

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA
DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

DAILY HANSARD

Thursday 25 September 2025

Preliminary Transcript

This draft transcript of debates is issued in advance of the final Hansard for the use of the members of the House of Assembly and copies made from this may not be protected by parliamentary privilege.

Thursday 25 September 2025

The Speaker, **Mrs Petrusma**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People, and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS

TasInsure - Statements to Media

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.01 a.m.]

During the election campaign you told Tasmanians on national TV that you had a business case for TasInsure, but yesterday you finally admitted that no such business case exists. You have been caught out, Premier, and once again broken the trust of Tasmanians. Why have you misled Tasmanians and breached your own ministerial code of conduct by knowingly making misleading statements in the media?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and his continued rallying against cheaper, fairer insurance that is Tasmanian owned. I know honourable members who were in the caucus at the particular time we made the announcement were divided on whether or not there should be bipartisan support for such announcements, or rejected -

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and given the reaction, I can see that I have touched a nerve.

Mr Willie - It is not a serious policy.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is a very serious policy because it reflects the needs of Tasmanians.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable members of the Opposition, the Premier still has two more minutes to answer. I ask for him to be allowed to answer in silence, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - What I said in the campaign, along with extolling the virtues of cheaper, fairer insurance and Tasmanian-owned insurance.

Ms Finlay - Is that what you think it will be?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry?

The SPEAKER - Ignore the interjections, Premier. Interjections will cease.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are going to roll out this product, consult with the industry, consult with the community across the whole of government to ensure that we have a very strong business case for what is a very important policy commitment to lower the cost of living for families and to lower the cost of business for families, community groups and small businesses. That is what I stated in the campaign and I will continue to consult with key stakeholders.

You are doing a listening tour, Mr Willie, which I commend you for. It is what all members of parliament, particularly leaders of parties, should be doing across Tasmania. I have no doubt that TasInsure and the costs of insurance to Tasmanians, whether that be -

Ms Finlay - TasInsure definitely comes up in the conversation.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am sure it does.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is a policy that resonates with Tasmanians. It's a policy that was born of listening to Tasmanians and I'm sure Mr Willie is also listening to Tasmanians like I have and like our members have, whether on the west coast, the east coast, those in the tourism industry, those in community groups and the like, wanting this policy to proceed. You had the opportunity to be bipartisan and accept the fact that this is an issue, but you chose not to. Still, I welcome your interest in this matter and to be part of the solution.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Why doesn't the Premier just admit that he misled Tasmanians? He's breached the Ministerial Code of Conduct by knowingly misleading Tasmanians in the media.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have just explained, Mr Willie. I had a media conference every single day for 40 days and sometimes more across the day. This particular media conference was about TasInsure and I won't requote what I said, but I clearly said we will be consulting with industry as well as Tasmanians and this is a policy that will be delivered.

TasInsure

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.05 a.m.]

You promised TasInsure would be a new government-owned insurance company that would cut premiums and even lower grocery prices, but yesterday you also admitted that you're consulting with private providers like RACT about getting them to deliver instead. Tasmanians want the truth. What is TasInsure? Is it a new government business like you promised, or is it a rebranded private sector product?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question -

Mr Mitchell - A scam is what it is.

The SPEAKER - Member for Lyons.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have had an informal conversation with RACT who are a major insurance provider, a very strong brand in Tasmania and, of course, a very key stakeholder as well. As I have said before, there has been an average increase -

Mr Winter - They're so keen you didn't tell them?

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Franklin

Mr ROCKLIFF - in insurance premiums of some 35 per cent. Mr Ellis and I met with people in Queenstown, a small business, that had an increase of some 300 per cent. I'm aware of people underinsuring, not insuring, businesses closing -

Mr Willie - Is it a government business or will it be a private sector product?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Given that MAIB has been very successful in providing insurance and their premiums have increased on average, I believe, 5 per cent, not 35 per cent, why wouldn't we want to partner with MAIB but also listen to industry as well?

Opposition members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members of the Opposition, do keep quiet. You have five more questions where you can ask these questions you are interjecting with. Allow the Premier to speak.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. This is a policy born of listening to Tasmanians and increasingly over the last couple of years in particular, whether it be a small business, whether it be a farmer, whether it be a community group, whether it be mums and dads, people are struggling to fund their insurance. It is a key cost-of-living measure and a key protection for small businesses, families and communities, and we have responded to it.

Mr Willie - Is it a government business or is it a private sector product?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have raised this issue in a national forum as Minister for Tourism -

Mr Willie - Answer the question.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, you can ask a supplementary.

Mr ROCKLIFF - because the visitor economy has been particularly hit hard with respect to this matter. I raised it amongst other ministers and the federal minister as well on at least two occasions, calling for a national response to this issue. In the absence of that, we are

taking this issue on, and I look forward to working with all key stakeholders, including the community, and you are welcome to be part of the solution.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - The Premier went nowhere near that. Is TasInsure a government business or will it be a private sector product? It's like he is crab-walking away from his own policy.

The SPEAKER - He is reflecting on the original question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We're committed to our stated commitment, as per the election.

Greyhound Racing - Legislation for End of Industry

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.10 a.m.]

You accepted the reality of public opinion turning against greyhound racing and made the humane choice to ban greyhound racing from 30 June 2029. You listen to the community, 74 per cent of whom according to EMRS polls, oppose this brutal industry.

Since your decision in July, Tasmanian industry participants have been played and strung along by mainland heavyweights afraid of the domino effect in other states, enabled by Labor. Let's get on with delivering your promise and give certainty not only to the majority of Tasmanians who oppose greyhound racing, but to the industry participants who should know that you are serious. There is no reason for delay. Will you commit to legislation ending greyhound racing in 2029 being tabled in this House this year?

Mr Winter - The Greens are asking Dorothy Dixers now. What is this place?

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier is the only one to be speaking for the next three minutes please.

Mr Winter - I thought you banned Dorothy Dixers?

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Franklin, you can ask a question if you want to this morning. I ask the Premier to be heard in silence.

ANSWER

Thank you, this is a cooperative parliament. Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. We are working with the Racing Integrity Commissioner when it comes to implementing this policy. I have been asked a few times over the last week, given the mainland industry interest in Tasmania and their expectation that we will roll back this policy, and I have said we won't. Greyhound racing will end in 2029, not just the funding, but the

industry. I accept the industry's disappointment and, no doubt, anger at that decision. I get that fully. However, it is a diminishing industry, it's an industry -

Mr Winter - Outrageous. It is not a diminishing industry.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is. We have a deed that will expire in 2029.

Mr Winter - It's only diminished because you're killing it.

The SPEAKER - Mr Winter, I will have to give you a warning if you keep interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to take your question on legislation on notice because I -

Ms Finlay - You just want to have the front of doing things but not actually do them. That's what is happening across all industries.

The SPEAKER - I will have to give the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition a warning too if she keeps on interrupting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Sorry, I missed that.

The SPEAKER - Don't worry about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can't give a commitment this year. I will take that on notice and it will be done as soon as practicable. We are seeking the advice about this with the Racing Integrity Commissioner. We need to do this in a very measured way that acknowledges the participants and, indeed, the welfare of the animals themselves.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - I thank the Premier for his response. In relation to my question about greyhound racing legislation being tabled this year, in the Premier's response he indicated it was complicated and it was coming. Could he give an indication in the next sitting of parliament about when the timeframe for the legislation might be at that point?

The SPEAKER - That does arise from the answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I can provide an update for you. My belief is we are in the drafting process now, but I will take that on notice as well. I can provide a clear timeline for you before the next parliament, or even earlier, given the break of six or seven weeks.

Dr Woodruff - Thank you.

Huntingfield - Housing Development

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[10.13 a.m.]

It has been seven years since Huntingfield was rezoned to fast-track a major housing development. Homes Tasmania took over this project in 2022. One of Homes Tasmania's objectives is to get homes built quickly. A panel of approved builders was created, allowing those builders to quote to build much-needed homes without the need for lengthy and extended tender processes.

However, at Huntingfield, builders, despite being on the panel, have been asked to go through an arduous EOI process to apply to build the homes. It has cost builders upwards of \$30,000 to submit these. EOIs on top of the costs they went through to get on the now seemingly redundant panel. In civil construction, there have been four tenders for Huntingfield, one of which has not been awarded and one of which was withdrawn. Industry feedback suggests this has been a nightmare project.

All the while, not one house has been built. In the midst of a housing crisis, how can you defend Homes Tasmania's incompetence around this project?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. There's a lot in that to take in. I have been briefed on some parts of that. I am not sure how the panels are working, but I touched yesterday on the fact of the system they are going through at the moment with Homes Tasmania toward getting a series of builders that can put homes up on Huntingfield.

The point of that - and I will look into it further and correct myself if I am wrong on any of this, is that the difference with the panel is that at Huntingfield, they are looking at the first release of the blocks. I can confirm the signage will go up on Saturday or Sunday this week.

The builders associated with that estate have a series of different plans with it, which is different to some of the other set-ups. Because of the size of Huntingfield, they wish to have a suite of different designs that people can pick from.

As with most estates that Homes Tasmania are working through, approximately 85 per cent of the homes are for normal sale. You have two options there: what Homes Tasmania need to put on as affordable housing and also as part of the 85 per cent.

I will take some other parts of that question on notice and double-check my facts on some of the issues that might be there that I may not have been briefed on properly yet. I will certainly come back to you on that as soon as I can.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Cricket

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.16 a.m.]

We have to accept and plan for the real possibility that cricket won't be played under your stadium's roof. Have you had discussions with cricket authorities or sought advice on Stadiums Tasmania buying Bellerive Oval to keep national and international cricket in Tasmania? Further, have you had discussions or sought advice on the government funding a cricket high-performance centre? If so, what is the cost of these two projects?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. There's a bit of relevant detail that may well be contained within the knowledge of our minister behind you. We are engaging with Cricket Tasmania more broadly on the new stadium.

I understand that the Premier of Victoria has announced an upgrade of the MCG to add 5000 to the capacity there, including investigating a roof for the MCG. They get more rain there than we do here, so it could be a good idea. People are following Tasmania's lead on ensuring events, entertainment, sport, et cetera, are well catered for. If Victoria is moving that way and we don't seize this opportunity, it will be a huge lost opportunity for Tasmanians and the young people of Tasmania.

I do not take the policy commitment to the stadium and the AFL team lightly. I take it very seriously. At the forefront of my mind, every step of the way, are the young people in Tasmania and providing them with the opportunity and aspiration. I am happy to take further questions on notice or get back to you regarding the specifics of your question.

Supplementary Question

Ms JOHNSTON - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms JOHNSTON - Can I just confirm that the Premier is taking on notice the question regarding discussions or seeking advice about Stadiums Tasmania purchasing Bellerive Oval and advice for discussions about the cricket High Performance Centre? Is that being taken on notice?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, I can confirm that.

State of the Environment Report - Recommendations

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

[10.20 a.m.]

Over a year ago your government was handed the State of the Environment Report, which chronicled the decline of Tasmania's environment over the past decade of Liberal government and provides 16 recommendations of the actions your government needs to take to address it.

Your government has largely ignored these, including the recommendation to review the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* as a matter of priority. On Tuesday, you were handed another damning report into the management of Tasmania's landfills, which was unequivocal. Tasmania's legislation is outdated and no longer fit for purpose in addressing the complexity of contemporary environmental management.

Tasmania's environmental laws haven't been updated in 20 years. They simply cannot address the cascade of threats that Tasmania's environment is currently facing. When will your government undertake the much-needed review of the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*?

ANSWER

Well, there was a lot in that question. Thank you for the question on the environment. It's great to see the Greens back on the environment, who've been missing in action somewhat in the last parliament.

We are doing a huge amount of work in this area. I'm aware of the reports to which you refer. Of course, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) sits under my purview as Minister for Environment, as does climate change. I was hoping that we would have a debate on climate change yesterday so I could get some of this on the record, but for whatever reason, you chose not to do that.

Mr Bayley - You filibustered.

Dr Woodruff - You filibustered it out. Speak to your minister. Speak to the Attorney-General.

The SPEAKER - Order. I do ask the minister to become more relevant to the question. You are inciting interjections. I ask everyone to allow the minister to respond. I draw the minister back to the question.

Ms OGILVIE - In relation to law reform, you will be aware that we have matters out for consultation at the moment. Looking forward to seeing the response to that. We're committed as a government to working together around these complex issues. Of course, I'm looking at Mr Garland and mention the marine environment Tasmania act that we've made a commitment to working on as well.

In relation to the Auditor-General's reporting to do with the waste management systems and processes, that's something that we have an eye to also.

The 2024 State of Environment Report was tabled in this place on 17 September 2024. The original report, which was prepared by the Tasmanian Planning Commission, and the responsible minister is actually the Minister for Housing and Planning. Nonetheless, given it touches on environmental matters, that sits with me. That builds on the significant work that we are already doing in these areas.

You have mentioned, I think - I just want to check the EP -

Mr Bayley - *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*.

Ms OGILVIE - In relation to that, if you have specific comments that you'd like to make, always happy to hear them. Our legislative agenda is, I believe, well-known. Very happy to have dialogue across the Chamber on all of these issues.

In relation to matters to do with the environment, I would also like to say that I'm very aware that the Australian government has released its National Climate Risk Assessment along its first national adaptation plan. I just wanted to say for the Chamber that our climate change work, particularly through Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT), is sophisticated, it is ongoing, and it includes the important emissions reduction plans (ERPs). I was going to speak a bit to this yesterday, but we didn't get to have that debate.

Happy to have more information from you if you think we need to be doing more, but I'm pretty content that our management and environment portfolio, particularly in relation to climate change and the work that we are doing in the marine environment is ongoing.

Supplementary Question

Mr BAYLEY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr BAYLEY - Thank you for the answer, minister, but you didn't actually answer the crux of this question. The planning commission in its State of the Environment Report said it was a priority to review the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*. My question was, explicitly, when will your government undertake the much-needed review of the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*?

The SPEAKER - That question is in order.

Ms OGILVIE - Very happy to answer it. We have worked diligently through all of the recommendations, and they are recommendations. That work is ongoing. In relation to whether we will, or timing of that, that is something I could seek from the department for you, if you would like me to do that.

Mr BAYLEY - Are you taking that on notice?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, happy to do that.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

TasInsure - Government or Private Delivery

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.24 a.m.]

During the election you promised Tasmania a government-owned insurer, TasInsure, telling them it would save \$250 on their groceries. You have been caught out misleading Tasmanians about the business case that didn't exist. You're now consulting with the private sector, and it is unclear what your policy actually is. No wonder Tasmanians are struggling to trust you and your government.

Premier, tell Tasmanians the truth. Will you be establishing a government-owned insurer or are you preparing to hand taxpayer money to a private insurer like RACT in a bid to subsidise premiums?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I committed to our policy we announced at the last election, which is to ensure cheaper and fairer insurance, and ours - TasInsure. I thought the Labor Party would support a government intervention when it comes to supporting mums and dads, families, small business and community groups - government-owned. I thought you'd support it.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Thank you, Premier. I ask all members of the opposition to allow the Premier to make his contribution. You still have another four questions that you can prosecute your case this morning, but allow the Premier to speak in silence, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is our stated commitment because we've listened to Tasmanians and Tasmanians like this policy because it was born of their wishes. They were coming to us and saying, 'We are hurting. We are underinsuring or not insuring. We can't put on community events because of the cost of insurance.' I've raised it nationally over the last two years. This is an issue which we are going to address as a Tasmanian government in response to the needs of Tasmanians. We are listening. You have a tin ear when it comes to a number of policies over the last few months in particular, I'd have to say.

Ms Finlay, I thought you would, being a member of the Labor Party - albeit it took you some time and that's okay.

Members interjecting.

Ms Finlay - At least you stuck with a decision. You have to give them credit for that.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know you interviewed the Labor Party, you interviewed the Liberal Party.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Mr ROCKLIFF - We missed out as a result of Ms Finlay not being part of our party, but we've picked ourselves up. Not unlike Mr Winter, of course, who we thought was born in two different places, but actually it's three.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier will stop inciting interjections.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There's another party that, I believe, Ms Finlay interviewed, and that is the National Party. Ms Finlay could have well been wearing the big hat like Tucks, but no, she chose the Labor Party, and I wish you well.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Supplementary is to the Premier. He won't say he is committed to a government-owned insurer. He won't say those words. Say it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I said it.

Mr WILLIE - You didn't say it.

The SPEAKER - Premier, I do draw your question, because that does go back to your answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I did say it.

Mr Willie - He didn't say it.

Ms Finlay - Coward.

The SPEAKER - Ms Finlay, I do ask you to withdraw that. You said 'coward'.

Ms Finlay - I will withdraw it, however, as Speaker, you invited him to respond to the question that our Leader appropriately asked.

The SPEAKER - I do ask you to withdraw.

Ms Finlay - I withdraw. Can the Leader ask a supplementary question again?

The SPEAKER - You can ask another question. The Premier has stated that he answered the question. We will be able to look at the answer.

Mr Willie - He ignored your ruling.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The only one who should be speaking right -

Members interjecting.

Mr Ferguson - Best to respect the ruling.

Dr Broad - Yes, he should, that's right, Mr Ferguson.

The SPEAKER - Order. Ms Brown, the only one speaking at the moment is me. The honourable member for Franklin will have his turn soon. The Premier has assured the House that he did address that question. We will let Hansard decide that. I am sure you will be asking another question soon.

Salmon Industry - Multinational Corporations

Mr GEORGE question to MINISTER for BUSINESS, INDUSTRY and RESOURCES, Mr ELLIS, referred to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

[10.29 a.m.]

Our waterways are our most precious natural asset and, of course, what makes us an island. With endemic disease in the salmon industry, rapidly warming waters, summer infestations of salps, algal blooms and jellyfish, the threat to a profitable future for the industry in our waters rises year by year. What action is the government taking, or will the government take, to protect from the threat to communities and jobs reliant on the multinational salmon companies in the event that they turn their backs on Tasmania as profits fall and mortalities rise and walk away without a backward glass for job losses and abandoned communities?

Mr ELLIS - I'm happy to refer to the responsible minister.

The SPEAKER - The minister is referring the question to the Minister for Environment.

ANSWER

Thank you very much for the question, which I know is very dear to your heart. I speak in relation to the environmental aspects of your question.

Mr GEORGE - May I make a point of order? The question is to the minister for Industry.

The SPEAKER - Yes, but the minister has referred it to the Minister for Environment because it actually sits under the Minister for Environment's portfolio. A minister can refer a question to the most appropriate minister to answer the question you asked.

Ms OGILVIE - I am happy to touch on that too, because it does have elements that sit across portfolios. You mentioned business and industry, you mentioned the potential for business to move itself out of the state, but in the main it was about the environmental aspects, and then we also have the agricultural management of the salmon industry itself.

I am really happy to answer your question. It did seem to be a bit of a hypothetical about what would happen if, so that's not something that we would do or I would feel comfortable to

hypothesise on from here but if you would like us to get some more information about that aspect of it, I am very happy to do that.

The SPEAKER - Minister, will you will be taking that on notice? Is that what you are saying?

Ms OGILVIE - No, we'll have a briefing.

North West Transmission Developments - Compensation for Landowners

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[10.31 a.m.]

TasNetworks is currently negotiating a strategic benefits payment for people whose land is traversed by the massive new towers required for the North West Transmission Developments. While I understand most of the towers will be next to existing transmission lines, the 17-kilometre section from East Cam to Highclere, and if stage 2 of the project goes ahead, the 60-kilometre section from Hampshire Hills to Staverton, will be a new route. Owing to growing public opposition to these sorts of developments, Victoria and New South Wales are offering significant compensation payments to neighbouring landowners whose visual amenities are impacted by transmission lines. What compensation will TasNetworks be offering those landowners whose land is not directly traversed by the new towers but will nevertheless depreciate in value because they are in the line of sight or close proximity to those towers?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, again I thank the member for his question and ongoing interest in this matter. The rollout of what will be a substantial build here in Tasmania in terms of new generation, which of course we need to see our state continue to grow, will see increased electrification in our industries and a continuing increase in demand in our homes and in our vehicles, our transport sector. That is something we must be very clear-eyed about. There is no way to provide that extra generation and distribution of energy without building new assets. We are focused on doing that at the least cost possible with the most efficient use of new transmission. That is something to which I am deeply committed, that we do not overbuild. It is one of the underpinning fundamentals of the energy regulation in this country and, indeed, where Tasmania is involved.

As I articulated yesterday, there are substantial compensation payments available to people hosting transmission. There are strategic benefits payments that are likewise being rolled out through other jurisdictions that we are offering. It's a really delicate balance because the numbers are substantial in quantity, as I was alluding to yesterday. For example, the strategic benefits payment by itself, which is not the largest part of the compensation, is \$200,000, indexed per kilometre. If you look at stage 1 of North West Transmission, that's 130 kilometres, so it's substantial, and that's just the strategic benefits payment. The *Lands Acquisition Act 1993* (LAA) compensation element is a quantum higher again. I think the last number I saw for that, which was some time ago, I must admit, it was \$461,000 per kilometre as an average. It will be higher and lower in some circumstances.

We are talking about substantial quantum of money. That money needs to be recovered from customers, so we have a delicate balance here with building the infrastructure we need without unduly burdening our customer base. I am committed to finding a fair and reasonable pathway for affected landholders. I think what you are talking about is an issue that is emerging potentially in some other jurisdictions. I would urge caution as we consider those things that add substantial cost to Tasmania because in the Tasmanian context it's important to recognise that we have a small customer base and those impacts are felt disproportionately.

The SPEAKER - The honourable minister's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr GARLAND - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr GARLAND - The question was: will there be compensation for neighbouring landholders next to the transmission lines?

The SPEAKER - That goes to the heart of the question.

Mr DUIGAN - For the time we are contemplating that is not being considered at this time.

TasInsure - Government Business

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.36 a.m.]

In your previous answer you said that you were 'committed to government intervention', which is very different to a government business. Are you committed to establishing TasInsure as a government business or not?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. When I came up previously to answer this question I said that we are committed to our policy, and we are.

Mr Willie - Say the words, 'a government business'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are committed to our policy.

Mr Willie - He won't say it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - 'Government businesses'. We are committed to our policy.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable Premier still has two-and-a-half minutes. I ask that he be heard in silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The reason we are committed to our policy, to the point of the question, is that the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the announcement by the Tasmanian Liberals to tackle the cost of insurance. Insurance premiums have increased significantly in recent years and that's having a direct impact on Tasmanian businesses as well as the broader community.

The Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) endorsed TasInsure, saying:

The Tasmanian Hospitality Association strongly endorses today's announcement of TasInsure, a state-backed insurer designed to provide fair and affordable coverage for local businesses. [tbc]

It is the visitor economy that first came to me expressing their concern.

TasFarmers said:

Today's announcement, which will see small business insurance costs reduced, is a major win. A successfully implemented policy will support the sustainability of the agricultural industry's future. [tbc]

I can go on with more endorsements. The Small Business Council endorsed TasInsure -

Mr Willie - Just all shopfront, no substance. No business case, no modelling - you made it up.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Opposition, this is your first warning. You are repeatedly interjecting when you still have more questions you can use to prosecute your case.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The TICT said TasInsure can:

... help level the playing field and restore fairness to the system. It will strongly be welcomed by our industry. Tourism operators have shown incredible resilience through the past few years, but rising costs and insurance barriers are becoming unsustainable. [tbc]

Ms HADDAD - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. After repeated questions, the Premier is still going nowhere near the base of the question, which is whether he is still committed to his policy of a public insurer.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, honourable member. I draw the Premier back to the question in the next 45 seconds.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you very much. The policy we committed to is the policy that exists today.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Is the Premier still committed to establishing TasInsure as a government business? He could be very clear and say that.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes.

Salmon Industry - Disclosure of Information Regarding Disease Outbreaks

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.39 a.m.]

The independent review into Tasmania's Right to Information (RTI) framework found a culture of secrecy and obfuscation by your government, especially when it comes to providing the community with information on controversial matters.

The salmon industry hides behind commercial-in-confidence exemptions to keep Tasmanians in the dark about basic information. They operate in public waterways. Impacts on these waterways, such as the total production of fish or biomass density, should not be withheld.

The regulations administered by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) also don't allow the number of salmon mortalities or antibiotics being used to be disclosed for months afterwards. The communities want to know their waterways are safe to swim in and salmon are safe to eat, but relevant information is still kept behind lock and key.

Premier, before another summer of disaster unfold, will you put the salmon industry on notice as you promised? Will you ensure active and real-time disclosure of disease outbreaks, salmon mortality rates and antibiotic use?

The SPEAKER - The honourable member's time for asking the question has expired.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. The first part of her question was about RTI, accountability and the like. Before I get to the nub of the question, I will point to a number of measures we have taken as a government. There is the release of ministerial diaries on a quarterly basis. There is real-time reporting of key performance indicators in our major hospitals. We started that data a number of years ago. I believe we now also have bed block data available. This is a federal government matter. Nonetheless, it affects Tasmanians and its important. There is new government information gateway web page. There has been a significant expansion of routine disclosures, gifts and hospitality under our government. It's been a whole-of-government public reporting of gifts, benefits and hospitality received, and -

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Speaker, Standing order 45, relevance. I referred to RTIs at the start of the question but it was fundamentally about transparency and disclosure of information about the salmon industry.

The SPEAKER - It was a very broad question, Dr Woodruff, but I do ask the Premier to consider the other elements of the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you and I will. The context of my answer is important in terms of the Ministerial Code of Conduct, which is updated after every election to improve accountability in the performance of duties of all ministers. There is releasing RTI materials to all Tasmanians, notwithstanding yesterday's report, for which we thank Professor Tim McCormack and Associate Professor Rick Snell. There is routine disclosure of ministerial and parliamentary expenses; the RTI annual report; *Electoral Act* reforms; publication of submissions; delegation of all ministerial RTIs to agencies; reform of pecuniary interest disclosures for all members of parliament; support for the Ombudsman; support for the Integrity Commission; regular disclosures of child sex allegations across the public service; and GBE transparency and oversight.

We have done a lot over the last decade and it is continuous improvement. Which brings me to the salmon question, where we have always wanted a continuous improvement in terms of openness, transparency, penalties for marine debris, monitoring and the like. The Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan's latest iteration demonstrates that.

When it comes to the EPA, the government has strengthened the Environment Protection Authority's role as an independent environmental regulator to ensure comprehensive environmental monitoring and regulation of our salmon industry. There needs to be continuous improvement, which is why we have committed to the study in the industry and the pause on spatial expansion.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - I asked the Premier whether he would ensure the active disclosure in real time of disease outbreaks, salmon mortality rates and antibiotic use?

The SPEAKER - That does go to the original question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to familiarise myself with the current process and cross-reference what happens now with your question so that I can give you a clear answer. I am happy to provide that answer to you at a later stage.

I said the industry was on notice earlier this year as a result of the mass mortality event, and that continues. That's not because I don't support the industry. I do, particularly when it comes to the jobs it provides and the economic benefits to rural and regional Tasmania. However, in order for that to continue, there must be continuous improvement in the industry,

which includes areas that the study will cover. I understand the terms of reference for consultation will be released soon.

Education Facility Attendants - Working Conditions

Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[10.44 a.m.]

Last week your department issued advice to school communities on the industrial action being taken by educational facility attendants (EFAs), advising that other staff and students could participate in cleaning tasks if they volunteered. Do you believe it is appropriate for untrained staff and students to be involved in cleaning tasks under any circumstances? Are you aware that in at least one school, students were bribed with lollies to empty bins? If the EFA industrial action is escalated, how will your department ensure safe and hygienic working and learning environments for Tasmanian school staff and students? Or will schools have no choice but to close their doors?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the opposition leader for the question. It certainly has been a difficult time and there have been difficult and protracted negotiations. We are doing all we can to try and find an agreeable resolution. I accept that relationships breakdown when people stop communicating. That has been my clear message to my department and I have been pleased to see that the department is absolutely engaged in this process now.

I appreciated having the opportunity to meet with the union and with the EFA representatives. They had a compelling case. I appreciated their vulnerability and their preparedness to meet with me and discuss their concerns. They do such a vital role in our schools that often goes beyond what they need to do, and we are grateful for that.

Unfortunately, there was industrial action last week and it resulted in the closure of 13 schools. That put pressure on school communities. The department did everything it could to mitigate the impact of that industrial action but, unfortunately, we saw some schools close, which is a shame because every school day matters.

I acknowledge that communications had broken down and I now have great confidence that is back on track. My secretary had another meeting yesterday and has made a commitment to regular meetings moving forward to ensure that we get to a really good place and an understanding. I feel confident with the work that has been done.

I thank principals and school staff who did such a great job responding at very short notice to the industrial action. Our primary concern in that moment was the safety of our students. We made sure that every possible means of communication could go out to parents and families to advise of the industrial action. We made sure that if children did come to school, they would be safe and taken care of. We had staff at schools. We also made sure all bus routes were taken care of.

I am not sure about the comment you made about children being offered lollies. What I do know is that we are determined to find a resolution here and we will also always be making sure our children are safe.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Does the minister think it is appropriate that students are being asked to do cleaning in the place of school cleaners, kitchen assistants and school groundspeople?

The SPEAKER - It does go back to the original question.

Ms PALMER - I am not aware of the comments that you're making. I will certainly look into that, but I am not aware of children being offered lollies to clean. EFAs do an amazing job. We need them to do the job that they do.

Mr Willie - They need more than platitudes.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable member will allow the minister to answer in silence.

Ms PALMER - We are very grateful for the work that they do. We need to come to a resolution here. As I've said to my department, I need you to be communicating. They are certainly doing that and I thank them for it.

Soccer - Government Support

Mr DI FALCO question to MINISTER for SPORT, Mr DUIGAN

[10.49 a.m.]

With Australian Rules dominating the public sphere, there is another sport that has over 30,000 participants and is rapidly growing in this state that is often overlooked - soccer or, more correctly, football. Shouldn't we be supporting them as well?

The SPEAKER - Just while the member returns to his seat and the ministers coming up, I remind all members of the House that our three ministers from the Legislative Council do need to leave the Chamber around this time. If the minister can make a quick response. I do encourage members, if they have a question for the three ministers, to make it a lot quicker.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I recognise the fantastic landscape of, and I will call it football, in Tasmania. We are seeing strong growth in all sports in Tasmania and it's such a proud thing for the government, whether it be basketball, netball, football, AFL, pickleball in some of our senior cohorts as well. It is so important that we are supporting those people being able to play the sport that they want to, at whatever stage of life

they are at. We know the benefits are not just physical wellbeing but the lifelong bonds that come of being part of a club, and the mental health wellbeing benefits of sports also.

I was very pleased to meet with Football Tasmania yesterday or the day before. I understand that Football Tasmania continues to see growth opportunities in Tasmania. There is certainly the prospect at some stage for an A-League team here in Tasmania. I believe that's an aspiration we should all hold to see Tasmania represented at the highest level. It should be noted that football would be very happy to play A-League games at the new stadium at Macquarie Point.

The state government is a supporter of Football Tasmania through recurrent funding. If my memory serves me correctly, it's about \$500,000 a year. Then there are grants and infrastructure upgrades for a lot of our sporting facilities happening around the state.

