.

Mr WINTER - I understand that, but the question was really for the minister. You're right; it is a matter for government. Will you rule out signing up to a deal that is essentially more expensive than you could finance through TASCORP?

Mr STREET - I'm not giving guarantees or ruling things out.

Mr WINTER - I don't understand why you couldn't do that. It's a very basic -

Mr STREET - What I'm saying is that the government would have no interest in doing a deal like that.

Mr WINTER - Okay, that's good. I appreciate that.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, it's a statement of fact that there was no plan to move the Goods Shed prior to this stadium. Is there any possibility you can build a stadium without moving the Goods Shed?

PUBLIC

Ms BEACH - We've gone through a precinct planning process where we've looked at the key projects that we were looking to deliver on site and what the best way is to deliver those. That's set out in the Precinct Plan.

Mr BAYLEY - Can you build it without moving the Goods Shed, though?

Ms BEACH - The location of the multipurpose stadium, as you can see in the Precinct Plan, is where the Goods Shed currently is, which is why we've proposed the relocation of that.

Mr BAYLEY - If the Goods Shed is only moving because of the stadium build and you can't build the stadium without doing it, why isn't the cost of moving the Goods Shed part of the cost of building the stadium?

Ms BEACH - The Goods Shed in its current state would need refurbishment for it to be activated and provide a full multipurpose space for the community, so that's something the corporation would be looking to manage anyway.

Mr BAYLEY - Isn't that just a disingenuous way of excluding costs from the stadium? You can't build this thing. It's at centre half forward. You can't build the stadium without moving the Goods Shed. You've agreed to move it; you want to move it. You're not even incorporating it into the plans.

Ms BEACH - We've looked to integrate the Goods Shed as part of the design for the stadium. It will remain as a standalone facility, so it will be able to [inaudible] in its full structure for its heritage values and be able to be utilised as an individual, functioning space.

Mr BAYLEY - That's not the question. Are you proposing to use heritage funds that are in the Budget like heritage funds, for example, to do this relocation?

Ms BEACH - The corporation will be managing the relocation of the Goods Shed.

Mr BAYLEY - And paying for it?

Ms BEACH - Yes.

Mr BAYLEY - Your primary purpose as it stands at the moment is to build a stadium. I don't understand how that isn't considered part of the cost. Surely it's part of the cost.

Ms BEACH - The corporation's primary purpose is the remediation and redevelopment of the site and delivering a mixed-use precinct. This is one of our responsibilities and one of the redevelopments we'll be leading onsite.

Mr BAYLEY - How much will it cost?

CHAIR - I'll go to Ms Johnston.

Mr LIMKIN - Sorry, I want to correct the record for Mr O'Byrne. My advice is that it was 2022 when the Department of Communities was transferred into DSG, and that is when DSG became accountable for the project. I apologise for getting my dates wrong.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you.

Ms JOHNSTON - The WT Partnership Quantity Surveying report is critical to understand the veracity of the KPMG report, which is the cost-benefit analysis. It's a critical part of understanding the economic viability of the stadium project. You've indicated in your previous response that a summary report would be made publicly available. Will the full detailed report be provided to the Tasmanian Planning Commission and also to Dr Gruen so that they can make a full assessment?

Ms BEACH - As the minister noted, there's a number of things we need to consider in that. Firstly, the submission we've made to the Planning Commission is a planning application. We're not seeking funding approval; we're seeking planning approval. The reason that the costs have been considered to a point - and it is at a point, the concept design point - is to inform the economic analysis, because that's part of the integrated assessment. There's the integrated assessment, there's a social benefits financial impact report and the cost-benefit assessment. To inform those, the indicative costs at the point we are at was required for KPMG to do their assessment.

As has been noted in some of the hearings during the week, cost planning is a dynamic process. It will continue to change as we go through the design process. While we've made the submission to the Tasmanian Planning Commission in parallel, we'll continue the detailed design process, and at the end of that process we'll have a different number to what we have now. We're working through a finessing process. We've allowed for contingencies in our current estimates, and the snapshot that's been included is a point in time. We've already identified value management since identifying that process.

As the minister already noted, there are some challenges with that full articulation. The detailed analysis in the cost planning includes things like trade works and identifying our specific contingencies. If we were to make that available, we're effectively telling the market all of the details of our costings. They can then inform their bids based on those, and it removes the competitive nature of going to market for the construction.

That is a commercial challenge for us, but also, the way that they're costed is essentially the quantity surveyor's intellectual property. There'll be different ways that quantity surveyors estimate the individual line items, so it isn't appropriate for us to release the detailed information. That is why, when the minister asked us what we would be able to release, we looked at what we would be able to produce as a summary. Similar to what's in the business case, there is a summary in there, and similar to what was tabled in parliament in 2022, we're making sure at least that level of information is available.

Ms JOHNSTON - Minister, with all due respect, though, the TPC has been tasked with doing an economic assessment. That's a component of the total assessment they're going to do. How can they possibly do that if they're kept in the dark about critical information, particularly around contingencies and components of the construction? How do they do that assessment if they only have the high level? They're tasked on behalf of Tasmanians to do an assessment of the economic impact.

Ms BEACH - The capital cost of the project is one input into the economic assessment.

Ms JOHNSTON - A very important part, though.

PUBLIC

Ms BEACH - It is, but it is one input. There will be a number of inputs that have gone into that assessment, and it is the assessment that we've put forward for their consideration.

Mr O'BYRNE - There's lots of conjecture about the use of various facilities and stadiums that we currently have. What is the future for Bellerive Oval now?

Mr STREET - It's a good question, and it's an open question to be perfectly honest. When the stadium at Macquarie Point is built, the need for Bellerive Oval to host high-attendance sport is negated, and Cricket Tasmania has made it clear to the government that it doesn't see its future there in terms of using that as a base for its high-performance programs. It is a question that we have to answer going forward, along with conversation with Stadiums Tasmania, because initially that was one of the five assets that were being transferred to Stadiums Tasmania as well. That will be an ongoing conversation with Cricket Tasmania, with Clarence Council, which owns the land, and with Stadiums Tasmania for where they see their organisation fitting in terms of the future of Bellerive Oval.

Mr SHELTON - The stadium is a big project and there are a lot of questions around it, but the Budget goes to a lot of other areas. I'm more interested in some of the little things that the Budget is doing to have big impacts on families. How is the Budget helping children with complex family and care situations get involved in sporting activities?

Mr STREET - The government has been supporting Reclink with funding since 2021-22 to provide evidence-based, innovative sport and active recreation programs that engage some of our most at-risk and disadvantaged young people. I'll acknowledge that Mr O'Byrne has participated in their fundraising football matches on a couple of occasions where I've gone along and tossed the coin and then vacated the field as quickly as possible. I'm pleased as part of this Budget that we've committed to providing an additional \$150,000 per year over the next two years to this important community-focused organisation, bringing its total funding to \$317,000 per year for the next two years.

Reclink delivers more than 40 sport and recreation activities and partners with over 100 member organisations in Tasmania including the Migrant Resource Centre, Anglicare, the Salvation Army, City Mission and Colony 47. Its work is focused on engaging young Tasmanians from complex backgrounds including those experiencing poor mental health; drug, alcohol and gambling harm; domestic and partner violence; homelessness; long-term unemployment; social isolation; and socio-economic disadvantage.

Our funding of Reclink has helped deliver rapid growth in participation and ever-increasing engagement and partnership with government schools. Reclink has identified and nurtured young talents across cricket, netball, basketball and other sports through its community series, providing assistance to access pathway level sport through local clubs via its scholarship program. For many, involvement with a Reclink program is their first opportunity to be part of a team.

If I may, I'd like to share a testimonial from the principal of Bothwell District School, Ryan Kinder, who wrote to Reclink following the school's involvement with one of its programs. Mr Kinder wrote:

We all very much appreciate the organisation, dedication and drive that you show to give our kids the chance to meet other students, build their

conference in unfamiliar social settings and to compete against other students in a non-threatening environment.

That's a ringing endorsement for Reclink's work in a regional community, and that's why we've provided Reclink with additional funding in this Budget. I'll just add to finish that at the first of those Reclink football matches that I went to, I met the Victorian manager. At the time Reclink in Tasmania was running basically off the side of the Reclink Victoria manager's desk. We're really proud of the support that we've been able to provide to establish Reclink in all three regions of the state. The organisation itself needs to take a hell of a lot of credit for its growth and for the programs that it runs, and the reach it has expanded in a relatively short amount of time.

