



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 3 December 2025

REVISED EDITION

Contents

WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2025	1
STATEMENT BY PREMIER.....	1
ABSENCE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINISTERS FROM QUESTION TIME.....	1
QUESTIONS.....	1
TASRACING - TASINSURE TEXT MESSAGE.....	1
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	1
TASRACING - TASINSURE TEXT MESSAGE.....	2
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	2
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - COST	3
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	4
ASHLEY YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE - TRANSPORT OF CHILDREN	5
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	6
TASRACING - TASINSURE TEXTS	6
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	7
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS	8
EXPERT ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT.....	8
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION.....	9
PREMIER'S INTEGRITY.....	10
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	11
TASRACING - TASINSURE COMMENTS	11
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	12
EDUCATION - TEACHERS' WELLBEING.....	13
TASMANIAN LIBERALS COUNCIL MEETING	14
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	15
TASRACING - TASINSURE TEXT.....	16
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	16
FARMING - SUPPORT FOR FARMERS.....	17
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - FUNDING COMMITMENTS	18
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	18
WILKINSONS POINT - VALUATION REPORT	19
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	20
WILKINSONS POINT - VALUATION REPORT	20
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	21
CHILDREN IN CUSTODY - SPIT HOOD INCIDENT.....	21
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	22
ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN RENTAL PROPERTIES	23
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS.....	24
ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE	24
FOSSEY RIVER HEAVY VEHICLE REST AREA.....	24
ILLAWARRA ROAD - FARM ACCESS DANGERS	25
RURAL POLICE STATIONS	25
ANSWER TO QUESTION FROM VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE TASMANIA	25
HUONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - MDT ASSESSMENT.....	26
TRESILLIAN BUS OUTREACH SERVICE FOR THE NORTH-WEST COAST	26
WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE CHECKS FREE FOR VOLUNTEERS.....	26
TABLED PAPER	27
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B - MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND RENEWABLES - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	27
POISONS AMENDMENT (INTERSTATE PRESCRIPTIONS) BILL 2025 (NO. 45)	27
TERRORISM LEGISLATION (EXTENSION) BILL 2025 (NO. 52).....	27
MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL	27

JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON WORKPLACE CULTURE OVERSIGHT - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA	27
JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON WORKPLACE CULTURE OVERSIGHT - PAPER NUMBER 26.....	28
JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON WORKPLACE CULTURE OVERSIGHT - ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS STATEMENT.....	28
MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE	29
HONESTY IN POLITICS	29
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2025 (NO. 63).....	38
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2025 (NO. 64).....	38
IN COMMITTEE - ESTIMATES COMMITTEES - CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS	38
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2025 (NO. 63).....	54
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2025 (NO. 64).....	54
IN COMMITTEE - ESTIMATES COMMITTEES - CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS	54
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2025 (NO. 63).....	117
APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2025 (NO. 64).....	117
THIRD READING	117
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS	117
DEBATE MOTION FORTHWITH.....	117
MOTION	117
CONSIDERATION OF MESSAGES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL - MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT.....	117
MOTION	128
STANDING ORDERS AND RULES OF THE HOUSE - AMENDMENT.....	128
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS	129
CUSTODIAL INSPECTOR AMENDMENT (PROTECTION FROM REPRISAL BILL) 2025 (NO. 44) - CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENTS	129
CUSTODIAL INSPECTOR AMENDMENT (PROTECTION FROM REPRISAL) BILL 2025 (NO. 44)	129
IN COMMITTEE - CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.....	129
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (NO. 58).....	131
SECOND READING	131
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (NO. 58).....	165
IN COMMITTEE	165
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (NO. 58).....	178
THIRD READING	178
ADJOURNMENT	179
ANSWER TO QUESTION - WILKINSONS POINT - VALUE OF LAND.....	179
TASRACING - TASINSURE TEXT MESSAGES.....	179
BENNETTS LOGGING - FEDERAL FOREST LEGISLATION CHANGES.....	180
PAUL REYNOLDS - INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE.....	181
TASMANIAN MENOPAUSE SUMMIT.....	183
VENÉY HILLER - CONTRIBUTION TO PALLIATIVE CARE	184
HACSU STOP-WORK ACTIONS.....	186
HELEN MANSOUR AM - TRIBUTE.....	187

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF DEMENTIA ROUNDTABLE	188
NORTHERN TASMANIAN ALLIANCE FOR RESILIENT COUNCILS	189
COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS	191

Wednesday 3 December 2025

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

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Absence of Legislative Council Ministers from Question Time

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I advise the House that minister Duigan, minister Palmer and minister Vincent will be absent from Question Time due to the Legislative Council sitting at 10.00 a.m. today. I will be taking questions in respect of their portfolios.

QUESTIONS

Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

In your party's announcement on 2 July to establish TasInsure, there was not a single mention of workers' compensation insurance or the racing industry. It's not even mentioned on the TasInsure website. Yet by 9.00 a.m. the next day, Tasracing had issued a statement and a text message and posted on their website advising that TasInsure will provide workers' compensation insurance and it's expected to apply to racing industry participants. Did you or anyone in your office speak to anybody at Tasracing prior to the statement being issued on 3 July?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. Answers have already been provided on this but to reiterate, as previously advised, this was an operational matter and a decision that was made by the company. I'm advised the Chair took immediate action when alerted to the post and has spoken to the CEO about his actions. As a state-owned company, Tasracing is not covered by the *State Service Act*. This was a matter for the Tasracing board, and the Chair has already addressed it during the scrutiny committee hearing last week. If the member has any other allegations, she can make them to the appropriate authority.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms FINLAY - Minister, the questions are to you and they're about how Tasracing found out about the information. There was no mention in your press release, no mention on the TasInsure website. The question to you is: how did Tasracing know those details?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Minister for Racing.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her follow-up question. I was first advised during GBE scrutiny last week that a text message had been sent out and as it was revealed during Estimates, the Chair also spoke to the CEO afterwards when he was advised that a text message had been sent. I was unaware of that information until last week in scrutiny.

Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

[10.04 a.m.]

It's a very simple question, minister, directly to you. Did you or anyone from your office speak to anybody at Tasracing before their announcement on 3 July?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. I did not speak to anyone on 3 July. I don't believe anyone from my office did either.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A point of clarification, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - A supplementary question.

Ms FINLAY - The question is: did you or anyone from your office speak to anybody at Tasracing before their announcement on 3 July? How is it that Tasracing understood that workers compensation was going to be applicable to the racing industry? If there was no information in your announcements and no information on the website, how did they find out?

The SPEAKER - I am taking that as a supplementary because the minister had concluded her original response. This is a supplementary question, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Thanks, Speaker. That's a matter you would need to ask Tasracing about. I think every single question was asked during scrutiny hearings last week.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Cost

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

Once upon a time you promised Tasmanians public funding for your stadium would be capped at \$375 million and 'not a red cent more'. Today we heard from the member for Elwick that your new commitment is cost capped at \$875 million. That's \$500 million over, or 50 billion red cents more. Given the monumental scale of your broken promise, will you apologise to the people of Tasmania?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. You may well have misspoke when you mentioned 50 billion more.

Dr Woodruff - Red cents more - you should have listened.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the help from the Greens.

Members interjecting.

Dr Woodruff - Just a full half a million dollars.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You're getting closer.

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. I draw the Premier to his deceit and broken promise to Tasmanians. Will you apologise for it?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier is the only one who should be speaking right now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's \$375 million capital borrowings taken up to \$875 million -

Dr Woodruff - Still perpetuating deceit.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, you can ask a supplementary. Allow the Premier to speak.

Mr ROCKLIFF - With the project being \$1.13 billion overall, the state contribution of \$875 million including \$375 million and borrowings for said project go forward. The cap, should we exceed that, we will value-manage the project or seek funds from elsewhere, including our partners within the project, including the federal government, which has already contributed \$240 million.

I welcome the very sensible discussions we've been able to have and it's a very difficult decision for members in the other place because there are a lot of differing views on the matter, but it's important to listen and get an understanding of the areas that individuals feel most concerned about and for us to listen and act on those concerns, because the project, as I've said many times, Dr Woodruff, is too important for Tasmania not to proceed. It's a huge opportunity for us in terms of economics, in terms of jobs, in terms of aspiration, in terms of our own AFL and AFLW teams, and all the other associated private investment that will come with creating a really huge boost to not only the economy but Tasmania's confidence as well, which can never be underestimated. I'm a big believer that confidence is king and we need to keep driving this state forward.

Dr Woodruff - So you will say any mistruth just to barrel your way through.

The SPEAKER - Order. Honourable Leader of the Greens, you can ask a supplementary soon.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I appreciate your engagement along the way too, Dr Woodruff and your deputy leader as well, because as I've said, there are people for and against this project. People have asked questions and scrutinised this project as well. For all the scrutiny and all the questions that have been asked -

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - A supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - The member for Elwick said today on the radio that you had told her that costs would not exceed \$875 million. Do you accept and will you apologise for that broken promise to Tasmanians of an extra \$500 million more of public money?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You know very well, Dr Woodruff; we've been through this before a number of times about the \$375 million capital and the borrowings further -

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, would the Premier please take back his obvious mistruths to the House? It is disgraceful. He perpetuates a lie in this Chamber.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Thank you. Your comments are on the record; the Premier has the call.

Dr Woodruff - It is.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Greens, I don't want to have to issue warnings. I ask that the Premier be heard. You can ask another question. You have three more you can ask.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Built into the \$1.13 billion, of course, is the \$240 million contribution as well. There's escalation built in, there's contingency built in as well. The project was assessed under P90, or P90 project; very thorough. I know that should we proceed with the project - and I'm not taking anything for granted -

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

Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Transport of Children

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.11 a.m.]

Yesterday, the Custodial Inspector handed down a report which found the treatment of a young person at Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) breached human rights and child-safe principles. We saw disturbing images of a young person being treated appallingly while they were in the process of being transported by private security contractors. Given the findings of the commission of inquiry, it beggars belief that the government would outsource transport of children to and from Ashley. Regardless of their level of training and experience, the use of private contractors opens up the possibility of additional risks to children and young people due to a lack of direct government oversight and responsibility. After all that we have learnt through the commission of inquiry, Premier, how can you defend outsourcing any role that involves responsibility for children at Ashley?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The government acknowledges the very real importance of independent oversight and safeguards to protect the rights of young people within the youth justice system and supports the intent of the Custodial Inspector's review and recommendations. In response to the review, the Department of Education, Children and Young People has implemented, and continues to progress improvements to transport processes, training, policy and governance.

The department, I'm advised, is actively progressing work to ensure practices remain aligned with contemporary therapeutic models at all times. The contract specifications for transport of children and young people to and from Ashley Youth Detention Centre are under consideration to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Spit hoods are prohibited and not in use at Ashley Youth Detention Centre, including makeshift spit hoods, such as T-shirts or any material that covers the face. I'm also advised that the prohibition extends to use on transport to and from the centre. AYDC staff and contractors also have access to personal protective equipment that can be worn if there is a risk of spitting.

Supplementary Question

Mr O'BYRNE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you for the answer, Premier. My supplementary question relates to the engagement of contractors and, therefore, the contracting out of responsibility to a third party for the responsibility of transporting children and young people. Will you commit, or will you undertake to review that, and to bring those services back in-house, so you have a greater amount of control and oversight and care for these young people?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As you well appreciate, honourable member, transports are required 24 hours a day, seven days a week and sometimes at relatively short notice, so we have to also deal with the reality and complexity of these situations. Due to a combination of unpredictable journey times and workforce challenges, the department uses external contractors for these transports. At least two contracted transport workers are assigned to each transport, which is typically for one young person only, with the safety and security of young people during transport a primary consideration for the department.

Contractors must hold security licences, which require national police checks, and must complete the department's safeguarding training, which provides an understanding of how to report concerns and keep young people safe. Of course, the transport staff bus also have a current registration to work with vulnerable people.

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

Tasracing - TasInsure Texts

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

[10.15 a.m.]

When you first found out that Tasracing had issued communications promoting a Liberal Party election policy, a clear breach of a number of codes, principles and potentially laws, as the minister responsible for racing, what did you do?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I believe I've already answered that question. The champion for the north or the champion for Tasmania would understand, whilst travelling around the state and talking to many businesses, insurance was a number one focus for many of our businesses. We travel around and people are uninsured, underinsured, and it is an absolute priority.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. The question is specifically about when the minister first found out, what did she do?

The SPEAKER - I draw the minister back to the question.

Ms HOWLETT - As I said, I first found out last week in Estimates. I'm not going to reiterate what I've already stated, but what I will say is, the Small Business Council also issued a media release, saying, 'Great news that will also cover workers' compensation insurance costs, a compulsory requirement for all employers and often seen as grossly inequitable when small business tends to make a very small component of workers' compensation insurance plans'. I have one from TasFarmers as well, which states, 'The proposal, which TasFarmers understands includes workers compensation insurance -'

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Honourable members of the opposition, I will start issuing warnings and, as I said yesterday, they can be in very quick succession. The Member for Lyons, Ms Butler, has made a few contributions in a row. There have been a few others chipping in. I just want to hear the minister over the remaining one minute and 20 seconds. Thank you, minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Speaker. As I said, I've already provided my answer, but as the member opposite me would know and would be aware, insurance is a huge issue for many small businesses right around our state.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms FINLAY - Arising from my original question, which was, when the minister found out what did she do: when she found out, she just said that she first heard about it in Estimates. Well minister, you actually shared the Tasracing communications on your Facebook page and it's still there this morning. You've effectively endorsed what they did. Does that mean that you think it's appropriate for a state-owned company to use government and staffing resources to promote a party election policy?

The SPEAKER - Honourable minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable member, like I said, TasFarmers have also shared a media release, as has the Small Business Council as well.

Mr Winter - If you just misled, you need to take it more seriously.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Franklin, Mr Winter.

Ms HOWLETT - Insurance is a major issue for many businesses that are doing it tough right around Tasmania.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Standing Order 45, Speaker. The core of the question is when the minister first found out, what did she do? She said she found out in Estimates. She shared the Tasracing post about this when it was posted. Are you effectively endorsing the position which we know has -

The SPEAKER - Your point of order is on relevance. I ask the minister to come back to relevance to the question, please.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Speaker. As I stated, I have already answered those questions.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, I ask the House to settle, please.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - I'd like us all to very warmly welcome the Work Pathway students from TasTAFE in parliament in the gallery today. Welcome.

Members - Hear, hear.

Expert Advice to Government

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.20 a.m.]

In the deal you did with the honourable member for Elwick, Bec Thomas, to get her vote, you committed to an independent watchdog and an independent expert design, quality and integrity review panel to oversee the stadium build. So far, you've ignored all the independent experts' advice on the stadium, so why should Tasmanians believe you will listen and act on these new panels' advice? Is this just another empty promise you have no intention of acting on just to win the upper House support?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. You have put many questions forward with respect to this project and made your views very clear, from day one, that you do not support the project. Others have engaged, been willing to listen, and take views from all quarters before forming their view. I commend all that have contributed to the discussion. The matters that Ms Thomas has worked and discussed with our government is about ensuring the project can be the best it can be when it comes to probity, oversight and the like.