I would report back that Football Tasmania is happy with where they see the sport at the moment. There are growth opportunities, there are things on their roadmap around centres of excellence and growing sport, and they are by no means overlooked in our sporting landscape, but thank you for the question.

Future Potential Production Forests - Protection

Ms ROSOL question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.53 a.m.]

This morning I am tabling a petition from almost 900 people in north-east Tasmania calling for permanent protection of state forests currently zoned as Future Potential Production Forest (FPPF). They love their local forests, which have threatened plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth. These forests were all independently assessed in 2012 as having high conservation value and were intended for protection under the Tasmanian Forest Agreement.

Your recent announcement to abandon your government's policy to log parts of the 356,000 hectares of FPPF forests were extremely welcome and widely supported.

In addition, Tasmania's State of the Environment Report made the clear recommendation that forested habitat needs to be put into permanent reserve to protect the threatened and endangered species they contain. Will you look to permanently protect all FPPFs into formal reserves and national parks?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. You mentioned the north-east and it's fantastic to see the coexistence, if you like, of forestry, agriculture, and tourism. Derby is a great example of industries that coexist for the benefit of the whole community. I will take great interest in the petition and the exact wording of the petition; reminding the people that have signed that petition that it's a very important part of democracy. Your question is not our policy, but I will look at the petition and see how that is worded. I look forward to that. Thank you very much for that.

Our government is working together with the forestry sector and the thousands of Tasmanians that rely on the forestry sector. It's a very important part of our industry, and we're in that continuous improvement space. All our traditional industries, if I can call it that, whether it be forestry and mining and agriculture, all need to work with their natural resources for the benefit of the sustainability of each of those industries.

Multi-School Organisation Pilot - Cost

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.55 a.m.]

The new multi-school organisation pilot couldn't have started any worse. Principals are livid and teachers are gobsmacked by your minister's secrecy and lack of consultation when it comes to rolling out the program. The independent education review the government relies upon said that any reform needs multi-partisan support and a long-term commitment, yet your minister rushed ahead without either.

Your government announced a global search for executives who will be paid hundreds of thousands of dollars before undertaking proper consultation with Tasmanian educators. Now, the government is trying to declassify school business managers to create more savings.

How much will your new multi-school organisation trial cost, including all executive salaries, administration, and associated costs? Is the government intending to fund the program by declassifying school business managers?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge, the answer to your last part of the question is no. I've struggled to find an area where Labor have supported good education reform over the last decade.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I'm very proud of our achievements as a government in education; extending our high schools to years 11 and 12. There are so many young people who have had an opportunity as a result of taking away that barrier and providing that opportunity -

Dr Broad Right, and what are the education results? Why won't you review it?

The SPEAKER - Dr Broad.

Mr ROCKLIFF - providing that opportunity in rural and regional Tasmania in particular. Working with colleges, schools working together in the best interests of students. We changed the law in this place with the *Education Act 2016*, where we made it law that our kids had to complete year 12 and could not leave school until they were 18 or had to be engaged in vocational education and training. We made that compulsory because education is for life,

and the longer we can keep young people in schools, they'll live healthier lives and more productive lives and make greater contribution to our community.

Mr Willie - If it was a good policy you could defend it.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We also need to ensure that, on the other end, we're engaging young people in education earlier, working together with three-year-olds, particularly supporting the families of disadvantage who would most value that earlier year of preschool or kindergarten, if I can put it that way. We're supporting Launching into Learning, Learning in Families Together was created as well.

We're also focused on literacy and numeracy, where we have done enormous work in recent times and led parts of the nation when it comes to the phonics test and ensuring that we're getting phonetic awareness back in our schools. We are rolling that out now and every school should be participating in that and it is working.

Mr Ferguson - It is working.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Ferguson, it is absolutely working and there is evidence to support that and I believe minister Palmer has expressed that. These are all the reforms we have done and the multi-school organisation reforms is part of the broader reform matters encompassing our commitment to education. We have just signed a bilateral agreement which has growth funding for schools over the course of the next decade, and that funding starts in Tasmania, if my memory serves me correctly, immediately.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - How much is the multi-schools organisation trial going to cost and why is the government so determined to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on CEOs that teachers don't want?

The SPEAKER - Cost was at the heart of the previous question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am sure the minister will be happy to detail the costs of these matters, but the opportunity cost of not continuing to reform our education system is enormous. I reject the premise of your first question about consultation. Our minister outlined in the upper House just yesterday the enormous amount of consultation -

Mr Willie - Are you seeing what teachers are saying about that?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You were on board with the move through MSOs, as I understand it, but you broke away from that when the heat got a little too much in the middle of an election.

We will always focus on what's best for young people and ensure that our schools are resourced appropriately. When I came to the role of minister for Education, this state actually had higher growth funding for private schools than government schools, which we have changed and are putting our efforts into public education, as we should.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Residential Building Code - Rollout of Changes

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, TRADE and CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Mr BARNETT

[11.01 a.m.]

Tasmania's building industry is fast losing trust in you and your government over your botched rollout of changes to the residential building code. This week, Mr Greg Rothacker, managing director of Creative Homes Hobart, one of Tasmania's largest home builders, wrote to your government and said:

We would have 20-plus sets of plans that have not gone in for planning and now we have to go and redraft and recast to our clients. There needs to be demands for a timeline of a minimum of three months, if not six months, prior to the implementation of such a massive amendment. Expletive being a builder, we are the ones that are supposedly bringing prosperity to the state.
[tbc]

Minister, in the middle of a housing crisis, why are you throwing the industry into chaos through this lack of consultation? Will you now pause the implementation of these changes to at least give builders a chance to catch up?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The first point, quite clearly, is that the government's getting on with the job of delivering for Tasmanians, taking action to get homes built cheaper, faster and easier, and that's what we're doing. We have cut the red tape and we will continue to do that. We have done that in a way that delivers faster building and construction, delivering more homes faster. I commend the former minister, Felix Ellis, and, of course, the Premier, who announced this nation-first plan to put in place a six-year freeze on the new mandatory National Construction Code requirements which will block those new federal red tape impositions.

We are delivering on that plan. It is happening as we speak. Our government is delivering on that policy to freeze the adoption of the National Construction Code 2025. That has led to a delay for five years in any further changes to the code following the 2025 revisions, which have now been adopted as policy at a federal level. This is where Tasmania has been leading to grow our economy, deliver more jobs and we are delivering on that. There's no greater support of our construction industry than this government. However, we remain steadfast in our support for Tasmanians with disabilities and the elderly. It is very important and why we are implementing -

Mr Willie - They need more time and a better process.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, this is your second warning for the day. I ask that the honourable minister is heard in silence, please.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks very much, Speaker. We are delivering the provisions of the liveable housing initiative. This is happening as we speak in accordance with the timeline and the staged implementation that was agreed and set out in October last year and which the industry is aware of and for which we have great support across the community, including from the disability sector and those representing the elderly. It is balanced and the right approach and there is a lot of work that has been undertaken. I encourage the honourable member and others to back in this balanced approach and support those in the community who need that support, such as people with disabilities and the elderly. As I say, this has been in place for more than 12 months and we look forward to delivering on our plan.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Potato Mop-Top Virus

Mr JAENSCH question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[11.06 a.m.]

Tasmania is responding to the recent detection of potato mop-top virus, which was first detected in July this year. Constituents in my electorate, particularly potato growers, are keen to understand the amount of testing that has occurred ahead of the planting season, and as we move to managing potato mop-top virus, what support measures are being considered for Tasmanian potato growers?

Tasmanian Azure Kingfisher - Conservation

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

This question is from my constituent Fiona in Crabtree. The Tasmanian azure kingfisher is one of 14 endangered birds without a state or federal threatened species recovery plan. With less than 400 of these incredibly beautiful birds left in the wild, the government is not doing everything it can to halt the decline of this iconic species, or of the more than 680 species on Tasmania's threatened species list. Despite calls from conservationists and tourism operators and recommendations from your own department's threatened species section, there has been no progress for more than a decade. The azure kingfisher continues to decline in numbers. Will you commit to developing a recovery plan for the azure kingfisher before it is too late?

Strike it Out - Launceston Accommodation on Crown Land

Mr FAIRS question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr DUIGAN

Strike it Out is a not-for-profit organisation committed to bringing about positive change to accommodate one's self-worth and provide necessities for life to those in need. This includes emergency support packages and food packages for those in need from Campbell Town all the way to Wynyard. Strike it Out tell me they have outgrown their current location and are currently looking for accommodation in Launceston. Can you work with Strike It Out to identify potential crown land sites that might be suitable?

Cape Reed Reserve - Mountain Bike Tracks

South Prospect - Housing Development

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

I have had multiple constituents contact me about the proposed upgrades to the mountain bike tracks and the associated infrastructure at Cape Reed Reserve. Constituents are keen to understand the government's position on that.

Further, there is a current planning application before the Launceston City Council for \$2 billion worth of development in South Prospect. Constituents are keen to understand the government's position and what tangible action they will take to support this development go through, which is likely to unlock land for about 2000 houses, much needed in the current environment and will take pressure off supply, so what is the government's position and what specifically is the government doing to support these outcomes?

West Coast - Support for Remote Health Practitioners

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

My question is from my constituents on the west coast. The minister will be aware, I am sure, of the recent decision by Ochre Health not to renew the contract of a registrar who has relocated from Western Australia with the intention of establishing herself permanently on the west coast. This decision has significant implications for the continuity of care in a region that has long struggled to attract and retain permanent medical practitioners. The west coast continues to rely heavily on short-term locums, resulting in fragmented care and ongoing frustrations for residents. Will the minister outline to the House what work the department is doing with stakeholders to ensure registrars are properly supported to remaining communities like the west coast?

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Housing - Cap on Secondary Dwelling Size

Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

In rural and regional parts of Lyons, landowners are keen to build secondary residences for family or rental use. Yet, the current 60-square-metre cap under the planning scheme makes this incredibly difficult. It is too small for couples or accessible living and doesn't reflect the larger block size common across Lyons. Other states like New South Wales and Queensland now allow granny flats of 80 to 100 square metres, scaled to land size.

Will the minister consider updating Tasmania's outdated 60-square-metre cap and support reforms that will allow for larger, well-designed secondary dwellings, especially in regional areas, where space isn't a constraint, but housing availability is?

PETITIONS

Forestry - Change of Status of Future Potential Production Forest Areas

[11.10 a.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to be the bearer of two petitions which are similarly worded: a written petition signed by approximately 69 petitioners and an e-petition signed by approximately 809 petitioners. The petitions conform with the relevant Standing Orders and rules of the House. The petition raises concerns about the Tasmanian government's intention to convert 39,000 hectares of Crown land previously slated for protection known as Future Protected Production Forest to Permanent Timber Production Zone for the purpose of logging.

Petitions received.

Health - Access to Arthritis Services

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to be the bearer of an e-petition signed by approximately 1093 petitioners. The petition conforms with the relevant Standing Orders of the House. The e-petition regards Tasmanians living with arthritis deserving access to appropriate clinical services statewide, particularly those in the north and north-west.

Petition received.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (SAFETY MODIFICATIONS) BILL 2025 (No. 59)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read the first time.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

TASMANIA COMMUNITY FUND AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 55) MT LYELL ACID DRAINAGE REDUCTION (REPEAL) BILL 2025 (No. 53) UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (No. 58)

First Reading

Bills presented by Ms Ogilvie and read the first time.

SITTING DATES

[11.17 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House at its rising, adjourn till Tuesday 4 November next at 10.00 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Honourable Speaker, I also have another motion to suspend standing orders, and I understand that has been agreed in relation to the expungement legislation. I move -

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the second reading of the Expungement of Historical Offences Amendment Bill 2025 No. 51 from being moved at this day's sitting.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I will just take a moment to say that we welcome this bill and are really keen to debate it. It would have been better to have this bill tabled in line with the Standing Orders last week, but we accepted that wasn't the case and we welcome it this week. It is pretty simple in concept and content and it has been through this place before. It is also consistent with the recommendations of the independent review of the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act* and it is also consistent with the findings of the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equity, so we do welcome this and want to see this progressed and debated today.

I to acknowledge the work of LGBTIQ+ advocates and particularly Rodney Croome in advocating for this piece of work to be done and I acknowledge their anxiety when parliament was prorogued and this bill was lost and had to be retabled and wasn't retabled last week, hence we are keen to debate this bill and get it done. It is long overdue and it does contribute to righting a really profound wrong. We support dealing with this urgently and getting this bill done today.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Chronic and Persistent Pain

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: chronic and persistent pain.

September is International Pain Awareness Month, which is part of an annual global campaign to help spread awareness of issues related to pain. According to Pain Australia, there are 3.6 million people who suffer from chronic pain in Australia. Some studies have put the figure as high as one in five.

Living with chronic pain can be exhausting. It is often invisible, hard to describe and challenging, even for those who can get help. Chronic pain can affect a person's use of health care and ability to work, exercise and socialise. While research and treatments are improving, many people are still struggling to be heard and understood, even by the medical professionals they are approaching.

By way of example, I have constituents with profound persistent pain being accused unfairly and hurtfully of drug-seeking behaviour by doctors and nurses, when all they want is for their pain to end and for their dignity and quality of life to be restored. Recent studies have confirmed this sort of response from the medical profession is a growing trend.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, people with chronic pain are more likely than those without chronic pain to experience mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance and fatigue. It also takes a huge toll on other family members: It is hard to see someone in constant pain.

When chronic pain sufferers are hospitalised, they spend longer in hospital than most people without chronic pain. There are, of course, huge costs to the economy, but I will let the Liberals talk about those. Although the causes of chronic pain are not well understood, those who experience socioeconomic disadvantage are almost twice as likely as those who are not socioeconomically disadvantaged. What is not acknowledged in the community is when chronic or acute pain gets so bad that it leads people to take their own life.

According to the coroner's report on suicide in Tasmania between 2012 to 2020, 63 per cent of the women who took their own life during that period had been recorded as suffering from chronic, acute or cancer-related pain. Only 4 per cent of those cases were considered as having a terminal illness. According to a 2019 report by Pain Australia, suicidal behaviour is two to three times higher in people with chronic pain than the general population. We cannot know how many of those people who took their own lives did so because of the physical pain they were in, but it is an issue that warrants much more attention and government resources to get a better understanding of this.

I want to talk about access to pain management services. We know from the work done by a parliamentary committee in 2022 into rural health services that pain specialists and rheumatologists are incredibly difficult to access, particularly for poorer rural areas where the services are so badly needed, resulting in significantly longer waiting times. The inquiry noted

that in order to access specialist rheumatology and pain management, patients from the north and north-west had to travel to Hobart, or Melbourne in some instances.

It is worth noting a petition was tabled today in this House signed by over 1000 people which requested recognition of the need of north and north-west Tasmanians to be able to access appropriate clinical care, including treatment for arthritis and persistent pain and the establishment of permanent northern based rheumatology services and persistent pain clinics, which still hasn't occurred. This remains an ongoing issue.

In the time left, I want to talk about access to medication, because this can often be the only way many people are able to manage their pain, particularly as it can take such a long time to get in to see a specialist or access multidisciplinary or non-prescription treatment options.

Since 2020, opioid restrictions imposed not just in Tasmania but nationally have made it harder to access some of the most effective pain management. While there are sound policy justifications for this, what hasn't been considered is the impact this is having on pain sufferers, with many feeling stigmatised, targeted or punished and some simply not receiving the medication they need to manage their pain. It has also increased costs, with more visits to GPs, which in the north-west are difficult to get.

This is why people are turning to medicinal cannabis, but that is also very hard to access in Tasmania and extremely expensive, even though we have a burgeoning industry of commercial medicinal cannabis cultivation in this state. Those who have difficulty accessing pain medication legally can be left with no option but to pursue it illegally, criminalising what is a medical problem. I will have a lot more to say about this in the coming months, but I want to start the public conversation today because it needs to be had.

[11.26 a.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Braddon, Mr Garland, for highlighting this important matter. I want to start by assuring Mr Garland and the entire parliament that our government absolutely recognises and understands the importance of specialist services for people living with musculoskeletal conditions, including persistent pain, and we are committed to providing equitable access to these services for Tasmanians right across the state. We are working to increase access to musculoskeletal care pathways and implement multidisciplinary models of care with an investment of \$6 million to develop Tasmania's musculoskeletal services, including strengthening of pain and rheumatology services in the north and north-west of Tasmania.

For the parliament's benefit, I can confirm the department is currently establishing a permanent rheumatology service, a permanent back pain assessment and treatment service and enhanced persistent pain service capability through extended partnership arrangements with private providers. These initiatives will provide improved services for Tasmanians living in the north and north-west of our state.

I am advised that right now recruitment is underway at the Launceston General Hospital to permanently appoint specialist rheumatology consultants, advanced scope physiotherapists, a clinical nurse consultant and administrative support. This new rheumatology service will complement existing musculoskeletal care pathways, including orthopaedic and neurosurgical services and allied health-led non-surgical back pain and joint assessment and treatment.

In the interim, in response to identified needs, the department has already progressed improved persistent pain service capability, supported by a partnership with a private pain specialist service in Launceston and additional funding to the OPAL Persistent Pain program in the north-west.

Through the partnership with a Launceston private provider, we've expanded access for public patients, which includes consultant services for persistent pain management provided by a pain medicine specialist and access to minor procedures to support persistent pain management. The department has also purchased 3D scanning technology for orthotics and prosthetics in the north-west and podiatry F-scan in shoe pressure fitting equipment for podiatry services statewide.

Through continued private partnership agreements, expanded public specialist consultant outpatient persistent pain services will be delivered from Burnie, Devonport and Launceston to build service capability and further understand the current demand and unmet service need for future planning and development. This expansion will further increase access for public patients by providing additional consultant services for persistent pain management provided by a pain medicine specialist, multidisciplinary assessments for people suffering from persistent pain, and pain management programs that support self-management. The Department has advised that they will establish the permanent services for northern Tasmania by the end of this year. These new permanent services are possible because of the Government's strong focus on building a better Tasmanian health system now and for the future.

We have been investing record funding, which has seen more doctors, more nurses, more allied health professionals and more paramedics caring for Tasmanians across the state. More surgery is being delivered and a range of significant infrastructure projects underway to ensure that staff and patients have access to world-class facilities and technology. For example, in the honourable member's electorate of Braddon, as part of our first 100-day plan, planning and design work will commence for the completion of the \$174.8 million Stage 1 of the North West Hospitals Masterplan.

At the North West Regional Hospital, our investment will deliver a link bridge to join the southern portion of the site to the core of the hospital, a new medical inpatient unit building to house the existing medical ward, clinical diagnostics, dialysis and the lung function laboratory.

At the Mersey Community Hospital, our investment will provide a new sub-acute building providing medical oncology services and a new inpatient unit for geriatric evaluation and management.

In closing, I hope that this information assures the member and the House that this Government is committed to providing equitable access to health services, including to address persistent and chronic pain for Tasmanians right across the state.

[11.32 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the fellow member for Braddon, Mr Garland, for bringing forward this matter of public importance this morning. That's exactly what it is, it is a matter of public importance. Each and every day, through my office in Braddon in the city of Burnie, we hear from people not just from Burnie but right across the region about their long waits to see a specialist and/or to get on to the elective surgery waitlist in this state.

Mr Garland is quite right in his contribution when he talks about the mental health implications that this has for Tasmanians. Whilst I appreciate the update that the minister has provided to the House today, I remind this place that the Liberals have been in government for 11 years and it is only now that they're talking about standing up chronic pain management clinics that extend from the north across to the north-west. I don't believe that's good enough, because the people of the north-west have been suffering with intolerable and intractable pain for many, many years. They often have to wait for long periods of time to see a specialist even for an initial assessment, and have to travel long distances to have that assessment - that would be to Hobart, in a car, often in very bad pain and with significant disability from that pain and impaired mental health and wellbeing.

I do remind the House that there has been every opportunity for those services to be stood up before. I don't think it is good enough that people will have to wait that long. I am pleased to hear the minister say that they will be in place by the end of the year, and I hope they will be. I am sure that Mr Garland and I will be holding you to account on that around those services being available to people.

I have spoken a lot over the years in this place about my constituents and the inequities when it comes to health across the electorate of Braddon. One of those constituents who I got to know quite well was a woman from Wynyard called Irene. She is a lovely lady, and I got to know her over a period of probably 12 months where I had contact with her through my office on a regular basis about her long wait to see a neurosurgeon in Hobart. Irene had lived for many years with chronic pain and disability from, I believe it was a back injury from many years ago, and it took us a long time to get her the help that she needed. Yes, that meant speaking to the media and highlighting her case. That also brought forward many other people who had experienced a similar situation in accessing a neurosurgeon.

I want to remind the House today of the current figures on the waitlist in Tasmania if you want to see a neurosurgeon. You can't see a neurosurgeon in Burnie or at the North West Regional Hospital or the Mersey, but currently in the north it is 814 days' wait for an urgent case and it's 1338 days in the south for an urgent case. That is terrible, absolutely terrible. You can see why Mr Garland has brought this issue to the House today, but you can see why we're hearing from people across our electorate offices about these extraordinary wait times to see a specialist. There are 66,000 Tasmanians that are waiting to see a specialist. Yes, this government has announced masterplan after masterplan - glossy paperwork that outlines plans that are years away for people. They're not delivering services for people right now; they are plans for buildings that, yes, are needed, but they are years away. What people need is services. They need access to specialists.

We raised in this place a number of years ago access to paediatric specialist appointments for children, say, that are requiring to have grommets put in their ears or a tonsillectomy - simple procedures that could make a huge difference to the development of young children and their ability to engage in education and learning. At that time, we were told that there were options being looked at such as flying children and their families interstate or improving that service, but I've not heard a thing about that since, and the outcome of that.

I believe that this government needs to do better. I acknowledge that the minister's only just come into this role and I accept that, but this government has been in government for 11 years. Yes, we have hundreds of masterplans for new buildings, but right now, what

Tasmanians need is access to services. When this government came to office back in 2014, the specialist waitlist sat at 33,000 people. It now sits at, what I said, 66,000. That is an indictment on this government and Tasmanians are suffering because of it.

[11.35 a.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Braddon for bringing this to the attention of the House. I thank you, but mostly, I would like to give support and sympathy to all those who suffer from the condition. It's the most devastating disease that impacts not just people and patients, but also their families.

It's not about just complaining about pain. It can affect their mental wellbeing in a severe way. As we mentioned, it can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, lack of sleep. We have to understand sometimes the causes of that, because it's very relevant to their management. People can have acute pain from an acute injury, but it can then lead to continuous pain.

The management of this, in my experience, is always very difficult. Sometimes you need a real specialist in pain management to deal with this condition. That means we need comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment of this. We had shortages of it in the north, as in the north-west. We had intermittent services. I'm delighted to hear that our Minister for Health is taking this seriously by trying to address it in the future and expand services to be available in the north and the north-west.

Management of pain is not just about medications. Of course you can take a drug, and sometimes surgical procedures can help - for example, a nerve block. How often do we see people with chronic back pain, which can cause severe restriction on their mobility, and they might need surgical treatment. As we heard, neurosurgery can be so helpful for them. Physiotherapy, I feel, is sometimes helpful. That's why having a comprehensive and multidisciplinary team is so relevant. A psychological approach and having psychiatrists and psychologists can help greatly in management of pain as well. More important is how we can rehabilitate these patients. Having a specialist can help greatly in gaining trust and making sure that they feel comfortable to manage the pain. It is a devastating disease because of its impacts on their quality of life and impact on their work. Quite often they take time off work. I feel it is always good investment to provide them with a specialist to manage their condition. I support the member for Braddon for bringing attention of this condition to the House.

[11.39 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on this matter of public importance of chronic and persistent pain and acknowledge the work of my colleagues Cecily Rosol, member for Bass, and Helen Burnet, member for Clark, as the health and preventative health spokespeople respectively.

Chronic and persistent pain is pain that lasts beyond normal healing time or is simply ongoing. It is a critical issue across our community, as we have heard already. Illness, musculoskeletal problems and injuries are a common cause, but sometimes there is no obvious cause. Also, chronic pain is not necessarily visible to other people, so we have to increase our awareness and level of compassion for people who are suffering this condition. It is welcome to hear the minister make some commitments on that because it does have significant issues and impact on people. It impacts on their mood, sleep, mental health and ability to fulfil work and other commitments. This has a cost to quality of life of a patient, their productivity within

the workplace and, therefore, impacts on the economy and other broader elements of society, as well as the impact on other people, their families.

A lot of people live with chronic pain and we don't even realise it. It can be difficult to manage and address, and that is if it is even manageable. Of the types, there is back pain and skeletal pain, arthritic conditions, abdominal pain, which I will talk about later, including endometriosis and persistent pelvic pain, migraines and diabetic neuropathy, which is nerve damage that can affect people with diabetes.

Australia-wide, one in five people over the age of 45 experience chronic and persistent pain. As Tasmania has an ageing population, one of the sickest populations and more chronic disease incidents, it is likely to be higher here. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2022, 21 per cent of Tasmania have back problems and 21 per cent of Tasmanians have arthritis. They are both the highest rates in the country.

I am one of them. I have sore knees and a sore neck. I have had a knee reconstruction from a footy injury 30 years ago. It has done me well for 30 years but it is really impacting on me now. I have only recently just had to go back and do X-rays and MRIs, and the like, and I need to deal with it by getting on my bike, physio, potentially a steroid injection. As Mr Garland has identified, medical cannabis is a significant revolution in treatment these days and I am one of those people that holds a prescription and it certainly helps me in that space.

I will just quickly talk about issues that do not affect me. About 8 per cent of men have persistent pelvic pain. That's irritable bowel syndrome and the like. Up to 15 or 25 per cent of women suffer greatly from persistent pelvic pain associated with periods, endometriosis and other reproductive system conditions, which are the overwhelming cause of this. It is a significant issue. The Australian Physiotherapy Association identifies it as the leading health concern for women, girls and trans men, and it needs to be acknowledged.

I will share a contribution from one of our constituents who has given me permission to do so:

I struggled with menstrual pain for 10 years. Every month I had to go to the GP to get a medical certificate because I had to miss work for at least two days due to painful periods. I saw various GPs during this period and not a single one of them thought to tell me that painful periods were not normal. It wasn't until I was in pain three weeks a month that I saw a GP who asked me the right questions and told me that it wasn't normal to have painful periods, it wasn't normal to work miss work every month.

I started two years of weekly physio appointments and lots of therapy to retrain my brain around chronic pain. The cherry on top of this experience was a few weeks after my laparoscopy and I had an annual performance review at work where a male supervisor told me, and I quote: 'Now that you are taking less sick leave, you are more reliable.'

That just demonstrates the level of cultural change that we need to accept in the workplace and I am proud of the Greens, both at the state level through my colleague Helen Burnet and at the federal level, for introducing legislation to allow 12 days of paid reproductive

health leave every year. It is a significant initiative because it needs to change the culture, attitudes and the administration of work to acknowledge the impacts of persistent pelvic pain.

Time expired.

[11.45 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this matter of public importance. I applaud the honourable member for Braddon, Mr Garland, for bringing forward this MPI. I am sure we have discussed pain and chronic and persistent pain in my time in this House of now 15 years, but I can't remember the last time that happened. It does not get raised often enough. I am sure it is no coincidence that it has been on the same day an e-petition was tabled signed by 900 Tasmanians on the very subject. It is tremendous that today we have the entirety of this parliament focused on this issue at this moment.

It is a massive concern, not just to those 900 people and their families, but to people right around our state. I am familiar with it. I have people I love in my family who suffer with chronic and persistent pain, and I am sure that is the case for many members in this House.

The government has been making investments in this space but we need to do more. We need to bring on more resources and services and ensure we have properly connected those into the communities we are here to serve. Not just in the cities but ensuring there are functional linkages into our regions and our islands so that people are able to get access to those better services.

We know we cannot have a rheumatologist in every town and suburb. Rheumatologists are as rare as hens' teeth. I was pleased that our new minister has been able to outline that those investments include the provision of additional rheumatology services. It has been a real issue in my community in Launceston and north-east Tasmania. I also want to pay tribute to the member for Launceston in the other House, Rosemary Armitage, who has been raising these issues for some years. In fact, it has been in response to those concerns and those great advocates that this government has been in fact making those additional investments.

I feel there has been a misunderstanding. Some people believe the \$6 million commitment has gone nowhere. That is a misunderstanding for those people who signed that petition or felt that way. I was pleased that our minister has been able to outline what has been delivered with those funds and what Tasmanians can expect in the future. I noted that it will be in place in many of the regions in coming months. It cannot come soon enough for a lot of Tasmanians.

A brief anecdote, if I may. By the way, a brief political point: we had people on waiting lists not for 800 days; they had been waiting 10 years before we came to office. Long before I became health minister, I visited a family at their home and a young woman who had been kept out of the workforce by her persistent chronic pain, was on a very heavy regulated medication with special permission from the Chief Pharmacist of the Tasmanian Health Department. Not only was she suffering, not only was the pain medication assisting, but she was also addicted to that substance as a result of having been medicated with it, necessarily, for a long period of time. She had been ill and she had to make that difficult decision to eat her own vomit to get the medication back, such was her medical and mental need for that pain treatment because there was no relief and there was no understanding and there was mistrust of her that she was abusing the medication and just wanted more. We've come a long way, I believe, as a state

health department and government in the intervening years. This incident, by the way, was more than 15 years ago, but we've still got a long way to go.

In my 30 seconds remaining, I want to pay tribute to the Clifford Craig Foundation, where only last month - our minister was there with me and I think I was only one of two or three blokes in the room - we went to an endometriosis presentation hosted by Vanessa Cahoon. We also had Louise Hull there, who is the ambassador for Endometriosis Australia. The lessons learned there were not just new to me as a bloke, but to many of the women in the room as well who learned for the first time that this effects one in six women. Hats off to those who've brought this forward today. Our government remains resolute in providing better services.

Time expired.

[11.49 a.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I also commend and thank the member for Braddon, Mr Garland, for bringing on this important motion today. Thank you also to the member for Bass, who has just resumed his seat, for mentioning the petition I tabled this morning. I just wanted to speak a little bit more about that petition and thank the Health minister, Bridget Archer, for the comments she made that went to the substance of the petition. That is people who are suffering from arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions, particularly in the north and the north-west of the state.

The petition I tabled this morning was sponsored by community petitioner Diana Hardy Wilson. I'm sure many members are familiar with Diana, an incredible Tasmanian who lives in Bridport and is a huge advocate for many things, one of which is the need for rheumatology services in northern Tasmania. Diana shared her story with me and that's what led to the petition we tabled this morning. I want to let members know that Diana will be here later in the day on the adjournment to hear me speak about that petition as well, so if anybody would like to follow that up with her she'd be very grateful.

Diana lives in Bridport and for some time she used to travel to Hobart every time she needed treatment for polyarthritis. She's now in her 70s, was diagnosed nearly a decade ago and has made that seven-hour round trip to the state's south many, many times. She said that there had to be some kind of permanent rheumatology clinic available in the north and the north-west. She was very relieved, as was Jackie Slyp, the CEO of Arthritis and Osteoporosis Tasmania, at the 2023 Liberal Party commitment of \$6 million to establish a permanent musculoskeletal service in Launceston to service north and north-western Tasmanians. They were disappointed, however, that that \$6 million at the time the petition was established seemed to have gone nowhere. That really worried both Jackie and her members, as well as Diana and other people in the north and north-west, who are desperately in need of those services.