CHAIR - We might pause and have a five-minute break.

The Committee suspended from 2.13 p.m. to 2.19 p.m.

CHAIR - Welcome back, everybody. Mr Winter has the call.

Mr WINTER - Minister, have you had time over the break to come back with an answer about the cancellation of the event at the Mudbar as yet?

Mr STREET - I understand your concern.

Mr WINTER - That's fine. I'll move on if you haven't.

Mr STREET - I'm asking for you to allow us to take it on notice. There were multiple organisations involved in organising that. I want to get straight exactly what happened from our perspective and then we'll come back to you.

Mr WINTER - Minister, the AFL deal that has been signed has a bunch of time lines that need to be met. The first is the training facility, which must receive all approvals by the end of 2024, which I think you'd accept is impossible, you are not going to be able to do that. The stadium must have planning approvals by 30 March next year. There's a bunch more in the next nine months. Have you sought to amend the deed, or is there any form of agreement with the AFL around the slippage that you've seen so far?

Mr STREET - Regarding the high-performance centre, the AFL are on the steering committee that's doing the due diligence work on that. They've expressed no problems with the time frames that we're working towards. Acknowledging what you've said, we would still hope to be able to make a decision and have a DA lodged by the end of the year still, regardless of the tight time frames we're working to. Whether we've got approval or not is subject to council processes of whichever site we choose. I don't know whether there's been a discussion around the planning approval clause. Craig?

Mr LIMKIN - The AFL is also on the project steering committee for the stadium, which I chair, and they have not raised any concerns regarding any of the clauses in the deed.

Mr WINTER - When I read the deed, as I understand it, it says that these are triggers that the AFL can give 60 days notice of intention to terminate the deal, which obviously nobody

PUBLIC

wants. Are you looking to amend the deed or are you just moving on by agreement that there's going to be slippage and there aren't going to be any issues raised?

Mr LIMKIN - I've not had any indication from the AFL of any concerns or any of those clauses happening, Mr Winter. I meet with them regularly outside the process to make sure that they are happy with the progress of each of the elements of the club funding arrangement deed and they have not indicated any concerns. I will indicate that they are across every element of that deed plus every element of where we're up to. We are being fully transparent with both them and the club because they are key partners and ultimately that does affect them. From my experience, in conversations, there have been no issues raised.

Mr WINTER - Can you run us through the latest timetable that you have for both the TA and the stadium in terms of when you're looking to have planning and building approval for both facilities and when you're looking to have both of them completed?

Mr STREET - We'll go to the stadium first and I'll throw to Anne and then come back to me for the high-performance centre.

Ms BEACH - The TPC has up to 12 months to undertake the assessment and as you'd be aware, we've submitted our planning application for the integrated assessment through the Project of State Significance process. Once they've completed their work, it then goes to the minister responsible for that act, which is the Premier, and it's then tabled in parliament. It needs to go through both Houses of parliament.

Mr WINTER - What's the expected time?

Ms BEACH - Twelve months from last week is when the report would be due. Upon receiving that planning outcome, we'd be seeking building approval with a view to commencing work at the end of 2025 so that we're completing works at the end of 2028.

Mr WINTER - Completing the works on the stadium at the end of 2028?

Mr STREET - I keep saying the due diligence work is going on at both sides. So are architectural designs and what have you. Planning applications for both are being developed at the same time as well. Once we make a firm decision, we'll be in a place to submit a DA almost immediately once we've made the final decision on the site.

Mr WINTER - And the rest of the time line on when you look to commence construction and have it completed?

Mr LIMKIN - At this stage, Mr Winter, once we have a site, we'll be able to have a confirmed time line. I don't want to give you a time line at this stage because there are different time lines for each site. But what I can say to you is under both scenarios we will be able to deliver the facility by the requirement under the deed, which, my understanding is, to be complete by 31 October 2027. I have no concerns regarding the ability to meet that at this stage.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, back to the Goods Shed, what are the cost estimates for moving the Goods Shed?

PUBLIC

Ms BEACH - We have had this question through hearings during the week and, as I've noted, there are a couple of things we need to consider here. There are a couple of ways we can relocate the Goods Shed.

One is it can be disassembled and then reassembled on site in the location we have identified in our Project of State Significance application. The other option is we have had indications from approaches suggesting it could be moved in one, so as a solid structure. So, we'll need to go through a process to work out the best way to do that, the most cost-effective and the most appropriate to protect heritage.

In terms of the cost, it would depend on the response to taking that to market to test the most appropriate way. As I noted earlier in the week in the hearings with the Premier, it would be inappropriate for us to indicate costings for that because we do need to get the best possible value when we go to market.

Mr BAYLEY - And, so, there are no guarantees that it can be moved or will be approved to be moved. The Heritage Tasmania works guidelines explicitly say that relocating a significant structure will, in most circumstances, be unacceptable. What conversations have you had with the Tasmanian Heritage Council or Heritage Tasmania, what's the process and what are the prospects for having this approved to move in the first place?

Ms BEACH - We've met with Heritage Tasmania and as you'd be aware -

Mr BAYLEY - Who's that? Sorry, I just missed that.

Ms BEACH - Heritage Tasmania. As you'd be aware, the Heritage Council has undertaken assessment, supported by Heritage Tasmania, as part of assessing the Goods Shed and listing it on the State Heritage Register.

So, we have an engagement through that process. As part of the Project of State Significance process, the guidelines are in the *Cultural Heritage Act*. So, it is part of the integrated assessment through the Project of State Significance process, so the Heritage Council has been identified as a relevant agency.

Now that we've made our submission, they will have an opportunity to review our submission and provide feedback directly to the Tasmanian Planning Commission, raise any concerns or flag any questions that will then feed through to us to provide any further information. We've engaged with Heritage Tasmania, they're aware of our proposal and our thinking around that, and it'll be part of the integrated assessment of project.

Mr BAYLEY - Which begs the question, minister, if there are no guarantees this will be approved, whether it's the move of the Goods Shed or whether it's the Planning Commission POSS process, full stop, as it stands at the moment, the stadium is currently the biggest risk to the AFL team because no-one had any control over it - no-one really, not Premier Rockliff, not anyone could agree to build a stadium there because it has to go through a whole range of steps to get approved and funded. I mean, what are you going to do if the Heritage Council, for example, or the Planning Commission rejects this and says no, you can't build it and you can't build it on this site?

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - I am not going to deal in hypothetical questions at this stage, Mr Bayley. I've every confidence that with the work that the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's put into the POSS submission that we will be successful in getting planning permission.

Mr BAYLEY - Does that not amount to political pressure on the Planning Commission though? I mean, you are building - and the Premier, every member of your government is building - this expectation that it gets approved and it will happen.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr STREET - That is why I am trying to be careful in my comments now that the POSS submission is in, because I don't want to be seen to be leaning on the on the TPC. We want the TPC to do the work that's necessary to assess it and to produce the integrated assessment report, which I think Ms Beach indicated to me would take probably three or four months. Absolutely, we want them to be free to assess the POSS process. The Macquarie Point Development Corporation put a lot of time and effort into that submission and we want it assessed on its merits.

Mr BAYLEY - How can they truly be free if there's so much political pressure on this?

CHAIR - Mr Bayley, you've had your allocation. Mrs Pentland.

Mr STREET - Just before going on to Mrs Pentland, Mr Limkin has an answer to Mr O'Byrne's question about the money spent at Wilkinsons Point.

Mr LIMKIN - I am advised it is \$2.35 million for the entire project. A lot of the money that we have already spent will be able to be reused as the decoupling of the project. So, that includes the design work that is transferable to the JackJumpers site, the new four-courts site. We're using the redesigns as much as possible. A number of the elements on the funding we've also spent has been about road improvement to the MyState Bank Arena, which the department would be doing anyway because of the commitments and the work happening at Wilkinsons Point. So, while the total cost spent to date is \$2.35 million on all the components, most of that we'll be able to reuse on various other components that we've now split out from the original proposal.