We do want this project to be the best it can possibly be. I'm not taking anything for granted. The upper House is doing its due diligence now and very thoroughly debating the project, and I commend them for that. I'm not taking for granted any particular outcome, because it's about the debate on the floor of the House, and those who support or don't support, at the end of the day. I'm always willing, and have always been willing, to engage with people to see this project, which I have believed in from the very beginning, to fruition, for the benefit of Tasmania. I respect your view and, with respect, it would be good if you could respect other alternative views as well. There are a lot of people who believe in this project for the future of Tasmania.

I have been very clear - it's a defining moment. For all the discussions that have taken place, all the scrutiny, all the reports, all the questions, we're here at this point now and it is a defining moment. Do we take the state forward or is the opportunity cost of not supporting this project, in the eyes of investors into Tasmania, that Tasmania is not a place to invest? That would be devastating for many, many people, notwithstanding the potential economic consequences.

Supplementary Question.

Ms JOHNSTON - Speaker, supplementary?

The SPEAKER - Supplementary.

Ms JOHNSTON - The Premier, in his response, talked about the importance of setting up these particular panels: the oversight panel and the independent integrity review panel. Have you given Ms Thomas any written guarantee that you will actually act and accept the advice of these panels and not move away from the advice that they received, or you received from them?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Should the project proceed, there is a greater oversight on the project. They're one mechanism of oversight, the others will be within this place, in the upper House and the Public Accounts Committee. This is going to be scrutinised to the nth degree - every brick that's laid. There will be questions of 'have you laid it right' and 'how much did the brick cost?' I mean, this is going to be pretty seriously scrutinised. These are designed to make the project better

Ms JOHNSTON - Point of order, Speaker. The question is: will you accept and act on the advice - have you given Ms Thomas this guarantee?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course we will listen to any advice that comes forward.

Premier's Integrity

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.24 a.m.]

You promised government investment in the stadium would be capped at \$375 million. This morning it's been confirmed the cost cap has now been raised by \$500 million. Capital or borrowings, it's money Tasmanians will fork out, yet you still won't admit you've broken your promise. Still, you won't apologise. If even now you can't admit that you've breached this commitment, how can anyone trust you? Where is your integrity?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank the honourable member, Ms Johnston, for the question as well. Ms Johnston, listen and act on advice, thank you very much. That's why we're setting up extra government -

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable speaker, I asked a question about the Premier's integrity, and with respect to Ms Johnston, this is a question to you about your integrity.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Leader of the Greens, the Premier's only 20 seconds into his contribution.

Dr Woodruff - He is answering a different question.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, this is your first warning. The Premier is only just on his feet. I ask that you allow him to answer in silence, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. You seem to think that the vote will proceed to the positive for the stadium. I'm not taking that for granted. Can I say this - the vitriol and the personal attacks have to stop when it comes to this. The vitriol no doubt will start, if it's not already started, on those who have indicated their support upstairs, and that is shameful. What we need to do is be mature adults, accept the will of the upper House debate and vote, and unite around this project.

You have a contribution to make with this project, should it proceed, by the scrutiny that you will apply to ensure maximum value for money and what was committed to is actually delivered. Do that without the vitriol and the personal attacks, please, is my advice. When I compare comments that I made at the rally of 15,000 people the other day, where it was positive, thanked those who supported the project, compared to the personal attacks that were made in the anti-rally, they were quite stark.

Moving forward, surely, we can unite and make this project the best it can possibly be. I look forward to the project proceeding and the discussion in the upper House. I'm not taking anything for granted. I welcome the commitment of members we've engaged with in the Legislative Council, and all those commitments will be realised.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question?

The SPEAKER - A supplementary.

Dr WOODRUFF - On the Premier's comments about vitriol and personal attacks, I will remind him about his statements in this House about Nicholas Gruen and the Tasmanian Planning Commission panel and how disgraceful his behaviour was. I asked a straight question, and the Premier did not answer it.

Premier, it is about your trust; people's trust in you and your integrity. You take responsibility for your words. You have broken your promise to Tasmanians of \$375 million. Will you take responsibility for that? Where is your integrity if you can't even do that?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I've provided the answer to you, very clearly. We've always been upfront about the cost. We announced the \$1.13 billion a number of months ago and we will see this project through.

Tasracing - TasInsure Comments

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

[10.29 a.m.]

On reflection earlier to a question that I asked, you answered that you first heard about this at Estimates. We know that you shared the Tasracing announcement in July. Have you just misled the parliament?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I'm not quite sure what the member has against cheaper, fairer insurances to our businesses across the state. During the election campaign it was a very busy time, as I'm sure we're all aware. I will correct the record as soon as possible. Now, apparently, under a tile text post 'TasInsure', there was a comment that was a link shared to Tasracing's media release, the same day that the Small Business Council put out their statement and the same day as TasFarmers put out their statement as well, honourable Speaker.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance; the question is specific to the minister. Did you mislead? I have, live, here this morning -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The only one talking right now is the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Ms FINLAY - 'Jane Howlett, author', sharing the Tasracing statement. Have you misled the House? You said you first knew about it in Estimates. This is on your Facebook page. You shared it as 'author'.

Ms HOWLETT - I've just corrected the record, honourable Speaker.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The only one speaking now is the Minister for Racing. Allow her to make her contribution in silence, please.

Ms HOWLETT - I've just corrected the record, honourable Speaker.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - A supplementary question.

Ms FINLAY - Given that the minister has just confirmed that she knew about it in July, the questions we've been asking the minister this morning are: as minister, knowing that Tasracing had put this out, does she think it's appropriate that they use government resources and staffing to share information about an election policy?

The SPEAKER - Honourable minister.

Ms HOWLETT - I thank the member for her question. I did say the first time I knew was in Estimates. It had been pointed out and I did repost the statement at the time, I accept that, I acknowledge that, but I stand by my statement. This was a matter for Tasracing, not myself.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. The supplementary question -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable minister still has 45 seconds to go.

Ms FINLAY - The question is: does she think it's appropriate for staff and resources to be used to make communications around an election policy? She's not going there.

The SPEAKER - I cannot put words in the minister's mouth. She is making a reply. I do ask the minister to be relevant and to continue.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable Speaker. I've just corrected the record, I'm happy to do so and I've done that. Clearly, I'm not as quick at correcting the record on Facebook posts like you are removing Young Labor posts from a conference.

Members interjecting.

Dr Broad - Are you serious? You're a minister of the Crown, you know that? What a joke. Take your job seriously.

The SPEAKER - Order. I ask the House to settle, please. Dr Broad, this is your first warning, because the only one on their feet at the moment is Prof Razay.

Education - Teachers' Wellbeing

Prof RAZAY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.32 a.m.]

Teachers are working with complex trauma in classrooms, which has profound impacts on the level of challenging behaviours that result from mental health issues in children and misunderstood needs. It also has a huge impact on teachers' wellbeing, partly from feeling overwhelmed and under-resourced to be able to deal with these challenging behaviours and emotional needs, and partly tied to the guilt that comes from being unable to keep other children safe in the classroom or to deliver the learning program required. Premier, can you outline what supports are given to address teacher burnout and eventual dropout?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank Prof Razay very much for the question, and it's a very good one. It's a complex environment for our educators in school environments and it has been for many years, if not forever, but there's a heightened concern at this particular time. I know that because I've got a sister who's a teacher, I've got friends who are teachers and I was Education minister for seven years.

During that time we ensured, and continue to ensure, that the best way our young people can learn is if they are safe and feel comfortable in the learning environment. That's about ensuring we put supports around our young people, our students, when it comes to trauma-informed practice from our educators, which we have invested in. That was part of the bilateral agreement we signed in 2017 with the federal government on supports for students with disability. We went from a very crude way of assessing the investment we make for students with disability around IQ levels, to now very much a new model which was advocated for by Kristen Desmond and disability advocates. A number of years ago there was a working group set up and now we have a far better system where the resources go directly to the student, whatever those needs are, and they vary depending on the abilities of each young person.

When it comes to the wellbeing of our principals and staff, we recognise the important role teachers and principals play in the effective running of our schools and on improving student outcomes. Considerable efforts have been made to enhance the wellbeing of principals and teachers. All supports that are intended to not just strengthen and sustain the wellbeing of Tasmanian government school principals and teachers, but to allow principals and teachers to focus on leading and teaching as well. The voices of principals and teachers alongside insights from national and state level stakeholder inputs and research have informed government initiatives.

I well recall working with the Principals Association in Tasmania and the leadership of Malcolm Elliott mostly and then Sally McGee and the work they did in bringing forward to us as a government the importance of wellbeing for principals and staff. That was very insightful. I mentioned barriers around trauma-informed practice and students with disabilities, but also -

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

Tasmanian Liberals Council Meeting

Mr GEORGE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.36 a.m.]

At the Liberal State Council meeting on the weekend, a motion to replace or overhaul Tasmania's Hare-Clark voting system was passed. While I understand the Liberals' terror of permanently losing any hope of majority government, will you undertake not to tamper with what is one of the most democratic forms of election in the world and one that has served Tasmania so well?

At the same time, will you condemn the extraordinarily derogatory comments by Burnie Liberal branch member Liz Kinnheir-Tarte directed at my Independent colleague and member for Braddon, Mr Garland? If you won't condemn such outrageous slurs, then let me say that I would be proud to stand by Mr Garland, not as the dregs of Tasmania, but as the very best Tasmania has to offer.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his very good question. There is some interest in the Liberal Party State Council. There often is and we have them open and the media there to look at, scrutinise and report on the Liberal State Council in all its glory, or, at times, not so, I'd have to say.

First, to the second part of your question, I reached out to the honourable member by voicemail and then text and apologised on behalf of the Liberal Party for what was said. I want to make that very clear. I've just spoken about vitriol and personal attacks and my view that they have no place in informed debate.

When it comes to the Hare-Clark system, this is not a new discussion, it's an investigation, I believe. The Liberal Party membership has every right, as does any democratic organisation, to put forward ideas, test those ideas and then advocate for investigations into electoral systems and all sorts of matters. That's their right. I'm sure in other forums as well political organisations would do the same and at least should listen to their membership. There is a broad range of views when it comes to the Hare-Clark system. I think Shane Broad doesn't support the Hare-Clark system.

Dr Broad - Let's have the discussion; thanks for listening.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Shane wants to have the discussion as well and it's a fair enough discussion to have. My views are on record when it comes to the Hare-Clark system and they are probably counter to some of the views in the community. I'm actually a believer in the Hare-Clark system. I was influenced by my grandfather who was an engineer at the Hydro and a very good mathematician, and he thought it was the fairest system in the world at the time. Others would disagree with that, of course, with all sorts of matters around proportional representation, but that's my personal view. The party organisation, of which we value the membership, chose to investigate alternative electoral systems, and I commend them for at least having a go.

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - A supplementary question Speaker?

The SPEAKER - Supplementary.

Mr GEORGE - I understand the fear of both parties about the Hare-Clark system and minority government, but Premier, will you undertake that under your premiership you will not tamper with the Hare-Clark system?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Dr Broad - We've been operating it for decades. It's a different question.

The SPEAKER - Order. Hare-Clark was referred to and the Premier did talk about it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. We've already increased the numbers of the House of Assembly, so I'm not sure your definition -

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it's increasing the numbers, to the benefit, might I say, of Independent members. You should be high-fiving me, actually, Mr George. We have lot to do, and we're focusing on health, education, our schools, public safety, and we have no plans around electoral system changes for the foreseeable future.

Tasracing - TasInsure Text

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

[10.42 a.m.]

We've now established that you did know about this in July, so I restate my question. When you first found out in July that Tasracing had issued communications promoting a Liberal Party election policy - a clear breach of a number of codes, principles and potentially laws, as the minister responsible for Tasracing, what did you do?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. As previously advised, it was an operational matter, and a decision was made by the company. I'm advised that the Chair took the immediate action when alerted to the post and has spoken to the CEO about his actions. As a state-owned company, Tasracing is not covered by the *State Service Act*. This was a matter for the Tasracing board and the Chair has already addressed it during the scrutiny committee hearing. I've already answered the questions, and I have corrected the record as well. I have nothing further to add.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - Supplementary question?

The SPEAKER - Supplementary.

Ms FINLAY - Coming from the answer from the minister, do you, as minister, think it's acceptable for a state-owned company to issue communications promoting a Liberal Party policy, which is potentially a breach of codes, principles and laws?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I ask the House to settle. I appreciate the sensitivities of this matter, but I do ask that respect is shown in this place so that the minister can answer the question. None of us knows what the minister is going to say. None of us can know what the minister will be saying in 30 seconds from now. I do ask that the minister be heard, please.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, honourable Speaker. and I thank the member for her question. I believe that the Chair took the appropriate action.

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance, before the minister walks away. The supplementary question was very specific.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Please sit down. The minister has gone. I cannot force the minister to come back if the minister has indicated she has finished her question. You have two more questions to ask, that you can ask the minister.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, minister. Interjections will cease. The House will settle. Next question, please.

Farming - Support for Farmers

Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[10.45 a.m.]

I have been speaking to a lot of farmers in Lyons, and I'm deeply alarmed about the number of farmers selling up due to the state of the sector - lack of abattoirs, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC), high transport costs and mistreatment by the supermarket duopoly. What support are you providing to this crucial industry?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member not only for his question but also his advocacy representing the views of farmers in his region and his electorate. I, too, understand and have been listening loud and clear to farmers, particularly when it comes to small-scale abattoirs and the ability for cattle to be processed in accordance with health regimes, rules and regulations, so that it is safe for not only the person consuming it, but it also provides a level of protection around those undertaking that work. To that end, in relation to our small-scale abattoir, a great piece of work has been released that is out very shortly. We look forward to getting that on the shelves and into the hands of farmers so that they can go about their business.

When it comes to the service skills, when it comes to a farmer having an animal slaughtered on his/her own farm, again, that is contained within the small-scale abattoir document. Let me tell you that a great deal of biosecurity considerations has gone into this, as well as trying to lessen the risk, trying to make the system more flexible, so that we're not putting an onerous burden onto our farmers, who just want to get the job done.

That's what we're about. We're about reducing red tape. We're about making things easier. I understand this completely. I come from that industry. I look forward to anybody from this place who has similar concerns with farmers meeting those requirements, please reach out. Please let me know their concerns, so that I can deal with it. I mean that sincerely. Thank you, Speaker.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Funding Commitments

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.58 a.m.]

Premier, we heard from the member for Elwick this morning that you promised to seek funding from the federal government, the AFL or Cricket Australia should the stadium costs exceed the current projection of \$1.13 billion. Obviously, it will cost more than that. It's still not fully designed. The construction contract is still a year away, at least. Have you received, Premier, any commitment from the federal government, the AFL or from Cricket Australia that they will bail you out if the stadium cost rises yet again?

ANSWER

No, I haven't received any commitment. Should that eventuate, over the contingency and over the cost escalation there are various options, including seeking further funding from the entities that you mentioned, but also value managing the project in terms of the project's -

Mr Bayley - Cutting corners? No, it's round.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, Deputy Leader. There are a lot of considerations there. This is a P90 project with contingency and with cost escalation built into the \$1.13 billion. I'm confident, given the scrutiny on this project, that it will be within budget like the Bridgewater Bridge was.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Supplementary?