Jackie described them this way, saying:

These conditions cause significant pain and they stop people from being able to perform daily activities. Many can't work anymore, they can't move the way that they were once able to move. Everyday activities like brushing your hair, getting dressed, getting your kids ready for school, are difficult with these conditions, and yet treatments are available that can make a significant difference. [tbc]

She said she had seen a steady degradation of services in Tasmania over 20 years, so it will indeed be a great relief to northern and north-western Tasmanians to have heard this morning from the Health minister that that commitment has been revived and that there will be a permanent clinic in Launceston. People suffering from musculoskeletal and other permanent pain disorders were very rightly dissatisfied with the interim stopgap measure that was temporary clinics. It wasn't enough and it's very encouraging to hear that something might be changing.

We know how much people are suffering. We know that one in four Tasmanians suffer from arthritis, osteoporosis or musculoskeletal conditions. If you think it's the kind of thing that only affects other people, think again, because as we age we will all start to experience the effects of age. I'm seeing some nods around the Chamber. The member for Clark, Mr Bayley, shared his experience. Others have shared their experiences of permanent pain and how devastating it is to the way we conduct our day-to-day lives. This kind of treatment that is available, that makes a massive difference to being able to go about your daily activities, go to work, get yourself ready and look after your children, will make a profound impact on the lives of people who need it.

Endometriosis and pelvic pain, which the member for Clark also mentioned, is a much misunderstood and neglected area of health care that affects many thousands of women who have not been taken seriously. For decades, women have been told it's just what women go through. Endometriosis and pelvic pain can be treated and I commend the Albanese Labor government for increasing their commitment to endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics. There will be 33 nationwide by the end of 2028. There's one right here in my electorate in Glenorchy being run by Family Planning Tasmania that's already making a significant impact on the lives of Tasmanian women.

Matter noted.

**JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS
AMENDMENTS) BILL 2025 (No. 38)**

Message from the Legislative Council

Bill returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Inaugural Speeches

The SPEAKER - Before I give the call to the honourable member for Clark for his inaugural speech, I will remind the Chamber that we extend the usual courtesies to Mr Vermey as he gives his inaugural speech today. The convention in the House is that inaugural speeches are heard without interjection or interruption unless it's 'Hear hear' and applause at the end. With that, it gives me great pleasure to invite the honourable member for Clark, Mr Vermey, to the despatch box.

INAUGURAL SPEECH

Member for Clark, Mr Vermey

[11.55 a.m.]

Mr VERMEY (Clark) - Thank you, honourable Speaker. In my first formal contribution to this place I would like to begin by formally congratulating you on your elected role as Speaker and extending my congratulations to all members of this place who have been elected to serve in the 52nd Parliament of Tasmania.

It is a great honour and a humbling privilege to stand in this Chamber today to deliver my inaugural address as the newly elected Liberal member for Clark. I acknowledge the Aboriginal people, the traditional owners of this land on which we meet, and pay my respects to elders past and present.

I told my wife I was only going to run for parliament once - 'one campaign, just five-and-a-half weeks, that's it' - a promise. It is the only promise I haven't kept. Three whirlwind campaigns later and here I am, proof, perhaps, that you can give something, your all and you never quite know where you may end up.

I also stand here today as someone who has lived a full life before politics. I was born in Hobart on 18 December 1968, the son of Beth and Bill Vermey. My father was born in Amsterdam above the family butcher shop during the dark days of war. In 1950, with nothing but courage and a belief in a better future, my grandparents boarded the ship *Johan Van Oldenbarnevelt* with nine children. They arrived in Melbourne, no work was there and after time in settlement camps in New South Wales, made their way to Tasmania, where they were sponsored by Rex Mundy of Mundy and Sons - a great pleasure, them looking after the family - and slowly built a new life.

My grandfather's simple philosophy was, 'We are here in Australia now, we learn English, we join communities, we play sport and we embrace that new country'. That spirit of resilience shaped my family's story and it shapes me today.

I come from three generations of butchers and small business owners. My grandfather, father and I all worked behind the counter. For us, the shop was never just about what we sold, it was about serving the community, providing for families and building relationships that last across the decades.

My own journey began with an apprenticeship at Coles in 1986. It was meant to be a stopgap before finishing school, but I quickly realised I had found work I loved and also a bit of income, and that apprenticeship gave me a trade. It taught me to be resilient; it gave me an apprenticeship that set me up for hard work and discipline that has stayed with me ever since. From there, I built a career that took in my family's business. I won apprenticeship awards, the first one a national one for butchery which led me to doing some work in Tokyo on exchange. I then came back to Tasmania to run my own business and take over the family business.

Like many Tasmanians, I know both opportunity and adversity. I survived a few accidents - I have good surgeons who have put things back - that nearly ended my career and perhaps my life, but I carried on. I worked, I coached, I joined the Army Reserve, and raised the family. And through it all, I worked behind the butcher's counter.

Now, some think that politics and butchery are strange companions, but I can tell you that a butcher's counter is one of the best places to learn about your community. Over the years, I have served thousands of customers. I have celebrated with the families when they grieved, with them when loved ones were lost, as families grew and shared in their struggles when times were tough. Long before the Reserve Bank meets or the headlines break, when the cost-of-living pressure is squeezing families, where our local businesses are struggling, you can see it by what people purchase, what items they are putting on their tables. That experience has given me some rare insight, a front-row seat into the real lives of the Tasmanians. Not policy on a page, not statistics in a report, but real-life experiences.

My story has also been shaped by my family's own challenges, particularly with ADHD and dyslexia. I have seen firsthand how important early diagnosis and support is to the development of the child and family's wellbeing. We need to pick it up early so we can help families and the children. That experience has made me deeply passionate about ensuring that every Tasmanian child, regardless of their circumstances, has access to timely assessment, quality treatment and the resources they need to thrive. For this reason, I thank the previous member for Clark, Simon Behrakis, for his work with the inquiry into assessment of ADHD and support services.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr VERMEY - I look forward to this committee being reinstated and its findings being used for better outcomes for communities.

In my days at school, I was in the cadet corps, I played rugby, and I rode. I love these activities, involvements in being part of the team. At the core of it all were my grandfather's words to join communities, play sport and embrace our country. Through my involvement, I understood the importance of community sporting clubs that provide opportunities for social engagement. They provide support, friendship and opportunities to express your emotions.

After school, I continued to engage in sport with rugby, rowing, scuba diving and, later, snow skiing. Diving in Tasmania is a wonderful opportunity. We have, in my opinion, some of the best places in the world to dive and explore, whether it be catching a cray or two or swimming in undersea gardens, or even coming face to face with a friendly orca. My boys now dive with me and it has taken our family to amazing places.

Rowing went from the school club to the Tasmanian university rowing club and back to school, where I had the pleasure of coaching my three boys, Hamish, Thomas and Angus, over a 14-year-journey at the Hutchins School. There were two of those years where I had no boys at school, but I just loved being with the boys, the coaches and staff, and having that chance of mentoring, where you can direct people and assist without being a parent, without being a coach, but just a good person, a good mentor.

I stand here today not only as a butcher or a small business owner or a rowing coach, or even a husband and father, although I am all these things. I stand here because I love this place we call home. I deeply care for this community. I want to use the lessons I have learnt through resilience, hard work, listening and lived experiences to shape a Tasmania that is strong, fair and full of opportunity.

My wife, Rachel, who is sitting here today, has been my anchor and great supporter. She knows this is not about ambition. This is about service - servicing the community that has given me so much and the people who every day inspire me with their grit, generosity and spirit. This is my purpose, this is my why: to give back to the community that has raised me, to fight for families doing it tough, to ensure that every Tasmanian, whether battling cost-of-living pressures, navigating health care or education, or chasing their dreams, know they have a voice here in this place.

My purpose is to build a strong community and a place to invest, to invest in people from the start to finish. I believe education is key. When Rachel and I managed to pick up some early potential problems our boys were facing in learning during their early childhood years, Lansdowne Crescent Primary was a school for our boys, a wonderful community with terrific caring staff. We embedded ourselves in school fairs, sporting events, camps, quiz nights and numerous activities. It was there at Lansdowne that our boys' superpowers were uncovered. ADHD has helped to drive our boys and has shaped them into the young men we have here today.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr VERMEY - I am proud of them and proud of their achievements so far. We have come a long way since I - and Paul Taranto - were part of 41 boys in a classroom. Back then, those with characteristics of ADHD were considered to be disruptive and troublemakers. Education doesn't stop in primary schools. It's a lifelong journey and one for me that continued into Hutchins well after my schooling years had ended. I never expected in my journey to become a member of the Hutchins Old Boys. Thankfully, they still let me attend St Virgil's Old Virgilians events as well, a foot in each camp. Through my involvement in the boys' schooling and their sport, I invested not just in their future, but the wider school community. I am proud to have been involved in teaching boys and young men through rowing club and the concept of mateship, which has different forms.

Gavin - sorry, the honourable member for Braddon - talked about this from his perspective, which resonated with me. It was important for me that mateship extended to the parents and the wider rowing community, and I am going to use that sense of mateship in this parliament. I come from the Liberal tradition best put by John Howard as a broad church. I will work together with you all in this place. My phone is always on and I am an early riser. I still can't sleep in.

In my journey here I have been assisted by many friends and family who have chosen to place their faith in me, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Sadly, I lost my father to dementia just over three years ago, but I really lost him three years before that due to the effects of that horrid disease. He never had any idea of the journey my family and I were embarking on. I hope he's smiling down on me today.

My number-one supporter, my mother Beth, is not able to be here today as she suffered a major stroke three weeks ago. I thank Marg for being here and I would just like to say a huge thank you to the paramedics and the staff of the Royal Hobart Hospital for their care and support.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr VERMEY - During the campaign, mum would love to have all the people buzzing around her house as it was a great spot for storage, and she loved seeing my face in her garden every morning, even though it was on a 2D corflute. To Beth, I love you, Mum, and I wouldn't be here without you.

To my wife Rachel, you've certainly put up with a lot, all the comings and goings, the not knowing what's going on in our diary and that the world can change very quickly in a moment. I do thank you for your support.

I have so many people to thank. There is our adopted nonna, Noline, who has helped bring up our family for around 20 years and has always been there for a comforting chat, and her partner, David.

To my team at Vermey's Quality Meats, who became my southern electorate office and who've had to put up with me running in and out, asking if my clothes matched, where are my keys, where's my phone, and all the other things. They have given me the confidence to do what I'm doing and I thank them all immensely.

To the Premier, Jeremy, thank you for supporting me to be part of this team. It's a real honour to get a call from a man you respect to ask you to run. Thank you. I almost didn't do it but I got another call to say, 'I will back you and support you', and he has.

To Peter Coulson, I know the rule was not to answer the phone when I didn't recognise the number, but anyone knows that I'll always answer it and that was the call from Jeremy to give me that encouragement.

To my great friend, Paul, of 49 years, thank you for approaching me with the idea that I should stand for parliament. I always thought deep in my mind that I wanted to have a go, so thank you for shining a light on that part of me and encouraging me. I truly thank you for pushing me to put my hand up, because even a short time in I now realise I'm really enjoying this challenge.

To Jake, Alex, Justin, Sam McQuestin, Tom, Ross, Jamie, Jason, Tony P, Moose, Libby, Kevin, Serge, all three Jesses in my life - if I asked Siri to 'Call Jess', I'd either get the Premier's Jess or another Jess or my Jess at work, so I didn't need the Premier to come down to make sausages.

To big Mike up there, I thank you for helping me. Although you may have come from another side a long time ago, you jumped in at the beginning to get me started and have been with me to the end to see it through. Thank you.

I apologise to those I've missed. The efforts have been vast and I deeply appreciate all.

Over three elections we finally got here in around 17 months - a strategy well-executed. Thank you, Lincoln. Thank you to my campaign manager who managed to get me elected. You know who you are. You may have been the vandal who helped to destroy my Collingwood memorabilia sign -

Mr O'Byrne - Shame.

Mr VERMEY - Absolute shame - that had been signed. You believed it needed to be in another spot, but you managed to get rid of those marks on it which you did not realise were signatures. Thank you. It hurts - not a good exercise.

To Phillip, you are outstanding, the tortoise and hare. He is not here today, but I really thank you, Phil.

To Rick and Helva, my in-laws, your support has been great and your encouragement has gone a long way to believe in me and to get me here.

To all my colleagues who ran with me, I thank you all over those three elections. To Simon, maybe you will come back and we can get three in Clark - I still think we can.

Finally, to the people of Clark, thank you for the trust you have placed in me. It is the greatest privilege of my life to serve in this parliament. I promise that I will work hard every single day to listen to your concerns, to stand up for your interests and to honour the faith you have shown in me. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER - I congratulate the member for Clark on his inaugural speech.

MOTION

Disallowance - Parliamentary Salaries, Superannuation and Allowances Act 2012

[12.18 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House disallows, in accordance with section 3G of the *Parliamentary Salaries, Superannuation and Allowances Act 2012*, the determination contained in the May 2025 Report of the Full Bench of the Tasmanian Industrial Commission into Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances, laid upon the Table of the House on Tuesday, 3 June 2025.

This motion moves that the House disallows the determination I have just referred to that would see parliamentarians provided with a salary increase of 22.36 per cent. The determination would also see increases in certain allowances and sitting fees. Should the motion before us today and in the other place not pass, the determination will be gazetted and come into effect with backpay from 1 July 2025. The government's position is that the Commission's determination should be disallowed, in that the increase is out of step with community expectations. To provide some context to our debate today and for the benefit of newer members - and I include myself in that - the *Parliamentary Salary, Superannuation and Allowances Act 2012* provides the process for the setting of salaries, allowances and benefits for members of the Tasmanian parliament. Under the act, the Tasmanian Industrial Commission may inquire, report and make determinations from time to time on the amount of the basic salary for parliamentary members, the kind and amount of any additional salary paid

for roles including the Premier, Deputy Premier, ministers of the Crown, Secretary to Cabinet, and certain offices of parliament, and allowances and related matters.

The most recent report of the Industrial Commission was completed in May 2025. Its determination of the salary levels and allowances that should apply to parliamentarians relates to the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2025, a period of some seven years. A determination of the Commission will be implemented automatically unless within 10 sitting days of the determination being tabled in the parliament both Houses pass a resolution requesting that the determination be disallowed and not be implemented.

If a determination is not disallowed, the Commission will gazette a notice setting out the determination. This would result in the suggested specified amounts of the basic salary, additional salary payable for certain positions and the allowances and benefits coming into effect. If a determination does not come into effect when it is due, either because it has not been made by the TIC or disallowed by the parliament, the existing basic salary, additional salary and the allowances for MPs continue until a new determination is made. If a determination is disallowed, the Commission must, within 12 months from the date of this allowance, make a new determination.

The report which I referred was tabled in both Houses on 3 June 2025. As the sitting days and the Houses vary, there are two different dates for which a disallowance motion has to be passed. For the House of Assembly, that is today, and for the Legislative Council, 4 November 2025. However, it is noted that the other place is dealing with the matter today, indeed, as we speak. The determination can only be disallowed in its entirety, not in part. If either House does not pass a disallowance motion, the determination will be gazetted and come into effect with backpay until 1 July 2025.

The determination would see the basic salary for Tasmanian MPs rise from \$140,185 per annum to \$171,527.50. It's clear that the current process for determining parliamentary salaries and allowances is not functioning well. The fact that a pay rise has not been forthcoming since 2019 clearly points to the need for an alternative system that removes the onus on parliamentarians to accept or reject a determination. I am advised that since 1973, at least eight different methodologies for parliamentary salaries in Tasmania have been adopted and subsequently abandoned.

Gradual increases over time in the context of the budget repair process are considered preferable to lump sum catch ups over seven years in a single year. This would better align with community expectations and the experience of many Tasmanians where modest annual salary increases are received. The government will work through alternative proposals for addressing this issue. I think I speak for everyone here when I say that we collectively entered this place for reasons of public service. We stand committed as a government to a fair and transparent remuneration system that balances the load we bear as MPs with commonsense expectations which would not see an immediate 22 per cent catch-up.

[12.24 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - The upper House has just voted, so it's a moot point, really, Speaker. I will nonetheless put a statement on the record, which has been shared in the upper House by my colleague, member for Rumney, Sarah Lovell.

MP salaries are always an uncomfortably contentious issue, but this comes down to a very simple principle: who should be deciding how much members of parliament get paid?

A previous parliament decided to give this work to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission for very good reason. The last people who should be deciding on how much members of parliament get paid is members of parliament. It's important to recognise that members of parliament are in a position of power that can easily be abused. It's not healthy for democracy for members of parliament to have any say in their own pay.

I note the Unions Tasmania submission to the work of the Industrial Commission, dated April 2019, concludes with this comment:

A transparent and fair system of remuneration for MPs should not allow parliament to veto increases awarded through any independent, external statutory mechanism. Legislation which enables political interference with recommendations arising from annual reviews of salaries must be disallowed.

In extraordinary circumstances where it is the view of the parliament that the decision of the Commission should not be implemented, then those arguments should be put before the Commission. [tbc]

This comes down to a fundamental principle of who should be deciding how much parliamentarians are paid. It should not be members of parliament who make this decision, and I believe that is what most in the community would expect.

After much consideration and discussion with members of parliament from all political parties, including independents, Labor will not be supporting the disallowance.

[12.26 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, the Tasmanian Industrial Commission has made their assessment, and we note that their determination is legitimate and they went through a proper process, and that the pay rise they recommend is legitimate according to the process they have enacted.

There has been a freeze on MPs' salaries since the 2018 determination, effectively 2019, and also, I note, on electorate allowances for that period. That has an impact on the manner in which we can contribute to the community in the work that we do.

There's no doubt for Tasmanian MPs that our pay is far below those of MPs in other states. At the moment I believe it's 58 per cent of a federal government backbencher. It used to be much higher than that. I also recognise that different members of parliament have different personal and financial circumstances, and to have had no pay change at all for eight years, for many, seems hardly reasonable.

However, the Greens are deeply uncomfortable supporting a 22 per cent pay rise. In the current circumstances in Tasmania we find that a very difficult position to be involved in adopting. It is a very large correction in one hit - 22 per cent is not in line with community expectations for pay rises.

We have previously voted against substantially very large pay corrections that occurred in 1996. I believe it was a huge debate in the community, the 40 per cent pay rise that Tasmanian MPs received. I think MPs were earning \$35,000 then, and that was a very big community discussion.

We also supported the 2012 decision not to make the big pay rise correction then. We acknowledge the situation now, as it was then, is that these large corrections are not in line with community expectations. We agree with the Treasurer. I believe the shadow, Ms Haddad, also mentioned that we need a system that is enduring that takes it out of the hands of MPs having anything to do with voting for or against disallowance motions which are effectively making decisions about our pay. That is not a place any of us want to be in.

We would encourage and recommend we work with government to bring in legislation - with other members of parliament; it affects us all - so that parliament can develop a mechanism. There are pretty obvious examples such as a wage price index or some sort of glide path to getting over a decade-long period or something that would slowly move us into better parity with other members of parliament in other states. That would be preferable. On the basis of that we will be supporting this disallowance motion today.

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise with some trepidation to oppose the motion. I have noted in this very short time I have been in parliament the hard work that members on every side of this parliament put into it, the dedication and the time, the effort and the experience. I note particularly the stellar performances in parliament of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition's Treasury spokesperson and the honourable Treasurer. They speak in the most bullish, passionate and often entertaining manner. That comes from the fact that they know what they're doing, they have experience and they are dedicated and believe in what they are doing. They are hardworking and dedicated.

Their timidity on this issue astonishes me because this is something we need to bite the bullet on. These parliamentarians deserve the recognition, which includes remuneration, for their dedication, their hard work, and the fact they are doing a job which does not even have job stability or guarantees to it. They carry a great load and a great burden. They have to face their community every day. I already know what it's like to face social media and people in the street who want to tear you down, who do not recognise the effort, the work, the dedication and the sense of public service that everybody in this House brings to their work. On the other hand, I also recognise the number of times that I've been stopped in the streets and I am sure the same would apply to other honourable members, where people actually do recognise that the job that we are doing is intended for the benefit of Tasmania.

There are a number of reasons that I oppose this motion. The first is that, even by comparison to our federal colleagues, honourable members here experience far less remuneration for their effort. Although the amount of salary increase may seem huge, it is not when it compares to the salaries that have been increased even in the public service, let alone in the private sector, over the past seven years. We need to attract candidates from all sections of society with all sorts of backgrounds of experience. By increasing salaries to a just level that is actually in line with other states and with our colleagues in the federal parliament, we will attract people who might not otherwise be able to do it, particularly for younger people with experience who can bring that experience and that capacity to parliament, particularly if they are single parents or a single-salary family.

It's been seven years since the commission began to look into state parliament wages. Seven years has been a long time. We need to bite the bullet, be brave and stand up and say this is our job. We don't need to hide our light under a bushel. We need to be able to stand up and say proudly, 'This is the work we do, even if necessary these are the hours we work. These are these are the things we do for the benefit of Tasmania.' Much as I feel some reservation standing up as a brand new member of parliament and will be no doubt criticised for looking after my own income as opposed to looking after the incomes of Tasmanians in general, I think it's time that we bit the bullet, take the opprobrium we are likely to get from the public, and move on.

[12.34 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, long before I got involved in politics and gave two bobs' notice to it all, I remember in this place they gave themselves a 40 per cent pay rise and the reaction from the community is still out there; it still gets mentioned. I do not believe that it should be up to us to determine what we should or should not be paid. There's an old saying that you get what you pay for and in my view, since I have been here, you could not pay a person enough to do this job properly because of the importance of the work we are going over.

You might recall just while back we had TasNetworks in here and they were complaining they were not on the same parity as what was being paid on the mainland. You do not want to create that division and I can guarantee you somewhere down the track, if we forgo whatever is put forward for us, there will be people who will resent that and that will rise to the surface. I do not believe it is our role to be determining what we are paid. You don't go out and give yourself a game in your local football side and you should not be doing the same with this pay. I will not be supporting this motion.

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, this is a bit of a merry mess we have got ourselves in, isn't it? I agree in principle that politicians should not be setting their own wages. The Industrial Commission is an independent body which should be respected and given power with public servants and private and public sector workers. They either go to the Fair Work Commission or the commission to seek a determination and we all accept the umpire's decision.

I was a young union organiser around the time of the 40 per cent pay rise. I remember the stickers. In fact, I've still got a couple of stickers at home. It was a time when the issue of politicians' pay came up, because politicians in the 1980s and early 90s kicked the can down the road and created the problem.

No-one in this House comes here for the money because our hourly rates, for those who do the work, are pretty low. I am not complaining about that and, for the record, none of us are sitting on a big superannuation payout when we leave here; we all get the minimum Commonwealth guarantee that we get paid in our own super, but I will support the disallowance motion, although it is a moot point, because of the upper House.

Whilst I believe the independent commission should be respected and that politicians should not be setting their own wage, we cannot ignore the fact that politics has been played with this issue for the last decade. The Giddings government broke the nexus between state and federal because of the politics under pressure from the then Liberal opposition, and subsequent

leaders, both Liberal and Labor, played politics with it as well - 'We're not going to take the wage increase, you take the wage increase.' It was a competition about who could threaten each other and play politics. We played politics with our own wages and conditions.

I was re-elected in 2018 and was told, 'We're going to have another crack at this. We should all write letters and we're not going to accept a pay increase', continuing the politics. I disagreed with it then and I disagree with it now around the politics of our salaries and allowances, but when we've got the budget the way we are, and I know that the wage increase will not necessarily be a huge number, but we're talking to cleaners and hospital staff about 3 per cent and saying we need to have wage constraint, yet we would accept a 20 odd per cent wage increase as a one-off payment on a matter of principle, which I agree with, but we are ignoring this Chamber and the politics and collective behaviour which has led us to this point.

I don't believe we should kick the can down the road. I don't believe we should just wait for another five years and then it will get to 30 per cent, 35 per cent and we are back here again. I was advocating in discussions with people for an alternative pathway so that we wouldn't get the 22 per cent bump. We would start to draw down on the difference between a state [TBC 12.39.14] and a federal parliamentarian's wage, consistent with the commission, but to do it in a way which avoided the big bump.

It is clear the other House has a different view. I don't reflect on them. Their arguments and the arguments put forward by those members who will vote against the disallowance motion are all principled. I agree with you. However, to do it in isolation and ignorance of this Chamber and the politics of this issue for the last decade just does not smell well.

I wouldn't support the disallowance motion if it was kicking the can down the road. I would support it on the basis that there would be a discussion to deal with another pathway forward so that over a period of time, we would phase in the catch-up between state and federal politicians, respecting the Tasmanian Industrial Commission's decision but acknowledging a one-off bump is a shocker.

Obviously, that is moot now. The upper House has made its decision and I respect them. I have listened to some of their arguments and I cannot disagree. However, I believe we have an opportunity to stand on principle and also take responsibility for the politics of this.

The SPEAKER (Mrs Petrusma) - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 19

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Ms Badger
Mr Barnett
Mr Bayley
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Ms Howlett

NOES 14

Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Mr Garland
Mr George
Mrs Greene

Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Prof Razay
Mr Rockliff
Ms Rosol
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

Ms Haddad
Ms Johnston
Mr Mitchell
Mr Willie
Mr Winter (Teller)

Motion agreed to.

**EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICAL OFFENCES
AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 51)**

Second Reading

[12.49 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) -
Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read the second time.

The bill demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to right the wrongs of the past. Until 1997, the *Criminal Code Act 1924* contained several offences prohibiting male homosexual activity. Homosexuality was decriminalised in 1997 with the repeal of section 122A, 122C and 123 of the *Criminal Code Act 1924*. Not long after, the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* came into effect, making it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation or lawful sexual activity. Then in 2001, the offence of cross-dressing was repealed under the *Police Offences Act 1935*. Further legislative reform occurred when the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017* passed, recognising that criminalising consensual homosexual conduct was unjust, caused harm and resulted in discrimination and disadvantage.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017* in response to recommendations from the Independent Review of the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017* made by independent reviewers Melanie Bartlett and Taya Ketelaar-Jones, and the report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender Inequality to which this bill was referred by the Legislative Council. I thank Ms Bartlett and Ms Ketelaar, and acknowledge the committee's work reviewing the scheme and for making the recommendations our government is now responding to.

The independent statutory review recommended legislative amendments that will expand the operation and administration of the act to include related offences, further support a victim-centred approach for investigations, improve measures to support effective record disposal and improve the confidentiality of records for all parties.

The review also made a number of recommendations that did not require legislative amendment, which our government has implemented or will implement to ensure a more streamlined process and ensure greater promotion of the scheme.

Our government originally committed to implementing 12 of the 13 recommendations made by the independent reviewers. The 13th recommendation related to the establishment of a one-off ex gratia payment for applicants who had their charges and convictions expunged. Our government's original position was that this was not necessary given existing ex gratia mechanisms. However, our government supports an amended redress scheme, as proposed by the report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality. That scheme is now incorporated into the bill.

I will now address the substantive clauses of the bill. Clause 4 of the bill addresses amendments to the definition section of the principal act. The bill amends the definition of historical offences to include 'a related offence'. It inserts a definition of 'personal information' to make it consistent with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*. It inserts a definition of 'related offence' to include offences against section 34B offences or substantially similar provisions in other acts, and inserts a definition of 'secondary electronic record' to assist with delivering the intent of the review to only retain records which are necessary for historical purposes.

Clause 5 of the bill amends section 9 of the principal act, which deals with the disclosure of records to the applicant. The clause omits the definition of personal information in the current section, which is inconsistent with the definition of the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* and provides for a narrower definition of 'record'. This definitional change accords with the reviewers' recommendation to ensure the secretary does not inadvertently provide the applicant a third party's personal information.

The principal act currently provides for the expungement of charges or convictions for historical offences. A historical offence is defined as a homosexual offence or a cross-dressing offence. Under the bill, the definition of historical offence has been expanded to also include 'a related offence'.

Clause 6 of the bill amends section 10, matters to be considered in determining an application. The first change being made to that section reflects that related offences can now be expunged. Related offences have been defined to include charges or convictions for resisting, obstructing or assaulting police under section 34B of the *Police Offences Act 1935*, or substantially similar provisions in other acts. Related offences will only be eligible for expungement where the secretary of the Department of Justice is satisfied on reasonable grounds, after having received advice from the Commissioner of Police in relation to the circumstances of the related offence, that the eligible person would not have been charged with the related offence but for the fact that the eligible person was suspected of committing a homosexual offence or cross-dressing offence, and expunging the charges not contrary to the public interest.

The second change to that same section is small but important. Section 10(3)(c) of the principal act is being amended to provide that in determining a historical offence expungement application, the reasonable inquiries that may be necessary to make as to the location of the other party are to be made by the secretary. The amendments mean that where the consent of

the person is in issue, the secretary, not the applicant, will make reasonable inquiries to locate the other party to verify facts.

Clause 7 of the bill amends section 12, which provides that the secretary must provide an applicant with a copy of any relevant records relating to the application when explaining the reasons for intending to refuse an application. The recommended change will mean that when unsuccessful applicants receive refusal reasons and relevant records relating to the application, information will only relate to their personal information, not third parties.

Clause 8 of the bill amends section 15. Section 15 sets out what is to happen once a charge or conviction has been expunged and provides for a process for annotating records. The reviewers recognise the benefits of treating secondary records different to ordinary records. The act is, therefore, being amended so section 15 provides that when a record is expunged, secondary electronic records will not be annotated, as is the case for ordinary records, but instead permanently removed.

The bill also allows for an exception that will allow the process of expungement for secondary electronic records to be that applied for ordinary records where it is not possible to permanently delete records due to technical limitations.

These changes will minimise the number of records which refer to an expunged conviction, thereby decreasing the risk of unintentional or accidental disclosure.

Clause 9 of the bill inserts a part 3A into the act for the purpose of providing a redress scheme for people who have successfully had their charges or convictions expunged. The clause reflects the arising recommendations from the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality's report which addressed the provision of compensation payable under the principal act. I acknowledge the work of the honourable member for Murchison in the other place, the committee and all those who made submissions. The government reviewed the report and accepts its recommendations.

The new part 3A provides for redress payments amounts and the associated indexation method to allow for CPI changes. The government also considered CPI indexation is an important feature and is pleased to support this measure.

The government also notes 'sanction' is defined broadly to include, but is not limited to, a fine or penalty, community service, probation order, a custodial or suspended sentence, mandatory counselling or treatment. Our understanding is that if there is a successful applicant who has their conviction expunged, it is very likely they would have had such a sanction applied, particularly as fines were relatively common. They will, therefore, be eligible for the highest amount.

Part 3A also includes other housekeeping matters in relation to the redress scheme.

Clause 10 of the bill amends section 22, which ordinarily precludes compensation to persons who have any charges or convictions expunged. The section has been amended to allow compensation to be provided to a person if they are entitled to it under the act. They will allow redress payments to be provided under part 3A.