Mrs PENTLAND - Minister, given we're spending \$130 million upgrading the UTAS Stadium, an investment I fully support, is four games of men's AFL enough annual top-level content? And, given the Macquarie Point Stadium will be desperate to attract content, how can you guarantee Launceston will continue to get its fair share of top-tier sport?

Mr STREET - I met with the Launceston City councillors the other day, Mrs Pentland, and they asked exactly the same question. We are committed to four games in Launceston when the Devils come into the competition, but we do acknowledge as well that the AFL controls the fixturing.

It would be fair to say that it's the reason that we're keen also for the deal with Hawthorn and the relationship to continue as well, to expand on the Devils' four games to potentially Hawthorn games on top of that, to increase the men's AFL content at the redeveloped stadium. But I think what needs to not be lost in this as well is the fact that AFLW, the VFL team that supports the AFL team, the VFLW team will also be playing across the state and we would

expect that a reasonable level of that content would be played in the north - and, hopefully, in the north-west as well at Dial.

I don't know whether, James, you want to add to that from a Stadiums Tasmania perspective in terms of the redevelopment.

Mr AVERY - I think there's been some conversation about AFL content. We also need to look further afield than just AFL content: the ability to continue to attract significant cricket content into the venue, but not just sport as well, other events, live entertainment. The redevelopment is going to be a catalyst for attracting other events there - business and conferencing events which don't happen at the venue at the moment because the facilities don't cater for that.

So, there's a huge opportunity for more content through there outside of event days, if you like, and Stadiums Tasmania is confident that with an integrated stadium model, with one entity eventually operating all venues, you'll have cost efficiencies and better purchasing power to be able to drive content across those venues, and that includes UTAS Stadium.

Mrs PENTLAND - Has the A-League been mentioned at all?

Mr AVERY - Stadiums Tasmania has had conversations with all the key major sporting codes in relation to a number of the projects, whether it be the Macquarie Point project or the redevelopment at UTAS Stadium, and we have engaged Football Australia, the A-Leagues, Football Tasmania, Rugby Australia, the NRL. All have expressed an interest in both projects and are very keen to see what those redevelopments look like.

Mr STREET - We had an opportunity with the Melbourne Storm a couple of years ago that we ended up having to turn down, but it would be fair to say that they're very interested.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, thank you for the answer on the \$2.35 million. I'm a bit sceptical about how much can just be reused. I think that's wishful thinking.

What is the budget for the new facility and when will it be built?

Mr STREET - It's in the Budget as a total line item of \$49.7 million but that includes the JackJumpers high-performance facility as well. There's \$15 million for that. The budget for the four-court facility in the northern suburbs is \$30 million.

But there is also money within that \$49.7 million for gymnastics, which was going to be catered for in the facility at Wilkinsons Point, which now won't be. We're in discussions with whatever gymnastics club is based at Brighton, which was looking to relocate to the facility at Wilkinsons Point. We're working with them on using that money and some money that they've already had set aside, initially for for a new gymnastics' facility at Brighton.

Mr O'BYRNE - Just on that \$2.35 million, Chair, if I could just finish this line of questioning. You talked about some work that was performed or done at Wilkinsons Point and I understand the LK Group leased that and they have responsibility for that. So, when you say you did some work out there, what work did you do?

Mr LIMKIN - We looked at further internal roads to support MyState Bank Arena, the movement around there, also the new movement to the new ferry terminal at Wilkinsons Point that the government has announced, which is further down that period of time.

Mr O'BYRNE - But what work?

Mr LIMKIN - It was really preliminary design work on potential new road access and access that was originally for the Wilkinsons Point complex, the sports centre, the JJ site, the four courts et cetera. We're looking at how do we reuse that work at the moment to make it easier for access.

Mr O'BYRNE - If those facilities aren't built there, then you'll have to start again, won't you, because the design will look something different.

Mr LIMKIN - My understanding, Mr O'Byrne, is some of that work was regarding how do you create a better entry way into the entire facility because of the additional users moving into it. Some of that work, as I said, will be able to be reused to ensure movements into that facility to support MyState Bank Arena.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, as an old sportsperson, without too much emphasis on the old, I'm very much a supporter of the government's initiative of getting as many Tasmanians as possible involved in sport and active recreation, particularly our young kids, to get them off the screens and outside and running around. Can you please provide an update on the participation data - actual data on how many people are out there, and any information on what you're doing to promote active recreation outside of the traditional sports area?

Mr STREET - Thanks for the question, Mr Shelton. We're working very hard to increase opportunities for Tasmanians to be active, whether that be through our funding of traditional sports or our investments in the likes of walking tracks, cycle paths and even playgrounds right around the state.

One of my key messages as Minister for Sport and Events has been that I'm agnostic about how we get people active as long as we get them active. That means giving them a variety of different options and that's because we know that non-traditional sports and activities play a really important role in achieving our aim of ensuring all Tasmanians can access the sport and active recreation pursuit of their choice.

The latest figures from Ausplay, a large-scale national survey conducted by Sport Australia, showed nearly 60 per cent of Tasmanian adults participate in sport or physical activity three or more times a week, which is a slight increase from the previous year of 59.8 per cent. I've got to say that I fall outside of that. I'm letting the team down at the minute.

The data show that there is a trend towards participation in non-sport-related activities such as walking, going to the gym, jogging and bushwalking. In fact, Ausplay figures show that walking was the most popular activity for Tasmanian adults, which is one of the reasons why, as part of my Local Government portfolio, we committed \$5 million towards the local government Open Spaces infrastructure grants.

Through this program, administered in partnership with the Local Government Association of Tasmania, councils have been able to improve walking paths in places like

PUBLIC

Bridgewater and Devonport, and playgrounds in Dorset, Waratah-Wynyard and the Northern Midlands.

In the 2024-25 Budget, we're continuing our support of sports outside of the mainstream codes, providing \$30,000 in funding for the Deloraine District Anglers Club and committing \$190,000 to a cycle path in Lilydale.

I take this opportunity to talk about the government's support of services for people who face particular obstacles when accessing sport and active recreation. Our state grants program administered by Active Tasmania provided \$17,000 this year to work and get out to support the LGBTIQA+ community access sport and active recreation through the Everyone Can Play initiative. Everyone Can Play helps sport organisations embed LGBTIQA+ inclusive policies and practices, including through the appointment of inclusion officers or champions.

Another organisation to benefit from funding through the state grants program is New Horizons Tasmania, which received \$60,000 to help Tasmanians living with a disability to access sport by working in partnership with sporting bodies, clubs, schools and community organisations to build more inclusive and equitable communities.

I'm really proud as Minister for Sport and Events that this government is helping Tasmanians across the board to build participation and that we're getting results.

Mr WILLIE - I've been following along in my office downstairs. There's been a good discussion this afternoon. I hope Mr O'Byrne doesn't mind me jumping in here, because the community courts are something that I'm very passionate about too, and it is in my electorate.

The traffic management solution you were just talking about, I think it was about an \$800,000 tender. It was my understanding that you had to do that work because you need enough car parking for both venues to be operational at the same time. How do you reuse that work?

Mr LIMKIN - As I said, Mr Willie, there is a large amount of development going to happen on the Wilkinsons Point site. The Department of State Growth is working with the LK Group as part of that. We will look at how we reuse some of that information -

Mr WILLIE - But car parks aren't required.

Mr LIMKIN - As I indicated, we are in the process of decoupling the elements of the original commitment and we will look to reuse as much available work that we have already done as part of that commitment to ensure value for money for taxpayers.

Mr WILLIE - It seems strange to me. Minister, on this topic, you had \$30 million in the Budget. Was there any thought to being a bit creative? I know there's been some work done by Claremont College in Glenorchy Basketball Association; you've got Hobart Phoenix, which is a club of nearly 1000 registered members, they've got no facility. Was there some thought to maybe splitting this funding up and delivering a number of solutions? You've also got the New Town Netball Precinct, which basketball is played at as well. That needs some work on it.

Mr STREET - I understand that. You're not the first person who suggested potentially splitting the money and building two facilities or reapportioning the money. I think the very

PUBLIC

least that I can do after the delays that we've had is maintain the commitment to spend the \$30 million on the four-court facility for the northern suburbs.

That's not to say that we don't acknowledge that we've got more work to do, particularly in central Hobart in terms of a new facility. We've talked to Hobart Phoenix and to the Hobart City Council about land availability as well.