The SPEAKER - Supplementary.

Dr WOODRUFF - I think everybody who's listening would want to know what the Premier means by 'value managing' the project. He's said, yet again, that there won't be more money coming from Tasmanians, and he doesn't have any commitments from the AFL, Cricket Australia or the Federal Government. What does value managing the extra cost to this project mean, specifically in terms of how much Tasmanians would pay?

Mr ROCKLIFF - It's about working within your budget: it could be the amenities, it could be in a lot of areas. I'm not going to be specific about it, except to say it's about ensuring you have options either to come within the budget or seek further funds from elsewhere. It's pretty simple.

Dr Woodruff - You could ditch the corporate box.

Mr Rockliff - I know you will be in it; you will be one of the first, I reckon.

Members interjecting.

Dr Woodruff - In your dreams.

The SPEAKER - Order. The House will settle.

Wilkinsons Point - Valuation Report

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.51 a.m.]

The Valuer-General told the government that the valuation report for Wilkinsons Point should not be shared with the billionaire proponent who was looking to purchase the site, but in October 2024, that's exactly what happened. According to the Auditor-General, it was your office that directed the department to share it. Under our system of government, ministerial staff can't direct public servants, but ministers can. Can you confirm that the instruction to release the valuation came from you personally?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. The Auditor-General published a report on the proposed sale of the Wilkinsons Point land in September this year. The report found several shortcomings, and the advice provided supported the government's decision-making and issues with the process and governance arrangements that were followed. However, it is pleasing that the audit also identified that since mid-2024, State Growth had made improvements in their advice process and governance surrounding this specific project. State Growth has applied those improvements to other projects as part of their continuous improvement program.

In 2020, the government's focus was to support the Tasmanian economy during the COVID-19 pandemic and usual government processes were highly disrupted and the department was focused on high-priority relief packages.

I thank the Auditor-General for his work on the matter. I note that no finalised land sale and development agreement has been reached with the LK Group. The four recommendations of the report have been accepted, and the department has acknowledged that it must do better and is committed to improving its internal processes. This is a welcome sign of continuous improvement.

The land specified was to be sold at a price to be determined by the Valuer-General. Therefore, the proponent knowing that value was purely to inform discussions. The department had been discussing the valuation and the Valuer-General's advice with the proponent for many months, I'm advised, before the report was shared. Given that the agreed price was to be the Valuer-General's determination, there is nothing unusual in this advice being shared, as what happened in 2019.

Ms HADDAD - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. The Premier hasn't gone near the question, which is: did he instruct the department to share that valuation with the proponent?

The SPEAKER - He was still sort of there, so Premier, I do bring you back to relevance on that question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I have answered it, honourable Speaker. The department had been discussing the valuation and the Valuer-General's advice with the proponent for many months.

Supplementary question

Ms HADDAD - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms HADDAD - The question, Speaker, was really simple. Who directed it? Was it the Premier who directed the department to share that valuation? If he's saying it's just the department who did it off their own bat, will he share and table any correspondence between him and his department and the proponent?

The supplementary question again, Premier, is: who instructed the department to share the valuation with the proponent, and if you're saying the department acted under no instructions from you or your office, will you table any correspondence between yourself, your office, and the proponent?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, I will seek some advice on those matters, but I do want to be specific about this. The department had been discussing the valuation with the Valuer-General's advice with the proponent for many months before the report was shared.

Wilkinsons Point - Valuation Report

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.55 a.m.]

The Premier didn't answer the question. The question was: under whose instructions was the department discussing it? You have to acknowledge that giving the potential purchaser access to a confidential valuation gives them a massive advantage in their negotiations with the state. Why did you give a mainland billionaire access to this confidential information that everyday Tasmanian proponents would never be given? Will you commit to providing any other interested purchaser a copy of that valuation, and if not, why not?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. My advice is there were constant discussions. I've said the department have been sharing matters for months, under the Valuer-General's advice, with the proponent for many months before the report was shared. It hasn't proceeded, but there is a huge opportunity when it comes to the matter before us.

Remembering 2020 when we were in COVID, there was an opportunity for investment in Tasmania - I'm not sure if you're saying that we shouldn't have proceeded with the JackJumpers or not. This is a development opportunity, a huge opportunity for Tasmania, which we will benefit from, should it proceed.

Supplementary Question

Ms HADDAD - A supplementary, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - A supplementary.

Ms HADDAD - Honourable Speaker, the Premier, again, didn't go anywhere near the question. Under whose instructions was the department sharing the information with the proponent? He implied that it was the Auditor-General who instructed the department to share the information. I doubt that's the case and I invite the Premier to correct that record. Will he commit to tabling any correspondence between himself, his office and the proponent, and if not, what is he trying to hide?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, I believe I've covered that, but I'm happy to seek advice on the matter raised by the member.

Ms Finlay - Is that coming back today, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - Sorry Premier, is that on notice?

Mr Rockliff - Yes, best endeavors.

Children in Custody - Spit Hood Incident

Ms ROSOL question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.57 a.m.]

Yesterday, the Custodial Inspector released their report into security contractor transport of young people in custody. The report reveals a T-shirt was pulled over a young person's head as an improvised spit hood while they were in custody and being transported by a private security company. This was a result of Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP's) failure to properly oversee private contractors. Spit hoods are both dangerous and a violation of human rights and after all your promises following the commission of inquiry, your government is still not keeping children safe. Concerns about the security contractor were raised multiple times with the department and no action was taken.

Will you commit to legislating a ban on the use of spit hoods? Earlier you said, contracts are required, and the department is reviewing contract specifications. Will you commit to ending the use of private security contractors transporting children to and from Ashley?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, a large part of the last part of the question was answered in my answer to the question of a member for Franklin, where one was highlighting the complexity and the availability of staff at all hours of the day, night and during the week. There has to be a degree of flexibility to get those resources to ensure the safety of young people within the transport arrangements.

When it comes to the issue of spit hoods, as I said, spit hoods are strictly prohibited and not in use at Ashley Youth Detention Centre, I'm advised, including makeshift spit hoods such as T-shirts, or any material that covers the face and the prohibition extends to use on transports to and from the centre. I'm advised that Ashley operations staff have been advised by direction and briefings that spit hoods of any type are prohibited, and where a risk of spitting is determined, a single use spit shield is available to staff to use as a form of personal protective equipment. Training and guidelines on the risks presented by spitting and how to manage them are currently being developed.

Supplementary Question

Ms ROSOL - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - A supplementary.

Ms ROSOL - The Premier didn't answer either of my questions. The first was about whether he commits to legislating a ban on the use of spit hoods. He also talked about the need for flexibility with training companies. Clearly there's a major issue with private contractors with staff turnover, casual work arrangements, and there's no way of making sure those staff are properly trained. Will you take the necessary step of ending the use of private contractors?

The SPEAKER - I draw the Premier back to the original question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will have to seek advice on the last part of that question. It's a policy matter and there are complexities should one go down that pathway in terms of availability of staff, so I'd need to seek advice on what you are seeking and the implications for that.

I'm advised that the secretary of DECYP met with the Custodial Inspector to discuss the review findings and recommendations. We acknowledge the importance of independent oversight and safeguards to protect the rights of young people in the youth justice system and support the intent of the Custodial Inspector's review recommendations. The recommendations will be assessed and considered, including legislation to ban the use of spit hoods under the act and amend or replace the act to cover the use of force that may occur outside of a custodial setting, for

example, during transport and offsite appointment locations. In response to the review, the department has implemented and continues -

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

Energy Efficiency in Rental Properties

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

[11.02 a.m.]

We know your government is committed to Marinus Link which, according to independent analysis by Deloitte commissioned by the Treasury, will dramatically increase the wholesale electricity price in Tasmania. I'm particularly concerned about the impact this will have on Tasmanians who are on low incomes and are renting, so I was pleased to see your response to last year's climate change risk assessment called 'Managing Tasmanian's Climate Risks and Opportunities'. It sets out a whole host of measures to assist Tasmanians to adapt to climate change.

I want to ask you about one particular measure on page 30 where Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT) said it was developing information and resources to support landlords to improve energy efficiency in rental properties. Can you update the House on what resources have been provided to landlords to improve energy efficiency in rental properties, or any policies your government has to help landlords to do this and reduce power bills for renters?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I shall endeavour to provide an answer to a very specific question. You're quite right, we are taking this very seriously and our government has done a huge amount of work in climate change response. Tasmania's Risk Assessment for Climate Change 2024, which I believe is the document you're talking about, was released in November and it's the first statewide climate risk assessment for Tasmania. It identified about 40 climate-related risks and opportunities that influence the natural, social, built and economic domains.

I realise you're specifically talking about landlords and rentals and improving their energy efficiency, so I will try to get to that quickly. I think it is also important to make sure to update the House about how wide and broad the work is that we are doing in this area. We wanted to truly understand how better to deal with the risks and the opportunities and that's why we've gone through 33 of the risks and opportunities and identified whether they're tier 1 or tier 2 and what sort of adaptation is recommended over the next five years.

Deloitte's Risk Advisory were appointed to go through this work and to work with ReCFIT. We know that physical climate-related risks, the sorts of things that you're describing again in built housing, are important. Climate-related acute shocks could happen such as heat waves, floods, bushfires, drought, et cetera, and long-term climate trends such as temperature change, sea level

rise, seasonal distribution, intensity of rainfall, incidents of frost, distribution of invasive species and diseases.

We are working across four value domains - natural, social, economic and built. You've referred to the built domain in your question. We have a response which includes a range of adaptation actions. focusing on five priority areas to build resilience to the changing climate. One of those is helping Tasmanians understand the climate risks and opportunities, and the second one is supporting Tasmanians to access fit-for-purpose climate science data and information, building public sector capability and facilitating collaborative partnerships to support adaptation action, and we're monitoring those as we go along.

We have a range of actions under that, including briefings and materials; working with the University of Tasmania on the Natural Hazards Atlas project, which we heard a bit about yesterday, that great event; updating Tasmanian fine-scale climate projections; working with interpretive materials to help specific user groups such as landlords and building owners; progressing whole-of-government work; and supporting government agencies to work with sectors such as landlords and heritage buildings to -

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

[11.06 a.m.]

My constituent, Linda, owns an EV and finds driving it around Tasmania for work almost impossible due to the lack of charging infrastructure. She's also repeatedly had problems with chargers. She reports that three weeks ago both EV chargers were out of order in Westbury and two weeks ago one of the chargers was out of order in Campbell Town, resulting in long queues. What action will you take to ensure there's more EV charging infrastructure across the state and what work will you do with operators of EV charging infrastructure to ensure the chargers we do have are in working order?

Fossey River Heavy Vehicle Rest Area

Mr JAENSCH question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

I have a question from a constituent regarding the proposed heavy vehicle rest area at Fossey River on the Murchison Highway. My constituent is not a truck driver but a volunteer driver who brings people from the west coast to Burnie for appointments and the existing facilities at Fossey

River are unsuitable for some of his older clients. When will the new heavy vehicle rest area be built and will it be accessible to the public or just to truck drivers?

Illawarra Road - Farm Access Dangers

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

My constituent question is from Illawarra Road landowners. The 2015 reclassification of Illawarra Road into the highway network occurred without consultation or assessment of suitability and prior to the Perth Bypass. Perth Bypass travel time savings are negligible. Illawarra Road is primarily a working rural corridor used daily for moving machinery and stock. Overtaking lanes across property entrances and G-turns will force tractors and stock trucks to cross three lanes in 100 kph traffic. The large increase in heavy freight vehicles on this road greatly increases collision risk. On 30 October, the Illawarra Road landowners wrote to the minister requesting an onsite ministerial review to understand the dangers with farm access. Will the minister meet with landowners on site and review the project safety, risk and cost benefit to determine whether continuing this project remains viable and justified?

Rural Police Stations

Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

This question is from a constituent in Oatlands. Many rural police stations are manned by a single officer, often responding to incidents without immediate backup. Can you confirm whether it is true that officers in these one-officer stations are not issued with in-car camera systems in their patrol vehicles? Will the government commit to ensuring that rural officers are equipped with the same recording technology available to their urban counterparts?

Answer to Question from Volunteer Marine Rescue Tasmania

Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for SPORT, Mr DUIGAN

My question is on behalf of Volunteer Marine Rescue Tasmania. There was a question put on 9 September on behalf of the Volunteer Marine Rescue Tasmania and there still hasn't been a response provided. Can the minister please provide a response?

Huonville High School - MDT Assessment

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

My question is on behalf of a constituent, Brian, in Huonville, who raises attention to the serious health and safety risks identified in the Materials and Design Technology (MDT) dust assessment conducted at Huonville High School in August this year. It reveals unsafe levels of exposure to hazardous airborne contaminants in the woodwork and metalwork areas, including wood dust, welding fumes, poor ventilation and extraction. Some of the wood dust and welding fumes are classified as group 1 carcinogens and points to the minister's legal obligations under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2012* and *Regulations 2002*. Brian asks for immediate actions that are needed to install a negatively pressured ventilated welding and grinding room, upgrades and verification about the performance of all Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) systems, and points to the staff and students who are being exposed to carcinogens and asks for action now, please.

Tresillian Bus Outreach Service for the North-West Coast

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

My constituent from Burnie would like to know how frequently the Tresillian bus outreach service will visit the north-west coast, and if the government has given up on building mother-baby beds for the north-west coast.

Working with Vulnerable People Checks Free for Volunteers

Mr JAENSCH question to MINISTER for COMMUNITY and MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS, Ms OGILVIE

The people who volunteer in my community are keen to know if the interim Budget is passed this week, when will our election policy making Working with Vulnerable People checks free for volunteers come into effect and for how long?

Time expired.

TABLED PAPER

Estimates Committee B - Minister for Energy and Renewables - Additional Information

[11.13 a.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I lay upon the Table of the House additional information provided to Estimates Committee B by the Minister for Energy and Renewables.

Paper tabled.

POISONS AMENDMENT (INTERSTATE PRESCRIPTIONS) BILL 2025 (No. 45) TERRORISM LEGISLATION (EXTENSION) BILL 2025 (No. 52)

Bills returned from Legislative Council without amendment.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight - Code of Conduct for Members of the Parliament of Tasmania

The SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, which I shall ask the Clerk to read:

Honourable Speaker,

The Legislative Council, having this day agreed to the following resolution, now transmits the same to the House of Assembly and requests concurrence therein.

Resolved with reference to the Interim Report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight paper number 26, that for the current parliament, unless otherwise ordered, the Legislative Council adopt a code of conduct for all members of the Parliament of Tasmania in the following terms. The terms in full have been circulated to members.

C Farrell
President
Legislative Council
2 December 2025.

Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight - Paper Number 26

The SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a further message from the Legislative Council.

Honourable Speaker,

The Legislative Council, having this day agreed to the following resolution, now transmits the same to the House of Assembly and requests its concurrence therein.