Clause 11 of the bill creates a new section 28A which responds to the reviewer's recommendation that the act requires an amendment to provide that any records, documents or material that has been collected or created in the investigation and determination of an application for expungement are exempt from the provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

This bill appropriately responds to the recommendations of the independent review and the concerns raised in the report by the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality. The government was pleased to bring forward all the other legislative amendments.

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

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICAL OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 51)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

Mr BARNETT - Honourable Speaker, I am very pleased to continue on to conclude my second reading speech. The government was pleased to bring forward all the other legislative amendments necessary to implement the recommendations of the independent reviewer's report in support of improving the expungement scheme for people affected so negatively by these historic offences that should never have existed.

We acknowledge all the community stakeholders and victims of these historical laws, and continue to give our commitment to support people in accessing this important scheme and importantly, the redress now being proposed under these amendments. We embrace the changes that have been made and will continue to update the legislation where necessary to ensure it is consistent with our community's expectations.

I commend the bill to the House.

In conclusion, I acknowledge in the Chamber today Rodney Croome from Equality Tasmania and his long-standing advocacy in this space together with others in the Chamber. I wanted to acknowledge that at the end of the second reading speech, noting also foreshadowing, as I have done privately, I have a long-standing commitment at 3.00 p.m. I will need to exit the Chamber for that and then I will return.

[2.32 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable shadow attorney-general, Ella Haddad, for giving me a spot in the rotation, because unfortunately I also need to step out at 3.00 p.m.

It is my great pleasure today to recognise, again, what we are doing. We were here last year and it is past time that we finalise this very, very important bill to expunge historical offences and to provide redress for people who are victims of a crime that never should have been. It's a further step towards rectifying the injustices that occurred to Tasmanians over decades because of state-sanctioned criminalisation of the people who were being their best

selves, living their lives, and were falsely, wrongly criminalised for homosexuality and for crossdressing.

We recognised 28 years ago now, when we ended the criminalisation of homosexuality and crossdressing, that those crimes were offensive, they were discriminatory, they were harmful, they fed prejudice and stigma in the community that people were forced to live with. Often it forced them into completely hiding their true selves, not just from the wider community, but too often from their workplaces, their families and sometimes their best friends - sometimes even partly from themselves. Some people were public, other people were hidden, but whether public or hidden, people suffered by not being able to express themselves.

I want to reflect on some of the other things that have happened in this parliament over the last couple of years, and I feel a great deal of hope and optimism in my heart about the sort of Tasmania that we live in today compared to the Tasmania that finally ended the decriminalisation of homosexuality and crossdressing in 1987.

We have come a long way, and this bill, in formally expunging those offences and in providing redress for people who suffered those crimes, is a very important and significant step along the way where Tasmania now, with this legislation, when it passes both through both Houses of Parliament, will be nation-leading in providing redress for people who are victims of crime.

It was 2017 when we removed the crimes from the statute and it was the Premier at the time, Will Hodgman, who formally apologised on behalf of the state of Tasmania to everyone whose lives had been harmed. People, I want to remind us all, live in our community with those scars today, and it is those people whom I believe the members speaking in this House are addressing. We hear you. We know that you have suffered. It was unjust. The law at the time represented a position that was offensive, it was harmful and it was wrong. We are here today to do what we can to repair and help the healing from those injustices.

I want to thank Rodney Croome, who's here in the Chamber today. We all know Rodney. Most of Australia actually knows Rodney, because Rodney has never stopped before those times in 1987. We are all here today with this legislation in very large part because of the ongoing and continued advocacy of Rodney Croome. We really respect and adore him because of the persistence and the grace with which he has gone about advocating for LGBTIQ+ people over all these decades. I also recognise the other people who are here and some others watching online who have played their part in being a voice for many people who have been voiceless because of their fears of prejudice and stigma.

It is important to recognise the lost opportunities that people experienced. It wasn't just the fear and the stigma, but the life they could have led if they were able to express themselves, able to express the love they had for their partner in public, to their family. The sort of things that we take for granted, like being able to fall in love with somebody, be romantic in public, get married. Those things are a million miles from people's experience and here we live in an Australia where marriage equality is finally real. It's hard for us to imagine what it was like, but this is the darkness that many people who were wrongfully convicted of those crimes experienced and still live with.

A three-year independent review was done and I thank the work of Melanie Bartlett and Taya Ketelaar-Jones who completed that work in October 2020. It is now nearly five years on

from then and it is long overdue to get some completion on the 13 recommendations they made from that independent review to improve our legislation and the processes around expungement. Of those, five did not require legislation. The recommendations relate to streamlining the process for expungements to occur; supporting applicants through the process; promoting the scheme widely and making it known to more people; and the manner in which documents would be disposed of.

I refer to documents in relation to historical information about people being charged with what were then crimes of homosexuality and cross-dressing, because I remember talking about this when the bill was before the House last year and the recommendations have been fully adopted. We talked about them being worked on at the time. Maybe the minister could give us an update on whether all of that work has been completed or not by now.

The Greens strongly support the eight recommendations that are enshrined in this bill from that independent review, in addition to the matter of redress, which I' will get to. Initially only seven of those recommendations were in the bill, but it was through an amendment by the Greens to this legislation in the House when it came in last year that we have included the eighth recommendation the independent reviewers made, which was to provide redress.

The intention to expand the expungement scheme to include offences for which expungement can be sought is included here. An example of that could mean things like offences such as resisting arrest and obstructing and assaulting police officers. They are now included and the scheme has been broadened to allow for those types of offences that were incidental to the so-called crime at the time itself, but it is in recognition of the fact that the charges would not have been laid except for the fact that the person was being charged in the context of their conduct being 'of a homosexual nature'. That was the language of the time. They then effectively became captured under the crime of homosexuality. The independent reviewers made that recommendation because the purpose of this expungement legislation is to acknowledge that homosexuality, cross-dressing offences and these related offences should never have been crimes at all.

We endorsed Equality Tasmania's comments about this area at the time that there should be a broader range of incidental offences and records that are capable of being expunged, including things like move-on provisions, loitering, intoxication and public annoyance, as well as the police surveillance records themselves. They would all be captured. We also support Equality Tasmania's recommendations that records relating to the involvement of people in protests that sought to draw attention to Tasmania's discriminatory homosexual and cross-dressing laws should also be capable of being expunged.

There has been a dark cloud that has hovered over people's lives for decades. People were threatened, arrested and some were charged with crimes that could have resulted in jail for 21 years. Sometimes, of course, the people who were jailed were done so through the notion of it being an offence to the moral fabric of the crime. People who engaged in protests, as people engage in protests today, were standing up against the idea that people couldn't be their true self.

Section 15 of the act was recommended for being included in this bill by the independent reviewers to be amended so that the annotation process for expungement of records should not apply to secondary records, and it's worth laying out some of the thoughts people have about that particular recommendation.

The reviewers noted there was a strong argument that annotation, things that were written on the record of a person who'd been charged, would not give applicants confidence that their records would truly be disregarded or expunged. Equality Tasmania asked whether annotated records were an appropriate method for expunging the records of a prior crime and the reviewers noted that the Antidiscrimination Commissioner recorded a preference that annotated records be retained for historical purposes.

This is a really important issue, the erasure of our dark history, and it's certainly been infamous in other countries where today's view about past practices that have occurred finds those practises outrageous, impalatable and tries to wipe them from the record. There are clearly arguments either way, but the strong preference is that we should not erase the reality of what happened to people, because that record is a record of pain and suffering and we should all understand our history so that we never repeat it.

There is a question, then, of distinguishing between the ordinary or original records and the secondary records. Victoria defines secondary records as being an official record that is a copy, duplicate or reproduction of or an extract from another existing official record, regardless of whether those records are held by the same entity or by different entities. What would happen for those records is that the data controller must either remove the entry, make the entry incapable of being found, or de-identify the information contained in the entry and destroy any link between it and the information that would identify the person to whom it referred.

As I understand it, going forward we would have a situation where the annotating on records, which many people in the LGBTIQ+ community have stated they believe are important to be kept for historical purposes, would be happening on primary records but not on secondary records. In other words, the secondary records remain but the primary record would be expunged, and that's something the Greens support.

I want to make a note in relation to recommendation 8 from the independent review, which was that there be a specific disposal schedule to provide that all records that are collected or created when an application is made would be disposed of after six months. We support that.

The other matters in this bill are pretty incidental, other than the matter of redress, which I will come to. The point I want to make in relation to the rest of this bill is that I acknowledge the work of Equality Tasmania and Rodney Croome in their representations around the initial draft before it came to parliament last year and again in the submissions after it came to parliament. Equality Tasmania, representing parts of the LGBTIQ+ community, Rodney and others urged the government to include recommendation 13 of the independent review to provide redress for people who have been harmed. That wasn't included in the government's bill when it came to this place last year.

Redress is paramount to provide for justice and for healing. It's about the state atoning for the harms, loss of lives led, indeed the actual loss of lives of people who took their own life as a result of what happened to them - the trauma, humiliation and shame many people lived with as a result of those laws, as well as the active discrimination people experienced then. For many people who experienced that, it still lives on with them today. On the basis of those views, the Greens introduced an amendment to the bill last year to provide redress for people who were unjustly convicted of those crimes. It was very welcome that members supported those amendments and I thank members for their input into that debate.

What our amendment provided for was an independent assessment process that the government would establish. It would have meant that an independent assessor would have prepared a methodology by which redress could be determined for each individual applicant. Our amendment didn't prescribe the methodology. It left it to an independent assessor to determine themselves. We noted that there are different models around Australia and different circumstances that could have been included in developing that sort of methodology.

Our proposal was that the independent assessor will then provide a methodology to the government, that information would be tabled in parliament as a disallowable instrument, and then it would be available for parliament to look at and make an assessment of the methodology before it was finally approved. Our amendment was supported by the House and when the bill went to the Legislative Council last year, it was referred to a committee process. In that process, the committee heard submissions, prepared a determination and ultimately proposed an adjusted method which was to set a base of rate scales based on the experiences that had occurred to people who would apply for redress. The amendments to the legislation recommended by the committee did not go through that place before parliament was prorogued for the election. However, I am glad to say they have been adopted in this bill here today.

I thank the Attorney-General for doing that process and that work. That makes this process now more expedient. People have already waited a long time to get the justice I have talked about. It is important that it is in the legislation. We have had a look at the amendments and how they are reflected in the bill. We believe the amendments accurately reflect the committee's recommendations, and they contain many of the provisions in the Greens' original amendments.

The rate scales proposed are based on the circumstances of the person who is claiming redress and the proposed amounts for the different categories are enough to be more than tokenistic. They send a message that parliament understands that harm was done and accepts the need for appropriate redress, which is important.

Clause 19C of the bill talks about three categories of redress. The first category is payment of redress for a person who was not convicted but was charged with any of the matters that are now expunged. That person would receive \$15,000 with CPI to go on top of that for every year subsequent to the legislation passing.

The second category would be for a person who had been convicted with one of the expunged charges but did not have any court-imposed sanctions regarding that charge. That amount would be \$4, 000 for that person and subsequent CPI.

The third category is for a person who had been convicted in respect of cross-dressing or homosexuality and had received at least one court-imposed sanction. That sanction could have been gaol. It could also have been a range of intensely harmful interventions about trying to change that person and stop them being the person they were. The amount set for that is \$75,000.

The Greens support where we have landed. We still think it would have been better and fairer to use an independent methodology, but we recognise that it does send an important message and these amounts are not tokenistic. We also appreciate it wasn't the preferred approach of the government at the beginning. We commend the Attorney-General for accepting

the recommendations and sending a message of support to the affected communities that is broadly presented by the parliament through his inclusion of these amendments in the bill, rather than another member or the Legislative Council having to insert them. That is an important demonstration of a process that is efficient, harmonious and faster.

I thank all the members of the LGBTIQ+ community who shared their stories and experiences of what life was like in Tasmania in those darker times. We all need to remember our history, remind ourselves why we never want to relive it and why we stand together against that sort of discrimination. Every member of our community is valued, every member should feel included and welcome and free to be themselves.

I thank the Attorney-General and the staff who have worked on this. It has been quite a long journey. I know that Rodney will be glad to have this out of the way in a timely fashion, because, ever a busy man, more work to do. The Greens strongly support this bill.

[2.57 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, we debated a similar bill last year and, like the Leader of the Greens, I recognise that the government has returned to this place after the work of that upper House committee with a new bill that is vastly improved in that it does include a redress scheme. It not only improves expungement laws already on the books but, importantly, implements that redress system that will provide some recognition, as well as financial redress, to the men affected by our previous punitive anti-gay laws. I thank the Attorney-General for doing so and his office and department, who I know have worked rapidly to have this bill ready for us to debate under a suspension of Standing Orders today. I welcome the opportunity to provide a contribution on behalf of the Opposition.

Last year when we debated a similar bill, albeit without the redress scheme, I started my speech by taking us back to 1997. I reminded the Chamber of some of the things that were happening at that time. John Howard was prime minister, Kim Beazley was opposition leader and Geoffrey Rush won the best actor Oscar for his role in the film *Shine*. It was the year that Princess Diana died, the Thredbo landslide occurred, Netflix was founded, and the film *Titanic* was released, which I believe became the biggest grossing box office film and won 11 Oscars. The Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997 and if you were, like I was, relatively young at that time, you might have had a Tamagotchi, an electronic toy pet that hit the shelves in 1997.

I shared those experiences as those examples of pop culture history last year and I do so again not to be silly or flippant, but to remind people that most of those things are in relatively recent memory for those of us here in this parliament. It shows us how recent indeed 1997 was. It was during the lifetime of all of us here in the parliament, even the youngest members; it was less than 30 years ago.

The reason to remind ourselves that 1997 was only a heartbeat ago for most of us is to reflect on the fact that until 1997 it was a criminal offence in our Criminal Code to be in a gay relationship in Tasmania, as well as a criminal offence to be cross-dressing or be a man dressed in women's clothing in public. The bill talks about historical offences, but these offences are not historical in the general sense of that word. They certainly don't feel historical for those men who were charged, convicted or even incarcerated for being gay.

In preparing today's speech, I thought about my children who are now 17 and 20. They have a beautiful, great big group of friends, young people of all races, sexuality and gender

identity. When these young people hear it was a crime less than 30 years ago to be gay, they actually can't quite believe it. When I tell them it was punishable by up to 21 years in prison, they look at me like I am completely crazy. They're dumbfounded and confused and they wonder what a dark and weird place the past must have been in our state.

I think it's a good thing that it seems unfathomable to young people today and all of us here that it could have been a crime punishable by prison to simply love who you love. It shocks us because we've come so far since that time, both culturally and in terms of the laws that sit on our statute books. Today's bill is an improvement on last year's because it improves those laws but also puts in place the redress scheme the minister outlined in his second reading speech.

I think it is fitting that as the last state in Australia to remove these anti-gay crimes, we are now the first state to offer a financial redress scheme for the victims of those crimes. Charges and convictions under those former outdated laws led to incredible lasting harm. Legally, they led to things like court-imposed fines and community service orders, jail time, and being sent to the Royal Derwent Hospital for aversion therapy. Socially, they led to things such as involuntary outing of people's sexuality or gender identity, loss of jobs, loss of family, loss of relationships, people leaving our state, many of them for good, as well as deep shame, humiliation and even suicide.

Not only was the road to remove these laws from our statute books a slow one, but it was also a very hard one. There were enormous barriers and roadblocks in the way of that campaign, and I pay tribute to the many advocates, including parliamentarians, who did not give up on that fight even when it became hard for them and despite the vitriol and hatred that was thrown at them for decades.

In the 1980s, Premier Robin Gray said that homosexuals were not welcome in Tasmania, and then there were the aggressive and hostile town hall meetings across the state driven by homophobia, prejudice and hate. Police were stationing themselves outside meetings of the peaceful campaign for decriminalisation, writing down number plates and car types of people who were arriving and leaving those meetings, and there were arrests of people who were staffing a peaceful information stall the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group ran at Salamanca Market here in Hobart just across the road. They were the predecessor organisation to today's Equality Tasmania.

In particular, people remember the iconic photos of Rodney Croome being arrested back then. I want to recognise that Rodney is in the Chamber with us today. I feel really fortunate to have known Rodney since I was a teenager and I thank him immensely for his tireless advocacy that has led not only to the removal of those laws back in 1997 but also to significant and enduring change here in Tasmania, around the country and the world.

Rodney has a rare and unique quality as an advocate: His advocacy is at all times calm, which is pretty rare, at all times kind and at all times respectful of those he is working with for change. I believe that is in large part because of that approach that the Leader of the Greens described it as 'grace'. I think that was a great word to use and it is because of this graceful approach that the law reform we have seen in Tasmania has been so significant.

Back in 1997 and long before that, Rodney and others were running a determined and disciplined campaign to do what was right. It culminated in the historic case that Rodney and

Nick Toonen and took to the United Nations Human Rights Committee and in 1994 that committee determined our laws were in breach of international human rights, but it did not end there. What followed was an increase of homophobic sentiment in our community, bigger homophobic town hall meetings, bigger homophobic rallies, a boycott of Tasmanian products, intervention from the Australian government, Amnesty International and even the High Court.

For the years that determined campaign endured, the removal of these laws finally came many years later in 1997. As I said, we've come a long way since then and I want to look at some of the improvements we have seen in our state since that time. Tasmania has adopted the nation's most progressive antidiscrimination laws and nation-leading relationship recognition laws which were a really essential part of protecting the rights of same-sex couples prior to marriage equality being achieved nationally.

We became the first state to officially recognise asexual and gender-diverse people and just this week we have made significant improvements to our sentencing laws, a start towards hate crime legislation, including protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ people from hate-motivated criminal offending. We passed world-leading gender recognition laws back in 2019 and that still remains the thing I am proudest of having had a part to play in in my time in parliament, but along with these legislative changes came a transformation of community attitude as well.

There is support for these legislative changes, a Pride festival that grows each year, LGBTIQ+ groups in schools, in communities, community organisations and across government departments, strategies, road maps and plans and funded organisations. In 2017 in the marriage equality postal vote Tasmania returned a 63 per cent yes vote, which was significantly above the national average, and in my little electorate of Clark there was nearly a 74 per cent yes vote and I am pretty proud of that from our city and towns.

We have indeed gone from the worst part of the country in terms of protecting LGBTIQ+ rights to the best. Other states and overseas jurisdictions now look to us for ways to improve their laws and today we add to this long list of improvements by implementing this nation-leading redress scheme for men who were charged or convicted of homosexuality or cross-dressing.

I want to pause to recognise that when we fight for and achieve wins that protect rights and enshrine them in our laws, they are never set in stone. Every win that a parliament or community achieves through legislative or policy change can be removed, sometimes even more easily than it can be legislated for and many times, much more easily than a fight to change the law in the first place. Every win can be taken away if we do not continue to defend those wins.

I want to look overseas now at the far-right extremist Trump regime in the United States, where we see right before our eyes a living example of this, with the rights of women, immigrants, gay and trans people under direct attack every day, but luckily we are not America because we are improving our laws right now by the provisions in this bill.

They come, in part, from an independent review conducted in 2020 by Melanie Bartlett and Taya Ketelaar-Jones. They recommended many of the changes that are put forward in this bill. In their report, Bartlett and Ketelaar-Jones estimated that almost 100 men had been

convicted of these crimes between 1945 and the 1980s alone. Many more would have been charged.

These men suffered greatly. They suffered loss of employment, housing, family and friends. Many left the state forever. All live or lived with the trauma of public shame, humiliation and stigma of criminal convictions. Sadly, many of these men went to their graves suffering from these injustices. However, some of them are still alive.

The changes that we make in this bill today mean that if they successfully apply to have their charges or convictions expunged, they will automatically receive financial redress. There will be no need to go through a second administrative process of applying for a payment. They will receive \$15,000 if they were charged, \$45,000 if they were convicted, and \$75,000 if they were sentenced to other forms of punishment, including incarceration in jail, community service orders or conversion therapies at the Royal Derwent Hospital.

These amounts were set by an inquiry that was conducted by the Gender and Equality Committee of this parliament last year. I want to thank and commend the government for adopting the recommendations of that committee and indeed the members of that Joint House Committee for the work they did, in particular the Chair, Ruth Forrest, and Deputy Chair, Dean Harriss, along with members of that committee, Bec Thomas, Miriam Beswick, Meg Brown, Cecily Rosol and Nic Street.

In particular, I do want to recognise Nic Street for his work on that committee, but also his advocacy in the community and in this parliament, always having been a strong ally for LGBTIQ+ people and always standing up for those things in this place and in the community. I know that Mr Street was, and is, deeply committed to the provisions in this bill.

I also want to commend the many community advocates who not only presented to that committee, but people I mentioned before who have been advocating for this and other changes, starting right back from decriminalisation, for decades and decades. Rodney, who I've already spoken about at length today, Martine Delaney and Richard Hale and many, many others who were involved right back then in the 1980s and 1990s.

More recently we see a growing group of incredible and inspiring upcoming influential leaders, including Dr Ash Russell, Dr Charlie Burton, Olivia Hogarth, Rowan Richardson, Andrew Badcock, Trenton Hoare, who's also in the Chamber with us today. Many, many more, too many to name, but please know that this parliament recognises and values their work and we value your commitment and your advocacy as community leaders.

Usually when I speak on a bill like this, I like to share a personal story of the impact that changes like this will make. I do know that Equality Tasmania as an organisation are in contact with some Tasmanian men who may now apply under these new provisions to have their records expunged and receive a financial redress. Some of them were fined or served prison time and at least one of them was given the option of receiving conversion treatment at the Royal Derwent.

However, none of these men are willing to speak publicly about the pain and trauma they experienced or to have their stories identified in this place. They don't want to revisit what they went through, and I don't blame them. They shouldn't have to come to us, as parliamentarians,

to prove their suffering or to beg for justice. It should be with sorrow in our heart and a request for forgiveness that we offer the redress regardless.

While nothing can truly compensate for what they went through, this simple, warranted and overdue reform will provide at least some recognition of what they went through. It's the least that we can do as today's parliament to right some of the injustice for the cruelty that former parliaments inflicted on them and their loved ones.

Like our historic laws that protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians, I hope that this will motivate a redress movement across Australia. I hope that other jurisdictions will look to us to implement similar schemes and to protect the rights of people in their states and territories.

I want to conclude my comments by noting and reflecting on the fact that outside the parliament, along Salamanca Place, there is a beautiful artistic piece. It is a tribute that recognises the hurt that these laws inflicted and how far we've come as a state. They are embedded in the concrete. It is two illuminated lines of text. They sit right beside where that Salamanca Market stall once stood where Tasmanians were arrested for protesting against our anti-gay laws. One of them reads, 'Forgive me for not holding you in my arms', and the other reads, 'In the wake of your courage, I swim'. We should beg forgiveness from these men, now very elderly, that we did not hold them in our arms, and it is indeed in the wake of their courage that we now swim.

[3.14 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise in support of the bill and congratulate both sides of parliament for supporting it. It is long overdue, but nevertheless a leader in our nation, and a continuation of the work of so many goodwilled people to bring closure to those who suffered from laws that unjustly removed their rights and condemned them to being shamed, discriminated against and criminalised for decades and longer.

I do walk with great care on this issue as someone who has never experienced discrimination of this or probably any other nature, so if my words are clumsy, I hope my intentions and goodwill are clear. I have been on a huge learning curve over the past few years as I have learned more and more of the suffering that so many people experienced for either being out or, just as sadly, for having to conceal their true identity. Credit goes to some outstanding and courageous individuals who have led the way to a better and brighter future for the LGBTIQ+ community. This includes Rodney Croome, Ash Russell, Nick Toonen, my friends Paul Thomas and Bob Brown, and many others.

Thank goodness for them and people like them who have unlocked the potential for so many to live full and better lives, at peace with the community they live in, never forgetting that so many still suffer discrimination that leads to distress, high levels of lifelong emotional pain, and far too often, suicide. It was the courage of these and others that dragged Tasmania from the dark ages of what Rodney Croome described as the 'Bigots' Island' to what he calls today the 'Rainbow Island'.

From an island that required a High Court ruling to cement the decriminalising of people who simply didn't conform to what our state government considered some sort of acceptable norm, we are now leading the nation, with hopes that other states will follow in our footsteps.

I only hope those who felt so oppressed in Tasmania that they left the island forever may return, even as visitors, to appreciate how far the state has come. I note that this bill does not

offer what we would normally consider to be compensation. That would require millions of dollars to provide anything approaching a just financial settlement. However, I hope that simply acknowledging past injustices and providing a modicum of financial redress will ameliorate past pain and provide a stepping stone to a happier, more serene future.

This is a welcome, if overdue, reform and I support it.

[3.18 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker. I rise today to speak in support of the Expungement of Historical Offences Amendment Bill 2025. This bill is about fairness and dignity. For too long, many Tasmanians were subject to unjust laws that criminalised them simply for being who they are. Those laws have rightly been consigned to history, but their impact still lingers in the records and in the lives of those caught up in them.

Our Parliament has taken important steps over the years to correct these wrongs. The decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1997, the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* and the repeal of outdated offences such as cross-dressing in 2001 were all part of that journey.

In 2017, the Tasmanian Liberal government introduced the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017*, recognising the harm caused by these discriminatory laws and giving people a pathway to have those convictions removed. However, as this bill makes clear, there is clearly more work to do.

The amendments before us respond not only to the independent review of the act, but also to the report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality. Their recommendations have been included which has ensured this bill is improved not only on practical grounds but also on compassionate grounds. This is a good example of collaboration in parliament working as it should. Independent reviewers made their recommendations, a parliamentary committee scrutinised the scheme and heard from stakeholders, and now our government has brought forward a bill that reflects both sets of feedback. It shows that this reform has democratic legitimacy and broad parliamentary support. Importantly, the committee's feedback has strengthened the bill. By incorporating the committee's findings, the bill not only reflects the expertise of reviewers but also the voices of members across this parliament and the witnesses who came before them. That inclusiveness builds public confidence in the scheme and ensures the outcomes are fair and durable.

The broader reforms in the bill include expanding the scheme to cover related offences, shifting responsibility for fact-finding to the secretary and updating how records are handled to make sure the system is robust and victim centred.

I acknowledge, in reaching this point, the work of our Attorney-General, Guy Barnett, his advisers and his department for their diligent and careful work to bring this bill back to us today in its current improved and more complete form. I particularly acknowledge the work of Rodney Croome, Equality Tasmania, Trenton Hoare and all those they spoke to and spoke for, for fighting so hard and for waiting so long for these changes. They should be proud and celebrate their role in achieving these changes today.

As a legislator, however, as an elected representative of our Tasmanian community, my feelings today are more reflective than triumphant. Bittersweet, happy-sad, as my daughter would say. As others have pointed out, this legislation will be nation-leading but, sadly, in this

case, nation-leading doesn't mean we have leapt ahead. In my view, it means that we are just a bit less wrong than we were, a bit more just, a bit closer to where we should have been now had the laws of our state never intruded into the personal identities and private lives of its citizens the way that these bad laws did. But they did. We can remove them, but they cast a shadow. That's why the redress part of this bill is particularly important, and the way it has been resolved is important. It's an acknowledgement that rescinding bad laws is a necessary and overdue correction, that ever having had them has caused harm and that we are sorry.

While we can't go back and can't undo, and we should never forget the wrongs that have been done, hope lies in the sentiment Ms Haddad expressed, which I have also experienced talking to young people and my own children. We have a generation now for whom the things that we've sought to fix are incomprehensible. They will not be part of anyone else's experience going into the future but we must keep vigilant to ensure that, even with best intentions, by oversight or omission, we are creating the potential for a future generation to have to go through the same process.

These forms are measured, practical and carefully considered. They reinforce our government's commitments to supporting those who were so unjustly treated in the past. They are necessary, they are bittersweet. Those who have brought them to us need to be thanked. Those who have waited so long deserve to celebrate in their own way what this means for them. I commend the bill to the House.

[3.23 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I wasn't intending to speak today given that I am new to this House and this bill has been progressing prior to it coming before us today. However, I feel I want to make a contribution, particularly following on a very fine contribution from the member for Clark and other members in this place. Also, it would be remiss of me to not speak on the first occasion, Rodney, when I see you in this House. I have, like other members in this place, had the great privilege of working alongside Rodney on many things over time and I commend him for the work that he has done over many years in relation to these matters.

I pick up on the point I believe the member for Clark, Ms Haddad, made about the fact that we can't take these gains for granted. We have more progress before us, more to do. There is always more work to do. It is very heartening to see the parliament coming together in this way to deal with these injustices that still persist to this day, but we cannot take it for granted. I know from my own experience in another parliament that the laws we have in Tasmania, whilst they still have a long way to go, can still come under threat too. We must always be looking for the progress we can make in regard to these issues. We must also continue to be vigilant and protect the gains we have made to date.

This bill amends the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017* in response to the legislative recommendations of the independent review of the *Expungement of Historical Offences Act* made by independent reviewers Melanie Bartlett and Taya Ketelaar-Jones, and the recommendations by the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality in relation to an ex-gratia scheme. The government is committed to improving the expungement of historical offences scheme to better provide support to affected persons while ensuring only relevant and appropriate convictions are expunged. The key features of the bill are as follows:

The expansion of the expungement scheme to include related offences. The bill amends section 10 of the act to expand the expungement scheme to allow related offences to be eligible for expungement. Related offences have been defined to include an offence relation to resisting, obstructing or assaulting police under section 34B of the *Police Offences Act 1935*, or any equivalent provision as in force at that time. Related offences will only be eligible for expungement when the secretary of the Department of Justice is satisfied on reasonable grounds, after having considered advice from the Commissioner of Police in relation to the circumstances of the related offence, that the eligible person would not have been charged with the related offence but for the fact that the eligible person was suspected of committing a homosexual offence or cross-dressing offence, and expunging that charge is not contrary to the public interest.

Again, I reflect on the commentary from the member for Clark earlier. It is quite extraordinary in 2025, and I am certain my own children would be listening to this today and saying, 'What?' I very much look forward to putting this episode behind us and I commend this bill to the House.

[3.28 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge the contributions of those in this place, the Leader of the Greens, the shadow attorney-general, Peter George, the honourable member for Franklin, thank you for your contribution, and likewise to my colleague, Roger Jaensch, member for Braddon; and the Health minister and member for Bass. I know of their ongoing and special interest in this matter for and on behalf of their constituents.

Right upfront I want to pass on my sincere thanks to my department who've worked hard, particularly in recent times, to bring forward this bill so we could debate it today. As you know, we suspended Standing Orders to bring it forward so we could debate it today rather than in November, as we wanted to progress this important legislation, so a special acknowledgement to Bruce Paterson, Meegan Essex and Natalie Sires for their support over a long period of time. When I say a long period of time, it was 1 August last year when the government introduced the Expungement of Historical Offences Amendment Bill 2024 to amend the act in response to the independent review, as has been noted by Melanie Bartlett and Taya Ketelaar-Jones in October 2020, who made those 13 recommendations. It has been a long time coming and that has been reflected by all of the contributions over many decades, but it has come to a conclusion, all being well today, and then through to the other place.

That review was undertaken. The House of Assembly supported the amendments that were put forward by the Tasmanian Greens at that time to provide a formal compensation mechanism under the act and these amendments were passed and tabled in the Legislative Council. On 20 November 2024, the honourable member for Murchison, Ruth Forrest, successfully moved a motion to adjourn debate on the bill and the bill was referred to the joint sessional committee on gender inequality with a prescribed focus to address the provision of compensation payable under the principal act.