I'm not, by any means, sitting here and saying that building the four-court facility in the northern suburbs is the end of the work that we need to do in terms of court provision in southern Tasmania. We need to build more facilities as well and it's going to be my job to advocate for that money in future budgets.

Mr WILLIE - What I'm saying is you could have, with some creative thinking, delivered some courts in the northern suburbs and maybe fixed some solutions for more user groups with the money.

Mr STREET - Look, I don't want to be too cynical, but I think it would have been painted as us walking away from the commitment that we made to the northern suburbs back in 2018 to build the four-courts facility if we'd done anything but keep to that commitment.

Mr WILLIE - I think the basketball community would celebrate more courts because they're desperately needed.

Mr STREET - I understand that.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, Ms Beach said before that they didn't want to share certain sensitive information about moving the Goods Shed. I can understand that and I take your point, but can you confirm that you actually do have cost estimates to move it?

Ms BEACH - We've looked at a couple of different scenarios and we will need to - the relocation of the shed as a whole is a newer concept. We've dismantled -

Mr BAYLEY - A what concept, sorry?

Ms BEACH - A newer concept. We've dismantled a couple of sheds on site in the last 18 to 24 months, so we have a good feel about those sorts of costings. But relocating it as a whole shed is something we would need to test the market to get an understanding for, so we do need to explore that.

Mr BAYLEY - Isn't the admission though that you've done some costings and you need to go out to market to cost this and that it will cost the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, in itself, an admission that the \$375 million that the Premier has capped Tasmania's expenditure to is a complete furphy? It's a newer concept, it wasn't in the original concept and it's clearly going to cost additional and over and above the \$375 million.

Mr STREET - Look, I don't believe so. I believe that the Macquarie Point Development Corporation's role was to remediate the site and get it ready to build the stadium and removing the Goods Shed is part of that.

Mr BAYLEY - Part of the original cost, as in contributed by the federal government, the \$50 million that was given many years ago and so forth, is that what you're saying? That it can be paid for by that money?

Ms BEACH - The government has invested money for the corporation to prepare the site, ready for development, and that includes putting infrastructure in place to enable that and interim permit activation. We'll use the existing funds that the government has invested in the corporation to prepare the Goods Shed for that activation for the community.

Mr BAYLEY - That, then, is an additional cost, surely, in relation to the stadium.

Ms BEACH - It will use the existing funds that the corporation has.

Mr O'BYRNE - Further to the line of questioning from my colleague, member for Clark, for a number of years, netball, volleyball, futsal, basketball, a whole range of codes have been calling out for an overarching strategy of facilities for them across the state, not just in Hobart but Dowling Street and across the north-west coast.

Your government has previously announced having a facility strategy that all codes could have input into, could see and support and then potentially raise a range of funds to assist in the delivery of those - federal government funds, local government funds, whatever. That has been promised for a number of years, minister; where are we at with that?

Mr STREET - That work is ongoing.

Mr O'BYRNE - Like the basketball courts?

Mr STREET - The Tasmanian government aims to provide and support high-quality, well-planned sport and active recreation facilities to enable Tasmanians to be physically active. To support this objective, the government seeks to capture information on the current provision of sport and active recreation facilities, with a focus on identifying gaps and opportunities for strategic investment in new and/or upgraded facilities.

We are currently working with existing infrastructure data sets of state and local government, state and national sporting organisations and the Department for Education, Children and Young People to help inform an infrastructure gap analysis. This complex piece of work will complement the regional Sports Facility Plan for Northern Tasmania, which was commissioned by those five councils back in 2023.

Combining facility plans and other data sets will enable the Tasmanian government to best understand current and future demand for facilities. I don't think it would be a stretch to say that it has been a complicated piece of work pulling those data sets together and also getting it into a form where we don't want it to just be a point-in-time analysis; we want it to be something that evolves and grows so that it informs decisions five and 10 years from now as we put more data into it as well, but the work on the audit is ongoing.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, I take at face value your commitment to it; I know from talking to you personally, you believe this is a good thing to do. Does your department just not believe it's important because we have delays in infrastructure delivery, we have commitments to work on programs, we are collating information? Year in, year out, people are hearing the same

things from your government and your department; they are getting pretty close to the end of their tether, minister.

Mr STREET - I understand. Craig?

Mr LIMKIN - Mr O'Byrne, I acknowledge that it has been a long time for this to happen. I have prioritised resources within the department since becoming secretary to enable it to be done; if I need to prioritise more resources to enable it to happen quickly and in an efficient way, I am more than happy to do that. As you said, this is really important and the department has been asked to prioritise it by the minister, but if we need to prioritise it further and look at other things we can stop, I am more than happy to do that.

Mr O'BYRNE - This is the threshold piece of work, because without this work being done, every federal and state election cycle, if you don't have a coherent strategy, you are not going to attract the funds.

Mr STREET - No, I completely understand that. I would never be critical of public servants who work hard every day to enact government policy. I think it would be fair to say that Community Sport and Recreation sitting within Communities Tasmania as a department worked in terms of the programs that they delivered, but probably didn't work in terms of having the expertise within the department for infrastructure delivery, and that is unfortunate.

I think we have now, with Sport, with Active Tasmania sitting within the Department of State Growth in line with Infrastructure Tasmania, a far better opportunity to deliver those projects on time and at a reasonable rate going forward, provided I do my job as sport and rec minister in isolating funding for projects that we know we need to build.

We know that Moonah and Clarence indoor sports facilities, even though the money has been spent on them to basically remediate them, are at the end of life. They were built with a federal government program in the late 1960s, both of them just like Elphin. We have investment that we need to make across the south of the state; the north of the state, I have to say, is starting to look better, with the \$25 million that we are investing in Devonport with the council project up there for a six-court facility, I think it is, in conjunction with their development. We've got the community and sporting facility at Mowbray that will have four dedicated netball courts for the first time for the NTNA to have a home; three multipurpose courts within that as for basketball, futsal, volleyball -

Mr O'BYRNE - It's predominantly federal money, isn't it?

Mr STREET - No, there was a fairly significant commitment by state government, \$27.5 million of state -

Mr WILLIE - The contributions kept growing.

Mr STREET - There was a significant state government contribution. That started as a Launceston City Council project as a community facility; we saw the opportunity to partner with them and perhaps deliver something a little bit more than just -

Mr O'BYRNE - But they led it.

Mr STREET - No, they led the initial -

Mr O'BYRNE - The threshold work?

Mr STREET - It's \$27.5 million from the state, \$15 million from the Australian Government and \$1.1 million from the city of Launceston. We've also made the election commitment around Elphin as well, and that'll add three courts at that facility. Across the north-west and the north, we feel like we're getting there. We acknowledge that we've got some work to do in the south in terms of indoor facilities.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, it was a shock to everybody that Dark Mofo took a hiatus from their full program this year. It highlights just how important events are for our tourism and hospitality industries through the winter. I'm hoping you can provide an overview on what the government did to support events over the last six months.

Mr STREET - We know events are crucial to boosting the Tasmanian economy in the winter months and we always make this a priority. The hospitality sector had a tough June with low occupancy, but the sector itself puts the July rebound down to our Events portfolio, and that's quite genuine. It's a tribute to many of our events such as Beaker Street, Festival of Voices, Huon Valley Midwinter Festival and the Tassie Scallop Fiesta held across the state. Hobart also hosted the Australian Hockey Men's Masters Tournament, which welcomed more than 4000 competitors for the event - an enormous event for the city of Hobart.

In the absence of a full-scale Dark Mofo event this year, the Tasmanian government, through Events Tasmania, committed to seeking event content that could be hosted across Tasmania in the winter months of 2024 to boost visitation numbers, including mass participation events, entertainment, sports products and touring groups.

From April to September 2024, the Tasmanian government will have supported 57 events across the entire state. An uplift in funding was also provided to two existing winter events, those being the Festival of Voices and the Beaker Street Festival. The uplift in funding allowed both of these events to undertake additional event activations and to boost their interstate marketing with the aim to attract more visitors to Tasmania during the winter period.

A further \$100,000 was allocated to support events with their marketing activities through the Event Marketing Tasmania winter 2024 edition grant program. As I mentioned earlier, the aim of this program is to assist event organisers with interstate marketing activities that target visitors from outside of Tasmania for events held between April and September of 2024.