Resolved with reference to the Interim Report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight paper number 26, that for current parliament, unless otherwise ordered, the Legislative Council resolves to establish an independent complaints commissioner in the following terms, and the terms in full have been circulated to members.

C Farrell
President
Legislative Council
2 December 2025

**Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight -
Alcohol and Other Drugs Statement**

The SPEAKER - I am in receipt of a further message from the Legislative Council.

Honourable Speaker,

The Legislative Council, having this day agreed to the following resolution, now transmits the same to the House of Assembly and requests its concurrence therein.

Resolved with reference to the Interim Report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight paper number 26, that for the current parliament, unless otherwise ordered, the Legislative Council agree to the following statement for members in relation to alcohol and other drugs, and the statement in full has been circulated to members.

C Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council
2 December 2025

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

That the last three messages be taken into consideration at a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Honesty in Politics

[11.17 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: honesty in politics.

I rise to speak to and for Tasmanians who have been appalled and shocked at this Liberal government and Premier Jeremy Rockliff's casual disregard for truth in politics. What they've seen over the last three years has shocked many Tasmanians to the core. I want people to know today, as we hear and understand that it is likely that the order to progress a stadium will pass this House, that the fight is not over. The fight to protect our democracy, the fight to protect the things that we love and hold dear is not over. The Greens stand with Tasmanians who want to have premiers and politicians who speak the truth, who want to protect our democratic processes and who understand that the things we care about should be protected for future generations.

We understand the true cost that this stadium would bring to the Tasmania's budget, but we also understand the true damage it will do to the things that many Tasmanians hold incredibly dear, such as the sacred Cenotaph and the Aboriginal reconciliation site that should be built and will be built at Macquarie Point, and the sacred Cenotaph will be protected, because people in Tasmania will resist and reject any attempt to spend our precious resources building a third stadium that is a vanity project for the AFL that Tasmanians don't need and can't afford.

It will cripple our economy for decades to come and it will mean that the things we need to have money spent on in a state that is desperately scarce of resources can be directed towards health, housing, the commission of inquiry recommendations, child safety services, the neighbourhood centres and all the other things that are currently being viciously cut by this government precisely to save the money that's required to build the stadium. We stand with those Tasmanians, and we stand for people in this parliament. We from the Greens and many others here on the crossbench would be appalled that the government is actually considering making a mockery of democratic processes by going down this path.

Let's be clear. You can legislate an order to approve a stadium, but that does not mean it will be built, because you cannot legislate to change reality and the reality is the costs of this stadium have gone up. They've already gone up four times and it's only started, from \$715 million to \$775 million to \$945 million to \$1.13 billion. We have a stadium that's 70 per cent designed. We do not have a contract for it. We do not have a tender. We have huge things that have to be included

in the costs that are not accounted for. We have no money for a northern access road. We have no money to fix up the pedestrian and streets of Macquarie and Davey streets. We have nothing in there to do the job of building a stadium. More to the point, any and all the money that will go into building a stadium is money that will not go into putting people into homes, and it will not go into the escalating elective surgery needs, and it will not go into the neighbourhood centres that are already having their budgets cut.

Tasmanians have been watching. They might be played for fools by the Premier, but they are not fools. They can see the lies and broken promises that have dripped from his lips for two years now. He went to the 2024 election promising a cap of \$375 million. He knew he had to do that or he would not have won that election. Every day since, he has refused, obfuscated and pretended that borrowings and capital are two different buckets of money. At the end of the day, Tasmanians will be paying for decades. The Greens are here with Tasmanians who are appalled at that idea, and we will never stop, because we defend our democracy and we defend truth. The attacks on the Planning Commission - they rejected this. This stadium should never be built. The Greens are going to stand with Tasmanians who make sure it won't be.

Time expired

[11.22 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Treasurer) - Honourable Speaker, one thing I've observed in recent times is that those who preach tolerance are usually the most intolerant people. Similarly, with this debate, we have people saying we need honesty in politics. The same group seeks to tell the people of Tasmania that 1500 people somehow equates to 15,000 people yet, they come here with a straight face, claiming that they are the purveyors of honesty in Tasmanian politics when that is a monstrous misrepresentation of what occurred over the past two weekends.

We were told that 1500 is similar to 15,000. What an exaggeration, what hyperbole. The Greens must know that their statements in relation to that are just false. Yesterday, a lot of people in this place wore their 'Respect' badge. Virtue signalling at its best, for, and yet, on that very same day, the Leader of the Greens attacked public servants who could not defend themselves on the basis that the Greens themselves misunderstood the difference between volume and weight. Their mistake, and incapacity to apologise - let me be frank with them. Chances are it was an honest mistake by the Greens, but when you make an honest mistake, the honest thing to do is to apologise. The people who are claiming that we need honesty in politics, monstrously defamed public servants, who cannot defend themselves, only to find out later that the Greens had misrepresented the situation in this place.

Then, we have the assertion that somehow the pursuit of this multipurpose stadium is a mockery of the democratic process. We had an election not that long ago, and 25 of the 35 members in this place were elected on a very strong policy of supporting the stadium. How is that a mockery of democracy? That is a mandate, I would have thought, in anybody's language.

Then we had in this debate another monstrous misrepresentation from those who seek honesty in politics, saying that there's no money for the Northern Access Road. It is in the budget. It is in the budget. It is in the budget. I've said it three times hoping that it might penetrate through

this veil of honesty the Greens seek to portray themselves with: a veil that, unfortunately, has been broken by black-and-white budget documentation. The northern access road will be built as a result of the Hobart City Deal that was developed in 2018-19. Money in the budget, and I have said in this place before - no stadium, no team, but a northern access road. It will happen in any event yet, the Leader of the Greens comes into this place asserting the exact opposite. I am sure that the Leader of the Greens is not that ignorant of the facts and therefore, you have to ask the question: what is her motive in asserting that which is debunked categorically in the budget which is categorically debunked in the budget papers?

Finally, in relation to the \$375 million, the very beginning of the business case was \$375 million equity injection at the beginning and then \$240 million from federal Labor, \$15 million from the AFL and whatever is left would be borrowed. A very clear statement, yet we have the Greens, yet again, seeking to misrepresent the situation.

As a young law student, I learnt that 'he' - and that was the language of the time - 'he who comes to equity must come with clean hands'. I would say, she who asserts honesty in politics needs to come with clean hands, and the Leader of the Greens has demonstrably failed in that task.

[11.27 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, it gives me little pleasure to rise on this matter of public importance, honesty in politics. I, too, want to frame my contribution about the stadium because this stadium is a development that has been built on deceit since day one. On that day, as Cassy O'Connor was signing a tri-partisan agreement to support the Tassie Devils team - which we do, strongly - the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, looked her in the eye and said, 'Cassy, a stadium will not be part of this bid'. That is evidence because it remains in black and white on the AFL's website today in a story that the AAP wrote in August 2022. The headline for that story, and I quote, 'Premier confirms new stadium won't be part of Tassie's AFL bid' and the leader on the story, again I quote, says, 'Tasmania confirms their formal proposal for the league's 19th licence won't include a new stadium ahead of a vote this month'.

Built on deceit. The Premier has been telling people for a long time, before the May 2023 AFL deal that a stadium wasn't part of the bid. Yet, when that deal was inked - a dud deal, I might say - it has the stadium in it. Not just that, it's a stadium in a specific location, of a specific size, of a specific design with a roof. What other entity? What other organisation? What other self-respecting person allows the AFL to dictate exactly where we should build one of the biggest infrastructure projects that this state has ever seen? What happened here was, the AFL tried to pick a winner and then the Planning Commission has done its work and revealed the fact that that site is unsuitable for a stadium.

Fast-forward to 2024, on day one of an election campaign, the Premier announced the \$375 million and 'not one red cent more'. Clearly, a strategy to try to neutralise the issue in the election campaign context, promising that private public partnerships would pick up the balance. However, we have had blowouts since then, repeated blowouts - \$715 million turned into \$775 million turned into \$945 million and then, literally on the day the Planning Commission releases its report, there's a confession that it is now \$1.13 billion, and private public partnership has been ruled out.

The original borrowings that are still written into the business case and literally was tabled in this House on the 1 June 2023, says that the government will spend \$375 million and the remaining \$85 million will be funded through borrowings - \$85 million. We know how much the borrowings are now. The borrowings for Macquarie Point Development Corporation alone are \$490.7 million. The information that the Treasurer has given us in relation to that is that it will cost us up to \$32 million a year from the general government sector to service that debt, to pay that debt.

That will probably go up, because in the last week or two we've had our credit rating downgraded. That means the cost of money becomes more expensive - so the \$490 million for Macquarie Point and, indeed, the \$375 million that the government will need to borrow to contribute has just got more expensive. When we talk about this so-called new cap of \$875 million, it's already blown. It's already blown because if you add in the cost of servicing the debt that we have to borrow, we have well and truly over \$875 million already.

When abandoning the private/public partnership process, the Premier said 'borrowings are not part of capital'. However, in Estimates last week, Treasurer Mr Abetz directly contradicted the Premier by saying borrowings are clearly going to be part of the capital input into this project. The spin and deceit of the government has been exposed by his own Treasurer.

When it comes to the assessment process, it's utterly disappointing to hear the Premier, over the years, denigrate the Tasmanian Planning Commission and say that they went into this process with a preconceived position. In terms of ongoing deceit, I just want to highlight the fact that the Planning Commission, when it comes to the Cenotaph, was unequivocal in relation to the impacts of this stadium on the Cenotaph. Yet in this flimsy document the government has released that reruns all the lost arguments, the government says the significance of the Cenotaph is respected. Well, that's not the view of the RSL, because they said that they have been disrespected at every turn.

Time expired.

[11.32 a.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this morning to speak on this matter of public importance. Often when we speak to the matter of public importance, we share opinions from within the Chamber or across the Chamber. There are people in the community, many thousands of Tasmanians, watching what happens here and having wild expectations that the standards in this place are set high. What's happened with this government is that they have an inability to understand that honesty matters. This government have set the bar so low that newer members who have come into the government feel like the sort of behaviours that we're seeing from this government are acceptable. You don't have to look very far, and you don't have to look very far back to be questioning the honesty in politics, or the honesty in this government. Just in question time today, how can it be so hard that you have to ask repeated questions to get simple answers to questions and to come to the truth?

I repeatedly asked the Minister for Racing this morning repeatedly about when she first understood and knew about Tasracing spruiking Liberal Party election promises about TasInsure

workers' compensation and how it would apply to their racing sector. When did she first find out about it? She was trying to get away to say that she heard about it in Estimates, but we had evidence that she knew about it in July, so she had to scramble to the podium and retract her statement. Still, it's not clear - how did Tasracing find out? There was no public information about the fact that there would be workers' compensation included or that it would be applied to the racing industry, so how did they find out? Again, the minister still hasn't answered that question honestly.

We don't have to just ask ministers in this Chamber, but we have guest ministers down here for Question Time. Minister for Sport, Nick Duigan, can't answer questions honestly about the way that he has woefully treated the North Launceston Footy Club, with a promise of \$100,000 taken away because they would dare to cover their options and stand with the Labor Party. The minister upstairs is not able to tell the truth and not able to behave in a way that meets community expectations.

Again, today, we talk about the behaviour of the Premier, who instructed a valuation to be shared with a proponent, against the advice of the Attorney-General, on Wilkinsons Point. There are so many current issues about this government where they cannot tell the truth, where the issues are piling up but the standards are piling lower and lower.

For the community, this is a matter of public importance. The public care about what happens in this place. The public care deeply about the standards. Just this morning I received an email in regard to the North Launceston Footy Club and how they've been treated. You would think that would be a local issue. You would think it would be so localised that the minister, whose office is just over the road would care about it but we know that he doesn't care about the North Launceston Footy Club, he doesn't care about being honest, and he doesn't care about doing the right thing.

Well, a Tasmanian constituent from the south emailed me this morning to express his concerns. His concerns are that Mr Duigan admitted publicly that he declined to provide promised funding to the North Launceston Footy Club due to their president appearing in a photo with the then-Opposition Leader. He says:

This crosses the line. It's no longer merely a broken promise or pork barrelling - it's corrupt conduct.

These are the feelings of Tasmanians. Tasmanians expect us to do everything we can to stamp out corruption.

Minister Duigan should resign or be dismissed over this corruption.

This is how strongly people feel about this.

If this doesn't occur, then people should be requested and required to do everything they can to call this government and their ministers to account.

The problem here is right from the top. The problem here is with the Premier. The Premier is unable, or unwilling, to hold himself to a high standard, nor his ministers to a high standard, in

a way that the Cabinet and the government actually serve the people of Tasmania for the best interests of Tasmanians, not just to protect themselves.

There is an expectation that people are honest. We don't have to look very far. We see North Launceston Footy Club treated appallingly. We see Tasracing having access to information that wasn't publicly available to anybody else. We see, despite and against the Valuer-General's advice, information being shared directly with proponents.

You look at the debacle of the *Spirits of Tasmania*. Had it not been for the relentless questioning from this side of the House for months and months about that issue, this government would never have revealed the concerns that they had financially or operationally with those *Spirits*.

Tasmanians deserve better. They deserve a premier who is going to set a standard that he holds himself and he expects his ministers to hold to. There has to be honesty in politics. There has to be integrity in politics. Otherwise, people lose trust and they lose faith, and then Tasmania and Tasmanians are poorer for it.

[11.37 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, one thing I can agree on with the member who just resumed her seat is that we must have honesty in politics. That's something every member of this House should be able to categorically and proudly state. The problem is that this Chamber gets used and abused for whatever is the passing policy debate of the day - and today it's the stadium, on the part of the Greens. I think it's extremely unfortunate that the Labor Party would deliberately read into *Hansard* that particular email, knowing the potency of some of the words in that email, generated as a result of their appalling behaviour yesterday in this House, misquoting minister Duigan in this House, then using that as the basis -

Ms Finlay - How did we misquote him? It's not a misquote if it's him directly saying it.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - for the attack on his character. I say that very clearly and squarely. The Labor Party - that now sits on its record. I think that's a very sad thing for this House on the day when we've had presented before us the new code of conduct for members about a respectful workplace. Yet you would read that email, with those particular words, and you will say, 'Well, they're not my words'. You will say, 'Oh, I was just reading the words from a constituent who emailed me this morning'. The same person who emailed me as well. I have the words.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The member for Bass. Honourable members, there are still two more contributions that can be made in here. There are other forms of the House if you have issues with the member's words, but he has been in respectful silence for your contributions. I ask that the same courtesy and respect is shown to the honourable member.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you, Speaker. I think it's shameful that a person would bring those words into this House and then say, 'Oh, they're not my words. That's what the constituent said'. Now you've put it into *Hansard*, you've brought it into the House, it's on the webcast. Well done. Using your parliamentary privilege, you've done that to another person's character. You may see minister Duigan as just another Liberal minister, but he is a person with a beating heart and he deserves fairness, too. He deserves that basic level of fairness, as would you, Ms Finlay, if somebody said the same of you. A different word that starts with the letter 'C'. The champion. The great champion, the self-described champion who has had so many kinds of champion - she's been the champion for Launceston and the Tamar Valley in 2019; in 2021 upgraded herself to the champion for Launceston and northern Tasmania. In 2021, upgraded herself to a champion for Northern Tasmania, and in 2024 upgraded herself to champion for Tasmania. We can all have our turn at this stuff and you need to be very careful when you're shooting down other people that you don't live in a glass house yourself.