On 12 March 2025 the committee presented to the Legislative Council a report making six recommendations regarding redress under the bill and the committee recommended the bill be further amended to facilitate the establishment of a one-off redress payment under the principal act for eligible persons who had charges or convictions expunged under the act. I just wanted to note these for the record in the summary. Of course, it's in the fact sheet but members

of the public may not want to go all the way into that, so I just want to make it very clear. Firstly, for persons who were charged but not convicted of offences relating to cross-dressing and or consensual same-sex conduct and did not serve time in jail, \$15,000; persons who were convicted of offences relating to cross-dressing and or consensual same-sex conduct and did not serve any gaol time, \$45,000; and persons who were convicted of offences relating to cross-dressing and or consensual same-sex conduct and served time in jail or were subjected to other forms of punishment, \$75,000.

The honourable Ruth Forrest had amendments prepared to this effect, but this bill lapsed, as we know, at the calling of the election and then caretaker period kicked in. After further consideration, the government has included these amendments in the current tabled version of the bill, so I wanted to put on record my thanks to the chair, Ruth Forrest, and her committee for their work in bringing that report together and those recommendations.

The honourable Leader for the Greens has asked me to provide an update with respect to a number of those recommendations that did not require legislative amendments. I'd like to do that now. Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 are already implemented, so I don't need to go through those any further. Recommendation 6 is in progress and the reviewers' discussion noted feedback may be more useful when there is a greater volume of matters, however feedback would be useful to identify issues and enable staff to provide applicants with further support.

I am advised that currently information about support to applicants is available and applicants can offer feedback on their experience of the process. With potential increases to the volume of application the department is implementing formal feedback processes, so the application form has also been amended to provide that if applicants have formal feedback they can get in touch with the department.

Recommendation 8 implemented an alternative method. The Office of the State Archivist has developed an action plan to enable CBOS to dispose of arising temporary paper and digital records as soon as practicable, utilising an already existing disposal schedule and this ensures the records are destroyed. Recommendation 12 is in progress and the draft communications plan has been created to progress this recommendation as soon as is practicable. Following passage of the bill and consultation with community representatives, details of the new redress scheme will be incorporated.

At this point I would like to acknowledge again Rodney Croome and Equality Tasmania, not just for their ongoing advocacy but for the interaction Rodney's had with my office, not just with Jim but also my former chief of staff, Amber Mignot, that I would like to note on the record and, of course, ongoing communication and consultation with my department.

In terms of providing feedback on the details around the implementation of that and the education and awareness arrangements to be put into place, they have been taken on board and I am sort of getting a little nod here and there, which I appreciate. I am more than happy, as I have said personally to Rodney, to keep in touch and to engage with my department or with myself directly or my office going forward.

In conclusion, thank you very much, and to all of the members who've shared their remarks, we are hoping for positive progress of this bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICAL OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 51)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition - Establishment

[3.36 p.m.]

The SPEAKER - Before I go to the Leader of the House, I am in receipt of a message from the Legislative Council:

Honourable Speaker,

The Legislative Council, having this day taken into consideration the message of the House of Assembly dated 9 September 2025 regarding the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition, does agree to the establishment of the committee and further informs the House of Assembly it has resolved that Ms O'Connor, Ms Rattray and Ms Webb be appointed to serve on the committee on the part of the council and that Wednesday, 8 October 2025 at 10.00 a.m. be the time and committee room 1 be the place for holding the first meeting of the committee.

C. Farrell, President,
Legislative Council,
25 September 2025.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Honourable I move-

That the message be considered forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the House. I move-

That the proposed time and date of the first meeting be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the House and finally move -

That Ms Johnston, Mr Vermey and Mr Winter be appointed to serve on the Joint Sessional Committee on the part of the House.

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, we support the motion and appreciate the government appointing a Labor representative to this committee. As I said when this was first established in part by the House, we do not agree with the establishment of the committee. In fact, we moved an amendment to try and stop that from happening. I said that in the event that the House and the other place move to establish a committee, we will attempt to have a position on it. The reason is that it is important that people in this place are true to their word. It is important that people in this place are backing Tasmanians who rely on them, and what we've seen from the Liberal Party on greyhound racing is a total and utter capitulation to the Greens and Independent greens on this matter.

I have never seen anything like it - to have letters sent by the Premier of Tasmania, a position that should hold a level of respect, where people expect that when they receive a letter from the Premier of Tasmania that they will hold true to what they say.

The SPEAKER - Mr Winter, I have been advised that because this motion is purely about the three members being appointed to the committee, including yourself, if you can restrict your comments to the members being appointed to the committee.

Mr WINTER - I am pleased that the House has appointed me to the committee so that I can hold this government and this Premier to account in that committee for the promises that this Premier made. This Premier made a promise to the greyhound racing industry that he was committed to support the longevity and sustainability of the racing industry. He even talked about it creating \$208 million of economic activity for Tasmania.

Irrespective of your views on greyhound racing, the complete capitulation to send this letter on 17 July and then four weeks later to capitulate, to completely move your position from one of complete support for the industry to complete capitulation is something the no-one in this place should support.

I was listening to the contribution of a member of the Greens in the other place where the member Ms O'Connor talked about the 'flexibility of mind' to change one's position during an election campaign. Flexibility of mind. This committee is being established to shut down the greyhound racing industry because this Premier wanted to let every single person in the industry down - people who relied on him.

I was at Elwick two weeks ago today, where people told me, 'We voted Liberal because we were worried about Labor doing a deal with the Greens and shutting down our industry.' They said that to my face and Ms Butler heard the same thing, the thing we were being accused of doing by members of the Liberal Party. Mr Ellis has stood in this place and said that greyhound racing was 'part of Tasmania's way of life', yet he will support the shutdown of greyhound racing and therefore a Tasmanian way of life. Surely, he doesn't support this position.

The establishment of this committee and its members therefore have a very important role to play, because someone has to stand up for regional Tasmania. Someone has to stand up for the people who have been so badly let down by the Liberal Party, and that's going to have to be Labor. It is going to have to be us to stand up for those people who thought that Labor

was going to do a deal with the Greens when, in fact, it was the Liberals that capitulated to the Greens and green Independents who've been calling for this for years. That is why we're on this committee, to hold them to account now.

This committee has important work to do in one sense, because it needs to hold the government to account. Tasracing is now faced with a position where its board and its leadership is faced with having to shut down a code that is also tasked with supporting and encouraging the greyhound racing industry, and that's why this committee is important.

Mr ABETZ - Point of order, Speaker. I think we're getting a very good window into what the former Leader of the Opposition will be prosecuting when he's on the committee and dealing with matters on the committee that he is clearly straying from the motion which simply seeks relevance, Standing Order 45, Ms Johnston, Mr Vermey and Mr Winter.

The SPEAKER - It's 142, for everyone's benefit, we're out of Question Time. I do remind the member of relevance under 142. I encourage the member to restrict it to the members of the committee.

Mr WINTER - I was actually at that point talking about how this committee is going to operate and that's what we're debating.

The SPEAKER - We're not debating how the committee is operating, we're only debating that three people are going on the committee, including yourself.

Mr WINTER - Of course, you're right, Honourable Speaker, because you always are. We are debating the establishment of the committee and the members who are going onto the committee. I am speaking about that, but I'm not surprised that the Leader of Government Business wants to shut me down, because he's embarrassed about the capitulation, as are so many members of the Liberal Party. I am looking forward to any member of the Liberal Party outside of the Premier trying to defend this decision at some point in time. It hasn't happened so far.

How must Mr Shelton feel about this decision to shut down the greyhound racing industry, when he's been so supportive of it. Now, here we go, shut me down again.

Mr ABETZ - Standing Order 142. Thank you for that guidance, Speaker. We all know Mr Winter's well-rehearsed lines, but he is straying. The only topic is Ms Johnston, Mr Vermey and Mr Winter being appointed to serve on the committee. The establishment of the committee has already been determined, so that is no longer a topic of discussion. The only topic of discussion is the appointment of these three members.

The SPEAKER - Other members who aren't on the committee are not relevant. It's just the three people to the committee.

Mr WINTER - We will talk about Mr Vermey then. Fantastic, thank you for the inspiration, Honourable Speaker, and to the leader of the House.

Mr Vermey ran at this election and has plenty of people in his electorate supporting the greyhound racing industry, because he's a member for Clark, which is where the Elwick Racecourse is. Mr Vermey is now forced by the Premier and this Liberal government to stand

there and try and shut down the greyhound racing industry, to which he promised the people of Clark he supported by running under the Liberal Party ticket. Now Mr Vermey's put into it.

By the way, Mr Vermey's inaugural speech today was an absolute cracker, one of the best I have heard in this place. Beautiful speech. However, he's now put in this unenviable position by the Premier of Tasmania and the Minister for Racing - who refused to stand up for the industry that thought she had their back - to sit on this committee and back in a decision by this government to shut down the greyhound racing and direct it in that way.

I am going to hold this government to account as a member of the committee, as per the motion, for this disgraceful decision. It is important that the views of the racing industry are well heard on this committee, because they were not consulted at all by the government when they made this decision. In fact, no-one was. The Minister for Racing wasn't consulted, as far as we can tell, before the decision was made, yet backed it in anyway and stood with the Premier the next day as he shut down the greyhound racing industry that she'd supported for her whole career.

We will be on this committee. Mr Vermey, unfortunately for him, will be on this committee, and Ms Johnston. Let's be honest, Ms Johnston has been entirely consistent with her position on this since she arrived in this place, entirely consistent. Fair play to her for being on the committee and running her position.

What I can't stand, and what Tasmanians can't stand, is the position of the Liberal Party to go and say one thing, as they did to Ben Englund and the Northwest Greyhound Racing Club on 17 July 2025, and then move to shut it down one month later in a deal to stay in that seat. The Premier of Tasmania, the Minister for Racing, the leader of the House, the entire Liberal Party, put their own jobs ahead of the jobs of regional Tasmanians in greyhound racing, and it is disgraceful.

[3.47 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I will be very brief, so I will stay here at my seat. I thank the Leader of Government Business for putting forward the motion and my nomination to be on this committee. It's a very important committee dealing with the transitional arrangements to the ending of greyhound racing in Tasmania. I look forward to working with Mr Vermey, the other member for Clark, and Mr Winter, the member for Franklin, as well as my upper House colleagues.

I understand this very important matter of providing transitional arrangements. I take my committee positions incredibly seriously. I commit to working in good faith within the constraints of the terms of reference of this particular committee, and working very diligently to ensure a just and equal transition both for participants and for animals within the industry, and to be looking at the broad terms of reference.

I thank the leader for bringing this on today and to making sure that this committee can be established in a very quick manner, because there is important work to be done. I note that our first meeting will be on 8 October 2025, which is very timely because there's a lot to be done. I look forward to working, in good faith, within the terms of reference with other committee members.

[3.47 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I also welcome this motion coming back down to this House from the upper House. I thank the members of the other place for putting their hands up there, Ms Webb, Ms Rattray and Ms O'Connor and their willingness to participate. This is an important committee. This decision has been made and greyhound racing will shut down in 2029. This committee's role is to work out how to do that in an efficient, humane and just way for participants. Noting the makeup here, Mr Vermey, good luck; I just got a taste of what you might be in for. Ms Johnston, good luck as well. Mr Winter, while I completely acknowledge your position and the Labor Party's position in relation to this, your strong attachment to this industry and your commitment to it, I urge you to play a constructive role through this committee because it is about how to do this in a really efficient, effective, just and humane way.

We heard in a briefing from Saul Eslake at lunchtime today about the millions and millions of dollars of taxpayer money that has been put into this industry over many years and will continue to be put into this industry for the next few years. There are important decisions to be made about how that money can be invested in supporting people through this transition through to the end of this industry. We acknowledge the cultural importance this holds for some people but it is a very small amount of people. That has been really clear.

Mr ABETZ - Point of order, Speaker. Reluctantly, I rise on a point of order to be consistent with my interventions with Mr Winter - Standing Order 142. All we are discussing is the appointment of three people, not the establishment of the committee.

Mr BAYLEY - Leader, with respect, I am urging Mr Winter as one of those appointed people to engage constructively in this committee because it is a forum to guide this change in a constructive, humane and just way. There is a lot of work to be done. It can be done in numerous different ways, and Mr Winter has choices as to how he engages in that. I simply urge him to take a very good-faith, proactive and supportive role in that committee so that the participants in the industry can have the smoothest transition to a different future.

We support this motion and thank all members who put their hands up for this committee and wish them well in their works.

[3.50 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Honourable Speaker, very briefly, I would seek to take issue with many of the matters Mr Winter raised but join with him in congratulating the member for Clark, Mr Vermey, on a fantastic first speech.

Motion agreed to.

POISONS AMENDMENT (INTERSTATE PRESCRIPTIONS) BILL 2025 (No. 45)

Second Reading

[3.51 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

I am pleased to bring this bill before the House. I will start by noting that the *Poisons Act 1971* has been in place now for many decades. While it has served us well across its wide range of functions, including protecting the health and safety of Tasmanians, there is no doubt it is complex and somewhat unwieldy legislation. It presents many challenges in interpreting, amending and applying its provisions.

The Department of Health has commenced a comprehensive review of the *Poisons Act*. We know it needs more than just this change and we look forward to seeking public input as soon as possible on a new *Poisons Act*. That is important context for what we consider here today, this bill to allow interstate prescribing of narcotic substances and declared restricted substances.

Barriers to accessing ADHD diagnosis and care have been the subject of significant coverage in the media and extensive inquiries both here and nationally. We have all heard many stories and many have personal experience of these challenges and their impacts. Today I made a commitment made by my predecessors in this portfolio to enable interstate prescribing of ADHD medicines, among others. Currently, a pharmacist presented with a script issued interstate for these medicines is not legally able to dispense it. For the purposes of the act, it is not a legal script issued by somebody with the appropriate qualifications. This restriction applies to psychostimulant medicines commonly used to treat ADHD, opioid analgesics, most medicinal cannabis products and benzodiazepines, a wide range of medicines used for a wide range of conditions.

It's important to acknowledge this restriction has existed for very good reason. Many of the medicines to which it applies are drugs of dependence or drugs which pose a higher risk to patients or to the community at large, especially if diverted or misused. However, the environment has changed. We have widespread availability of telehealth and electronic systems that can tell us across medical practices, pharmacies, and traditional jurisdictional boundaries a lot more about which of these high-risk medicines have been prescribed and dispensed to which patients. The old safeguard has become out of step with the expectations of patients and the way they access care. It too often operates as a barrier to legitimate access to appropriately prescribed medicines.

It follows that this bill will increase access to medicines. We expect that this will benefit general practice and emergency departments by reducing presentations to get replacement scripts issued by local practitioners. We expect this will benefit patients by enabling their interstate practitioners to prescribe for them directly without requiring a partnership with a local prescriber, although where such a relationship is beneficial for the patient and practitioners, they may choose to maintain it.

We heard from one residential aged-care facility which engages an interstate telehealth local service for urgent out-of-hours medical support due to difficulties identifying an available local option. This facility has seen avoidable hospital admissions and prolonged avoidable pain for residents due to the inability of their locum doctors interstate to urgently prescribe appropriate pain relief out-of-hours. This is just one example of how this bill can make a difference.

While the purpose of this bill is easily explained, the actual amendments which give rise to the necessary outcome are a little more complex. The bill defines 'interstate prescriber' and creates them as a class of authorised health professionals, ensuring they have the relevant powers to prescribe under Tasmanian law. It also removes provisions requiring authorised health professionals, dentists, nurse practitioners, midwives and medical practitioners to be in Tasmania in order to prescribe declared restricted substances or narcotic substances.

Another change this bill makes is to the existing restrictions around bringing these substances into the state and possessing them. Currently, the act requires that they be brought in on your person or in your luggage. This amendment removes that requirement.

Increasing access to medicines, especially drugs of dependence, is not without risk. As a result, we have included some important safeguards in this bill which relate to the monitored medicines database. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a truly national monitored medicines database with unlimited cross-border data sharing. Each jurisdiction has its own instance of a common system which contains, broadly, information about residents of that jurisdiction and activity that occurs in that jurisdiction.

Because of this, we're specifically requiring an interstate prescriber to check TasScript when they prescribe to a Tasmanian. TasScript will tell them which monitored medicines, including narcotic substances, have been prescribed and dispensed to that patient. This is an important clinical tool for prescribers and dispensers to check the safety of a prescription in the context of a patient's other medicines, as well as a key safeguard against doctor shopping.

We're also requiring Tasmanian dispensers - pharmacists - to check the relevant interstate monitored medicines database when dispensing to those who reside outside of Tasmania. Again, this will ensure that the pharmacists have access to the best available information about that patient and can use this clinical tool in their decision-making. It will ensure that people cannot come to Tasmania to avoid the prescription monitoring systems of their home state.

I recognise this at times may be frustrating for busy community pharmacists who in the course of their activities may have to access multiple databases. I am assured that work is underway nationally to progress the development of a truly national real-time prescription monitoring service that will greatly simplify this process.

This bill clarifies the intended jurisdiction of the act, specifying that it is intended to apply to interstate prescribers in relation to the writing and issuing of prescriptions for narcotic substances and restricted substances insofar as they relate to the supply of such substances in Tasmania, or are issued to residents of Tasmania, including operating outside the territorial limits of Tasmania in relation to these matters.

The bill also creates a head of power to make regulations in relation to issuing and dispensing scripts by interstate prescribers. This is important and we have already drafted regulations that will give further effect to these laws and safeguards if the bill is passed. The effect of the draft regulations is essentially to require prescriptions to conform with the requirements for Tasmanian prescriptions, except where it is a prescription for an interstate patient, in which case it is exempt from that requirement.

This is important as interstate visitors are often very distressed to find that they cannot receive their usual medications from a local pharmacist on the basis of their script from their

usual doctor in their home state. This can be profoundly upsetting and disruptive, impacting people with cancer unable to access their pain medicine, parents unable to access their child's ADHD medicine, and many others. These travellers must find an available appointment with a local doctor. Sometimes they attend emergency departments, sometimes they simply cut their holidays short. I thank those people for sharing their experiences and I am pleased that we can do something about it for future visitors.

I also want to raise a note of caution. There are many issues around medicine access other than availability of interstate prescriptions. Disruptions in global medicine supply chains and surges in demand often create shortages, which we are seeing now in relation to some of the common ADHD medicines. A local pharmacy may not necessarily have every medicine in stock in any case, especially with more uncommon medicines or doses. Members of the public should, as always, be kind and courteous to their pharmacists and be understanding of the many factors that impact the availability of medicines.

Ultimately the effect of this bill is to remove existing restrictions that apply to interstate prescriptions. In doing so, it applies the Tasmanian law so that existing systems and safeguards are followed. This ensures equity between Tasmanian prescribers and those interstate. This will require education and awareness, as well as monitoring and enforcement. The Department of Health will, of course, undertake this work. The bill will commence on proclamation after a short period of time to allow for appropriate education and awareness raising and preparation for prescribers and dispensers. We expect that compliance will build over time as interstate prescribers become aware of the requirements in place.

I acknowledge the support of this bill by key stakeholders and I look forward to working together to improve and protect the health of Tasmanians into the future.

I commend the bill to the House.

[4.01 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise this afternoon and speak on this bill and can indicate that we will be supporting the bill. Like the minister, we have heard those stories from members of the community, particularly from families accessing medications for ADHD when it has been difficult to access specialist care in this state and they have gone interstate to enable their child to be assessed and seen. The other thing that had been raised with me for many years has been the ability of people visiting our state to access their medications, particularly if they're having ongoing cancer care or chronic disease management. They are both good inclusions.

I have a number of questions to put on the record as part of this process. In your speech, you referenced a comprehensive review of the *Poisons Act*. Could you provide a date for when that might be completed? I would like to understand who was consulted as part of this bill. I also want to understand the safety checks and balances. You spoke about the need for each of the practitioners in the separate instances - either issuing or filling the script, having to check the Real-Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) system for respective states. Obviously, the onus is on the practitioner. How will whether they have done that be monitored?

I also have question around the National Monitoring of Medicines database. Back in 2021 we passed another amendment to this particular piece of legislation related to us coming in line with other states and joining in a national medical medicines monitoring database. Tasmania

has been quite instrumental in that right from the start with the DORA system which has led to decreases in morbidity and mortality in our state. We have been nation-leading on that when you're looking at the prescription of high-risk drugs. We will all be aware of circumstances where people shop around for high-risk drugs, and the risks associated with taking those.

I am wondering whether the legislation we passed back in 2021 has actually been progressed and that we are now part of that national database. Could you provide an update on that? In your speech, you made reference to the fact that there's not a consistent monitoring of medicines across the country. I thought that was what we were trying to achieve by passing that legislation. That is more as a follow-up to something we have done here in the past.

I also have question on the scope of the practitioners included in the legislation and midwives. I hadn't thought of midwives being included in this as practitioners simply because I wouldn't have thought you would be accessing midwifery care interstate. Is there an example of why that has come to be included, or was it just a broad blanket scope of practitioners included in the legislation? It seemed a bit strange to me that you would be seeing a midwife interstate because, generally, you would see them close to where you are and having your baby.

The last question I have is about the bringing of substances into the state. The paper provided by the Department of Health says there are some issues with Australia Post about bringing certain substances into the state. Could provide some clarification about that? Obviously, you are changing that in the act so it doesn't have to be with the person, but how will people get access to it if there are issues with Australia Post?

They were the main questions I had. We are happy to support the bill.

[4.05 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on the Poisons Amendment (Interstate Prescriptions) Bill 2025. The Greens will be supporting this bill. We have already heard from both the previous speakers about the need for these amendments to the *Poisons Act* because we have heard the stories of people who experience significant difficulty obtaining medications and sometimes missing out on what they need. This bill will go towards resolving those issues. The bill provides a framework for interstate prescriptions to be dispensed in Tasmania, as well as covering gaps in our legislation regarding the legality of possessing controlled substances lawfully dispensed in other jurisdictions.

I note that the bill has generally been positively received by a wide range of stakeholders. However, the Greens have circulated amendments to the bill we intend to move. Many concerns were raised during consultation, both concerns directly to do with the bill and tangentially related to it.

A recurrent theme throughout the submissions to the draft was that these amendments are necessary in part because access to GPs and specialists in Tasmania is so challenging. For that reason, Tasmanians are increasingly needing to turn to interstate medical professionals. We are increasingly seeing reforms around pharmacy dispensing to address the difficulty in accessing specialists and GPs. While this reform is welcome regardless of this issue, far more work and investment to address the core issue needs to occur. A doctor at Ochre Healthcare recently stated that about 30 per cent of the patients they see at their Urgent Care Clinic do not have a Tasmanian-based GP at all.

One of the common issues raised through the consultation was the need to mitigate risks of misuse of prescription drugs, particularly opioids, benzodiazepines and psychostimulants, and the potential heightened risk of this misuse that the framework introduces. The Australian Medical Association (AMA) made a range of recommendations to mitigate these risks and I'm curious to hear the government's response to these recommendations. One of the AMA recommendations was a requirement that pharmacists dispensing high-risk medications on interstate prescriptions notify a patient's nominated GP that a script has been dispensed, but as far as we can determine, this recommendation has not been adopted.

The AMA further recommended that there be a two-year monitoring period post-implementation in which the government collects and publicly reports on data regarding rates of dispensing of interstate prescriptions, incidents of diversion or misuse, and impacts on ED presentations and urgent care services. I'm wondering if this is something the government is intending to do.

A further matter canvassed by the AMA and many other submitters was the matter of a national database. Many raised the need for a national database to be developed, both for safety reasons as well as administrative ease. I note that in the minister's second reading speech, she talked about the fact that we don't yet have a truly nationally monitored medicine database but that some progress is being made on it. I would just like to clarify that if the Tasmania government's position is that there should be, is it something you're advocating and can you outline how you're advocating that and working towards it?

The proposed safety framework relies on the use of various monitoring databases. However, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) raised concerns about relying solely on these systems as they currently stand. I will quote from their submission:

Whilst the proposed amendment to s38G of the act requires interstate prescribers to check the monitored medicines database prior to issuing a prescription for a monitored medicine, Tasmanian physicians report concerns about how this will be monitored and enforced. The messaging in TasScript to dispensing pharmacists is regarded by some as not definitive enough, e.g. it allows discretion outside of the top in the instance of opioid pharmacotherapy.

If these amendments to the act are made, we urge additional resourcing and a clear framework for proactively monitoring and enforcing the act and the regulations and more definitive instructions in TasScript that align with endorsed policy and legislation. [tbc]

Minister, is the government planning for more resourcing and is there any plan to consult with stakeholders about appropriate changes to the instructions and messaging in the TasScript system?

The RACGP also noted the need to have effective referral and follow-up systems in place to support telehealth-facilitated consultations. Does the government intend to undertake any reforms in this space?

The Rural Doctors Association of Tasmania emphasised the need to have monitoring systems in place to differentiate between one-off dispensing of high-risk medications from interstate prescriptions as opposed to regular prescriptions requiring authority to prescribe. They specifically asked how the government intends to enforce compliance of section 59E of the act on interstate prescribers. I think that builds on the question asked by Ms Dow around what monitoring would happen. My question would be how would that be enforced for prescribers who are outside of our state? How are we able to enforce them following an act that's within our state?

For my final question, I note that the draft bill was accompanied by draft regulations. I know the minister mentioned in her second reading speech some of the plans around draft regulations, but in your summation can you outline any changes that have been made to the draft regulations since the consultation?

As I indicated at the outset, the Greens have amendments to this bill. As part of these reforms, a range of amendments are included to provide the same protections for interstate prescriptions that they would have for Tasmanian-based prescriptions. For example, the bill provides that a person does not commit a possession or importation offence for a substance lawfully prescribed and dispensed to the person in another state or a territory. Furthermore, the consultation materials state the bill will broaden the circumstances in which people in Tasmania can lawfully drive if using prescribed medicinal cannabis as long as they are not impaired. This broadening is, however, limited and does not include prescriptions that are both prescribed and dispensed in another state or territory.

Currently, section 6A of the *Road Safety, Alcohol and Drugs Act 1970* provides that a person does not commit a driving with prescribed illicit drug in blood offence if the prescribed illicit drug was obtained and administered in accordance with the *Poisons Act 1971*. The bill as it stands extends this provision to cover circumstances where a prescription is issued interstate but the drug is dispensed in Tasmania. Our amendment extends this to also cover circumstances where the drug is both prescribed and dispensed interstate.

The absence of this amendment within the bill does not make sense to us. It is existing law that having a prescription is a valid defence to the driving with prescribed illicit drug in blood offence. It is the clear policy intent of this bill to extend existing defences for Tasmanian prescribed and dispensed medications to also apply to interstate prescribed and dispensed medications, and the absence of this provision is therefore inconsistent with these positions. During the briefing, the rationale provided for this not being included was that there was a desire not to step on Tasmania Police's toes, but the Greens think this is a poor argument.

The bill already extends defences for possession and importation and section 6A of the *Road Safety, Alcohol and Drugs Act 1970* already defers to the *Poisons Act 1971*. We do not think it is reasonable to allow a loophole that allows a person to be charged with an offence to remain when there is a clear intent for it not to be an offence, solely to avoid stepping on another department's toes. We also think this is important in light of the fact that the department's own consultation page admits to partially addressing this loophole already. This loophole has been evident for some time and the excuses to avoid addressing it are growing tired.

I am pleased to support this bill on behalf of the Greens and hope members will support our amendments when we go into Committee.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Is it your intention to put forward those amendments to the House during Committee?

Ms Rosol - Yes.

[4.15 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I too rise to talk on the Poisons Amendment Bill. I want to congratulate the government on introducing this bill and I am looking forward to the long-awaited review of the *Poisons Act*. I also want to indicate at the outset I will be supporting the bill. I want to thank the department for their multiple briefings on this bill and I acknowledge the near universal support from the medical profession and those who made submissions in response to the bill. The problem this bill is trying to fix has been raised by many of my constituents and it is pleasing to be able to tell them that the government is doing something about it.

Much of the focus of the contributions has been on the impact of those people who are who are prescribed psychostimulants. However, I want to talk about the barriers this will remove for those receiving medicinal cannabis. There are significant challenges for those people who seek to be medicated with medicinal cannabis. There is a lack of pharmacies that stock medicinal cannabis in Tasmania and a lack of GPs prepared to prescribe it. Most Tasmanians receiving medicinal cannabis have obtained their scripts from interstate telehealth services. However, the cost of these telehealth consults and the costs of these medicines is substantial and beyond the reach of many. I understand that medicinal cannabis, despite being legal to prescribe since 2016, is not a registered medicine, but I also understand this is a matter for the Therapeutic Goods Administration, not the state government.

I want to read an email sent to me by one of my constituents about this precise issue and the impact it has had on them.

I was until recently a medicinal cannabis patient, being prescribed it for post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of my employment. I explored the medicinal cannabis option at the suggestion of my psychologist and psychiatrist and had both their support and the support of my general practitioner. I found it to be more effective than the antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs that I had previously been prescribed and a vast improvement in my mental state was acknowledged by my general practitioner, psychologist, family and friends group. [tbc]

Like most people who are prescribed medical cannabis, I used one of the large telehealth clinics that specialised in cannabis medicines. After a far more in-depth consultation than I have ever had with any doctor before or since, I was issued a prescription which was then scrutinised by the Therapeutic Goods Administration before being released to a pharmacy. At this point I was under the impression that I was abiding by the law in Tasmania. I recently discovered that is not the case. In order for a valid medical cannabis prescription to be issued to a resident of Tasmania, it must be issued by a doctor who is physically present in Tasmania and dispensed by a pharmacy physically located in Tasmania. The Tasmanian government is effectively dictating to me which doctor I can consult about my health and which pharmacy I can fill my prescriptions at.

I have tried to obtain a prescription from a doctor who is physically present in Tasmania. I first asked the clinic I was formerly with, if they could suggest any, which they were unable to. I then rang every clinic on the first 40 pages of a Google search with the terms 'Medical Cannabis Tasmania'. After two days of telephone calls, I located three doctors in Tasmania who are willing to prescribe cannabis. Of those three, one is no longer accepting new patients and the other two are more than four hours of drive away. It is required by the law in Tasmania for at least the first consultation with the doctor prescribing cannabis to be in person, face-to-face. It is either impractical or impossible for me to see any of these practitioners face-to-face.

I will also draw to your attention that of the around 70 different medical cannabis clinics that I contacted, only two were aware of the legal situation in Tasmania, most knowing nothing and others having the distorted impression that a prescription only needs to be issued by a Tasmanian doctor if you intend to drive. At least one clinic appears to be taking advantage of the confusion regarding the situation in Tasmania. Tasmanian cannabis doctors are in fact Victorian-based, with no presence in Tasmania except the PO Box and telephone number that diverts to their Victorian office.

I am aware that theoretically any Tasmanian GP can prescribe medical cannabis and that any Tasmanian pharmacy can dispense medical cannabis. I have raised this with my regular GP. However, by his own statement, he doesn't know enough to prescribe medical cannabis and doesn't know anybody who does. I have spoken with my regular pharmacy about stocking medical cannabis, and they are unwilling. It is pointless having medical cannabis scheme in Tasmania if it is effectively impossible to both legally obtain and fill a prescription. This needs to be addressed. These draconian laws need to be relaxed. They are ridiculous, idiotic and not in line with community expectations.