I'm proud to say that 11 events received funding through this program, many of them new events. That's huge for the winter shoulder season, and so many communities will feel the benefits of all these events being held across the state: the Christmas in July Extravaganza, Tasmania's Fungi Festival, Tasmanian Autumn Festival, Wilderfeast, the Moonbird Festival on King Island, the Truffle Festival celebrating 25 years, Tasmanian Fashion Festival, residence at Dorney House, Glow Tour at East Coast Natureworld, Bicheno Beams and the Winter Challenge.

Our government continues to remain committed to this event sector and as you can see, we're providing lots of support to events during the cooler months this year.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, I might ask you a couple of stadium questions; I've asked plenty in the last couple of years. I heard before that you're not interested in entering into an arrangement that's not in the best interests of the state, that is a borrowing arrangement that's at a higher rate than TASCORP's. We have a very robust financial management system. It's a fairly modernised act. Can you commit to complying with the financial management framework, including Treasury instructions, entering into contracts?

Mr LIMKIN - Through you, minister, as I said earlier, the Department of State Growth is working with the Department of Treasury and Finance, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Stadiums Tasmania and Macquarie Point Development Corporation to provide advice on the best way to undertake a market testing. As part of that, our Treasury colleagues will make sure that we comply with the *Financial Management Act*, any Treasurer's Instructions or any other relevant matters. We will be engaging with them through this process.

Mr WILLIE - My concern here is that there's a political risk that you ignore some of that *Financial Management Act* framework. We have seen it in other areas, whether it is a ticketing system for Metro, that's been discussed this week, where Treasury instructions were ignored. It would be good to get a commitment that you will comply with that.

Mr STREET - I can only follow Mr Limkin's advice that in preparation to go to market, we will be working in conjunction with not just Treasury but with DPAC as well to make sure that we comply with all of those requirements.

Mr LIMKIN - Through you, minister, the Department of State Growth doesn't always comply with requirements in relation to the ticketing matter. There are exemptions under the *Financial Management Act* and also the Treasurer's Instructions for particular matters. As I gave evidence the other day in the transport sector, the then secretary made a determination that a direct procurement was enabled. The requirements under the Treasurer's Instructions actually enables an assessment of that to happen in certain circumstances, and I have assured myself that those circumstances were completed recently.

Mr WILLIE - When Stadium 2.0 was announced, you seemed quite open to that proposal. The government since has made stronger statements against that proposal. I understand it's in an unsolicited bid process with the Coordinator-General. They do have Capella Capital involved now, which is a pretty serious outfit. They've got a history of development across Australia, whether it's the Darwin Convention Centre, the Darling Harbour Convention Centre, a whole list of major roads and hospitals. Why isn't the government taking that proposal more seriously?

Mr STREET - As you indicate, it is part of an unsolicited bid now and I need to be careful about what I talk about. I met with the proponents of Mac Point 2.0 - I'm trying to think how long ago it was now - and I had a follow up meeting with them as well. We have since said that we are concentrating on our proposal at Macquarie Point. However, they are part of an unsolicited bid process at the minute. I certainly am not in a position to talk about it now that it's part of that process. I don't know how much more Mr Limkin can add to what I've said.

Mr LIMKIN - The unsolicited proposal and policy guidelines were updated in 2019 and these guidelines provide a transparent and consistent assessment process to allow the government to fairly consider unsolicited proposals received for the private sector, to determine whether they align with government strategic policy and determine if the proposal will provide

PUBLIC

a benefit to the public. The government would not normally comment on any unsolicited proposal other than those that are set out in the guidelines as key milestones.

In relation to the Stadium Precinct Consortium, sometimes referred to as 2.0, the proponents have publicly stated that they have submitted an unsolicited proposal for the AFL stadium and a mixed-use precinct in front of the regatta grounds at Macquarie Point. Accordingly, I can confirm that the proposal has been received by the Office of Coordinator-General from the Stadium Precinct Consortium and is currently being assessed by a specifically formed assessment panel. The assessment panel will make a recommendation to Cabinet through the minister as whether the submission meets the guidelines and should be taken to stage 2.

While I cannot comment on the information provided, which must remain confidential and would reasonably be assumed to contain commercially sensitive and proprietary information, I can confirm the assessment panel has been established and an independent probity adviser has been appointed. The assessment panel has been through all the materials submitted and met recently as part of its assessment process. Once this has completed its assessment against the guiding principles and the key criteria, it will provide its recommendation to Cabinet for its consideration. As this is a commercial-in-confidential assessment process, which is at an arm's length from ministers and the government, I cannot make any other comment at this stage.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, if that process is worked through and there is a positive recommendation, do you see some value, given that both are in the planning phase, that there is some competitive tension between the two projects to get best deal possible for Tasmania?

Mr STREET - I'm not trying to avoid the question. I'm not at liberty to be able to comment on that while the proposal is being assessed.

Mr BAYLEY - The *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act* was enacted in 2012. We've been through a pretty long and torturous process that included MONA and a truth and reconciliation proposition, culminating in a master plan a couple of years ago that your government started to contract out. In fact, it even paid out a Melbourne developer to not build there after the announcing the stadium. Was it ever the intention of the government to leave Macquarie Point vacant?

Mr STREET - You're talking about a time when decisions were made that I wasn't even in Cabinet.

Mr BAYLEY - Going forward, would you leave it vacant? Putting the stadium aside, would you leave it as a vacant site? Or has it always been government's intention to develop that site?

Mr STREET - I believe it's a prime piece of land for development that can enhance the City of Hobart.

Mr BAYLEY - I completely agree. I asked the question because the cost benefit analysis, when it assumes a base case scenario when it's trying to analyse the benefits to the state, assumes and I quote:

PUBLIC

No stadium is developed and therefore the state remains vacant and undeveloped.

Is it reasonable that a cost benefit analysis for one of the country's prime brownfields development sites, that we all agree should be developed and could enhance this city, should model an alternative where it is left vacant? Do you think that's a reasonable proposition to underpin a cost benefit analysis?

Mr STREET - It's probably a matter for Anne.

Mr BAYLEY - It's really a matter for government, with respect, minister. It's your government's policy. I accept that there's a stadium there at the moment. The question is, if the stadium wasn't to be built - prior to the stadium, there was a proposition around developing that site. If for some reason the TPC doesn't approve the stadium, I hope and expect the government would progress some sort of stunning urban renewal development there. Is that not correct? Is that not an unreasonable expectation?

Mr STREET - We went through this earlier in terms of being a hypothetical. We're committed to the stadium project. You're drawing me into supporting the stadium project and then you are criticising me for stepping on the TPC's ability to assess it -

Mr BAYLEY - No, I just -

CHAIR - Order.

Mr STREET - We are committed to the project and the redevelopment of Macquarie Point.

Mr BAYLEY - But, the cost benefit analysis, as it needs to do, contemplates a situation where the stadium isn't developed. In this context, the cost benefit analysis assumes that the site remains vacant. I know from my meetings with people like Nicholas Gruen, he seems very interested in the notion of cost benefit. We had an established master plan for the site prior to the stadium. We've got a stadium-based masterplan now. Do you think it's reasonable to do a cost benefit analysis assuming that it will stay a car park over the longer term if the stadium doesn't get built? It seems to me to underpin a flawed analysis in relation to the cost benefits.

Mr STREET - I do not agree but I will pass to Anne.

Mr BAYLEY - That is what is says, minister, it says no stadium is developed, and therefore the site remains vacant and undeveloped.

CHAIR - Order, Mr Bayley.

Mr STREET - I answered your question and I'm deferring to Anne.

Ms BEACH - The cost benefit analysis needs to establish the base case. This is base case that's been outlined. Given the current status of the site, this was comparing it to that. If the stadium development were not to go ahead, noting that we have the precinct plan in place, it would require us to review and look at an alternative arrangement. It seemed a reasonable assumption for this assessment.

PUBLIC

Mr BAYLEY - Wouldn't a more reasonable assumption be to compare it to the previous master plan that was agreed and that the government started to contract out to developers? That was the vision for this site prior to what effectively was an imposed stadium by the AFL. Surely that would be the most appropriate comparison. We all agree we're not going to leave that site vacant. We hope you don't leave that site vacant. How on earth is it reasonable for a fundamental piece of analysis that the TPC has to put into its considerations, to consider it less than a car park? To be honest, less than a car park is a vacant block of land.