The Greens have used this MPI to attack the honesty and character of the Premier because they're against the stadium. The Liberal Party is for the stadium, it's our project. The Labor Party have come on board. The Greens have its policy. We ought to be able to respect each other's different policy position on that major project, as we should, given its value and level of expenditure. That's appropriate but why would you drag the debate down to that position of accusing people of dishonesty when, as the cost of the project has risen, the Premier and the government have been transparent about it. It gives you the number upon which you then attack him and then it's considered through the Budget process, which is through these Houses. The democratic process is honoured in that way.

Every one of us, all 50 of us in both Houses have just one vote to exercise, carefully weighing it up and then be prepared to be accountable for it in electorates. What could be fairer than that, but the Greens always go the low road to attack the honesty of a person and the character, and I think that's a real shame.

In the closing 40 seconds I want to say how distraught I am about a lack of honesty in Canberra. The federal Labor government promised to uphold the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA), and last Wednesday night and Thursday morning they stripped it away. We have 5700 timber families in this state who have just had the rug pulled out from under them because the federal Australian government doing a deal with the Greens in the Senate have stripped away those protections for the RFA. That RFA is the basis for resource security and it's a great shame that we're not spending more time in this House this week challenging Labor for that appalling betrayal of our state.

[11.42 a.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak to the MPI about honesty in government and honesty in politics. I came into this place about 18 months ago under no illusions about honesty in politics. It's well known that there's a significant issue with integrity with politicians and with governments but even I've been shocked while I've been in here to see the level of debate and to see the things that are said. The government today want to talk about respect, and they want to talk about honesty, but they come with double standards. They have been in complete denial of the facts of the stadium; they're disconnected from reality. They're shifting

their baselines, constantly shifting the lines financially, and yet they have the audacity to accuse us of incorrectly calling out dishonesty in this place. What I constantly see in here is gaslighting. It's gaslighting of the people of Tasmania. The government stands in here and says, 'There will be no cuts because of the stadium'. We all know that that is wrong. This stadium is going to place us into incredible amounts of debt - we're already in debt, but we're going to be even in more debt.

They've said that it's not going to lead to job cuts. It's not going to lead to service cuts, but that's impossible. The government are putting more and more money into this stadium. They say now they've got a cap. Well, they've already shifted their cap, so I don't know why we would believe them on this cap that they've put on now. They're saying, 'Oh, no, it's fine, we will put the money into the stadium, but it's not going to affect services and jobs in this state'. The reality is that the money that's going into the stadium will come through borrowings. Those borrowings are going to lead to interest payments. Last time I was up here speaking about this, I think I said it was going to be up to \$70 million a year. Now we have information that says that interest payments will be up to \$90 million a year. We will be borrowing and borrowing and going into more and more debt and there is no way that we can continue to fund services and continue to pay public servants while our interest payments are going up and up and we need to find ways to pay for that.

What we have here is the government batting away our questions about this. We simply come and ask questions. We simply come and say, 'Tell us the truth about this. Stop pretending everything is going to be okay. Stop pretending that the stadium is going to be a saviour for this state'. It's not going to be a saviour for this state. It's going to put us into debt. Stop pretending that that debt is not an issue. I'm seriously shocked by that level of denial, that disconnection from reality that we constantly see in here. It's not okay for the people of Tasmania. The Greens stand in here for the people of Tasmania. We raise these questions for them because they have concerns. They are worried about the future of the state, they are worried about debt in this state, and they are worried about what that means for the services that they need.

I stand here as the representative for Bass, asking questions for the people of Bass concerned about the lies that we constantly hear from this government, saying everything will be alright. People in Bass know everything's not going to be alright. They come and talk to me about that all the time. They know that they're going to have to wait longer in the emergency department because the stadium is going to mean that there is less money available for health. They know that they're going to have to wait longer for ambulances.

Last week I had an email from a constituent about their father having to wait seven hours for an ambulance and then being told he'd have to wait four to five hours in the waiting room of the emergency department. He chose to stay at home. That is the reality that we are looking at with this stadium, those kinds of situations growing and increasing. For the government to stand in here morning after morning, Question Time after Question Time and deny that is a lack of honesty. To get up here and attack us for raising the questions and bringing the concerns of Tasmanians into this space is a lack of honesty. It has to stop. We need truth in this state. Tasmanians deserve to know how much this stadium is going to cost before we commit to it. We cannot have any more shifting lines any more changes in the figures any more commitments to a cap that's really a non-existent cap. It has to stop. People need honesty and the honest truth is this stadium will not help Tasmanians.

[11.47 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Greens for bringing on this topic. It was particularly timely, from this morning's Question Time, but not just this morning, but over the course of the last few months and even years. I was reflecting this morning about when I came into this place in 2021 and I was leader of opposition business straight away. In our meetings before parliament, we used to search for questions to ask the government, look for issues that needed highlighting, look for questions that would be hard to answer. Oftentimes, it was pretty tough to arrive in this place with really significant questions. I arrived this morning and I called it a smorgasbord. I mean, I didn't know where to start today in terms of honesty and integrity, and this government more broadly.

The budget is broken. I mean, a few years ago if we got a report like that from Moody's and S&P it would have been every single question in this parliament all week. Now, it's just another issue. The health system is broken. We've seen even worse stats released over the weekend showing how many Tasmanians are waiting to see a specialist. It is growing and growing and growing. Our housing situation, where so many young Tasmanians can't get into the market, and then we have this incredible waiting list; record numbers of people waiting to get into to a home through a broken Homes Tasmania system that has fundamentally let Tasmanians down. We're underperforming when it comes to just about every area of government. Then we have our GBE, TT-Line, which has been called insolvent by the Auditor-General of Tasmania.

The government is in tatters and at the heart of all that is this lack of integrity, this lack of honesty that we've seen. Minister Duigan's attack on the North Launceston Football Club, a football club just outside of his own electorate, across the road from his own electorate office, where he is still punishing them today for doing media with the Labor Party, young footballers who simply won't have a club in less than two years because of the decisions he's made and because of the punishment that he's dishing out. You've got no one on that side prepared to stand up and tell him what he's doing is wrong, including the member for Bass who just gave some kind of defence to his own behaviours. The defence is non-existent because the behaviour of this Minister for Sport, Nick Duigan, is unconscionable. The attack on those people that that club, those junior footballers is outrageous.

The answers this morning from minister Howlett in relation to the TasRacing text messages, firstly telling the House that she didn't know about these issues until scrutiny and then coming back to correct the record when she was caught out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition because she actually shared the information almost straight away. Caught out then coming and correcting the record as though that's okay. How could you believe this minister, a minister who stands with the greyhound racing industry just before the election and says she's got their back, then sells them out in a deal with the Greens? Whether you like the government's new greyhound policy or not, you must concede that this is unconscionable, this is an attack on people, and this is selling out people who thought they had the Liberal support.

This is about Jeremy Rockliff; the Premier, Mr Rockliff, I should say, whose answers today about The Wilkinsons Point saga did not answer the question, despite being asked multiple times. Was it he or his office? Was it him personally who directed the valuation to be shared with the proponent? Again and again and again. I think he was pretending he didn't know what the question

was. He knew exactly what he was being asked and he didn't want to answer. The answer, in part, is in the Auditor-General's report. We know in the Auditor-General's report that it was the Premier's office that provided this information to the proponent, the LK Group. You might think the Wilkinsons Point development will be fantastic, and I happen to believe that developing that land will be great for the state, but there must be honesty and integrity about the way this is done. It has to be done with the proper process.

They're not capable of that - the very basic components of governing, they are not able to do that. We stand in this place towards the end of another year where things just get worse and worse and worse. Honestly, at the start of every day - we have another Question Time tomorrow - I don't know where we will start. We would need hundreds of questions to get to the bottom of these issues because they don't answer simple questions.

One question it should have been - yes or no, did you share the valuation with the proponent? Just give her the answer. Instead we have to fight and battle to get anything out of this government. The standards have slipped to the point now where even the Sport minister, Mr Duigan's appalling treatment with that football club can't be called out by members opposite because they're not capable of seeing the vindictive behaviour that their own ministry is perpetuating on a great football club.

Matter noted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2025 (No. 63)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 64)

In Committee - Estimates Committees - Consideration of Reports

[11.52 a.m.]

Ms OGILVIE - Deputy Chair, I am delighted to rise and provide some reflections on the 2025-26 interim Budget Estimates sessions across my many portfolios. I'd like to start by thanking everybody who participated; particularly from my office, from the departmental staff, not only those who joined at the table, but those who did an incredible job preparing briefs and collating information. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Also, to everybody in this Chamber who participated. I always look forward to this time of the year where we get to sit together in close quarters and have longer and broader conversations about areas that I know we're all particularly interested in. Sometimes I'm surprised by what comes up in the questions that are asked. I really did make a huge effort, particularly this time with our minority parliament, to really open up, as much as I could, free-flowing dialogue, and I hope that was good and I hope it was appreciated by everybody in the House who participated.

My portfolio areas are Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy; Environment, including climate change; Community and Multicultural Affairs; and Arts and Heritage. We had good discussions through the sessions. This interim Budget was what we were talking about and we know, under this government, more Tasmanians than ever before are employed with more than 51,000. That's an increase since 2014 and it's a really good thing that more people are in work.

In relation to Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, which is really a keynote portfolio for not just us in this Chamber, everybody in the sector, but right across government. Technology touches everybody and improves our lives in so many different ways. I'm committed to delivering, alongside industry, to advance Tasmania's capability and potential. We have a vision for the economic development of Tasmania that is technology based, that is going to grow this clean, green, innovative sector, that helps our kids get a job, that helps our university in the STEM campus grow and improve and deliver the people we know want to work in this sector, which creates high-level, professional jobs in Tasmania that we know we can deliver because we're already seeing the growth there.

We also know that this sector is, I think it's over \$1.2 billion for Tasmania. It is a sleeping giant and that's the beautiful thing about the people in the tech sector. They hide their light under a bushel. They're not great at promoting themselves, yet they keep everything going. Let's never forget, the work they did during the pandemic, which was pivotal to keeping us all connected. They were able to show their skills in a way that we are still reaping the benefits from through the flexibility of the workforce and the ability to work from anywhere.

That was a really good session. I wish we had had longer. I will just note that our digital future and our advanced technology strategies will be out early in the new year. This has been a huge amount of work this year. We've done that work despite elections and despite all the other busyness of daily work and business as usual. I also held the first AI dialogue, which I was pleased to do with industry across sectors, and with the University of Tasmania. I would like to shout out to Mark Bowles and the economics department for the work they did. We continue to be focused on subsea cable to improve connectivity.

Internally, we have \$37.5 million for whole-of-government ICT and digital transformation initiatives and that's up from \$25 million. This underpins and underscores the broader digital transformation strategy for the government sector, making it a better and more interesting place to work, where we can get the benefits of process improvement. We are also providing more than \$90 million to implement technology solutions right across the government. That's good work as well.

Into the arts sector, I'm really pleased to say that we're working hard and well with our very important and good arts sector. In this Budget we backed our theatre sector with more than \$1 million dedicated to Theatre Royal. We've provided \$2.4 million, which we do every year to the beautiful Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. We've delivered \$4.5 million to support the infrastructure works associated with the redevelopment of Federation Concert Hall - I'm really pleased that we're able to get that into place. We are acknowledging the theatre's significant role in Tasmanian history and the Theatre Royal specifically as an integral venue for the performing arts.

I was really pleased to be able to discuss TMAG, which we love. It is our leading natural and cultural heritage organisation and custodian of the state collection. We've provided more than \$13 million to help keep TMAG's collection safe and to ensure visitors have an enjoyable experience. I was very pleased this week to attend the filming of an exciting new TV show, set to air on ABC in 2026 featuring TMAG, supported in part by Screen Tasmania. This is the kind of

stuff we want. We want our historic, heritage buildings to be enlivened and enriched by people visiting and coming up with new ideas particularly screen productions, which are something we're very keen to support. I say to everybody at TMAG, keep going, you're great, do more beautiful work. We've also committed more than \$16 million in arts and screen industry development funding to ensure we continue to have a thriving sector. By working together we are delivering for the arts. I will work collaboratively with all to ensure the longevity of our vibrant creative community.

It wouldn't be an arts speech if I didn't mention the oboe of course. We know there is a need for students to get more access to music skills training and to learn instruments. That is something that is embedded in our Music Tasmania report. We're doing the work to work out how we can enliven the sector. I have personally reflected on the experience that Ireland has in rebooting their music programs. I know you love music, I can see the nodding there, and when we see the bands that they create, the music that is everywhere, how they enjoy it, how it's very much a grassroots and community sector.

Ms Burnet - They have a minimum wage for artists.

Ms OGILVIE - Yep, we've looked at that, too, that's a federal government responsibility, nonetheless, I philosophically agree that people should be paid properly and our creative community respected. The State of Music report is going to be good and we will talk more about that in the new year.

We have put, as I said, \$16 million into arts and screen industry development and at the other end of the spectrum of creativity, which I also love, we have done a little more to appreciate the 2025 Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase and the huge success that it was. So many families and kids turned up. We were blown away with the success. Sometimes it's good to just try something and see what we can do.

The games sector is one of my favourite sectors. It is doing incredibly well and we have some leading lights in Tasmania who are delivering games and the technology for others to program games. Working right across the globe in this area from LA to Seattle, our people are there. We are winning awards, and I say we, but of course it's our games people who are doing that. We continue to support Tasmania's burgeoning video games sector with the \$500,000 Level Up Tasmania Fund continuing to be invested through 2025-26. One of the questions on my mind is how we can take that around the state and get kids and young developers and gamers and creative people who want to make Intellectual Property (IP), which we love, and sell it over the airwaves and get royalties back in Tasmania, which is clean and green and smart business, how we can do more of that here. I will continue to be a very loud supporter and fan of what they do now.

Heritage is an area of great passion for me. I've spoken in this Chamber previously about my background, not just with a degree in history but also having worked for UNESCO in cultural heritage, so I take this area very seriously. There is never enough money; it's always the roofs. It's very difficult but Tasmania is the heritage state, and when we look at the statistics of people and why they come to visit Tasmania, heritage is number 2 on their list. We've calculated a contribution of more than \$970 million annually from Heritage to Tasmania's gross state product and it supports

approximately 5000 direct and indirect jobs. Heritage is immense. It is everywhere we look and everywhere we walk, and I know everybody has a soft spot for our Heritage sector.

We were able to invest in this sector with our Built Heritage Grants Scheme. I was fortunate to get that going on coming into the portfolio for the first time some four years ago. In the second funding round, 41 projects across the state shared in \$1.3 million of grant funds. Round 3 is now open and offers up to a further \$1.3 million of grant funds for projects across the state. I'd like to encourage everybody to think about what their project should be, get them in and start talking to us. We'd like to see those activation ideas, particularly how people might need some help with infrastructure to get things going.