Literally every other state in Australia has a streamlined process. You select a specialist clinic, prescreen, have an intensive telehealth consultation and once TGA approval is gained, the prescription is released to a pharmacy. In Tasmania, you first find a doctor who is willing to prescribe cannabis, book an appointment which for me was three months away, prescreened, then have a face-to-face, one-on-one consultation. If your doctor prescribes cannabis, then they need to gain TGA approval, then 59A exemption under the *Poisons Act*, then have it further approved by the Tasmanian Conditional Access Scheme. It is little wonder doctors are unwilling to prescribe in Tasmania. Since ceasing my regular cannabis medicines six weeks ago, my mental state has declined, and I am now at the point where I am seriously considering sourcing an illegal supply and dealing with any consequences as they happen.

I strongly urge you to take action on this matter at the earliest possible opportunity and bring Tasmania's laws into line with the rest of the country, to remove all of the unnecessary red tape and layers of bureaucracy that exist in gaining a legitimate medical cannabis prescription in Tasmania.

I would like to speak about my experiences. I was playing football with Smithton Football Club. I broke my leg. I had a wrong diagnosis. Two weeks later I went in for operation and came out of the operation with a plate and a few screws holding my tibia together. They had me on morphine which made me nauseous, sick, stuffed my head around and constipated me. I told I didn't want to take that. They said we will try some Panadeine Forte, so I went back to my shack. The same thing happened with the Panadeine Forte and I hated it. It constipated me and just stuffed me around. I had always smoked cannabis recreationally, not that often, mainly

after a game of footy with a few beers with my mates, but from that point on I found that the cannabis worked, basically. What I am saying is that it worked.

I might add that the statistics I saw recently showing that people going from opiates to cannabis are not going back to opiates. To me it's a great alternative to opiates if they don't suit you.

I want to also read on to the *Hansard* some of the submissions from Carers Tasmania.

Many Tasmanian carers support people who require the medications included within the proposed reforms but currently find accessing these medications difficult.

Due to the current regulatory framework for these medications and significant workforce shortages in Tasmania, carers are often required to travel interstate with the person they care for to help them obtain the prescriptions they need.

These medications are not able to be dispensed in Tasmania if prescribed by an interstate practitioner, and therefore the person and often their carers must travel back to that practitioner and have it dispensed in the practitioner's state. This is often time consuming, costly, stressful and frustrating.

For many, this is not an option, meaning many people are not accessing the medication that may be a key part of their treatment.

Further, carers of people living with chronic pain often also navigate complex systems. Pain management frequently involves medications that are strongly regulated and may require specialist input.

It can be difficult to access these specialists in Tasmania due to the extensive workforce shortages.

Carers Tasmania commends the Tasmanian government taking this important step forward toward improving access to these essential medications in Tasmania. This will not only assist those requiring these medications to manage their health conditions, but will reduce the emotional, physical and financial toll on carers of people living with ADHD, mental ill health and chronic pain. [tbc]

During the debate this morning, it was acknowledged across the Chamber that we need to do better for sufferers of chronic and persistent pain. Part of that is around building community awareness. The main part is around removing barriers to accessing to treatment for chronic and persistent pain. These restrictions around prescribing are definitely one of those barriers. Another barrier is the chronic shortage of specialist medical practitioners or indeed any medical practitioner in Tasmania, which prompts Tasmanians to increasingly seek assistance via telehealth. This is a very significant issue for the people of Braddon.

I will read into *Hansard* part of the submission from the Royal Australian College of Physicians specifically relevant to my electorate:

Access to medical care for conditions where clinically indicated stimulants are best practice is currently inequitable in Tasmania. This is especially the case in north-west Tasmania where there are very lengthy wait times to see a paediatrician or child and adolescent psychiatrists.

While this reform recognises a trend and is reducing some of the barriers to effectively utilising those telehealth services by recognising interstate prescriptions, this change also presents risk, which are highlighted in the submission from the Royal Australian College of Physicians on this bill:

Patients who gain better access to pain medicine, physicians, or addiction medicine physicians via telehealth, facilitated by the proposed reforms, will likely need to access greater levels of related services inside Tasmania. These needs should be carefully assessed, planned for, and appropriately resourced, including the recruitment of necessary staff.

They also note:

The issue is not simply one of prescription and dispensing medicine. The RACP has concerns that a proposed policy remedy focused only on improving access to medicine will fail to provide the coordinated and specialist care required for accurate diagnosis and for safe and effective pharmacology intervention.

For example, to take just one physician specialty - The Hobart Public Rheumatology Services working at capacity and has difficulty servicing the North and North West of Tasmania, remote prescribing from out of state will not change the fact that the Hobart Rheumatology Service cannot follow up additional patients on biologicals.

So, patients unable to afford recurring episodic private consultations for this monitoring will constitute a new demand on the Tasmanian Public Rheumatology Service. [tbc]

The RACP urges the Tasmanian Government to consider these impacts and ensure that the necessary resources and infrastructure are in place to support the reforms equitably for all Tasmanians. Essentially, there are numerous barriers for Tasmanians who need access to restricted medications. One of those barriers is being addressed by this bill, but the big one is access to medical care here in Tasmania. We know access in regional and remote areas of the state is getting worse, not better. There are many factors in play there, but one obvious one is sufficient government funding. I hope the Treasurer is listening to this debate while he puts the finishing touches on his November budget.

Question on Notice - Answer

Environment Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 - Review

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

See Appendix 1 on page [tbc]

[4.28 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Environment) - Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to make a contribution on the Poisons Amendment (Interstate Prescriptions) Bill 2025 because this is such commonsense legislation in direct response to calls from the community which have been formally raised in both state and national inquiries. Our government is delivering for Tasmanians as this bill will make it easier to access medications from interstate prescribers.

To summarise the purpose of the bill, the proposed changes seek to amend the *Poisons Act 1971* to remove restrictions that prevent Tasmanian pharmacists from dispensing certain prescriptions that have been issued interstate, to ensure appropriate safeguards are applied and to clarify its intended jurisdiction.

As described by the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, this bill accompanies the ongoing work of the Department of Health in reviewing the entire *Poisons Act 1971*. Public input and consultation will be sought as part of this comprehensive review to enable more contemporary legislation and this is important in the context of our debate today, as the amendment will enable Tasmania to join other states in a coordinated approach to interstate prescribing of Schedule 8s, or narcotic substances, and declared restricted substances, or S4Ds. The proposed change will apply to almost all medicines in those categories, which include the psychostimulants commonly used to treat ADHD, opioids, medicinal cannabis and benzodiazepines.

This bill proposes changes to amend the *Poisons Act 1971* that will make it easier for Tasmanian residents to obtain medicines prescribed by their interstate health practitioners. It will also improve access to medicines for interstate travellers in Tasmania. Currently, pharmacists in Tasmania aren't allowed, by law, to dispense certain prescriptions that have been written or issued interstate. The proposed changes will enable them to dispense a valid interstate prescription for almost any medicine that has been written by an Australian Health Professional Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registered health professional. In other words, the location of the prescriber within Australia will no longer restrict the dispensing of certain medicines in Tasmania.

Proposed changes to the bill are particularly in response to the barriers to accessing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) diagnosis and care, as highlighted in the media and also state and national inquiries. In its submission, the ADHD Foundation said:

The current restrictions on interstate prescriptions magnify the multitude of barriers to quality, holistic care for people living with ADHD. Many Tasmanians, particularly those living in regional areas or the large number of people who are unable to obtain timely support from a psychiatrist or paediatrician, are forced to seek specialist ADHD assessments and treatment services interstate. [tbc]

The ADHD Foundation's submission highlighted the positive impact these proposed changes will have on Tasmanians living with ADHD, their families and their carers. That is, that the proposed changes will make it possible for patients to obtain ADHD medicines on the basis of a valid prescription written by a prescriber operating interstate. Many Tasmanians access interstate psychiatrists or paediatricians for diagnosis and/or treatment of ADHD, and those specialists will now be able to prescribe it directly.

The proposed changes will also mean that travellers to Tasmania from interstate who bring valid prescriptions with them will be able to have these dispensed by local pharmacists. This will address an often raised frustration by visitors to our beautiful state. Travelling in Tasmania will be that little bit easier when our visitors can have the prescriptions they bring from their home state dispensed in Tasmania. Importantly, the bill ensures interstate prescribers have the relevant powers to prescribe declared restricted substances and narcotic substances under Tasmanian law, and are bound by requirements and safeguards.

For prescribers practising in Tasmania, there are no specific changes. For prescribers practising interstate, there are a number of changes that we should be aware of. When prescribing a monitored medicine for a Tasmanian resident, they must take all reasonable steps to check TasScript, Tasmania's real-time prescription monitoring system. When prescribing a Schedule 8 medicine for a Tasmanian resident, the authority of the secretary of the Department of Health is usually required. When prescribing for a non-resident Tasmanian, if the prescriber believes the prescription is going to be dispensed in Tasmania, they are required to comply with Tasmanian prescription requirements.

Pharmacists operating in Tasmania should treat interstate prescriptions as they would treat Tasmanian ones, but there are a number of additional things to be aware of. Specifically, the requirements differ depending on whether the patient is from Tasmania or is from interstate.

When dispensing a prescription for a monitored medicine that has been issued interstate for an interstate patient, the real-time prescription monitoring system that should be checked is that of the patient's home jurisdiction. An interstate prescription for a Tasmanian patient is required to comply with all the usual Tasmanian requirements and the pharmacist must also reasonably believe the prescription has been lawfully issued in the jurisdiction of issue. An interstate prescription for an interstate patient will be able to be dispensed as long as the pharmacist reasonably believes it was lawfully prescribed in the relevant jurisdiction and it is otherwise appropriate for dispensing.

For pharmacists operating outside Tasmania, the main change that may be relevant is that the proposed bill removes a requirement which meant affected medicine dispensed interstate could only be brought into Tasmania physically by the person to whom it was prescribed or a family member, and had to be on their person or in their luggage. Pharmacists may now choose other means of delivery, such as Australia Post, noting other legal and policy restrictions may apply.

Reducing barriers to access of medicines will be balanced with existing systems and safeguards, ensuring equity between Tasmanian prescribers and those interstate.

The proposed changes will be monitored and enforced by the Pharmaceutical Services Branch of the Department of Health. The preferred approach is to encourage and support compliance through education and awareness raising in the first instance. Existing Tasmanian controls will apply to interstate prescriptions, ensuring equity with Tasmanians who receive their prescription from local prescribers.

Further, regulatory controls are in place in all states and territories to protect the public from harms commonly associated with the types of medicines affected by this proposal. Prescribers and pharmacists have extensive training. There are also safeguards, including

restrictions on who can prescribe and supply certain medicines, requirements around prescriptions themselves, and real-time prescription monitoring (RTPM). RTPM systems are clinical decision support tools containing information about prescribed and dispensed medicines that enable prescribers and pharmacists to make better-informed decisions.

Most of the medicines that will be more accessible as a result of this change are monitored medicines through RTPM, including opioids, psychostimulants, medicinal cannabis and benzodiazepines. Other Australian states generally allow interstate prescriptions for these types of medicines to be dispensed by local pharmacists. All states and territories categorise medicines in line with the national Poisons Standard, and in so doing, acknowledge that certain medicines are high-risk.

While the preferred approach to enforcement is to encourage and support compliance through education and awareness raising, existing regulatory tools are available for addressing problematic, unsafe or illegal prescribing behaviour by interstate practitioners. These include:

- correspondence reminding of requirements and penalties and urging compliance;
- issuing infringement notices;
- reporting practitioners to AHPRA;
- referring these matters to interstate equivalents.

Formal sanctions are usually only used when attempts to resolve issues collaboratively have failed, or in particular serious circumstances.

The availability of telehealth is a valuable innovation that improves access to healthcare, but it is not without its challenges. Safe access to medicines relies on clinicians doing the right thing, but the health practitioner regulatory environment provides a number of tools to address any issues. APRA and the national boards and peak organisations are continually working to ensure practitioners operate within clear guidelines on safe and appropriate provision of medicines and telehealth services.

Following passage of the bill, an implementation period of up to a couple of months is planned for the bill before it commences. This lead time will ensure that adequate communication with Tasmanian and national prescribers and pharmacists can take place. The Department of Health will work with professional organisations to communicate key information. Supporting information will be made available on the Department of Health website on an ongoing basis. The Pharmaceutical Services Branch could also be contacted for assistance, and each jurisdiction provides technical support for its Real Time Prescription Monitoring system.

In closing, this bill delivers on our government's commitment to enable interstate prescribing of medicines. This bill will bring Tasmania into line with other states in allowing prescriptions issued interstate to be dispensed and will contribute to improved access to healthcare for Tasmanians.

[4.40 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Deputy Speaker, I thank all members for their positive consideration of this important bill and for their valuable contributions to this discussion. I thank again those individual members of the community who have contributed to this bill, either indirectly by telling us about their experiences or by making formal submissions.

I also acknowledge and thank those stakeholder groups who have engaged with and helped to improve this bill, in particular the local branches of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and the Pharmacy Guild, the Australian Medical Association and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. In addition, Rural Doctors Association of Tasmania, Carers Tasmania, the ADHD Foundation Australia, and Health Consumers Tasmania.

I'd also like to thank my predecessors in this portfolio, Guy Barnett and Mr Jaensch, for their involvement in progressing this matter, and the Department of Health for its work to bring on these changes.

I will take this opportunity to address the matters raised during the debate. In particular, I emphasise again that this bill is first and foremost about the health of Tasmanians, including young and vulnerable Tasmanians. It is intended to remove a barrier by accessing medications that have been lawfully prescribed by appropriately qualified health professionals, and that has been our focus in drafting these changes.

We are also aware that the *Poisons Act 1971* is imperfect and many of the matters raised, such as authorities to prescribe, coordination of care and co-prescribing, while out of scope for these amendments, will inform our broader review. Other comments, including issues with Real Time Prescription Monitoring and ensuring clinically safe telehealth prescribing will continue to inform our engagement in national discussions on these matters.

We do want our laws to be the best that they can be, and I thank the member for Bass, Ms Rosol, and Mr Garland for raising the issues about interaction with the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970* that can impact users of certain medicines, and the amendment that Ms Rosol will bring on that issue.

Many of the matters raised by members are consistent with the intended approach to implementation and enforcement, noting that this will include regulations as well as supporting materials. Implementation activities will include further communication of how the changes will work and what will be required of pharmacists and prescribers. In the vast majority of cases, this will not be significantly different to what pharmacists do now in dispensing prescriptions for Tasmanians.

As flagged, the commencement date for the bill will be proclaimed, allowing a short period of time for communication and education. We expect that this will be around a couple of months but we will work towards commencement as soon as possible and will publicise the confirmed date at the earliest opportunity. Again, I thank and acknowledge the Tasmanian Department of Health for the work it will do to enable this and I thank our stakeholders for their support as this work is undertaken. We're committed to bringing this into place quickly to make it easier for Tasmanians to safely access the medicines they need. I again thank members for their contribution.

I do have a few answers to your questions, Ms Dow in particular. In relation to the *Poisons Act 1971*, the Department of Health has commenced a comprehensive review and a rewrite of the *Poisons Act 1971* and regulations. Extensive public consultation will be undertaken during 2026. Prior to public consultation, people can contact my office or the department with any issues that they wish to raise.

In relation to who was consulted, the draft bill and regulations were released for consultation on 24 March 2025, supported by a media release on 2 April 2025, and consultation closed on 24 April 2025, although late submissions were accepted and one extension was granted. That included the organisations I mentioned in my summing-up.

Safety checks and balances, which you raised - monitoring compliance and enforcement of the act is undertaken by the Pharmaceutical Services Branch of the Department of Health. The preferred approach is to encourage and support compliance through education and awareness-raising in the first instance. Regulatory tools available for addressing problematic, unsafe, or illegal prescribing behaviour by interstate practitioners include correspondence, reminding of requirements and penalties and urging compliance, issuing infringement notices, reporting practitioners to AHPRA, or referring these matters to interstate equivalents.

Formal sanctions are usually only used where attempts to resolve issues collaboratively have failed or in particularly serious circumstances. Prescribers and pharmacists with concerns identified through RTPM or otherwise should consider discussing their concerns with the relevant clinician or making a report to the relevant authority.

Existing Tasmanian controls will apply to interstate prescriptions, and regulatory controls are in place in all states and territories to protect the public from harms commonly associated with the types of medicines affected by this proposal. Prescribers and pharmacists have extensive training, and there are additional safeguards, including restrictions on who can prescribe and supply certain medicines, requirements around prescriptions themselves, and Real Time Prescription Monitoring.

Other Australian states generally allow interstate prescriptions for these types of medicines to be dispensed by local pharmacists. All states and territories categorise medicines in line with the national Poisons Standard, and in doing so acknowledge that certain medicines are high-risk.

In relation to the national RTPM that you mentioned - I think Ms Rosol raised a similar issue - we strongly support all efforts towards a genuinely national interoperable system. The existing systems will automatically capture access by pharmacists in their activity logging. Where pharmacists attempt but are unable to access systems, any dispensing decision will be a matter for them taking account of the rules and their own clinical judgement, and they would be strongly encouraged to document their decision-making.

The legislation is in place and operational. I think that was your question, Ms Rosol. But the information technology used nationally means that it is not fully integrated. This is a matter for the National Digital Health Agency. It is under national discussion, and I will be advocating at that level.

Ms Dow - Just to be clear, there is nothing about our system that is prohibiting us from participating in this?

Mrs ARCHER - No, it is the national. It is the way they talk to each other.

Doctor shopping is probably covered in the comments that I have just made above. Midwives are included to acknowledge scope of practice but agree that practically it is unlikely. It is included for consistency and to ensure that no barrier in the unlikely event that it is required.

In relation to Australia Post, we don't regulate the national post. Restrictions may exist at that level regarding what can be posted, but we are ensuring that our law doesn't impose any additional restrictions. I think that was the answer to all the questions.

I again thank members for their contributions and commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

POISONS AMENDMENT (INTERSTATE PRESCRIPTIONS) BILL 2025 (No. 45)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.

New clause A to follow clause 5 -

Ms ROSOL - As mentioned in my second reading speech, I flagged that we would be moving this amendment. I wish to move the following amendment, which has been circulated both by e-mail and in the Chamber today. The amendment is for a new clause A to follow clause 5 –

I move -

A, Section 36, further amended offences relating to certain restricted substances.

Section 36 of the Principal Act is amended by -

Inserting after subsection 2(b) the following subsection

- 2(c) For the purposes of section 6A of the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970*, a substance in respect of which subsection 2(a) applies is taken to have been obtained in accordance with this act.
[TBC]

Clause 5 of this bill amends section 36 of the Principal Act to provide that a person may possess a restricted substance to which the section 36 applies if it was lawfully prescribed in another state or territory for the use of the person or a member of the person's immediate family.

Our amendment will further amend this section to ensure this same exemption applies to section 6A of the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970*. In effect, this will mean that the same rules apply with respect to the offence of driving with prescribed illicit drug in blood,

regardless of whether a restricted substance was prescribed and/or dispensed in Tasmania or in another state or a territory. Section 6A(2) of the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970* requires that a prescribed illicit drug be obtained and administered in accordance with the *Poisons Act 1971*.

There are, in effect, three requirements: the substance has to be a prescribed illicit drug; the substance has to be obtained in accordance with the *Poisons Act 1971*; and the substance needs to be administered in accordance with the *Poisons Act 1971*. You might note that our amendment only clarifies that the substance is taken to be obtained in accordance with this act. The advice that we have is that the administered element is already covered by the regulations.

So, in plain English, when a substance is prescribed in another state, we have amended it that it is legal here and that means that people are complying with the *Poisons Act* as amended, should the bill pass, but if somebody then goes on to obtain the substance in another state, so it is prescribed and obtained in another state, it is not covered by the *Poisons Act* here because it was prescribed and dispensed under a different poisons act. This closes that loophole by saying that a substance that is prescribed and dispensed in another state, brought here and if somebody was found to be not complying with the *Road Safety Act*, they would now be covered by this amendment so that they can have a prescription obtained in another state as well.

That's what this is about. We have done it as two separate amendments with another amendment relating to restricted substances. Our second amendment applies to raw narcotics and narcotics substances. It is still only of a practical effect if that substance is also a prescribed illicit drug under the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970*.

To be clear, our amendments do not alter what is considered a prescribed illicit drug under the act. As far as we can determine, no current prescribed illicit drugs are also declared restricted substances to which section 36 applies, instead falling within the purview of narcotic substances and that goes to our second amendment. As lists of substances that are considered prescribed illicit drugs and declared restricted substances, raw narcotics, or narcotic substances are all subject to change by order, we considered it was pertinent to cover both possibilities in section 36 and section 48 to future proof against any relevant changes.

Mrs ARCHER - I thank the member for the amendments. The proposed Greens amendments relate to driving with prescribed illicit drugs, for example, medicinal cannabis in your system. Currently, driving with any detectable amount of THC from medicinal cannabis in your system is an offence in Tasmania under the *Road Safety Act*. There's an exemption to this offence if the product was obtained and administered in accordance with the *Poisons Act*, as the member has said.

The proposed changes in the bill will bring medicinal cannabis prescriptions issued interstate for Tasmanians under the *Poisons Act*. This means driving with medicinal cannabis in your system will not be an offence as long as they are not impaired, that is driving under the influence.

The Greens amendment adds mention of section 6A of the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970* into this bill and, therefore, the *Poisons Act* to reduce confusion about where a medicine is prescribed or dispensed under the *Road Safety Act*. While it is our view that it would be neater to amend the *Road Safety Act*, and this may be considered in the future, I can confirm that we will not oppose the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 10 agreed to.

New clause B to follow clause 10 -

Ms ROSOL - Deputy Chair, I move the following amendment:

New clause B to follow clause 10.

Clause B, section 48, further amended possession of narcotic substances, et cetera.

Section 48 of the Principal Act is amended by inserting, after subsection 2(d), the following subsection:

- (2)(e) For the purposes of section 6A of the *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970*, a raw narcotic or narcotic substance in respect of which subsection (2)(a) applies is taken to have been obtained in accordance with this act.

This amendment is very similar to the previous amendment, which I outlined the reasons for, so I don't think I need to add anything more. I would like to say thank you to the OPC, who helped with the drafting of both of these amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 13 agreed to.

Title as read agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment.

POISONS AMENDMENT (INTERSTATE PRESCRIPTION) BILL 2025 (No. 45)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Joint Sessional Committee - Recommendations of Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry - Re-Establishment

[5.00 pm]

The SPEAKER - I am receipt of a message from the Legislative Council:

The Legislative Council, having taken into consideration the message of the House of Assembly dated 9 September 2025 regarding the re-establishment of the joint recommendations from Commission of Inquiry Committee has agreed to the following resolution.

- (1) That a Joint Sessional Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers would lead to sit during any adjournment of both Houses and would leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon matters related to the recommendations made in the final report of the Commission Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's response to child sexual abuse in institutional settings, including:
 - (i) The Tasmanian Government's response and plan to implement the recommendations.
 - (ii) The Tasmanian Government's progress in implementing the recommendations.
 - (iii) Outcomes related to implementation of recommendations both partially and implemented.
 - (iv) Monitoring progress reports provided to Parliament as provided for by recommendation 22.1 by the Independent Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor, when appointed.
 - (v) Overseeing the performance and proper execution of functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People as provided for by recommendation 18.9.
 - (vi) Any other relevant matters that either House may refer to the Sessional Committee.
 - (vii) Any other matters incidental thereto.
- (2) The number of members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the House of Assembly B (4) with the following amendments:

In paragraph (1)(d) *leave out* 'when appointed'.

In paragraph (1)(e), *leave out* 'Commissioner' and *insert* instead 'Commission'.

After paragraph (1), *insert* the following new paragraph and *renumber* existing paragraph (2) as 'paragraph (3)'.
- (3) That Committee be authorised to receive all evidence, submission and related correspondence and papers received by the Joint Sessional Committee Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's

UNCORRECTED PROOF

response to child sexual abuse in institutional settings from the 51st Parliament and in paragraph 3 as renumbered, *leave out* '4' and in *insert* '3'.

Further, the Legislative Council has resolved that Ms O'Connor, Ms Lovell and Ms Webb be appointed to serve on the Committee on the part of the Council and that Monday, 6 October 2025 at 12.00 pm be the time and Committee Room 2 be the place for the holding of the first meeting of the said committee.

Legislative Council, 25 September 2025,
CM Farrell, President.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker. I move -

That the message be considered forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the House. I assume there weren't any in opposition.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - I was listening.

Mr ABETZ - I move

That the proposed time and date of the first meeting be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker, I move -

That Mrs Greene, Mr Jaensch and Ms Rosol be appointed to serve on the joint sessional committee on the part of the House.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, to quickly comment on the re-establishment of this committee, this committee is established to do some incredibly important work on behalf of this House on behalf of the people of Tasmania in the wake of the commission of the inquiry. We thank the Upper House for its work and nominating its members. We thank the members in this House, my colleague Ms Rosol, Mr Jaensch and Mrs Greene for volunteering on our behalf to do that work. We support the this motion.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters - Re-Establishment and Appointment

DEPUTY SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a message from the Legislative Council:

The Legislative Council having taken into consideration the message of the House of Assembly dated 9 September 2025 regarding the re-establishment of the Joint Senate Committee on Energy Prices has agreed to the following resolution -

- (1) That a Joint Select Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into a report upon energy prices and related matters in Tasmania with the following terms of reference
 - (a) Factors that impact energy prices for Tasmanian households and small and medium business customers with particular reference to energy generation, distribution and retail costs.
 - (b) The challenges related to energy supply and energy costs in Tasmania, including -
 - (i) Role in participation of state-owned energy entities;
 - (ii) Energy requirements;
 - (iii) Expansion of state-owned renewable energy generation, including associated community and economic benefits;
 - (iv) Private energy generators;
 - (v) Energy generation, storage and transmission capacity; and
 - (vi) Energy security considerations.
 - (c) Opportunities related to energy supply and energy costs in Tasmania, including -
 - (i) Role and participation of State-owned energy entities;
 - (ii) Energy requirements;
 - (iii) Expansion of state owned renewable energy generation, including associated community and economic benefits;
 - (iv) Private energy generators;
 - (v) Energy generation, storage and transmission capacity; and
 - (vi) Energy security considerations.

- (d) Tasmania's past, current and future participation in the National Electricity Market with a focus on impacts for Tasmania, including matters related to the national renewable energy transition.
 - (i) Current and future energy demand;
 - (ii) Costs, risks and benefits; and
 - (iii) Resource opportunities.
 - (e) Marinus Link PTY Ltd and associated energy power developments, (Battery of the Nation and North West Transmission Developments) including -
 - (i) Likely beneficiaries;
 - (ii) Funding arrangements, including the potential for private sector contribution;
 - (iii) Impact on Tasmania's energy bills and concessional pricing arrangements; and
 - (iv) Alternative options and associated costs and/or benefits to Tasmania, including costs and a cost of do nothing approach.
 - (f) Any other matters incidental thereto.
- (2) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions received by the Legislative Council Sessional Committee, Government Administration A Inquiry into Energy Prices in Tasmania from the third session of the 50th Parliament.
- (3) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions and related correspondence and papers received by the Joint Select Committee on energy matters from the 50th and 51st Parliament.
- (4) That the number of members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the House of the Assembly be four

With the following amendments -

Leave out paragraph (2) and renumber the following paragraphs accordingly

In paragraph (3) (as renumbered) *leave out* '50th and' years

Further, the Legislative Council has resolved Mr Edmunds, Ms Forrest, Mr Harriss and Ms Lovell be appointed to serve on the Committee on behalf of the Council and that Wednesday, 15 October 2025 at 2.00 p.m. be the time

and Committee Room 1 be the place for the holding of the first meeting of the Committee.

CM Farrell. President,
Legislative Council, 25 September 2025

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the Deputy Clerk for that mammoth effort. I move -

That the message be considered forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the amendments proposed by the Legislative Council to the resolution be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the House. I move -

I move that the proposed time and date of the first meeting be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ABETZ - Deputy Speaker, again, I thank the House. I move -

That Mr Bayley, Ms Finlay, Mr Garland and Mr Ferguson be appointed to serve on the said Joint Select Committee on the part of the House.

[5.09 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, again, reiterate the welcoming, the re-establishment of this coming back down from us from the House and thank all the members for putting up their hands to sit on it. I do say with some regret though, that some of the issues that we were considering, particularly in relation to Marinus Link and the benefits and others have been outstripped by the enthusiasm of the government to endorse that project ahead of any really credible consultation with this parliament and even the Tasmanian community. That is of some regret because the committee had done significant work in understanding Marinus, the challenges, the risks and the significant investment that was involved there.

Some of the work of this committee has been pulled out from under it, but nonetheless we will still be able to scrutinise some of that work and report back and hope that the benefits for Tasmania, some benefit, can be clawed back and from a Greens perspective, we can collectively relook at the commitments that have been made in that place.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker, on the strength of that speech by Mr Bayley, can I seek leave for an amendment? I move -

Delete my good friend Mr Ferguson from the list of the Committee and insert the name of my good friend Mr Vermey.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**TAXATION AND RELATED LEGISLATION (FIRST HOMEOWNER AND
PAYROLL RELIEF) BILL 2025 (No. 43)**

Second Reading

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of Government Business) - Deputy Speaker. I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

Today, our government is delivering on its election promises to increase the First Homeowner Grant to \$30,000 and extend the payroll tax rebate scheme for apprentices for a further 12 months. Following the state election, the government committed to introduce a suite of taxation and related initiatives within its first 100 days of being in office. This bill introduces the first two of those initiatives by amending the *First Homeowner Grant Act 2000* to help Tasmanians into their first home and support Tasmania's building and construction industry while also amending the *Payroll Tax Rebate (Apprentices, Trainees and Youth Employees) Act 2017* to continue providing payroll tax relief to Tasmanian businesses who employ our next generation of tradespeople.

The government is boosting the First Homeowner Grant from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for a period of 12 months from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 to help young Tasmanians and families get a foot up on the property ladder. This means that Tasmania will have one of the most competitive first homeowner grants offered by any state or territory in Australia.

The government's drive for new construction across the state will give young Tasmanians and families a greater incentive to build their own home, helping to address housing supply in Tasmania. New construction will also boost Tasmania's building and construction industry, creating more work and jobs.

We know that our plan works and this government will stick to this plan. We have one of the most competitive environments in the country and the lowest unemployment rate of all states at 3.9 per cent, I think it's now 3.7 per cent. We plan to continue this momentum and support our economy to grow now and into the future.

The government is also extending the payroll tax rebates scheme for apprentices for 12 months from 20 June 2025 to 30 June 2026. Local businesses make a significant investment in training the next generation of skilled Tasmanians. In recognition of this contribution, the government will continue its support for local businesses which employ and train apprentices.

Extending the payroll tax rebate scheme in this manner will support skills development, create more jobs and help more young Tasmanians into the workforce.