Mr STREET - I think Anne answered that question, but I'm happy to defer to her again.

Ms BEACH - The Precinct Plan in our ministerial direction that was issued in May 2023 notes that the Precinct Plan for the purpose of our act is a site masterplan, therefore, we are bound to use that Precinct Plan to implement the redevelopment of our site. It outlines the stadium development and that is the proposal we have in front of us.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, in answer to a question from Mr Shelton, you referred to Reclink. Reclink is a great organisation and they really do build community and work with a whole range of cohorts who are in desperate need of that kind of support and diversion from other activities. In your previous role as minister in the community service, you talked about trying to get certainty of funding. You said that there's a two-year allocation, the ask from Reclink was for a three-year allocation. So, if they are to build sustainability, if they are to build a program of work, could you explain why a three-year arrangement wasn't allocated to Reclink as opposed to two?

Mr STREET - I will pass to Mr Limkin. I understand, as well, what their budget request was. Obviously, decisions have to be made in the context of a tight budget. I was able to secure two years' funding, which they were delighted with. Obviously, they'd have been happier with three. I acknowledge that going forward organisations, not just like Reclink, but state sporting organisations as well, require certainty of funding. That's something we talked about at this table before and something that we're still trying to work on, to be perfectly honest.

We've upped the funding for state sporting organisations by using some of the increase in the Community Support Fund this year. The problem we have with that is that we can still only do it on one-year contracts because the CSL goes up and down. Under the guidelines that we have, we can't lock organisations into five-year contracts basing it on a funding pool that moves, so we're still doing some work.

Mr O'BYRNE - [inaudible] attached to that?

Mr STREET - That is exactly right. We used the Community Support Fund this year to be able to get the boost. We have to work on how we secure that funding ongoing for those state sporting organisations and Reclink would be one of those organisations that we'd be looking at as well.

Mr O'BYRNE - Are they able to deliver on the programs that they've submitted based on the money you've provided them? I would say that they would struggle.

Mr STREET - As part of the 2023-24 Budget, we continued the funding of Reclink, finding \$167,000 per annum over three years from 2024-25. As part of the 2024-25 state Budget, we've committed an additional \$150,000 per annum to support Reclink, taking its total

funding to \$317,000 for the next two years, a pretty significant uplift in funding. But, recognising the work that they're doing, the fact that they're expanding all the time, we're having ongoing conversations with Reclink as well, like we do with any growing organisation. It would be great if they can find some funding sources from somewhere besides the state government as well to complement what we're doing, but we certainly don't want a lack of funding to be a reason that they can't reach as many people as possible with the programs that they run.

Mr SHELTON - It has been mentioned the government is providing funding directly to support the sports clubs through this year's Budget, but can you explain how the government is also helping municipal councils and, therefore, ratepayers, with the upkeep of their sporting facilities?

Mr STREET - The government works very closely with Tasmania's 29 councils and enjoys a productive relationship with the local government sector. As Local Government minister, I'm acutely aware of the pressure that local councils have by having these sporting facilities on their books as well. That's why we're so keen to support them because we know how important these facilities are to the local communities. We also know that there are a number of councils who are struggling to provide all the services that are expected in the municipality as well.

We've committed \$5 million to the Glenorchy City Council for the immediate repair and upgrade works at the Glenorchy War Memorial Pool, which will bring that pool back online. It'd be nice if it was for the for this summer, but I'm not sure about the schedule of works to be perfectly honest. I note that the Glenorchy Mayor recently went on the record to say that this funding would provide swimming facilities for the Glenorchy community for the next 7 to 10 years, which is terrific. This was a great example of the council listening to its community and the government stepping in to provide support following the unfortunate situation where the pool had to be closed for an extended time.

In Devonport, we have been working similarly with the City Council on its Building a Sporting Legacy project, and I have talked about the \$25 million that we have provided to help bring this vision to reality. After substantial consultation, the Devonport City Council has been able to bring together football, basketball, cricket, netball, cycling and athletics so that they are all on board with the plan to build a new facility that will include four indoor community courts and a two-court show court and function centre. Anybody who has been involved in sports administration would know that getting those six or seven sports altogether to agree to the one plan is a phenomenal effort from the Devonport City Council.

We have worked closely with the Sorell Council in the preparation of this budget and have committed \$447,000 in my portfolio of projects in the municipality. Thanks to our support, there will be \$100,000 spent on improvements in equipment at the Sorell BMX Track, safety netting at Pembroke Park and the Dodges Ferry oval will be installed through a commitment of \$131,000, and the outdoor courts at the south-east sports complex will be enhanced through \$22,000 worth of funding for the construction of shelters.

We have also committed \$144,000 for viewing platforms for Carlton and Park Beach, improving amenities at those popular surfing beaches. On the Tasman Peninsula, we are providing \$30,000 for the fencing at the Taranna tennis courts through a grant to the Tasman Council and we have also made a \$500,000 commitment to sport facilities owned by the Burnie

PUBLIC

City Council. This will provide \$400,000 for the much-needed resurfacing of the Burnie netball courts and \$100,000 into work towards a plan to upgrade the Burnie basketball stadium.

These commitments to municipal councils in the Sports portfolio are terrific examples of the Tasmanian government working together with local government to deliver improvements to community facilities where they are most needed to boost participation in sport and active recreation across the state, Mr Shelton.

Mr WILLIE - I will not let the minister try to rewrite history on the Glenorchy Pool there. Your government and the council ignored the community for nearly a year and it was only Ella Haddad and me who offered a circuit breaker and then you try to make out like you were saving the pool. You can try to rewrite history, but it is not the facts.

Mr STREET - Okay.

Mr WILLIE - The question is about the high performance centre on the eastern shore. Do you think that has been handled well, minister? You have a community that is deeply divided, they have been put through an elector poll, you have the Clarence mayor saying all sorts of things about the government and you. When will they have some sort of certainty?

Mr STREET - Like I said earlier today, we are almost finished doing the due diligence at both the Kingston and Rosny sites to be able to make an informed decision. I have to say that I disagree with some of the commentary around the process. It has been important to do the due diligence at both sites. Even in December last year when we announced Rosny as the preferred site, we made it clear that Kingston had qualified on all the relevant criteria as well and that we will continue to do due diligence at that site as well, as we went through this process.

The Devils and the AFL, along with State Growth, are both on the steering committee that is doing the work to make sure that we get this choice right and, if I can quote Grant O'Brien from the other day:

It is a process that is taking the right sort of steps, not being done in haste, being done with the right processes and the right information being sought and what will result from that will be a high performance centre in the right area, with the right sort of work having been done to decide where that goes.

That is from the chairman of the club whose home this will be, who is very comfortable with the process that we have undertaken. That is not to say that we don't acknowledge the tight timeframes that we are working to. I note that there has been some criticism of the department's role in the steering committee process as well so I want to give Mr Limkin an opportunity to add to my answer.

Mr LIMKIN - Thank you, minister, and through the minister. The department has been working very hard since the sites were announced last year, really looking at undertaking geotech, cultural tests, native value tests, et cetera. Unfortunately, on the Glenorchy site, sorry, the Rosny site, I am sorry.

Mr WILLIE - You will upset some community here!

PUBLIC

Mr LIMKIN - It has been a long week. On the Rosny site, we received an updated report from the council in February this year, which would have actually been helpful when we were undertaking the original site selection and helped to remove some of that. The report was dated April 2023. Had we received that report earlier on, it would have saved the government significant amount of work in doing that.

I also indicate that I corresponded with the general manager in late August and I received a response from the general manager of the City of Clarence on 20 August. At no time during that time did they indicate in that correspondence, or any other correspondence, that they were concerned about the project or had any concerns about the way forward.

The Department of State Growth continues to work with both councils and, also, as the minister said, with the Devils and the AFL to finalise site selection as quick as possible. One of the things we need to do is to make sure that we provide full advice to the minister and the government on the risks and opportunities of both sides. That, unfortunately, does take time. We've had a significant amount of work being done on boreholes, on environmental values, on social and economic. We've also done preliminary testing of architectural designs during that period of time. I want to indicate that while we've been working on a site selection, the team has also been working on the next steps in the process concurrently to make sure we deliver this really quickly.