In relation to Community and Multicultural Affairs, the Tasmanian government acknowledges the invaluable role the community services industry has in keeping Tasmanians supported, connected and healthy. While funding to our Neighbourhood House network has increased from \$4.7 million in 2013-14 to more than \$15 million in this interim Budget, we want to ensure they have the right resources to support those seeking support or help, or just a friendly chat in their communities. Further to this, I have secured funding of \$150,000 for an independent needs analysis of the Neighbourhood House network, the focus of which will include staffing, safety, governance frameworks, the supports provided by houses to their local communities and operation, just to name a few. The analysis will also review the back-end, longer-term funding agreements, multiple funding deeds and streamlining the administrative burden. I anticipate the needs analysis will get underway early next year.

I've also been thrilled in the past few weeks to release and launch several strategies, including Inclusive Island, our LGBTIQ+ strategy, and I must thank both Rodney Croome and Olivia Hogarth for all their work on this and their inclusion of me as incoming minister, along with supporters who joined me to launch it last week. I did put the call out for anybody in the Chamber; particularly I invited Ms Haddad to join me. I'm very open to doing things like that, to be inclusive and to be welcoming. Sadly, I think her diary prevented her from coming, but we won't let that stop us from doing it again in future.

We launched Building Food-Resilient Communities - Tasmania's Food Resilience Strategy 2025-31, into which we are investing \$8.9 million over the next four years to support the implementation and continuation of food relief services. I had a really good visit to the University of Tasmania Sandy Bay campus to meet with the team there that's doing some incredible work with students. Having moved internationally a couple of times, I know how hard it is, particularly for international students when they arrive, to even know who to go and get help from - they could be lonely or hungry - just to find a way to connect. I know UTAS is doing some really great work there so I just wanted to mention that specifically.

We also launched Valuing our Volunteers - Tasmania's Volunteering Strategy 2025-30. Who doesn't love volunteers? I know through my life I've done a lot of volunteering, from volunteering on boards to being the netball coach for my daughter's grade 9 netball team. I think everybody in this Chamber does that and we all play our part, and I think the more we can do, the better, so I encourage everybody to continue to do that. We've also been able to provide some funding to

help with Working with Vulnerable People Card costs to try to defray that, which I think is also very helpful.

Environment and Climate Change is a really serious, large and important portfolio. We had about four hours on this in Estimates and I was very keen to be as open and have as much conversation across the table as we could. I hope that came through to those who were tuning in, to make sure that we provided as much information and answered questions in real time as we could. When it comes to the Environment portfolio, I reiterate that we as a government want to deliver real outcomes for Tasmania's environment. I'm specifically driven by science and community and I'm always seeking feedback. I've been turning up to lots of enviro events with that in mind and am always happy to hear from people. They may have different perspectives but I'm always happy to take them on board.

I note, particularly for the benefit of the staff members within our departments, the great work that is already underway. I note the strength of our \$8 million over four years for the Tasmanian Threatened Species Fund; it's really brilliant. In its first year the fund has enabled a range of strategic initiatives and on-ground conservation action for a wide range of threatened plants and animals. Through the Threatened Species Fund this year we have partnered with more than 15 organisations to deliver on-the-ground actions for threatened species.

One of the success stories of 2025 has also been the launch of Tasmania's container refund scheme, Recycle Rewards; and I see Mr Jaensch in the Chamber, who was the architect of the most successful scheme in the nation. We launched that on 1 May. For those who have been a bit out of the loop, I can update you with some numbers. We have now had more than 53 million containers returned that are not going into landfill, that are not on the side of the road, that are not breaking down and going into the oceans, but are getting plastics into the recycling circular economy work. This is incredible. Recycle Rewards is the fastest-growing scheme in the country, and there were benefits to adopting this program after other states and territories, because we were able to learn from what they did and make sure that our scheme was really fit for purpose in a state that has wide geographic diversity. I remember being out to launch I think it was the first Recycle Rewards points in Bridgewater, I believe, and a couple of kids rolled up on their bikes who looked to me like they were year seven or eight. They saw us there and they wanted to know when they could start recycling because they were saving up for some new bikes. I knew at that moment that we had got it right. I thank you, Roger Jaensch, for your work on that.

I've been out again at the Claremont point, talking to families who are rolling out - and it's always a different dynamic wherever you go. At Claremont, there are beautiful mums and dads who are teaching their kids about recycling. It's this great way of having the community engagement. The kids are putting their money into their bikes and/or donating to the more than 500 charities that are now connected to Recycle Rewards. It's really been phenomenal.

More broadly, I have a couple of passion areas. Those who have been around a long time will remember that many years ago I brought in a private member's bill on microplastics. That is something that is being helped by Recycle Rewards and I feel that that's a really great frame of reference now to come back to in this portfolio.

Through the Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board, landfill levy funds have been invested into Tasmania's waste and resource recovery sector with key investments. I will go through those in a minute. It's always interesting when you get a new portfolio and you get to learn about a new area. The waste and resource management that we do in Tasmania is phenomenal. We're an island state, which makes us unique in Australia. It also gives us a unique opportunity to look at a circular economy and work out how we can do things in a way that others may not have the opportunity to do. That is something that the board - which I rate highly and I'm very grateful for their work - have been focused on.

First, \$5.5 million in high-priority infrastructure grants has been deployed; \$500,000 for targeted waste and recycling projects in remote councils, not forgetting about the remote councils; \$4.3 million over four years for a statewide education campaign - it's so important to let people know what we're doing; and \$2.36 million to the three regional waste organisations to deliver local waste and resource recovery programs.

That's an area of great interest and passion for me. I will also say that I've started dialogue in relation to the challenge that we have with fast fashion and fabric recycling. I feel that that is an area in Tasmania we can do a lot with. I know other states and territories have moved on this. Internationally, the Nordic countries are getting on top of this as well. Fast fashion, slow fashion, circular economy - we can do more. The textiles industry, fashion industry - enormous, of course. We have that modern slavery overlay, which I think we all deeply care about as well.

When it comes to climate change, the climate change office in ReCFIT - what a great office they are - has several key priorities this year which are exemplified in the climate change action plan that includes 98 actions across government, equating to an investment of more than \$250 million. I will say that again, it's a big number, \$250 million, and these activities are already underway.

Finally, but by no means leastly, the very hard-working and diligent independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA). I don't think we could be prouder of an independent organisation than we are of the very important work that the EPA does. We know that the EPA has the respect of everybody and I think that's very telling.

This year marks a significant leadership transition with Catherine Murdoch appointed Chief Executive Officer and Director of the EPA in April 2025. I was really pleased to welcome Catherine to the table and introduce her to the committee. She was just wonderful to have there and she endeavoured to provide as much information as she could. We discussed the important work of upgrading the EPA's information systems and Tasmania's air-quality monitoring network, both of which have been funded in this Budget.

We've been wanting to do this work for a long time. It's been very hard to get it up. I feel like it's a little bit of a personal victory to get the money into those areas. It might not be as sexy as some of the other areas, but if we get that right it underpins everything that we can do about air quality - public health will benefit; everybody benefits from having the data that is accurate.

In conclusion, we are a government that delivers not just for today but for generations to come, hence that investment that I just spoke of. We are building a Tasmania where nature thrives, where waste is transformed into opportunity - and I see so many opportunities there to do more - and where environmental stewardship is not just a promise but a practice, that is something I think we in this Chamber would all agree on. We want to reduce pollution, we want a more circular economy, we want everybody engaged in making sure that Tasmania has the most beautiful and pristine environments - I'm looking at marine environments as well - that we can deliver in our beautiful state. I know that other states and territories are looking at what we're doing and saying, 'If Tasmania can do that, can we apply that approach in our states and territories?'

I will also note, there was a really good mood in the room, particularly for a couple of the sessions. I think the new nature of this parliament with its inclusiveness and collaboration - particularly across areas where we all agree, such as heritage and the arts and those good areas - there was a very good mood and I was very appreciative of the tone and tenor of the conversations that we had. We had some really interesting and good questions. The only downside was, perhaps, we would have liked a bit more time across some of the portfolio areas. Maybe that's something we can address going forward.

I won't take up too much more time. I wanted to close with that and say, I am aware that we have some challenges on the horizon - in the arts, in all our portfolios and areas. Budget constraints impact everybody. I will always work incredibly hard with my team and our departments to deliver for Tasmania. As I've said in this place, I will always work with anybody who is putting Tasmania first in their thinking.

I will just reiterate and underscore that we're promoting applications for heritage grants. Please bring those forward. Good ideas are always welcome from everywhere. The TasICT and the tech sector work has the opportunity to elevate our state. I know we're going to get on to the UTAS bill later, so I won't talk too much about that, but our UTAS STEM campus is pivotal and it is the anchor for the future of Tasmania because our future is digital. I hope to see you all tonight at the TasICT drinks. I think everybody should be there, where no doubt we will hear more.

I look forward to another longer, more in-depth Estimates next year.

[12.18 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER - Deputy Chair, it is my pleasure to rise and make some comments on the 2025-26 Budget. It's the second 2025-26 Budget actually, isn't it? I have the paper copy of the failed 2025-26 budget; I think they will become collector's items if you have a copy - I think most of the members on the opposite side of the room probably burnt theirs with embarrassment. Anyway, I digress.

It has been quite the year. It's been interesting to watch almost the democratic decline or the democratic recession that's very much happening in our state. It's symptomatic of the decline in accountability and transparency and integrity. Just this morning, in relation to the questions that were asked to the Minister for Racing about the use of a government business enterprise to spruik Liberal Party campaign slogans about TasInsure to the greyhound industry people. The text message that was sent out. I've seen a copy that was forwarded to me by a greyhound trainer in

Deloraine who received it, along with a lot of other people from that industry during the election campaign and it helped sway their vote. They supported the Liberal government because they were told, 'If you don't vote for us and if Labor get into government, they're going to do a deal with the Greens and shut down the greyhound industry'. That actually happened. It was up there with, 'They're going to ban your wood fire heaters' or 'They're going to close down the Mersey' - a whole heap of absolute diatribe. That's the democratic decline we now have in Tasmania.

I know countries around the world are also experiencing a democratic decline but in Tasmania, because this government feels relatively unchecked, their PR and their marketing campaign is just to continue on and deny everything. What was interesting this morning is that the minister responsible for Tasracing was more than happy to stand up and respond with deny, deny, deny - 'No, I only found out about it in Estimates' - no responsibility and just not answering a question with a truthful answer. That's what this place is all about and that's what democracy and transparency and being ethical is all about. I don't know whether or not these people, when they came into their positions, had any idea of that responsibility, but they are ministers of the Crown and there is such an emphasis on the ability to be honest, truthful and transparent. The only reason the record was corrected was because we could provide evidence of a Facebook post. That is just disgraceful, but that's okay, apparently, under this brave new world of Jeremy Rockliff's way.

It is not acceptable, and I know there are other people who are sitting in the Chamber today who have been around for as long as I have and have worked for some of the greats and some people were actually in opposition at the time when I was working for some of the greats. The accountability and the responsibility those people had was so much more than what you're doing as a government. You know that; there's a number of people who remember what that looks like.

I'm very disillusioned with this real democratic decline. The go-to from this government is to just be dishonest, just deny, just say, 'Well, that's your opinion', just to discount everything until you're caught out and then just correct the record. That's just not good enough. We still don't know how many of these ministers have been referred to the Integrity Commission because the laws are so bad that we're waiting for them to give their approval for the Integrity Commission to investigate them. I understand there's a number of ministers waiting to be investigated by the Integrity Commission.

I know that the Greens asked a lot of questions during Estimates about which ministers had been provided legal advice. I think the Minister for Sport was one who wouldn't answer that question as well. We know that unless the evidence is put right in front of that minister, they might not be honest about it. That's no way for a minister of the Crown to behave.

Mr Vincent's Estimates on Transport was a really interesting period; he answered some questions quite openly and we had some very good dialogue, and I thank him for that. I will also say that our Veterans' Affairs Estimates hearing was very good as well. We were able to ask some questions and have some responses provided and I really appreciated that. One of the areas I really wanted to discuss with the minister was the funding for the veterans' acute housing. There had been an election promise by the Liberal government of \$1.8 million and the federal government also putting in \$1.8 million but we couldn't see that funding in the Budget, and were trying to ascertain whether it was coming through Homes Tasmania, because that's been syphoned off to be

a GBE these days. The minister was looking into that. Without that \$1.8 million contribution from the state, the federal funding would not be forthcoming, so it was important that we get to the bottom of that. I will keep asking you questions about that, minister, because it's very important to our veterans.

One of the interesting aspects of the Estimates committee with Mr Vincent was we were able to talk quite openly about road safety and it's important that we place more emphasis on that, especially at the moment. Tasmania's road death and serious injury rates are unacceptably high and trending upwards. Tasmania continues to be one of Australia's worst performing jurisdictions, with young people over-represented in these statistics. Tasmania has set the second highest rate at 7.6 deaths per 100,000 people, a 41.6 per cent increase on the previous year, whilst the Australian Capital Territory reported the lowest fatality rate at 1.9 deaths per 100,000 people. That shows you the stark difference with Australian Capital Territory being the best at the moment.

We know that the state's local road network is extensive, with 14,000 kilometres compared with 3700 kilometres of highways and 60 per cent of road deaths occur in rural areas. The current funding for roads does not represent a long-term strategic or network-wide approach. We also know that Tasmania is the only state where automated speed camera revenues are not hypothecated for road safety investment. As part of the election advocacy statement, the RACT asked the government to consider hypothecating revenue from automated speed cameras and reinvesting that back into road safety and they have not done that. When you have such a huge increase in road safety fatalities, the second biggest in the country, we need to rethink how we are funding road safety initiatives. I think MAIB are doing a great job through the Road Safety Task Force. However, there are some good suggestions on how more support and revenue can be placed into road safety in Tasmania.

RACT did their own survey of their members, who responded that they weren't as concerned about receiving a speeding ticket from a camera if they understood that, 'I've done the wrong thing, I will pay the fine but I know a percentage of that fine will be hypothecated back into road safety initiatives'. They felt a lot more comfortable with that than feeling it's just a blatant revenue raising episode for the government or just to pay for those cameras. We learnt that the contracts for those cameras are about \$8 million annually. I know we can't put a price on human life, but that is extremely expensive and I believe there are 16 cameras statewide, so that's a pretty big spend. There might be a more carefully designed strategy which may be more beneficial to the Tasmanian taxpayer than forking out that kind of money to pay for speed cameras. Maybe we could do them ourselves. There could be a way for the Department of State Growth to be able to administer that because it is an awful lot of money.

We also talked about the Tasman Bridge. It's really interesting because I noticed about three weeks ago that the government had put out a notice for community consultation about the guardrails on the Tasman Bridge. Prior to the current contracts that commenced in July 2023 and 2024, we found in an RTI from budget Estimates in 2022 that:

The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have committed \$130 million of this to invest in the strengthening of the Tasman Bridge and widening of its

pathways, to provide for safer and more productive journeys to and from Hobart's east, and this funding will continue to 2026-27.