The bill gives effect to the first two tax and grant initiatives announced by this government in the lead up to the 2025 state election. This bill, coupled with our 2025 election commitments, build further on our 2030 strong plan for Tasmania's future and we're getting on with the job of delivering for the Tasmanian people.

I commend the bill to the House.

[5.12 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, I will open by saying we will support the bill. It's good to see the government in this case, promise to do something promise this bill to the Tasmanian people and now they're bringing exactly what they said to the House, which is how it should work. There'll be people watching this in the salmon industry, in the racing industry, in the forest industry, wondering, 'Why didn't that happen to me?' It is regretful that it is now so uncommon for this Liberal government to arrive here with bills that are in line with their election promises. But it is uncommon, it's noteworthy that in this case, they actually are.

This is a bill that brings together commitments around payroll tax and the First Home Owner Grant, to boost it to \$30,000. That will undoubtedly stimulate the economy. It is undoubtedly expensive though, which is why, regretfully, Labor, during the election campaign, did not commit to these policies because of the cost of it, but we will support it here today. We will support it here on the basis that presumably the government, through its upcoming budget, is going to outline how they will pay for it. That's what governments should do.

According to Treasury, I think the estimate through the briefing was \$18.6 million in additional expenditure through the 2025-26 and 2027-28 financial years, which is substantial. We are currently standing here debating the expenditure and also not bringing in as much revenue to the tune of a net detriment of the budget of \$18.6 million is estimated. That is a big decision for the House to make. There are reasons why we should do that, which is why we're supporting it. Particularly when it comes to Tasmania's housing sector at the moment and for young people. I'm one of those young people that benefited when I bought my first home, I think it was called a boost at that stage, when I bought my bed sit in North Hobart for \$151,000 in 2010 and sold it for not much more. I occasionally feel sad about the decision to sell that house. But I was helped and assisted and I wouldn't have been able to buy my first home at that stage in my life without the boost. There will be young people and some older people who will benefit from this policy and from this decision, if it's successful through the house, who will get to buy their very first home. Which will support them and their families, we hope, for decades to come. That's a good thing, but it is an expensive policy.

The policy in the second reading speech outlines that the bill amends the first homeowner grants to increase it from \$10,000 to \$30,000 from 1 July until 30 June this financial year and so there is some backpay. Presumably there may have been people who've already purchased their home understanding that this was government policy and they will be expecting and probably watching to see that this actually goes through. There is an element here to provide some certainty because there is an element of retrospective-ness in what's going on.

Also, the *Payroll Tax Rebate(Apprentices, Trainee and Youth Employees) Act* is extended for the rebate scheme for apprentices out to 30 June. This is an existing policy that's

now extended, so as we understand it, the government wasn't expecting to extend out this policy, but is now doing so through the election campaign and that additional \$18.6 million worth of expenditure. As I said, I'm looking forward to hearing, and perhaps as a question to the Treasurer today: could the Treasurer outline how the government is planning to pay for this policy? Given last year's \$1.7 billion cash deficit and the expectation of us moving towards \$13 billion worth of net debt, presumably they thought this through and outlined some savings or some way to pay for the policy.

There is, though, a significant lag in building approvals in this state. First Home Owner Grants will undoubtedly help to stimulate the first home buyers market and also new builds into the economy.

There is a housing crisis here in the state. The Housing Industry Association (HIA) released a report only in May this year which outlined where Tasmania sat on the scorecard for the whole country and we were rated, unfortunately, last. South Australia rated first, Western Australia second, Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, and then last by a good margin was Tasmania. The report outlined, thanks to the HIA, some of the reasons for that.

It said Tasmania has tumbled down the rankings in the last few years. This the state was on top of the table at the end of 2019, but most recently slipped behind the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory to be at the very bottom of the table. It has one of the weaker renovations market with a lack of new house building work entering the pipeline. It has completed its entire backlog of house bills accumulated since 2020. Tasmania also has the weakest multi-unit sector in the nation, with this sector still representing a small share of the overall market despite policymaker efforts to the contrary.

The state is also seeing relatively weak inflows of overseas arrivals and the continued exit of residents interstate. A relatively weaker renovation market, Tasmania has a relatively small volume of detached houses under construction, just 4 per cent above its decade average, had the weakest multi-unit sector development, the weakest market for the nation for non-first home buyers, and investors and it did not rank much better with first home buyers. It also had the weakest migration figures, according to the HIA.

I noticed during the election campaign as well that the HIA was one of the strongest backers of this policy, presumably dealing with some of the issues that their members and young Tasmanians are dealing with; a lack of affordable housing supply for young people, lack of rentals for young people, and a lack of work for builders. What we've seen over the last six to nine months, particularly speaking to the building sector organisations like the HIA - I acknowledge Stuart Collins, by the way, who was a great advocate for the building sector, I wish him well in the future - is a Tasmanian building and construction sector which is really lagging at the moment.

It desperately needs some stimulus and dealing with a lack of demand, presumably and partly, according to the HIA, part of net interstate migration loss, but also a burdensome planning scheme that makes it very, very hard to build a home here. This problem that we are trying to solve here today, which is to support first home builders and buyers, isn't just dealt with by throwing out additional \$20,000 in first home owners boosts, though that's important and that's welcomed and we are supporting that today, but also requires real planning reform. I'm looking forward, in my new role as the shadow planning minister to prosecuting some of

these issues and some of these issues we heard today, even around the consumer affairs portfolio that Dr Broad asked about this morning.

This is a problem which is multi-faceted. Yes, there's a lack of demand, which is dealt with by this bill and supports additional demand

Mr WINTER –

multifaceted. Yes, there's a lack of demand, which is dealt with by this bill. It supports additional demand to stimulate some more homes being built. There are also supply issues. There is a burdensome planning system and councils that are being difficult to build with, frankly. These issues need to be solved.

Labor supports the bill today. We can see that the building sector, in particular, needs some stimulus. However, the question I have for the Treasurer is: what are the government's plans to find equivalent savings, given the state of the budget?

[5.23 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the Treasurer for bringing the Taxation and Related Legislation (First Home Owner and Payroll Relief) Bill forward. The Greens support this bill. We supported this initiative in the election context and we will follow through in supporting the bill in the House today. It is obviously a bill in two parts: the first homeowners grant and then payroll relief. I thank the departmental officials for their briefing. It was very useful on this bill. It is a relatively simple change to an existing framework. It changes the \$10,000 First Home Owner Grant to a \$30 000 grant and it extends it from July 2025 through to June 2026, obviously noting that it is retrospective back to July 2025.

The First Home Owner Grant is an initiative we support, not without some trepidation in relation to both the budgetary impacts and market impacts in relation to house prices. However, it undoubtedly gives young people - or first homeowners, they may not necessarily be young people, but probably predominantly young people - a leg-up. Similar to Mr Winter, perhaps a decade or so earlier than him, when I got into my first home in the early 2000s, I think the First Home Owner Grant at that point was \$7000 and it was of significant assistance. It did make a difference.

However, this is a vexed issue. House prices have been skyrocketing over recent times relative to income. This has been particularly noticeable in Tasmania post-COVID. PropTrack released its latest report on 1 September and identified that national prices increased by 0.5 per cent in August. It is the eighth consecutive month of growth. Nationally, prices have risen by 5.3 per cent in the last year. I don't have the figures regionally in Tasmania, but in Hobart we have had a small drop of 0.5 per cent, but the annual growth over the last year has been 3.1 per cent, and the five-year growth has been 30.2 per cent.

When you have figures like that, we know that it is incredibly difficult for young people, in particular, to enter the home owner market. These kinds of initiatives make a difference. The intention is to increase the deposit and, therefore, improve accessibility for first home owners.

I acknowledge the view that, over time, the efficacy of these kinds of initiatives is diminished because of this impact on house prices more broadly. While we support this, it is certainly not a silver bullet when it comes to the housing crisis. The housing crisis is having a significant impact across the board in our community, and there are levers that need to be pulled in just about every jurisdiction.

Mr Winter mentioned some of the planning issues and we definitely need to see more reform and more incentive when it comes to medium-density development across our residential areas. Places like the northern rail corridor in my electorate of Clark is the perfect example: sitting ready and waiting for some stimulation and reform so that the kind of investment and medium-density development that can happen there does happen there.

At the national level, there has been a long debate about negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts. These are one of the most significant contributors to housing inaccessibility. Tax breaks for property developers is coming at an impact for first home owners. This is something that desperately needs to be reformed. I am proud to be part of a party that, at the national level, has put interstate property developers on notice, has flagged the need to reform negative gearing and capital gains tax. We need to make sure that interstate property investors do not get the kind of tax breaks they are currently getting for multiple investment properties. This is, effectively, stripping supply or at least accessible supply out of the market for first home owners here. Greens analysis has shown that doing away with these tax breaks would allow 850 000 people across the country to access their own home and 31 per cent of renters would shift from renting into home ownership. The cherry on top, the additional benefit in relation to that, is it would raise the kind of revenue you would need to build 600,000 public and affordable homes. This kind of reform is critically important.

At the state level, we come in here nearly every time we sit and talk about short-stay accommodation and needing to rein in the loss of whole home rentals to short-stay accommodation. We need to give renters more rights. This week we celebrated the opportunity to give renters the right to have pets in their rentals. That was very welcome, Attorney-General. Thank you for bringing that forward. You have also tabled the bill in relation to toppling furniture. However, there is so much more that needs to be done. We need to control out-of-control rents. We need to rein in no-cause evictions so that people cannot be evicted for no fault of their own. We need minimum standards in our houses so that they are comfortable and we need to allow people minor modifications. We look forward to debating the toppling furniture bill and we will bring forward some amendments there to expand the ability for tenants to undertake minor modifications.

We also acknowledge the Treasurer's commitment to bring forward the *Residential Tenancy Act* review and, ultimately, deliver reforms in that space. They are overdue and we need to be doing everything we can when it comes to the housing crisis.

In the short term, a contribution for a First Home Owner Grant is welcome, acknowledging that there are some challenges, both in paying for it and the impact more broadly. Some amendments have been distributed by my colleague in Clark, Ms Johnston, which I believe will add a little bit more integrity again to this program.

Regarding the payroll tax side of this bill, again we are supportive of this initiative. I have a quick question for the Treasurer: the current scheme, as stated, applies to apprentices, trainees and youth employees, but my understanding is that this initiative is quarantined for apprentices only. The question in my mind is, why is that? There are obviously benefits from the kind of programs that are run to increase participation by trainees and youth employees so why have these been struck out in this case when they have been part of this program to date?

We will support this bill. We look forward to discussing Ms Johnston's amendments.

[5.32 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, whenever I have asked Tasmanians over the last 25 years what is the worst stress they have, they have a similar answer: finances. What has happened for the last 25 years? Well, there has been a massive increase in individual debt, mainly or partly due to a rapid rise in house prices. It started in 2000 with the first stimulant to encourage first-time home buyers to own their own home. This led to a massively increased demand, which contributed to increased house prices. Whenever there has been a slowdown in house prices, successive governments responded with more stimuli, to a degree that house prices spiralled out of control and many people, especially the young ones, cannot afford to buy a house.

In addition to that, this also led to an increase in rental homes, with many people spending a good proportion of their income on housing. To give you an example of how house prices have increased since 2000: house prices in 2000 increased by 20 per cent following the HomeBuilder Grant, by a degree of about 22 per cent. Wages only increased by 2 per cent, so there was no compensation for the workers with wages.

I have looked at the Home Grants since 2000, and the best year for them was 2008. We know what happened in 2008 - that was the global financial crisis. If you look at the degree of rises, there were always more investors than first-time home buyers. In 2008, it was the only time first home buyers outnumbered investors, to a degree. For example, the first home buyers were at 66 per cent whereas investors were about 33 per cent. After the year 2000, when we gave out the HomeBuilder Grant, it reversed - then you had investors at nearly 60 per cent, while first home buyers made up about 30 per cent.

What we are seeing is that we help first-time homeowners at the beginning, then fewer and fewer people can afford houses but we have more investors in this state, and that's quite relevant. That's why I feel that all these stimuli have not actually helped. To give you an example of how it hurts buyers, when the First Home Owner Grant started in 2000 by the federal government it was mainly until 2013. During that period, it was estimated that for every \$7000 they gave, it contributed to a \$57,000 increase in house prices. In the last 10 to 15 years it's been even more than that.

My feeling is, I am going to support the motion today, because even if it helps a few young people I would be delighted. However, I think we need to slow down and even stop the uncontrollable rise in house prices. We need to slow down investment in the housing market, because they have become the major buyers, at the expense of first home buyers. Government needs to act fast to provide low-cost, affordable and social housing. Thank you.

[5.37 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to support the bill, particularly since some of the core of my campaign, apart from some of the more short-term campaigns, is on education, health and housing, and improving those for Tasmanians.

I recognise that a \$30,000 grant is a considerable increase on what was available before. The more people entering the market means that there will be an issue of supply and demand, and the potential increases in prices for property as a result of that. Thus, it may end up, whether we like it or not, in the long term, making it more difficult for low-income purchasers to enter the market. These types of grants, especially in combination with access to the MyHomes program, can also encourage overconfidence in buyers, who are initially likely to spend more than they are possibly able to repay, and thus overextend themselves.

I would like to have seen a cap on the price of a house that can attract these benefits of around the \$750,000 mark. Retrospectively applied, I think it's perfectly reasonable. I also think the fact that this grant will end in June 2026 is responsible, given the state of the debt and the fact that there'll be a new budget to be prepared.

I ask the minister if he could undertake to provide an update on the likely impact and outcomes of the 2025-26 \$30,000 commitment in time for the 2026 budget considerations? In other words, what I am requesting is a report on the impact of the increase of \$30,000 on the rental market, on construction and the house purchase market, and a reflection on whether this has led to an increase in the median price of housing in Tasmania.

In other words, what I am asking for is a real deep dive into monitoring the impact of this grant, which I do support.

[5.40 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Treasurer) - Honourable Speaker, I thank all those that made a contribution to this bill. I thank them for their support and for some of the comments and observations made.

If I can try to deal with them in order, in relation to the member for Franklin, the shadow treasurer, Mr Winter, the government will be reappropriating the Homes Faster! Partnership residential land rebate, and the Homes Faster! medium-high density development grant, both of which weren't taken up to any great extent. Governments do these things with the best of intentions, but sometimes they don't have the full -

Mr Winter - Can it be fully funded by that grant, the Homes Faster!?

Mr ABETZ - We are hoping so, but with these, it is always difficult to predict in advance what the uptake will be. It is our view that these will basically balance out.

From member for Clark, Mr Bayley's contribution, fully agree, this is not a silver bullet. There are many multi-factorial issues that impact the housing market, supply and demand, some of our planning laws, et cetera. There are a whole host of factors. I fully accept that this is not the cure-all, but it is a slight, or small initiative to assist especially the first home owners.

In relation to the payroll tax and why it is only for apprentices, as I think members are starting to accept and realise, there is a limit to government largesse. As much as we would

like to support right across the board, it was determined that apprentices would be the category for skilled workers that we would seek to assist in this measure.

In relation to Prof Razay, yes, there are many people under financial stress. All of us around this House would be aware of that from constituent feedback, cost-of-living, et cetera. The observations made about the rapid rise in house prices is, without being too provocative, I think it was in 2010 that the former leader of the Greens, Senator Brown, called for a limit on the immigration intake when it was only 184,000, if I recall, because of the stress on infrastructure, housing, et cetera. Here we are now many years advanced from 2010 with a lot higher, and it's supply and demand; there are more people vying for houses. It's supply and demand, and there is, I believe, a greater demand.

There is also the issue of getting the supply out onto the market. I commend Mr Vincent for his answer to - I think Mr O'Byrne - for the last couple of days in my electorate of Franklin, very close to where I live in Huntingfield, in getting some of the land released. Mr Vincent is getting onto that.

I fully acknowledge what is being said by Prof Razay and his commentary. This is only dealing with a very small area. I take on board what he has said, and similarly to my colleague from Franklin, Mr George. Supply and demand concerns - I think I have already spoken about that in relation to the other contributions.

In relation to the cap on price, can I indicate that previously there was only 4.6 per cent of applicants that were over the \$750,000 threshold. It is a minimal issue, but it is appropriate to discuss those matters.

Mr George quite rightly asks questions of the impact on the rental market, home purchasers. Unfortunately, I don't have any modelling or detailed analysis of all the impacts of first home owner schemes over the years. Common sense dictates that these sorts of schemes must have an impact. The extent of that impact I don't know, but the question you raise is an appropriate one and is worthy of genuine investigation, to ensure we don't accidentally have a perverse outcome, as I believe was being suggested in Prof Razay's contribution. We will monitor that closely.

Mr George - It would be nice to have a report before the budget so it gives you a ground zero to work on for the next budget.

Mr ABETZ - I take the interjection, it is a valid contribution in this debate. It is only for a period of 12 months. As the member for Franklin sits on the multi-partisan budget panel with myself, along with some others, he would be aware of the state of the budget. I won't make any predictions as to what may or may not be in the budget. Suffice to say this measure is only for a period of 12 months.

Mr Winter - There is a pathway to surplus, isn't there? I thought there was a pathway to surplus. You just referenced the state of the budget.

Mr ABETZ - There is indeed a pathway to surplus, you have heard that before, you will hear it again. What it will mean is discipline on all sides, and with a pathway to surplus I am sure we won't be getting this sort of duet of questions from the opposition at Question Time. One lot of questions saying that we should be spending more in one area, then another lot of

questions calling for a balanced budget. You can't have that sort of forked tongue speaking out of both sides of your mouth. What you need is an honest assessment. We do have a pathway to surplus and we will continue to pursue that, but a pathway to surplus is not assisted in any way, shape or form by one party asking for both more expenditure and then condemning the budget situation or the deficit situation. You can't have both.

That said, I thank honourable members for their contributions and commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

**TAXATION AND RELATED LEGISLATION (FIRST HOME OWNER AND
PAYROLL RELIEF) BILL 2025 (No. 43)**

In Committee

Clause 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5

Section 18 amended (Amount of grant)

[5.50 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON - Chair, this bill effectively triples the First Home Owner Grant for new builds. At first glance, this might seem very generous, but in practice it's inequitable, counterproductive and out of step with the reality of the Tasmanian housing crisis. I'm proposing two amendments: one to clause 5 which we're dealing with currently, and two to clause 6, which will deal with some of the issues around the problems with this particular middle-class welfare, essentially.

While renters are facing soaring costs, while thousands remain on social housing waitlists, and while the government has not in fact and will not in fact deliver 10,000 new homes, this parliament is essentially being asked to spend taxpayers' dollars subsidising potentially multimillion dollar builds. That is completely unacceptable in my view.

I will be moving amendments to cap the grant because at the very least we should not be using public funds to fund luxury homes.

The biggest problem of the policy in itself, and we have decades of evidence here and overseas, shows that the First Home Owner Grant mostly helps people who are already close to buying and it pushes prices up for everyone else. That's not fairness, as I said, it is middle-class welfare. We have plenty of research. Research from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has found that First Home Owner Grants do not substantially assist lower income households who might not have otherwise been able to access the home ownership market and other mechanisms like shared equity schemes recommended for this purpose.

Likewise, a Productivity Commission has recommended that governments phase out the First Home Owner Grants.

The amendments that I will be looking at are based on evidence and seeks to focus the government's increasingly limited resources in a more equitable way by providing targeted financial support to increase the stock of affordable housing in Tasmania and putting in place measures to ensure the scheme can't be so gained to build high value homes.

My first amendment is to clause 5. There are two amendments here. I have circulated those. I move -

Clause 5, first amendment:

Page 4, paragraph (a)

After 'amount is' *leave out* '30,000 or'

Insert instead 30,000.

Second amendment:

Same page, paragraph (b)

Leave out that paragraph

Insert instead the following paragraph (b) by omitting paragraph (b).

This is the effect of these two amendments. The first one ensures that those eligible for the proposed \$30,000 grant whose purchase exceeds the proposed \$750,000 cap, which will relate to clause 6, which we will hopefully be discussing shortly, are still not eligible for the current \$10,000 grant. Should the amendment to the next clause get up in relation to capping the grant at those properties at \$750,000, we don't want the absurd situation where someone is not eligible for that but is still eligible for the \$10,000 default amount. This effectively deals with that particular issue.

The second part of this amendment provides that the First Home Owner Grant scheme lapses entirely on 1 July 2026 unless the government introduces another bill to extend it. That is important in the context of our budget crisis that we have now - that we should be making conscious positive decisions when we decide to provide this kind of middle-class corporate welfare. It's important that we are making conscious decisions and we do this based on evidence.

I will also note that the government has expressed an intent that if it implements a short-stay levy, the levy might be applied to fund a scheme such as the First Home Owner Grant. In the absence of that levy, we should have a time when we reflect about whether we want to positively proceed with this.

These amendments do two things. They provide a mechanism where a perverse outcome doesn't occur if we cap the expenditure at \$750,000. Second, they give the opportunity for the government and this parliament to reconsider whether we want to continue this kind of assistance to the community. There is plenty of evidence that this kind of assistance does not impact increased housing affordability.

There are plenty of examples. The Productivity Commission, in particular, has recommended that governments phase it out. Without targeting there is greater risk that the assistance provided to households who would buy a home regardless of whether they are assisted, this would be a poor use of taxpayers' money and is more likely to result in higher house prices. There's plenty of evidence that we need to be considering this, particularly in an environment where we are constrained budget-wise. I recommend these amendments to the House.

Mr ABETZ - Deputy Chair, the government opposes the amendments in relation to the benefit of the schemes. I would use the Shadow Treasurer as exhibit A and Mr Bayley as exhibit B as to beneficiaries of the First Home Owner Grant scheme and how that assisted them into the housing market.

In relation to the cap, in 2024-25 only 18 out of the 391 First Home Owner Grant applicants, or 4.6 per cent, purchased properties valued over \$750,000. Introducing a cap for such a small cohort adds complexity and compliance burdens for all applicants and the State Service in having to assess the contracts. I could imagine people potentially gaming the situation to build a house, but then say, 'We'll have it painted afterwards, so take that out of the contract', or 'We'll have the concrete pads done afterwards, take that out of the contract and then that way we will be under a particular threshold or cap'. For the purpose of only 4.6 per cent of applicants to have this extra complexity, I would submit will simply add a burden for no real saving or targeting of the measure.

It may also discourage first home buyers from building or purchasing new homes over the \$750,000, pushing them toward existing housing stock instead - contrary to the policy's intent to stimulate new housing. A cap can harshly penalise applicants where construction costs unexpectedly exceed the threshold, resulting in a requirement to repay the First Home Owner Grant, so looking to fix the transaction value at a point in time could cause other difficulties. This mechanism may not be effective and requires further review. At the end of the day it's not going to make any real difference to the cost for a taxpayer other than extra complexity, which will in fact cost the taxpayer. The government, whilst understanding the rationale, sees there is no need for it.

Ms JOHNSTON - Deputy Chair, I thank the honourable Treasurer for his contribution on the amendment and note that the 18 is still a significant number. When we're talking about middle class welfare and in a budget constraint environment which we are in at the moment, we need to be mindful of every amount. Now we are going from \$10,000 to \$30,000. That's a substantial increase in this particular assistance package to first homeowners. I think we need to be really mindful of every cent and every dollar that we spend. Whilst it might only be 18 by \$30,000, that is a substantial amount, particularly when you're talking to community organisations that have been begging, grovelling and pleading for small amounts of money to come from the budget for very effective program. If we can potentially save this money -

Mr Winter - If your amendment is successful, does that stop anyone over \$750,000 from getting the grant at all.

Ms JOHNSTON - Yes, that is entirely the point. The cap itself will be dealt with in clause 6 of \$750,000 but it's assuming that if clause 6 is amended to have a cap at \$750,000 that the perverse outcome is that they still don't just get \$10,000 for building a \$1.5 million home. Just to clarify that.

DEPUTY CHAIR - The time being 6.00 p.m., I will report progress.

Progress reported.

QUESTION ON NOTICE - ANSWER

Sale of Public Buildings and Land Parcels

Ms BADGER question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

See Appendix 2 on page [tbc]

ADJOURNMENT

Salmon Industry - Disclosure of Information Regarding Disease Outbreaks

[6.00 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, there was a question by the Leader of the Greens to the Premier earlier today and the answer is: under the 2023 Salmon Industry Plan, this government committed to greater transparency and improved communication providing more information on the industry, its regulation and performance. The government remains committed to continuous improvement and delivering on this commitment. The government will draw on the learnings from the cross- agency debrief that is underway into the mortality event to consider the future approach for reporting of the metrics to which the honourable member referred.

Police Remembrance Day

[6.01 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to recognise Police Remembrance Day, which will be held on Monday 29 September. I welcome to the Speakers Reserve and acknowledge the presence of David Plumptre and John Mikulski of the Retired Police Association of Tasmania. They are both retired officers who worked tirelessly to support other former police service members.

On Monday 29 September, we mark Police Remembrance Day. It is a solemn day and a day to honour officers who have died in the line of duty or as a result of the choices and dangers that policing brings. It is the day to commemorate their sacrifices, acknowledge the risks of the job and recognise the profound impact their loss has on families, loved ones and the wider community. I'll proudly be attending as part of the Blue Family. I will wear the ribbon today to commemorate them.

It should also be a day to speak honestly about how we treat those who survive. To say to former members we recognise your service, we value your service, and we will offer you the support you deserve if you need help as a result of your service.

We rightly hold up our police officers as examples of courage and service. We celebrate their bravery when they're on the beat. However, too often, once they hang up the uniform, the support stops.

The Retired Police Association of Tasmania has been asking the government for some time now for something simple and just: that former officers suffering mental health issues caused by their service should have access to the same mental health support available to serving officers. Or in the words of the association's president, David Plumpton: 'You broke us, you fix us.'

The need could not be clearer. GPs ring the Retired Police Association about former officers in trauma who have a mental health plan but cannot get in to see a psychologist. Police themselves ring the association to ask them to support former members. Every time the association has to say: 'We're a social organisation, not a service organisation. We don't have trained counsellors. We can't provide ongoing care.' The Health and Wellbeing Officer for the Retired Police Association, John Mikulski, will do whatever he can. However, the help is extremely limited.

Former officers have even paid out of their own pockets to attend support courses interstate, often run by ex-Australian Defence Force organisations. The courses themselves are free, but the travel and accommodation are not. If support existed here in Tasmania, they wouldn't have to do that.

This isn't just an issue of cost. It's an issue of basic decency. When a tragedy happens, like the murder of Keith Smith, or other incidents that deeply affect police, serving members are proactively contacted and offer referral to support services. Former members are told something has happened that might trigger them but then they're offered nothing. It's almost cruel. In fact, it is cruel. It leaves retired members of the association carrying guilt for not being able to help with their former colleagues when their health deteriorates.

The problem is compounded by the shrinking of mental health services across the board. St Helen's Private Hospital has closed, the Hobart Clinic has closed, or reduced its services, and public supports are dwindling at the very moment they are needed the most. It is unfair for the state to laud police officers while they are serving only to abandon them when their service leaves scars. These men and women went where we asked them to go. They saw what we asked them to see. They did the hard jobs we didn't want to do. If that service breaks them, the state has a duty to help fix it.

The ask is straightforward: give ex-members with service-related mental health conditions access to the same mental health support as serving officers, build a proper referral pathway so GPs and police aren't left ringing a social club for help and fund support here in Tasmania so retired officers aren't forced to fly to Queensland for a course. Doing this would not just help individuals. It would honour the values of service and solidarity that underpin our police force. It would show current officers that their wellbeing matters beyond their last shift and prevent avoidable crises which, in the end, saves money as well as lives.

We cannot say, 'Thank you for your service' with one breath and then mutter, 'Good luck' with the next. We cannot leave the Retired Police Association to shoulder responsibility it never signed up for and is not equipped to meet. Police Remembrance Day is when we say, as a community, 'We see you and we remember'. Let it also a day we say to retired officers, 'We

will not forget you, we will support you, we will fix what your service broke'. 'You broke us, you fix us' is not a slogan, it's a moral obligation.

Time expired.

Arthritis and Other Musculoskeletal Conditions

[6.07 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, this morning I tabled a petition calling on the government to deliver on their \$6 million commitment for a permanent public rheumatology and persistent pain clinic in Launceston. More than 1093 people signed it, which is a huge number of Tasmanians willing to put their name to these concerns in a short period of time. It speaks volumes to how urgent this need is and how deeply let down north and north-western Tasmanians have felt.

One in four Tasmanians live with arthritis or other musculoskeletal conditions. They are one of the most common but most disabling and costly of all chronic conditions. They come in many forms and affect people of all ages. By 2030, the number of Tasmanians with the most debilitating strains is expected to grow by a further 20 per cent.

This issue first came to my attention when I met with Jackie Slyp, the CEO of Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania, who has been advocating for people with these conditions for over 20 years. Jackie is with us in the Chamber tonight, with many others. Jackie introduced me to Diana Wilson, who it has been an absolute pleasure to get to know. Diana agreed to be the community petitioner of the parliamentary e-petition I presented today. I welcome Jackie and Diana to the parliament and the Chamber, as well as Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania board members Frankie Forsyth and Alison Park. Thank you all for coming, and thank you, Diana, for travelling that long distance from Bridport.

That long journey is precisely why this petition is so important. When I met with Diana, she shared her story with me. I learnt that there was no regular permanent rheumatology clinic available in the north or the north west of Tasmania. It meant that she, like hundreds or thousands of others in Tasmania, had to make the seven-hour round trip to Hobart each time she needed to see a rheumatologist. Diana explained to me that these appointments can't happen by telehealth. They need a physical exam, they need tests that can only be done in person. A trip like that is heavy going for anyone, let alone somebody already suffering from persistent pain. However, without a northern service, that was the reality for Diana and many others.

Jackie at Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania explained to me that she has seen a steady degradation of services over the 20 years she has been working in the sector. She explained that these conditions cause significant pain and impact people in the performing of daily activities. They can stop people from being able to go to work or study because they can't move like they once could. Everyday activities like brushing your hair, getting dressed, getting your kids ready for school or cooking a meal can be difficult, or even impossible, and are utterly exhausting. They can wipe you out for hours or even days.

There are treatments available that make a huge difference and can make a profoundly positive impact on people's quality of life. Yet, northern Tasmanians have been missing out on these services because the government commitment had been shelved. Jackie said:

They were starting to look at locations and consider recruitment, and things were moving along really positively. Then all of a sudden nothing. We were just gobsmacked when we realised this funding had gone and angry that this was letting people down, people we'd worked so hard to get these commitments with. It's just not good enough. The government needs to be held to account.

I thank Jackie, Diana and Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania for working with me on the e-petition because it has done precisely that: it has held the government to account. I note that on a similar motion earlier today raised by the member for Braddon, Mr Garland, on the MPI, the Minister for Health, Ms Archer, confirmed that this project has been reprioritised by her department. I'm sure the minister will correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe a new clinic should be opened in Launceston around the end of the year. Thank you, minister, I am seeing a nod, so that's very positive.

I was thrilled to hear that news on a similar debate this morning and I know it will be very welcome news for the many thousands of north and north-western Tasmanians who need it. I thank Minister Archer for that commitment and again thank Jackie, Diana, Frankie and Alison, not only for joining us tonight in the parliament, but for your tireless advocacy over many years and decades.