Mr WILLIE - Just to be clear, you're responding to criticism from the mayor, not me in terms of the department.

Mr STREET - Yes.

Mr STREET - In fairness, I think you were pretty critical in the question you asked in the House the other day as well.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, of you, not the department.

Mr STREET - Right, okay.

Mr WILLIE - We're all accountable as elected members.

Mr STREET - The buck stops right here, Mr Willie.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, and the community is wondering what's going on.

Mr STREET - I understand that.

Mr WILLIE - Do you acknowledge that it will be a massive kick in the guts for that community if it's now removed as the preferred site? Also, and I'm happy to be corrected here because I've heard from a good source that, because of the gradient of the site, there's significant issues with retaining walls, up to \$10 million for retaining walls for the ovals.

Mr STREET - Where?

Mr WILLIE - At Rosny.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - Mr Limkin would be able to confirm that better than me. I'm not going to deal in hypotheticals around a community's reaction to a decision we haven't made yet. I will acknowledge that both the Kingston and Rosny communities have invested a lot of time and effort in lobbying for this facility.

Mr LIMKIN - The department is currently undertaking geotechnic works on both sites. Those geotechnic works will confirm a design. Part of that includes a number of boreholes on both sites, preliminary designs on both sites, arborist work on both sites. We are progressing those designs and that will be a part of the decision that will be provided to government to help them make a call on which way to go.

Mr WILLIE - It could be a cost factor that means there's a change of site?

Mr STREET - There could be any number of issues that need to be taken into account but, certainly, cost is being taken into account across both sites.

Mr WILLIE - You haven't disputed the \$10 million for retaining walls.

Mr STREET - I haven't confirmed it either. I'm not on the steering committee. The next time I will hear from the steering committee, outside of getting progressive updates on the work they're doing, is when they make their recommendation to me on which site.

Mr BAYLEY - Do you think the results and findings of the cost benefit analysis are important and relevant?

Mr STREET - They are an element in decision-making processes on projects like this.

Mr BAYLEY - Decisions of the planning commission?

Mr STREET - No, again, please don't try to draw me into talking about the Tasmanian Planning Commission, and its delivery -

Mr O'BYRNE - You'd be disappointed if we didn't try.

Mr STREET - and its deliberations. I'm steering away from that. I made it clear earlier and I'll make it clear again: I want the Tasmanian Planning Commission to analyse the POSS process that the Macquarie Point Development Corporation has put so much work into on its terms.

Mr BAYLEY - It's going to come to us, as parliamentarians. Surely, you agree that it's going to be important and that it's relevant. I put to you again -

Mr STREET - Mr Bayley, when it comes to the parliament, there wouldn't be anything that could be presented to the parliament that would make you vote for -

Mr BAYLEY - No, because we don't support the spending of this amount of taxpayer money, a billion dollars - over, because it's going to blow out. It's already blown out. We haven't even got to the contracting stage.

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - You were talking about returns on investment. I don't think there's any return on investment that would lead you to support the stadium.

Mr BAYLEY - There's probably not, but we certainly wouldn't be judging that based on the facts that the site would stay vacant. Minister, this is the site that we all agree is a great opportunity that has had 10 years and millions of dollars put into it to work up a plan, that had a plan for the escarpment, for the precinct, for the gateway, for the promenade, for the Goods Shed, for the underground, for the Truth and Reconciliation Park, and yes, that's been junked for the stadium and we've just had a stadium imposed. Surely -

Mr STREET - Not just a stadium. It is an integrated precinct plan as well.

Mr BAYLEY - A minor element of it when you compare it to the previous precinct plan. The Antarctic gateway element, it's a fraction, it's a shadow of its former self. Shouldn't at least a cost-benefit analysis be measured against the previously agreed master plan for the site, the site development plan? Surely? This is never going to be vacant land and we would hope it would never be vacant land.

Mr STREET - I think Anne answered that question before, but I'm happy to defer to her if you would like to add anything more.

Mr BAYLEY - Through you, minister, if we're going to go to Ms Beach, maybe she could outline what kind of conversations were had with this consultant about the constraints. Did you ask the consultant, through you, minister, to model a cost-benefit analysis against a vacant land scenario?

Ms BEACH - Through you, minister, the appointment of all the consultants that made that round of nearly 4000 pages that support our POSS submission were appointed through tender procurement processes. The larger consultancies, including this one, were undertaken through a tender open market process. Some of the much smaller ones were done through our request for quotation process. KPMG was selected through testing the market. They've used their models, their process to undertake this work. You'll note that in these reports they've consciously noted a conservative approach in some of their assumptions around things like some of the event profiles and some of the returns. There are elements where we think that this assessment is quite conservative.

Mr BAYLEY - With respect though, did you show them the previous master planning development? Did you show them that and say this is what we were going to do, this is now what we are being asked to do? Could you model a cost-benefit or did you ask them to do it against a vacant land scenario?

Ms BEACH - It was up to the judgment of the consultants to establish the base case.

Mr BAYLEY - Did you ask them though? That's the question.

Ms BEACH - We didn't direct them to use a specific base case.

Mr BAYLEY - Did you suggest to them that they use a specific base case that's vacant?

Ms BEACH - It was up to their judgment.

PUBLIC

Mr BAYLEY - Did you ask them - did you have this conversation about what is the base case scenario? Through you, minister.

Ms BEACH - Through you, minister. As I noted, it was up to their judgment to establish the suitable base case. We certainly had conversations, but we did not direct them to use a specific base case one way or the other.

Mr O'BYRNE - I'll ask one question on the high performance. The high performance centre is not just a building. It is a crucial step in delivering an AFL team, but it's also a crucial step in ensuring that we can attract and retain players, that it will become a genuine community facility where young Tasmanians from a whole range of codes will be able to use the facility. The community will be able to use the facility. I understand you are bumping up against not only cost pressures but also time. Are you aware there is significant concern in the football community about the decision that may move it away from a central location, being in the Clarence community in Rosny?

Mr STREET - I haven't been approached by any members of the local football community who've expressed that concern to me. That's the first that I've heard of concerns of the local community about -

Mr O'BYRNE - Locally and nationally.

Mr STREET - having a preferred location. You raising it right now is the first time I've heard that concern.

Mr WILLIE - I will keep going on this too. Is the location and how it will appeal to the players a major factor in this? Clarence is more central, it's close to the services, closer to the stadium.

Mr STREET - Of course it will be. I imagine it's an element of the decision. Again, that's probably more a question for Craig who is on the steering committee. He's working through the set of criteria that were initially used to choose Rosny as the preferred site and is now working through, I imagine, a defined set of criteria to make a decision on the final -

Mr WILLIE - Before we go to him, I can add to that. Is player retention being considered in this decision as well?

Mr STREET - Absolutely, it is because it's critical.

Mr LIMKIN - As the minister indicated, the project steering committee identified original criteria. It's a multi-faceted type of criteria. It includes costs, it includes timing, it includes those elements that the AFL club brought to the table, as well as the AFL, including player retention, the community interaction, the community benefit. If we look at some high-performance centres around the nation, for example, Brisbane, even the Sydney Swans example - and yes, I'm mentioning both in the grand final, they have that community aspect. They have both community use and player use, they're places of community gatherings and coffees, and those types of things.

It was a multi-faceted criteria analysis that was done in the original example. We are continuing to do that using those similar criteria as we update the information on both geotech costs, time and delivery risk.

Mr STREET - Without wanting to provide too much personal commentary, there are examples of both across the AFL, where clubs have chosen to reinvest in their old home, like Optus Oval for Carlton, at a central point. Brisbane went the exact opposite way and have used their development out at Springfield, outside of the city to base -

Mr O'BYRNE - They didn't have a lot of choice. For the Gabba, it's a bit constrained.

Mr STREET - Yes, but what I'm saying is, they chose not to go centrally in the city. They chose to use their development, basically, as a stimulus to develop a whole new suburb, so there's a multitude of different ways of doing this.

Mr WILLIE - Spoken like a Brisbane Lions supporter.

Mr STREET - I did get the opportunity to go and visit.