That was in a briefing in 2023. Then it goes on to state:

Currently, the Department has no plans for replacement or duplication of the Tasman Bridge. However, the Tasman Bridge Upgrade project has highlighted structural capacity constraints for the existing structure and uncertainties in the condition of components of the bridge...

Doesn't sound promising, does it?

... particularly foundations, due to the quality of as-constructed information and the ability to inspect and confirm condition information in water that is in excess of 40 metres in depth.

Also, in an RTI in 2022 on the Tasman Bridge pathway, stated that:

The Australian Government and the Tasmanian Government have both provided \$65 million to the Tasman Bridge, upgrading the Tasman Bridge to accommodate wider pathways, improve barriers and provide safer and more convenient access to the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists.

Development for the project is underway with consultants GHD, with work expected to start in 2022-23 subject to the procurement of a construction contractor. The project will take place in stages and it is anticipated works will be completed in 2024-25.

There's another one here, which is on arterial access improvements.

The Australian Government announced in the 2018-19 Budget funding of \$10 million to upgrade intelligent transport solutions on the Tasman Highway. The State Government has committed to match this funding. This will include modernisation of the lane use management system on the Tasman Bridge. Concept plans for the improvement to the Tasman Bridge have been released for public comment today.

That was on 22 June, by Catherine King.

It makes me wonder, what happened to all the funding for the Tasman Bridge and why haven't there been any changes to the Tasman Bridge because it was funded federally in the 2018-19 Budget? What happened to the safety barriers and pathways commitment to the Tasman Bridge, which was due for completion by 2024-25?

Safety barriers have been firmly recommended by various coroners over the last 11 years. Guardrails were put for public consultation, and was also completed three years ago. That's why

I was quite confused three weeks ago when the department put out a media release, another government announcement - because you made a lot of the announcements on the Tasman Bridge, and nothing's happened.

Now, we have another public consultation on guardrails on the Tasman Bridge, which really should have been done 11 years ago. You've already done the public consultation. How much money have you wasted on public consultation that you've just chosen to ignore because you keep kicking the can down the road? Lives matter, and without guardrails, there is a risk -

Mr Ferguson - Careful.

Ms BUTLER - Don't tell me to be careful. How dare you.

Mr Ferguson - Yes, you had to be cautioned two weeks ago. Be careful.

Ms BUTLER - Excuse me, Deputy Chair.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Order.

Ms BUTLER - How dare you. Just stop.

Mr Ferguson - You had to be cautioned. You were cautioned.

Ms BUTLER - Just stop. You've had your say, Mr Ferguson, and my gosh, don't you love to have your say. Enough.

Mr Ferguson - I'm listening.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Honourable member for Lyons, please continue.

Ms BUTLER - In August 2022, minister, the Public Works Committee signed off on the Tasman Bridge upgrades, including guardrails, based on complete comprehensive community consultation. That was put to us, the Public Works Committee, and it was based on complete community consultation, and it was also signed off by the Public Works Committee. I think the minister is being odd here because he knows that he was the minister for Infrastructure at that time and that nothing ever happened. Was it another botched project by the minister? I'm not sure.

To me, it is ridiculous that, again, this government has announced, 'We're going to do community consultation, we're going to do community consultation'. This happened three years ago. This community consultation was finished. Meanwhile, we still do not have guardrails on the Tasman Bridge. It is remiss and it is not good enough, and I do not understand why, because the funding has been there - the government has failed to roll this out.

I also asked questions to minister Felix Ellis about Police, Fire and Emergency Management. That was quite an interesting Estimates committee. I asked questions about firearms and quoted

Justice Michael Brett, a Supreme Court judge, who recently stated, when sentencing a man for illegally selling a gun:

The use of firearms by criminals in our Tasmanian society is, in the court's experience, at epidemic levels, and is a matter of great concern to the community, to the safety of the community, and in my view, must not be tolerated and must be dealt with.

There has been an increase from 288 to 380 total firearm-related incidents in Tasmania in the last 12 months. That's just an increase in the last 12 months. This comes on top of a government that has slashed the Police budget by \$30 million. They still haven't been able to provide any real reasoning of where they're slashing that funding from the Police budget. However, it stands that we need to get to the bottom of how illegal firearms are coming to Tasmania, and why you are cutting a police budget when we're having red flags such as that increase in firearm-related incidents put in front of us. I think it's really important that that is prosecuted.

We also know that under an RTI request, it was revealed that through firearm services - and we believe firearm services have had their budget cut, and we also believe that forensic science services have their budget cut and also probably radio dispatch services, because we can see that there are trigger points there. This is where the government may be finding their efficiency dividends, which is slashing jobs. The RTI revealed 498 new licence applications had been approved to undertake assessment, but are yet to undertake the firearm safety training course hosted by TAFE Tasmania. This is where it gets really interesting, because we know that TAFE Tasmania have had their funding cut and there are workers who will be losing their jobs three days before Christmas, which is disgraceful.

We know that there were 13 firearms safety training courses that were cancelled from May 2025 to now. Thirteen. At the time they stated - well, the information we were given was that there weren't enough people applying to undertake those firearm licence training courses. However, we understand that there were 531 new firearm licence applications waiting to receive approval around that same time, and that the reason why those firearm safety training courses were cancelled was because the government had cut the funding for TAFE. It's just a very good example of what your budget cuts are doing.

Another good example of not being able to provide funding for forensic services as well is the pure expense that creates on the Tasmanian economy. This is a really good example of that: I had a constituent who was held at gunpoint, and that person was holding something in their hand, and that person left the scene and dropped the thing in their hand. The police were able to take a DNA sample of the object that was in that person's hand. That person was also holding a firearm which they also dropped at the scene. It took six months for forensic services to be able to properly do a match with that DNA. Six months. That is not having a go at the people who work for forensic services because they do a brilliant job, but it's just a lack of workers in that area trying to deal with the huge backlog of collections in front of them.

Now, the sad thing about this case was the alleged perpetrator apparently conducted another two criminal events in the time that it took for the DNA to be processed. I think both were

carjackings and that evidence that was crucial for prosecuting this person wasn't able to be provided. As soon as it was provided, six months later, that person was picked up but those two crimes that happened subsequently really shouldn't have happened if your systems were working properly. I believe these are the kind of examples that we know will just keep getting worse as this government cuts the budget more and more to try to be able to deal with their inability to be able to manage a budget properly.

We also had a chat to Metro as well and we were able to find out that the half-price fares haven't really made much difference at all, insofar as the number of people who are using the buses. We do know that they're really important for people as a cost-of-living measure and we understand that. I think there was almost a form of manipulating of the loss of Metro because Metro lost \$2.5 million over the last financial year and it was manipulated, I believe, the messaging that the half-price fares were the reason why Metro had lost the amount of money that it had.

When it boiled down to it, if you read through the annual report properly, it was because the Department of State Growth are funding Metro based on 2019 revenue estimations. They're underfunding Metro. I don't know whether that is a strategy which is done on purpose to run Metro into the ground, because I can tell you what, the Metro drivers are doing a wonderful job under very hard conditions. The transit officers still aren't permanent even though that was promised by the government. A lot of things are promised by the government that don't come through, but we also know that the safety screens are still not all fitted as well. That was another thing that was also promised by the government.

I think their misrepresentation of the half-price fares was a little bit rich. When it boils down to it, Metro is underfunded by the Department of State Growth. That is a definite decision, whether or not you're deliberately running Metro into the ground in order to privatise services, because we know that in 2023, 177 services were cut and only 50 of those have been resumed. That's 122 services that were cut. If you're looking at shuffling some of those services across to a private provider, we know that you're looking at using private providers for the rapid bus system. We also know that the promises that you provided to Metro bus drivers to protect them really aren't protecting them at all. You still haven't made a permanent feature of the transit officers, there is no funding for that, and you still haven't put in the safety screens.

An incredible huge blowout in cost for the ticketing system as well, like a massive blowout of cost. It was interesting: Mr Winter was speaking this morning about the absolute smorgasbord of things that have gone wrong, and I was thinking the other day I should get a whole heap of butchers paper and write all the areas down in my portfolio areas, especially in my community where there are cuts and things that are going wrong and services that aren't being provided, and I thought, 'Gosh, I would fill a whole wall'. There are so many issues and that's what happens when there is that decline in democracy and that is very much what we are seeing at the moment with this government. I get really frustrated with the fact that - can't you just answer questions? Can't you be open and honest, because your go-to now - because your leader does it and I think that's it, you all fall in behind your leader - but if you don't like something - I can't believe that a Premier could be so disrespectful to an Auditor-General. 'Well, that's just an opinion of an Auditor-General' - that is nuts.

The main issue is this government's decisions and inability to build a berth is what made TT-Line insolvent. That is why the Auditor-General gave that information to ASIC. You all tried to cover it up and just like you did with TT-Line for the six months that we were prosecuting that with you, you denied that there was a problem. You didn't tell the truth about it. You did what minister Howlett did this morning. That is your culture at the moment, and it's a real shame and it's a real pox on your house. It's a real shame, because the people of Tasmania want honesty, and that, I swear, is one of the reasons why there's been such a divide over this stadium build as well here at Macquarie Point because I don't think they trust you to be able to build it, because you have stuffed up the *Spirits'* berths so much. That's the issue. I don't think they trust you.

You said you would build them a four-lane Midland Highway and you haven't - there are potholes all through that as well. It was interesting: I spent some time with a female truck driver recently on the Midland Highway and we drove from Brighton to Launceston depot and back. She pointed out all the areas where there have been fatalities and also near misses. They were entrance points and exit points off that Midland Highway where there are no slip lanes. Then she pointed to one where there is a slip lane and there's never been an incident there. Is that road design and lack of consultation on those heavy vehicle truck drivers?

You need to do better. I've given up trying to point out all those inconsistencies, but we could fill this whole parliament with butchers paper written down of all the issues in all our portfolios, in all our communities. You must know them too. There are only so many times you can put lipstick on a pig. It's time for you to be honest. If we ask you questions in this place if we ask you questions in Estimates, please don't mislead us. Please be honest about this democratic decline. Thank you.

[12.48 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL - Deputy Chair, I rise to reflect on Estimates committees, those committees in which we scrutinise and interrogate the government, and all is revealed about the Budget in answer to our questions. Well, that's what we hope, anyway, but I'm being wishful and fanciful of course, because in my experience that's not how committees work at all. Instead, the government use a wall of words to say nothing. They spill out word salads in a patently obvious effort to obfuscate. They give excessively long answers that don't answer the actual question but do pad out the time so there's less space for more questions and certainly less space for real answers. In Estimates, the government tabled plan after strategy after report in an effort to flood the space with information that diverts attention and distracts us from the real questions at hand.

Then there are the DDs, when we listen to mind-numbing propaganda we already know from previous mind-numbing media releases, and once again we are prevented from asking important questions. The Greens constantly work to draw back the curtains and shine light on the machinations of government departments. The government's shenanigans are incredibly frustrating. It would be nice to get a straight answer, a clear response, information that enables us to assess and evaluate the government's spending and performance. Instead, what we find out about the budget is minimal, but what we do find out about is the government, what matters to them and what makes them tick. I want to share insights gained into the government through Estimates, starting with Health Estimates.

In my budget reply speech, I mentioned that finding a performance indicator the Department of Health is meeting was like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Well, the government have gone one up on that now. In their new elective surgery four-year plan, tabled during Estimates, they've removed targets altogether, so embarrassed are they by their failure to meet performance indicators. I can see why they would. In the previous elective surgery four-year plan, the government laid out a total of 20 targets across the four-year period, as well as the overall goal of reducing the elective surgery waiting list to 5400. The government achieved only three of their 20 elective surgery targets across 2021 to 2025. They successfully completed more surgeries than their annual goal. This is great news, particularly for those people who did get their surgery, but the government failed on every one of the 17 other measures they set for themselves.

The wait list did not reduce to the target of 5400 people. The wait list at the end of the four-year plan was sitting about 9000 people, an abysmal failure. The government would like to tell us they invested \$156 million into elective surgery, but despite that, they did not meet their targets across a range of measures, including seeing people on time. People are still waiting too long for surgery, in pain, debilitated, missing out on critical timeframes for surgery for health concerns like cancer. These delays have real implications for real people.

The government has a new elective surgery four-year plan and, as I said, it has no targets in it and surprisingly, the funding for it is less than half that of the previous four-year plan, only \$70 million. When I questioned this during Estimates, I was told that work on the previous four-year plan has resulted in improvements to the systems, procedures and networks that will mean the government can reduce waiting lists with less than half the budget. That is a strange thing to claim, because while \$156 million was spent in the last four years, the waiting list grew by 1000 over the last 12 months. The maths doesn't math - \$156 million and waiting lists have still grown in the last 12 months. How on Earth is \$70 million going to do what the government says it will and reduce waiting lists? No wonder they haven't included any performance indicators in their plan.

In this we see a clear government tactic, hiding performance failures from Tasmanians by not providing performance indicators, meaning evaluation of performance is impossible. It's devious and says a lot about how this government operates.

Speaking of devious, we also focused on ambulance ramping during Health Estimates. In recent times we've seen much finger-pointing from the government blaming the federal government for the entire issue of bed-block. No doubt the federal government has a significant role to play, and they must do more, but this government must too. What's really disappointing is that so often they're more focused on talking points and announcements than they are on making a real difference.

The 2024 election promise to ban ambulance ramping is a great example. In announcing this promise, Premier Jeremy Rockliff said this:

Thirty minutes is around the average time it takes an ambulance crew to safely transfer their patient to the care of the hospital, which means that effectively we're going to be banning ramping.

Apart from the fact that you can't ban ramping, we got a completely different view from the Department of Health in Estimates. In fact, the Health secretary was very clear that transferring patients to the ED within 15 minutes remains the best-practice goal for our health system, and that any delay over 15 minutes is still considered to be ambulance ramping, as it always has been. In other words, Jeremy Rockliff and the Liberals simply made-up their own definition for ambulance ramping in last year's election campaign just so they could make a headline-grabbing announcement. This politically manufactured definition of ramping wasn't based in evidence or advice, it was the Premier playing politics with the health of Tasmanians.

Now that this cynical electioneering has been exposed, we hope the current minister will drop the charade. After all, it's not just the Department of Health policy that says patients should be transferred within 15 minutes. It's the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine and comprehensive, detailed research from Victoria that says delays of 17 minutes or more lead to increased risk of harm and death. If every single ambulance transferred their patient within 30 minutes, that would be a big improvement, but the evidence shows that would still be ramping that causes harm.

Under this government, ramping has increased faster than anywhere else in the country, so we are now a long way from best practice, but we need to put in place the policies and measures that make this our goal. Getting ambulances back on the road is one measure to mitigate the effects of ambulance ramping, but we need to do so much more to tackle the problem. I urge the government to take on board the recommendations of the ramping inquiry and to actually focus on the system-wide measures that will make a difference.

The Greens asked questions about job cuts within the Tasmanian Health Service. We heard that over the last two financial years 14 positions have been declined by the Vacancy Control Committee. In a Health service with 16,000 employees, just 14 positions have been declined. That's a pretty good indicator the Department of Health actually needs pretty much all the staff currently employed in it. If they only found 14 positions to cut, despite all their best efforts, it sounds like the Health Service is about the right size right now, which means any job cuts the Treasurer makes to rein in the budget will have a very real impact on service provision. We know those job cuts are coming because of the debt the state is currently in, and that debt is going to grow and grow and grow with the government's plans for a stadium.