Una Rockliff - Tribute

[6.11 p.m.]

Mr PEARCE (Braddon - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Honourable Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a remarkable Tasmanian, Una Rockliff, a woman whose vision, tenacity and quiet leadership helped shape not only an industry, but a legend that continues to enrich our state. Una was a trailblazer. Alongside her husband Peter, she co-founded what we now know as Tasmania's most respected seafood enterprise, Petuna.

In the early years, their operation was modest, just one boat and the belief that the Tasmanian waters held world-class potential. It was Una that gave the business its name, blending hers with Peter's, to create Petuna, a symbol of partnership, purpose and pride. She wasn't just behind the scenes. She was at the heart of it. From selling fish off the dock to managing their shop in Devonport, Una brought warmth, integrity and a deep commitment to quality. She believed that Tasmania could stand tall on the global stage for its seafood and through decades of dedication, she helped make that dream a reality.

Peter and Una were instrumental in the early development of salmon farming in Tasmania, laying the groundwork for an industry that now supports thousands and feeds millions. Their contribution was formally recognised with the highest honour in the field, the Industry Ambassador Award from the Australian Seafood Industry Awards.

However, Una's influence extended far beyond business. She was a mentor. She was a matriarch. She was a moral compass. Her kindness, her quiet strength shaped a culture of Petuna and touched the lives of everyone that she worked with. She led not with fanfare, but with example.

To the Rockliff family, we offer our deepest sympathies. Una's legacy will live on in the company that she has helped build, the company she uplifted and the values that she instilled.

Second, sadly, another legend from the north-west, Glenn Carr, passed away suddenly this month. Glenn's tribute at his funeral started with the Lee Kernaghan song *I Milk Cows*. The song goes: I am not going to sing it.

Members - Go on.

Mr PEARCE - It goes:

I milk cows, I grow spuds, I drive tractors, I fix pumps, I plough dirt, I run stock, life's good.

Those are the words of that song, but they're also the words that my mate Glenn lived his life by. He was a farmer, he was a leader, he was a mentor and he was a mate.

Glenn was a contractor and a fourth generation dairy farmer. He grew spuds up the north-west coast, Riana way. Glenn's reach on agriculture was much broader. He started contracting right up and down the north-west coast, spuds, silage and groundwork.

He was more skilled than most. He was a good tradesman. He was a good farmer. He's a good father. He's a man that showed us all respect. He earned that back in spades. He was a man of his words. He was loyal. He was dedicated.

My deepest condolences today to Glenn's partner Janine, to his brothers Kenny and Gary, to Glenn's children, to their stepchildren and all their family friends. Glenn was a doer, he was a stalwart, and he was a legend.

I'll miss you, Glenn.

Members - Hear, hear.

[6.15 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I want to correct the record in relation to a contribution I made on 6 May this year during a condolence speech for the former Liberal Premier, the honourable Tony Rundle.

In my contribution I discussed Premier Rundle's decision to give his members a conscience vote on the Greens bill to repeal anti-homosexuality laws on 26 March 1997.

I said the Attorney-General, Ray Groom was:

Totally opposed to the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

In fact this was not correct. Despite Mr Groom's attitudes at the time not being affirming of gay people, Mr Groom did vote to support this gay law reform, and I apologise for that misstatement.

The Greens gay law reform passed parliament in 1997. Tasmania was the last place in Australia to decriminalise homosexuality. Today, 28 years later, this House has made history again by passing legislation to enable those people who are harmed by those same anti-homosexual laws to now receive compensation for the trauma and suffering that they caused. From being the last place to bring justice for LGBTIQ+ people, the Greens amendments that were incorporated in today's bill mean that Tasmania will become the first state in Australia to provide redress.

On another matter, Mount Tongatabu, located between Geeveston and Dover, has been the scene of a tense standoff between conservationists and loggers tied up in a court battle for the last three years. In a landmark first, the Supreme Court of Tasmania has permanently restrained Forestry Tasmania from logging in a coupe on Mount Tongatabu. The orders endorsed by the court yesterday make this the first time in Tasmania that a permanent injunction has been granted to stop logging on public land. By agreeing to these consent orders, it can be inferred that Forestry Tasmania has accepted that its operations on Mount Tongatabu could not lawfully continue. The agency is now permanently barred from logging coupe KDO 45 E under its Forest Practices Plan and is limited to restorative works only.

The permanent injunction comes three years after the Wilderness Society originally brought a case because Forest Practices Plans, which are legally required whenever logging is undertaken, are both prepared and approved by Forestry Tasmania's own employees.

It's a landmark moment for this precious forest. A court has deemed a forest under threat of a Forest Practices Plan must be protected. The only conclusion to draw is that Forestry Tasmania and the Forest Practices Authority have agreed that if logging were to continue it would be unlawful.

This is fantastic news for the giant blue gums of Mount Tongatabu, left to flower now for swift parrots to forage and breed in. It's also great news for all the wedge-tailed eagles, the Tasmanian devils, the spotted-tailed quolls, eastern quolls and the white morph grey goshawk, that call Tongatabu their home.

The Greens are celebrating today alongside the campaigners from the Wilderness Society and their lawyer who took the case, the former Greens candidate, Vanessa Bleyer. Of course, we salute the tireless efforts of the local community, those people who identified the dangers to that forest and who fought to protect those beautiful swift parrot habitat and homes for all the other animals that I mentioned from permanent destruction.

Now it's time for the Tasmanian government to step up and close the loopholes that allow these destructive practises to persist and make sure that Lutruwita/Tasmania's forests are managed for their true values, their biodiversity, their climate values, for culture and, of course, for community.

Civics and Politics Education

[6.19 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight on the Adjournment to acknowledge that, we, as members of parliament, can always play a role in the education about civics and politics. From time to time, I'm fortunate enough to be approached by young students

to have work experience in my office. This week we've had young Georgie Summers, who's a grade 10 student from Saint Aloysius in the office. She came along on Monday and sat in on a number of stakeholder meetings with me and provided her opinion and advice after those meetings about how they went. She is a bright young woman and she's very keen to make her mark in life. She has been here the last couple of days; she was here today and on Tuesday. Part of the discussions that I have with the work experience students is that I give them an opportunity, if they want, to craft a speech for the Adjournment, so that I can provide a young person's voice to this House.

Young Georgie and I sat down, we talked about all the options of things that were going on. We talked about Huntingfield, we talked about a whole range of things and this wasn't a setup. I'll acknowledge that the Tasmanian Greens and others here. She asked to provide a speech on the stadium. Georgie asked me to provide and make a few comments and points. These are her points; she hasn't written a speech verbatim, but she has provided some points for me. Georgie wanted me to talk about the stadium because the stadium, in her words, was being discussed more and more by students at the school, because the project is so talked about in the news and on social media.

The majority of the students want the project to go ahead for several reasons including: it will allow big AFL teams to travel and play in Tasmania and Tasmanians will be able to see their teams face off against the Devils. It will be beneficial to other areas such as music, allowing artists to come to Tasmania, meaning Tasmanians will not have to travel to the mainland. It will give Tasmanians jobs, it will allow other major sporting events to be held in Tasmania and it will showcase Tasmanian talent. Now, Georgie is a Hawthorn fan and would love to see her team play the Devils. Disappointingly, Georgie would also like to see the Devils beat the Collingwood Football Club and that did not spark great joy in the office when she talked to me about that element of this speech. I thought I would commit to follow through and say that she would like to see the Devils beat Collingwood.

A member - Nice to have achievable goals.

Mr O'BYRNE - Yeah, from a Freo fan, seriously. It's just fantastic, what a great opportunity. Young Georgie, a smart young woman who really engaged in her time with us and I think it's such a privilege in this role to be able to work with young students, to give them a bit of an insight into the life of a politician, the life of politics and spending a couple of days here, watching all of the contributions, Question Time and being able to sit in. It was a great opportunity for her. All of my office were enriched by her presence, her wit, her commitment to her studies in future and clearly the Hawthorne Football Club.

I'm not done yet. You're going to do a hamstring. Hopefully, Collingwood will be able to get some injury free players back on the deck next year. Anyway, I digress.

Honourable Speaker, I want to acknowledge Georgie Summers and her work experience in my office and her commitment to her community.

[6.23 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak in part about greyhound racing this evening, but also mostly about accountability and trust in politics. Our profession is one of the least trusted in the nation right now. We are up there with social media influencers and cigarette lobbyists. But the old adage says that you can always tell when a politician is

lying because their lips will be moving. We have all heard the tired and worn-out jokes many times before. Now, earlier this year, Labor gave its word to the greyhound industry that we would not abandon them and that we would stand by them and that we would never shut down the industry. We made a promise, and we gave our word.

Now, we could have abandoned that promise and many more like it and seize government without an election. We committed to doing so puts paid to any allegations that we would have done a hypothetical deal with the Greens on this matter. We did not, therefore we will not, and that matter is now settled. Too much backflipping has occurred in this place, and it has damaged us all. On the matter of greyhounds, the Liberal/Green Coalition is now guilty of the very thing that they have attacked Labor of. They broke their word and they backflipped.

There will be many in the electorate that celebrate this. Ignoring the hypocrisy in supporting an action they would otherwise condemn purely because it aligns with their ideals and values, This is not democracy. We are better than that. In short, a promise has been made, and it must be kept. This is the line in the sand, and the backflipping stops here. The breaking of promises stops here. The avoidance of accountability stops here. Progress moves at the speed of trust, and we must rebuild trust. That starts by showing that the voter can take us on our word. Regardless of whether they agree with the subject in question, we must be trusted that if we make a position, we stand by it.

My fellow member for Lyons, the Minister for Racing, comes from a family with a long and proud history in the industry. You have many friends and also many family members that are committed and part of that industry. From the information we have received, those people feel very betrayed, and they also feel very abandoned by the decision that has been made to shut down their industry. At least one instance, a member of the racing community convinced her elderly mother, a lifelong one-eyed, died-in-the wool rusted-on Labor voter to vote Liberal. You know the reason that she did that? Because she was told by you at a race meeting, as were many people in that room, that if they voted Labor, Labor were going to do a deal with the Greens -

Ms Howlett - How many race meets have you been to? How many times have you been?

Ms BUTLER - I can give you the names of those people if you like.

Ms Howlett - I said, how many times have you been to the greyhounds?

Ms BUTLER - You know this is the truth. The minister said to these people that they trusted you. You said to them, 'you have to vote Liberal because if you vote for Labor they are going to do a deal with the Greens and they are going to shut down your greyhound industry'. Now we had this repeated to us by so many people the other night, the same thing. I was disgusted by that. These people absolutely trust you. That is information that was given to us firsthand by a number of people at a race meet week before last.

Now the Rockliff-led Liberal/Green Coalition did backflip, and they broke their promise and their words mean nothing. It is clear that wherever you find a Greens party you find an agenda against racing. That is true. We have seen the damaging impact to the industry in Canberra and also in New Zealand. New Zealand are three years into their four-year transition to ban greyhound racing. It is not an idea that is novel to Tasmania, it is also an imported tactic from New Zealand and the mainland.

It is also clear that many punters do not believe that this group of people, a minority group of people, deserve representation just because many do not agree with them. This is not some fringe cooker group of flat earthers or anti-vaxxers, the greyhound industry. This is a racing community with a long and proud and storied history in our state. Much like equestrian sports and livestock exhibitions, it is deeply tied to the strong rural community of my seat in Lyons. Will we see those targeted next for erasure from our rural life, minister?

Time expired.

Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department

[6.28 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak about health in Bass and more particularly the Launceston General Hospital emergency department. Before I begin, I thank the ANMF for their insights that they've given to the Greens into the state of healthcare at Launceston General Hospital and more broadly across the state.

Nurses and other health professionals and all health staff work hard across our health system to provide the care Tasmanians need. However, the system they are working in is stressed and breaking, and unfortunately that is breaking health staff and it's impacting negatively on many Tasmanians who can't get the care they need when they need it.

In recent times, it's been reported that there have been up to 130 patients a day presenting in the emergency department at Launceston General Hospital, but of those patients, 20-30 are being treated in the waiting room of the emergency department. They receive IV antibiotics, IV fluids, are officially admitted to hospital and transferred to the ward, all from the waiting room, sitting on hard plastic seats. Some are admitted to the emergency department for treatment on a trolley briefly and then return to the waiting room. How awful for patients to be so unwell they needed to attend Emergency, yet they end up sitting in an uncomfortable seat for extended periods.

Meanwhile the pressure on emergency department staff is intense. There are frequent shifts on which staff are working overtime, double shifts or are working short-staffed. This is stressful and exhausting and the pressure is reflected in the high turnover of staff within the department, including senior management.

Part of this pressure stems from the transfer of care protocols the government view as a success. Ambulances are indeed transferring the care of patients in emergency departments more quickly. However, staffing in the emergency department has not been boosted to cover this increased movement of patients into the department. Ambulances are able to get on their way to helping the next patient, and this is good news, but the ED is choked up with patients who nurses struggle to care for.

There are solutions to this situation. Current HR processes are incredibly slow within the Department of Health. I have heard reports of job cards requesting changes to positions taking 14 months-and-counting to be processed by HR. Recruitment delays are preventing people from being employed, and this problem isn't limited to the ED. The government must undertake work in HR to speed up decision-making and onboarding processes so new staff can be more

quickly employed to ease the pressure. There are also better ways to support staff in the emergency department to help reduce the stress and burnout they experience.

The high turnover of staff means many new staff are employed in the ED. At times this means high numbers of inexperienced staff who take time to gain the skills and expertise needed to care for high-acuity patients. This situation could be helped by the employment of clinical coaches in the emergency department. They would be available to provide support to staff and help them develop skills. This would reduce stress and lead to more job satisfaction, safer patient care and less staff turnover.

Right now, emergency department staff do not have access to Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) programs that is available to staff of emergency services. This is a peer support program that provides support to staff following critical incidents, but staff in our emergency departments who experience critical incidents are not able to access this. Extending this program to ED staff will help ease the pressures on staff and contribute to better staff retention.

The Greens have long called for 24/7 pathology and radiology services to be available at Launceston General Hospital. We know that this would ease the situation in the emergency department as people can get the assessment that they need and be able to access the treatment they need more quickly.

There are also other things. There's a possibility of demountable wards. This would increase capacity within the emergency department, but ultimately what it reflects is a need to speed up infrastructure builds. The Greens suggest that investment in this is a much greater priority and more important than a stadium, and we call on the government to invest in health infrastructure sooner rather than later. Things are tough in our emergency departments and in Launceston General Hospital in particular, but there are solutions and actions the government can and must take. The Greens call on the Liberal government to prioritise action and change in health over the stadium and do the work that's needed to turn things around.

Tasmanian Thoroughbred Racing Awards

[6.33 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Lyons - Minister for Racing) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak about and congratulate all the award winners from the 2025 Tasmanian Thoroughbred Racing Awards held at Country Club last Friday night. It was a privilege to attend and appropriately recognise all the winners.

The Stuart Gandy-trained mare, Geegees Mistruth, took home the major award of the evening, the Ladbrokes Tasmanian Horse of the Year. In the famous geared racing silks, Geegees Mistruth won the award by winning the Group 3 Mystic Journey Stakes, the Vamos Stakes, and achieved consistent placings at group levels in Victoria that demonstrate the quality of the season the mare put together.

Armidale Stud were recognised with major breeding awards for the Magic Millions-Leading Tasmanian-Based Juvenile Sire won by Alpine Eagle. Armidale also on the evening won the TasBreeders Leading Tasmanian-Based Sire with Needs Further.

I was pleased in September to visit David Whishaw, Managing Director of Armidale Stud, to meet the latest addition to their stallion roster; the addition of three-year-old colt Bodyguard an exciting prospect for Tasmanian breeding in coming years. David, along with Bart McCulloch from Grenville Stud and the TasBreeders team should be congratulated for the quality of their prodigy, providing the assurance for Magic Millions announcing an extension of their agreement in Tasmania.

I was thrilled on the night to see my dear friend Ron Riley represent the owners of Still A Star, who was elevated into the Tasmanian Racing Hall of Fame. Trained by my dear friend Bill Ryan, one of Tasmania's most popular race mares, she retired with 10 wins and almost \$900,000 in stakes.

Can I take this time to acknowledge the passing of Bill's wife Mary in March this year. I know that Mary would be so incredibly proud of Minnie.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Tasmanian Turf Club two-year-old of the year, Sanaya, trained by Barry Campbell and syndicated by Denise Martin at Star Thoroughbreds. The filly was unbeaten in two starts including the Listed Gold Sovereign and two-year-old Magic Million Classics. Owner of the horses include my dear aunty Anne, cousin Katrina, and cousin Craig, and also the honourable Premier of Tasmania, Jeremy Rockliff.

It was a fantastic night to come together, and I again congratulate all the award winners, both human and equine.

Burnie High School Musical - *Once Upon a Time*

[6.36 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, anyone who knows me knows that I love a good musical. I had the great privilege of attending the Burnie High School musical on Saturday afternoon last weekend. It was a fabulous show full of colour, vibrancy and talented young local kids.

I want to give a big shout-out to the cast, the crew, the band, and everybody involved in this year's production of *Once Upon a Time*. It really was a vibrant show full of great characters. The synopsis is that it's in the magic realm of fairyland. It begins with all of the characters of the Brothers Grimm fairytale. We had Rapunzel, Rumpelstiltskin, Hansel and Gretel, Snow White, Cinderella, and the Brave Little Tailor. The plot centres around a sinister plan by three witches and Rumpelstiltskin to eliminate all the princesses in fairyland, paving the way for their rule. Their scheme is thwarted by the clever and courageous Dame Rosie Parker and her allies who band together to save the kingdom. It's full of great, eclectic music, including Michael Jackson, The Proclaimers, and *The Middle* by Jimmy Eat World, which is one of my favourites. One of the standout characters for me was Dame Rosie Parker.

I congratulate all of the young local kids who were involved in the cast. The choreography was fantastic - a lot of the students did that themselves. The music was fantastic. It really was a great show, and I hope that everyone in the local community had the chance to see it.

The second issue I wish to speak about tonight is school crossings in my electorate around the Cooee, Havenview and Ulverstone primary schools. I raised this earlier in the year in this place and wrote to the then minister, Mr Abetz, about safety and the manning of those school crossings. I was given an assurance by the then minister that there would be a review done of each of those schools around safety issues and, more importantly, whether or not there should be a crossing guard stationed on those school crossings, which the department puts in place rather than the school.

To date, I haven't received a response. I will be following it up with the new minister for Transport. However, if the former minister has any further information he can forward, I would appreciate that to provide to the school associations at each of those schools.

International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

[6.39 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which is a UN International Day of Action recognised on 26 September every year. I am sure we can all agree that the global situation is utterly unpredictable. We have presidents like Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin having access to a red button and an arsenal of all sorts of horrific weapons, including nuclear weapons. We have people like Putin literally pushing the boundaries of international sovereignty, flying aircraft and drones over other countries, NATO countries like Poland and Estonia. This is an alarming situation where the world is more unstable than ever. We have egoistic megalomaniac tyrants just a fraction away from nuclear war.

The United Nations established the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in 2013 but it was thinking about the issue for a lot longer than that. The very first resolution of the UN in 1946 established global nuclear disarmament as the highest disarmament priority of the UN, and it continues as a priority today. In 1946, this was a reaction to the absolute horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where 213,000 people were vaporised and killed immediately on the dropping of those weapons with an untold amount dying subsequently in horrific deaths that that took, in many cases, many years to come to fruition.

As well as the direct impact of nuclear weapons on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there are the lingering impacts on remote Pacific islands and Outback communities as well. This is an issue that is abhorrent and a weapon that needs to be reined in. We need to disarm completely.

The annual day recognises that more needs to be done. It is estimated that there are 12,241 nuclear weapons in the world today, and we all understand that is a horrific prospect to have that many in the hands of eight countries. Eight countries have nuclear weapons: the United States, Russia, China, France, UK, India, Pakistan and North Korea. Israel is also widely acknowledged as having nuclear weapons but maintains this position of so-called strategic ambiguity. It neither confirms nor denies that it has nuclear weapons, but it is well understood that it does.

International days are important. They could be seen as being tokenistic, but they give us all an opportunity to reflect on the issue that is being recognised and to stand up and say something of significance. It is important that we act on these kind of platforms.

Of course, nuclear weapons are not the only issue when it comes to nuclear. The AUKUS deal is something that has attracted a significant amount of attention in Australia. Obviously not nuclear weapons, but nuclear-powered submarines, \$368 billion over 30 years that Australia will commit to those weapons, and they do deliver a high level of nuclear waste that will need to be dealt with. I note the efforts of my federal colleagues to consistently stand up against the AUKUS deal, to raise the concerns and fly the flag for peace and for disarmament.

I also acknowledge a number of different anti-war campaigners here in Tasmania over many years. I went to a meeting not that long ago of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I acknowledge Margaret Reynolds, the former senator for Tasmania in Canberra, who is a steadfast advocate and campaigner for peace, freedom and disarmament in Tasmania and around the world, as well as the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons. A lot of us would have signed the pledge during the election campaign and at other times. It's an international alliance that's represented in 100 countries and does a lot of really good work in relation to promoting the abolishment of nuclear weapons.

There are individuals over the years, and I still have very fond memories of being a youngster watching Stewart Lennox and Grant Maddock drive a rubber ducky onto the bow of a submarine as it came up the Derwent River to light a flare. We have seen brave people stand for peace and disarmament over many years in this state, and may that well continue.

Mental Health Week 2025

[6.44 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, tomorrow I have the honour of officially launching Mental Health Week 2025, a week that invites us all to pause, reflect and reconnect with what truly matters. Running from 4 to 12 October, the week is dedicated to shining a light on the importance of wellbeing in our everyday lives.

This year's theme, Appreciate the Little Things, is a powerful reminder that mental healthcare doesn't always require grand gestures. Often it's the simple moments, acts of kindness, shared laughter, quiet gratitude that have the greatest impact. Together, we can celebrate the small but meaningful connections that help build a healthier, more compassionate community. Whether it's listening to your favourite song, having a chat with a friend, a walk in nature or simply taking a minute to breathe, these small acts sustain our well-being and build resilience.

Our government is committed to ensuring that people living with mental health challenges and their families and carers can access the support they need when and where they need it. Over the past decade, we've invested more than \$564 million to strengthen Tasmania's mental health system. As part of this investment, we're proud to continue supporting the Mental Health Council of Tasmania to provide small grants for Mental Health Week, enabling local organisations to host events in their own communities. These events are reaching every corner of our state.

I enjoyed reviewing the event program this week and if you've not had a look yourself, I encourage you to look at what is being offered as there is something for everyone. From the

south of our state in Cygnet where the community are decorating their town with orange flowers, hearts and flags to raise awareness of suicide prevention, to the free Wellways Annual Dog Walk and Lunch in Cornelian Bay. In the north-west at the Ulverstone Neighbourhood House they are offering pottery and in my local community the Low Head Community Garden are offering a hands-on flower arranging workshop and laughter will echo statewide thanks to the Tassie Mental Health Comedy Roadshow.

Through the small grants program, we're empowering communities to run Mental Health Week events that will foster a sense of belonging and social connection, key ingredients for mental well-being. Feeling connected improves our mood, lowers stress, and activates calming brain regions. For minoritised and marginalised groups, community led initiatives are especially vital in creating inclusive spaces and addressing local needs. When communities lead their own initiatives, they build capacity to address local needs, fostering self-reliance and positive, sustained change. Importantly, these events also serve as gateways to mental health services and support networks that people may not know exist.

As we enter Mental Health Week, I'd also like to take this opportunity to talk about the important role language plays in shaping social attitudes and perceptions of mental ill health and suicide. It is a great example of how small things, like the use of certain words, can have impacts and harm on our communities. Mental ill health and suicide are complex public health issues and we need to communicate safely and accurately and with caution.

I am advised that in the previous parliament, the honourable member Roger Jaensch facilitated an information session with Mindframe, a program funded by the Australian Government under the National Suicide Prevention Leadership program. I am happy to facilitate a similar session, if there is interest from members, to ensure that they are aware of their social responsibility when it comes to this very sensitive topic and talking about mental ill health and suicide.

I also remind anyone listening that if you are struggling, please reach out for assistance. For example, for more information on Tasmania's public mental health system, Tasmanians can call Access Mental Health on 1800 332 388, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Or if you or someone you know is in crisis, call Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14.

Suicide prevention and the wellbeing of our community is a whole-of-government, whole-of-community issue and it is up to all of us to do what we can to support each other, to be kind to each other, to reach out in times of disruption and distress, to encourage discussion and to help build hope for the future.

Online Access Centres - Closures

[6.49 p.m.]

Mr MITCHELL (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to my feet to give my unwavering support to Tasmania's online access centres. For the past eight years there's been a campaign of attrition waged by this government against these very important centres. I have here a press release today from the Derwent Valley Online Access Centre in New Norfolk, which says that it has just been told it's losing its funding at the end of this financial year. June 30, that's it; all over. The centre's management committee secretary, Les Whittle, said:

This is a tragedy for the Derwent Valley. Libraries Tasmania anticipate they will absorb some of the centre services. It seems this will occur without extra staffing. Overall, this will come at a cost.

This is happening to online access centres throughout the state, particularly throughout the regional electorate of Lyons, where these centres perform such a vital task in assisting people, particularly older people who don't have the ready access to technology that younger people have. They perform a vital task, yet they are being cut off at the knees.

Mr Whittle makes the point that the Derwent Valley Online Access Centre has been around for some 25 years and has kept pace with technology, digital awareness training and a sense of community, and has not received any increases in funding for the past two decades, and that includes CPI increases. It has happened across multiple governments but under this government for the past eight years, it has been like water torture, like a drip on a rock, just drip, drip, drip on these online access centres, until they wear away.

Different online access centres perform different functions. I am a regular visitor to the St Helens Online Access Centre, a very comprehensive online access centre which performs myriad tasks for the community. It is utterly vital to that community up there in the north-east of Tasmania. However, I am told its future is also uncertain.

Ouse is uncertain, Glenora is uncertain and I think Bagdad recently closed. I believe there used to be 20 and now there's 12. Occasionally, just by matter of population, centres will come and go. However, there has been a concerted campaign by this government to close these centres down and absorb them into Libraries Tasmania but then not provide Libraries Tasmania with the staff or resources required to make sure they function as intended.

These places operate on the smell of an oily rag with fantastic volunteer committees and really committed volunteers, who I have been very proud to have an association with over the last nine years. I am absolutely gobsmacked that the government is closing down the Derwent Valley Online Access Centre. It has performed such an important role for the people of the New Norfolk for all this time. As Mr Whittle says:

It is hoped that the Derwent Valley community will voice its disappointment with this decision.

This might be done by contacting members of parliament and other community leaders. My Labor colleague, Jen Butler, and I are both very big supporters of online access centres and I must give a shout-out to the member for Lyons from the Greens, Ms Badger. She has also been a vocal supporter of these centres. Contact your member of parliament and other community leaders, write a letter to the local newspaper and radio, post support on a centre Facebook page or simply pop into the centre and say thanks and well done to the volunteers who will soon, sadly, not be there.

Earthquake - 25 September 2025

[6.53 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable speaker, I rise this evening to speak about the magnitude 4 earthquake that happened at 6.30 a.m. this morning. I've got to be honest, when

I was up this morning, I did think something very strange was happening and perhaps I was awfully tired. It turned out I was right. The room around me was trembling.

On the radio, it was initially a bit of a novelty, of course, this isn't something that happens every day in Tasmania as it does in Nepal or New Zealand or other places. It certainly wasn't a laughing matter and it wasn't something to be taken as a joke because it is quite serious. The location that this happened around the Pedder Impoundment, there are two major fault lines - the Gell River Fault and the Edgar fault. And on the Edgar fault there are two dams in pounding Pedder - the Edgar Dam and the Scotts Peak Dam. We know from risk assessments and flood mapping, thanks to a Greens RTI, that if either of those dams failed, the catastrophic outcomes for Huonville - it's just unfathomable how quickly the water would rise and how much of the Huon Valley would be underwater. We are not just talking about Huonville; we're talking as far as Eggs and Bacon Bay that would actually be impacted. The number of properties that would be lost and the possible loss of lives is huge.

The dams weren't fully assessed this morning when this news was coming through. It was really important that that was done first before the jovial reporting actually started to come in. Two of the dams were considered high risk because of their proximity to the fault line. They didn't meet contemporary safety standards. We're only just starting to get a full understanding of seismicity, not just here in Tasmania but across Australia. We now understand that Tasmania has in the past and will into the future experience earthquakes of up to magnitude 6 and 7. The one today, various figures were quoted, but about 4.4 magnitude.

The dams that are currently undergoing upgrading, Edgar is currently under works. Those works have started. Scotts Peak is still to come. Scotts Peak is significantly larger than Edgar dam, and it's also going to be significantly more expensive. The cost for the Edgar upgrade started at \$15 million. They're now up to over \$35 million. Scott's Peak started at maximum \$50 million. It's now looking at \$99 million.

Both of these dams are also in the Wilderness World Heritage area, so they had to be referred under the EPBC Act for these works to go ahead. When Edgar was referred, what happened to the Scotts Peak Dam? These are two projects, they're part of the one project, so under EPBC legislation there should have been referred together and they weren't. Why, honourable Speaker? Because everything relating to Scott's Peak just suddenly disappeared from the government websites. Infrastructure pipeline, it had been there for years, gone. Of course, there was only one project that got referred, so it didn't become a controlled action. Scott's peak reappeared, of course, didn't it, with the estimated budget doubling to \$99 million from the \$50 million that had originally started at.

Seriously, this government has to consider the costs of doing this because how long is it going to strengthen the dams for? It's not going to foolproof them if there is an earthquake. They're just going to fail slower.

There is a foolproof way and that is simply removing the dams. Now this is remembering that the Pedder Impoundment is an auxiliary storage impoundment. It produces 57 megawatts annually. It has done for the last 10 years. That's it.

NW the Pedder Empowerment is actually included in the Wilderness World Heritage Area with the intent that it is one day restored to its original magnificent state. We are in a climate crisis. The science from around the world shows us that in the changing climate, as

the icebergs melt, the Earth's tectonic plates are moving, it's going to induce more seismic, activity, honourable speaker, things are going to get worse. It's going to become more frequent.

We've also got a solution. We restore nature. We stop destroying it. We talk about Lake Pedder and everyone thinks, 'Oh it's that great beautiful lake.' Yes, it is, but there's also a lot more to it. It's incredibly important ecosystem. There's a vast area of peat soil under that Impoundment that could actually be sequestering carbon and being positive for the environment. In the 2021 Australian State of the Environment Report - it came out under a Federal-Liberal government - and what was the case study on ecosystem restoration, restoring Lake Pedder in Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage area.

There is a solution here. There's something that we can do and it's time that actually had this serious discussion about the cost of doing this versus investing in restoration in Tasmania because this would be a globally celebrated project and other people around the world, they're taking down dams. They know the value. They know that these massive storage impoundments are not what it's cracked up to be. It's taking more water out of the natural landscape. There's increased fire risk. The Americans calling call it 'hanging their water out to dry.' It's time we had a serious discussion about this in this place and it's time that we actually got on with restoring Lake Pedder.

The House adjourned at 6.58 p.m.