Mr WILLIE - Minister, people are sceptical that you're going to deliver this in the timeframe. It is a mess. There's division in the community. You have to have the development application lodged by the end of this year. You have to have it completed by the end of next year. Are you confident that if you don't meet those timelines, the AFL will accommodate that?

Mr STREET - We were talking about this before you came into the room. The AFL and the Devils are both on the steering committee. They are comfortable with the process we're going through and the timelines that are in place. Obviously, they want it to happen as soon as possible. We want it to happen as soon as possible. We're confident that we can still get the site selection done. As Mr Limkin was saying, they've been working through designs for both sites so that they're ready for development application lodgement basically as soon as we make a call on the site. So, we're confident that, yes, while the timeframes are tight, we can meet the AFL and the Devils' expectations around the development of this facility. I note, as you keep saying, how important it is that it's not just for retention of athletes once they get here; it's for attraction of athletes who are potentially looking to come here.

Mr WILLIE - Like Geelong's done so well attracting farmers and surfers, and things like that.

Mr STREET - Exactly right. It is going to be a selling point, hopefully, an asset to attract people to leave their established clubs and come to play for Tasmania because of this facility.

Mr LIMKIN - I have been advised that I can describe the criteria for the committee's information. There are four criteria with a number of outcomes under each one. I won't go under the outcomes. I will just keep at a very high level. The four criteria are:

- Physical qualities and functionality of the training and administration facility that will be able to be developed at the site within the allocation of the budget.
- Qualities of the site to support the objectives of the Tasmanian AFL club.

- Community and environmental benefits and impacts.
- Development and delivery risks and opportunities.

Under each one of those, there are individual considerations, but they are the four high-level criteria that have been used and will continue to be used on the finalisation of a site selection.

Mr WILLIE - Given the time, I might use my last question on a different topic. I've asked you this before but I don't think there was a satisfactory answer. The state government has provided money to the Tornadoes women's program but you have not provided it to the Hobart Chargers women's program. The state government has a history of being fair and equitable across the NBL1 sides, and I'm interested to know why you haven't extended that same opportunity. Isn't it effectively creating an unfair playing ground?

Mr STREET - The Tornadoes have been an important part of the Tasmanian basketball landscape for decades. They've been successful both on the court and in the community. NBL1 is requiring the Tornadoes and Northwest Thunder to come together under one licence for the north of the state from 2026. I've been heartened by the willingness of all parties to work towards an outcome that will not necessarily be ideal in the eyes of every supporter, but will hopefully allow both organisations to continue playing in the NBL1 competition. It's vitally important for the pathway for young basketballers in the state who aspire to make it to the NBL or WNBL, either with our championship winning JackJumpers or other teams.

The Tasmanian government is committed to developing women's basketball in this state from juniors right through to NBL1, and any suggestion that this is not the case is simply not true. The government has been a long-time supporter of the Tornadoes, the Thunder and the Hobart Chargers and their men's and women's programs through our funding of Basketball Tasmania, which delivers equitable funding for all of our Tasmanian NBL1 clubs.

The commitment made to the Launceston Tornadoes was primarily intended to fund a media and advertising campaign designed to lift participation by women and girls across the sporting landscape. I've been advised that the proposed campaign will aim to educate girls and their parents on the role of sport to improve health outcomes, promote the positive connection that team sport can provide and the benefits of team sport in the areas of mental health and wellbeing, and promote positive role models in sport for young girls and women.

The funding was the result of a clearly articulated vision for the promotion of the importance of women's and girls' sport by a community sporting organisation.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, the previous master development plan for Maquarie Point quite proudly says underneath the listing of all those various elements - the escarpment, the Truth and Reconciliation park, et cetera - that these precincts are specifically designed to underpin the planning scheme's framework. Do you accept that a stadium at 54 metres high is non-compliant with the planning scheme as it stands at the moment?

What do you say to stakeholders such as the RSL, who have long enjoyed the protections of the planning scheme to protect the values of the Cenotaph for sightlines and reverential ambience and who are now confronted with the loss of those values, as has been demonstrated in the diagrams that have been released as part of this proposition?

PUBLIC

Mr STREET - I'll go to Anne in a second to talk about the sightlines. We are committed to working with the RSL and all stakeholders on the development of this stadium. We believe that when it's completed, we can have a stadium and a development that enhances the Cenotaph rather than detracts from it. I understand that that's not necessarily the view of the RSL executive. However, you would be amazed at the number of returned servicemen who have written to me to -

Mr BAYLEY - You would probably be amazed at the number of Liberal Party members who don't support the stadium. Come on. That cuts both ways -

Mr STREET - It does cut both ways. I'm old enough to accept that there are varying views on this project. All I'm pointing out to you is that there are returned servicemen who've written to me who believe that this stadium won't detract from the Cenotaph or its ambience, that it will actually -

Mr BAYLEY - That's not the finding of the heritage assessment. It says the impact is very high -

CHAIR - Order, Mr Bayley.

Mr STREET - enhance the Cenotaph. We're committed to continuing to work with the RSL to get to the best possible outcome for all stakeholders involved in not just the stadium development but the precinct.

Mr BAYLEY - It's probably not necessary to go to Ms Beach, although I have a question that I think probably only Ms Beach could answer. It's in relation to the master plan and event day public transport coach. It says coaches will connect regional Tasmania to the stadium and offer private charters for groups, sporting clubs and communities to attend events. To accommodate coaches, Queens Domain is the preferred drop-off, parking and pick-up area, with a walking route via the Bridge of Remembrance.

We all know the Bridge of Remembrance; we know the Domain is the swimming pool and so forth. Where is that drop-off point, the parking and the pick-up area on the Domain?

Ms BEACH - I believe the member is referring to the Precinct Plan, so that includes the mode analysis. The mode analysis is what informed our initial mapping out of the different modes that would inform the ways that different people would move. Then, through our project of state significance application, we've furthered that work through the transport study, which has included an origin study. We've mapped through looking at 2030 as a base case, so how the network is coping at that time and then mapping event periods through that.

As the member noted that we've considered people that are travelling locally but also know there may be people who are travelling from regional areas who, rather than using a local bus service, would potentially be using chartered coach services, so we've differentiated coach from bus. We've looked at different options. For coach drop-off, one of the options was considering using connections up on the Domain and also looking through, now that we've worked through the more detailed work of connection in through the bus connection to the north-east of the site as well. We've mapped those through in the transport study. I'd need to refer to the transport study to highlight the exact area, but we could provide that to the member.

PUBLIC

Mr BAYLEY - Are you willing to take that on notice?

CHAIR - The time for Estimates of the Minister for Sport has concluded.

Mr BAYLEY - Can I just check, Chair, if the minister is willing to take that on notice? that seemed to be an offer to provide the committee with details of the drop-off, parking and pick-up area.

Mr STREET - We're happy to do that.

CHAIR - Thank you, everybody. The committee will adjourn until 9.00 a.m. tomorrow.

Mr STREET - I thank Craig Limkin, secretary of the Department of State Growth, Anne Beach, CEO of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, James Avery, CEO of Stadiums Tasmania, and all the department staff who are sitting behind in the preparation of everything for today.

The committee adjourned at 3.36 p.m.

Turn 31

Turn 32

Turn 33

Turn 34

Turn 35

Turn 36

Turn 37

Turn 38

Turn 39

Turn 40

Turn 41

Turn 42

Turn 43

Turn 44

Turn 45

PUBLIC

Turn 46

Turn 47

Turn 48

Turn 49

Turn 50

Turn 51

Turn 52

Turn 53

Turn 54

Turn 55

Turn 56

Turn 57

Turn 58

Turn 59

Turn 60

Turn 61

Turn 62

Turn 63

Turn 64

Turn 65

Turn 66

Turn 67

Turn 68

Turn 69

Turn 70

PUBLIC

Turn 71

Turn 72

Turn 73

Turn 74

Turn 75

Turn 76

Turn 77

Turn 78

Turn 79

Turn 80

Turn 81

Turn 82

Turn 83

Turn 84

Turn 85

Turn 86

Turn 87

Turn 88

Turn 89

Turn 90

Turn 91

Turn 92

Turn 93

Turn 94

Turn 95

PUBLIC

Turn 96

Turn 97

Turn 98

Turn 99

Turn 100