Given cuts are guaranteed, we asked what jobs are safe from cuts in the Department of Health? Almost none. The only jobs that are exempted from vacancy control are nursing positions allocated under nursing hours per patient day. Any other position is fair game -pathologists, physios, pharmacists, house services. The stadium equals far greater debt, equals more job cuts, equals service cuts. It's all connected. The stadium will result in service cuts across the state and Tasmanians will miss out. To say anything different is to mislead.

We learned more about the government through their sycophantic bowing down at the feet of the AFL and foisting a stadium on the state despite the very real devastating economic impact it will have on the state. The government's priorities are on full display in their budget choices and the needs of Tasmanians are far down the order of things.

I want to speak about the use of florfenicol to manage *Piscirickettsia salmonis* in overcrowded fish pens in Tasmanian waters. Many questions have been asked about this by my fellow Greens MPs, and with good reason. It is deeply concerning that we are dumping antibiotics into our waterways and I asked questions about Public Health advice about this, particularly whether Public Health had provided advice on the potential impact of antibiotic use on antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotic resistance is a major global health concern, with growing resistance leading to less effective treatments for bacterial infections, yet when I asked about it I was brushed off. The antibiotics are necessary, the minister said, so it's totally okay to be using them in the environment, as if treating salmon in overcrowded, overheated pens with antibiotics is not going to risk any impact on antibiotic resistance.

I was pointed to a media release and told it contained the advice of Public Health with links to national documents, including a national antibiotic resistance strategy. I've read the media release and the documents. None of them provide specific advice about the impact of florfenicol use in Tasmania and antibiotic resistance. All there is is comment about antibiotic residue and then a general acknowledgement that antibiotic resistance could be an issue. What we see here is a dismissal of questions. It's not unreasonable to ask questions about florfenicol use by the salmon industry and whether it could lead to increased antibiotic resistance. Rather than batting these questions away, the government should be providing evidence on the safety or otherwise of florfenicol use in relation to antibiotic resistance. To do less is to minimise the concerns of Tasmanians and to disrespect them and potentially to miss an opportunity to take action to reduce risk.

This is what we learned about the government in Health Estimates. They draw a cloak of secrecy over their poor performance by choosing not to make targets or provide performance indicators. They play around with decisions and measures to help make themselves look better. They love an attention-grabbing headline. They're going to prioritise a stadium over the State Service, and they are too willing to brush off legitimate concerns.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2025 (No. 63)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 64)

In Committee - Estimates Committees - Consideration of Reports

Resumed from above.

Ms ROSOL - Chair, I continue with the things that we learned about the government in Health Estimates. They love an attention-grabbing headline, they're going to prioritise a stadium over the Public Service, and they are too willing to brush off legitimate concerns.

I turn now to other portfolio areas that I asked questions about. Again, looking at the government responses is instructive and revealing. I've mentioned the coming cuts in Health and other public service areas, and now I turn to Community Services, where cuts were also discussed. We know the cuts are coming. It's clear in the forward Estimates, and the Treasurer has signalled this strongly through the budget submission pro forma.

When I asked the minister for Community Services why cuts were going to be made when community sector organisations are already struggling to make ends meet, the minister did not deny the cuts. At no point did she deny cuts or say there would be no cuts. What she did do was fall back onto clichés before urging community organisations to submit their budget bids so she could advocate them. If I was a community sector organisation, I would like something a bit stronger than that; something a bit more concrete than advocacy, because read the silence, the non-answer of the question. There was no denial of cuts.

We all know what the result of the advocacy will be. The Treasurer will turn a deaf ear to it, because he's looking for savings and cuts wherever he can. It strikes me that the minister was equivocating, talking up her care and appreciation for the community sector but unwilling to come out and state her opposition to cuts or say she would absolutely stop them from happening. In Community Services we see a government willing to mislead through platitudes and silence, hiding truth. The cloak of silence, once again.

What did we learn about the government from Disability Services? There's a distinct dismissal of need in Disability Services in Tasmania, best illustrated by the total lack of funding for programs for Tasmanians with disability outside of the NDIS. There are many Tasmanians with disability who do not have access to the NDIS, and this government chooses to provide no funding for services for them. I've asked about this several times. Last year I asked about funding for Disability Voices Tasmania.

This year I followed up on a question from Labor about Aurora Disability Services, and I confirmed with the minister that there is no funding in the Tasmanian Budget for disability services that do not fit within the NDIS. This is shameful. Tasmanians with disability are missing out on supports they need because this government doesn't think they are responsible for providing them. Other states recognise this responsibility, but not Tasmania. It's disturbing that this government is content for people with disability to languish without support while they pass the buck to the federal government. This is a choice - a choice that reflects the government's lack of care for people with disability.

This government is also at war with itself. We see this with the tough-on-crime rhetoric that is in complete opposition to the Youth Justice blueprint, but we also see it in the area of disability. Last year the *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act* was enacted. It's an act that helps ensure the rights of people with disability are protected and upheld across our state. Yet while inclusion is encouraged by one arm of government, another arm of the government is working against inclusion, with consultation open on a freezing of the National Construction Code. One of the important things the National Construction Code does is require housing liveability standards that ensure accessibility of new builds for people with disability. There has been ample time for the building industry to prepare for this. They've known about it for about a decade yet they are

doing all they can to obstruct the implementation of the standards, and the minister for Consumer Affairs is enabling them to do this, announcing a 'nation-leading freeze' on changes to the National Construction Code. What a shameful thing. Tasmania is leading the nation on freezing the implementation of liveable housing standards. Once again, we see a government that talks the talk but does not walk the walk; that says they care, but actively works in ways that deny that care.

I turn now to Children and Youth. What did we learn about the government from Children and Youth Estimates? There has been a giant failure in collective knowledge retention, for one. We asked questions about the JCP Youth election promise and grant provision. Shockingly, we were told that no-one at the table could answer our questions, because the minister was not the minister at the time of the election promise, the secretary was not the secretary, and the deputy secretary was not the deputy secretary. We were asking about a \$3.7 million grant to JCP Youth - a very significant grant, and there were no answers to our questions. There was a collective forgetting, and an unwillingness to seek out and provide the information during the committee. It is deeply concerning that the knowledge about such a large amount of money, with significant public interest, seems to have been lost because of a change of personnel and a lack of briefing.

Neither the minister, the secretary or the deputy secretary could provide detail on how or why a program was granted \$3.7 million. They could not explain why this money was granted without a tender, or whether any assessment of JCP Youth was undertaken prior to the decision to make the grant. This is remarkable, because this was a \$3.7 million contract granted to an organisation that does not use best practice, seemingly has no evidence base and, as experts have said, is not trauma-informed.

The Greens had an RTI on JCP Youth that we obtained in 2024. We already knew the answers to most of the questions we asked - it was all there in the RTI. We just wanted to know if the government would admit that no-one in DECYP had asked for JCP Youth to be given an enormous grant for statewide services; that staff in DECYP had had serious concerns about the safety and suitability of JCP Youth; that no proper assessment was done before the deed was signed; and that this grant was risky, unwise and unsuitable. What did we get when we asked? A whole lot of denial, excuses and even a suggestion that we were raising myths, when we were actually quoting concerns raised in internal DECYP documents.

This goes to the heart of the government's attitude to election promises and explains the budget mess we are in, with election commitments made without any reference to strategy and with scant attention to safety. It also speaks volumes about the government's attitude to public money, as if it is their own personal kitty bag from which they can hand out lollies to mates.

The JCP Youth election commitment is a perfect example of the government's inability to appropriately and wisely manage limited financial resources. As the Auditor-General identified earlier this year, election commitments are ad hoc and not aligned with government goals. In the JCP Youth election promise, we have the perfect example - an enormous amount of money granted to one organisation with no consideration for the broader strategy of intervention or other organisations working in the space. We have no risk assessment and no consultation with DECYP;

just a flashy announcement about a trendy organisation because they're willing to pick up kids off the street at night. Extraordinary - and an extraordinarily terrible process.

The government assured us in committee that they are meeting with JCP Youth, monitoring them regularly and evaluating their programs. It's a pity they didn't do that before granting them \$3.7 million.

I want to speak now to Corrections and Rehabilitation. What I took away from Estimates is that the government really love a shiny, new prison. They mentioned it repeatedly. Meanwhile, lockdowns are the norm, mostly due to staffing issues. When we asked the government what they were doing to address this problem, they seemed to have no real plan for fixing things - apart from building a new prison, which might make the government feel good, but won't address the issue.

In this, we learn that the government prioritise shiny new things over people, which brings me to the stadium - the biggest and shiniest new thing of them all, in the government's eyes at least. It's the ultimate in putting projects before people, prioritising cement over services. In the stadium, we see what the government really value: big things and their business buddies.

Given what we face as a state, their blithe brushing aside of budget pressures is bad for people, bad for communities, and bad for our state. The Premier might think the warm fuzzies of the dream will carry us through, but his dream is deluded, and it is the ultimate disrespect of Tasmanians. The Premier's Trumpian-style denial of facts and rewriting of events is deeply concerning, and it is taking our state in a giant lurch towards anger, aggression and right-wing dogma and there we have it: the values of our government on full display in budget Estimates. If I had to sum up the government's attitude on display through their Estimates responses, I'd say 'disrespect'. This government disrespects Tasmanians.

I want to go to a clear example of this in my electorate of Bass, with the Minister for Sports' actions around the North Launceston Football Club. The Greens have always maintained that dishing out funds at elections isn't the best way to allocate the public's money, and it's a big part of why Tasmania is in so much debt. The minister made a commitment to the North Launceston Football Club during this year's election campaign and then withdrew that commitment after the club president appeared in media with Labor. That's staggering disrespect on display right there; treating the North Launceston Football Club as if they are a political football, rather than recognising their need for support after being more than neglected and completely forgotten in all the planning for the redevelopment of York Park Stadium.

North Launceston Football Club have been homed at York Park for over 100 years and now they find themselves with an uncertain future as a result of having no home. Even yesterday in question time, the minister's disrespect continued in his responses. The Minister for Sport needs to stop playing with the club's future. He needs to stop brushing off how appalling his actions have been, own what he's done, apologise and fix the damage. North Launceston Football Club deserves better. They deserve to be recognised for their long history and connection with York Park, for their contributions to community sport over more than a century, and for the role they play in the Launceston community.

Budget Estimates revealed much about this government - the way they hide the truth, shift baselines, make glossy announcements to hide dark secrets, equivocate and avoid straight answers. This government loves spending money on shiny new things when people just need services. Ultimately, the government like to say they care about Tasmanians, but their actions don't match their words. That tells us everything we need to know about this Budget and the coming budget. The government is putting a stadium before people and Tasmanians will suffer because of it, as we head into austerity and terrible priorities. It's a shame.

[2.42 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON - Deputy Chair, I rise to speak to the budget Estimates process, and from the outset make the point that the committee hearings held the week before last revealed that government ministers are right across their briefs. They're good people who are working hard for the people of our state, and they should be commended and I do so now.

My other observation is that in general terms, although I don't agree with a lot of their policy platforms, the Greens were well prepared for Estimates. Their policies are anti-jobs, and I was personally very disappointed to see the awful attacks on JCP Youth, an organisation supported by both this side of the House and the other.

Conversely, Labor showed once again they were not prepared, they were shallow on detail and unwilling to properly examine the Budget. There are my observations and it's little wonder that after all these years since their omnishambles election in 2021, they are still today, in 2025, under federal administration and are not allowed to run their own affairs.

In continuing my budget reply, I want to reflect on what we learned in those hearings. A budget is more than a set of tables. It's about people, it's about priorities and the decisions that we make to support the quality of life of the people who call Tasmania home. Estimates is where those financial priorities are supposed to be tested, even scrutinised and explained.

In my budget reply, I laid out the foundations of responsible financial management: cutting down on expenditure; minimising and reducing debt; delivering for our regions, particularly Bass, which remains the engine room of our northern economy; and investing in essential services like health, education, housing and public safety.

In responding to the two days of hearings in which I actively participated with ministers Duigan and Barnett, I also want to share my insights against the broader economic and community priorities that I've spoken about time and time again. This is about delivering for the people of our state, Tasmania. Notably, today, 3 December 2025, is exactly 200 years since Tasmania, as a colony then known as Van Diemen's Land, was officially proclaimed as separate from New South Wales. I think it's a day to celebrate with gratitude and pride the incredible achievements that this small colony, which became a self-governing state in 1856, has achieved in all those 200 years, so take a bow, our founding fathers and mothers and those early pioneers who worked so hard to establish our democracy. This day today is 200 years since the commencement of Executive Council, the Supreme Court and the early days of what would become the Tasmanian Parliament. I'm proud to be Tasmanian and I wanted to mark that in this speech.

In the Estimates of minister Duigan, I was greatly impressed with the man's command of his portfolios and his appreciation for dealing with the real needs of Tasmanians, particularly on energy, an area of great opportunity if handled well. As we know, if not handled well, there's significant risk. I made it clear that I support Project Marinus, a state-building piece of infrastructure that will strengthen our energy resilience, unlock future export revenue and ensure Tasmania remains a central player in the national electricity grid of the future. I've always had a weather eye on the risks of that project throughout my role as a member of this House. My view is that it must be done right.

I want to speak very plainly on this point. Labor, from opposition, without the facts or knowing what they were even talking about, demanded that this government sign up to Marinus many months ago, before negotiations were completed. That was reckless. If we had followed Mr Winter's and Ms Finlay's advice, Tasmania would have been locked into a worse, more expensive deal. By refusing to bow to that pressure, including during an election campaign when tensions are always high and reactionary decisions can be made based on the political fever, by insisting on better terms, this government secured a far better outcome for our state.

Labor's approach was short-term, political, and I believe grossly irresponsible. I believe it was driven more by the interests of looking after their federal mates than the people of our state, just as we have seen on green aluminium and infrastructure funding under the 80:20 rule. I believe that's very shameful. Regardless of the colour of our party, we ought to be putting Tasmania's interests first when we disagree or agree on policies in this House.

As Treasurer, at one point along the journey on Marinus I uncovered a situation where Tasmania's negotiating position was being undermined. That circumstance was totally exploited by the federal side, totally unacceptable. I confronted that situation, I called it out and I stopped it. I fought for Tasmanian taxpayers, not Canberra's financial advantage. Be in no doubt Canberra were trying to screw us over big time, but they did not succeed.

Fast forward to 2025 and minister Duigan and the Cabinet showed the same resolve in those final stages. The government made the ultimatum and held firm for the right deal. I emphasise the right deal and the right commercial arrangements. I believe, and I'm proud to say it, Tasmania is better off because of it. The reality is that because of our hard negotiations, Tasmania secured an additional \$346 million from the Commonwealth. Without that money, future electricity bills would be noticeably higher.

Labor would have thrown that all away for cheap, short-term political convenience, even though that would have materially hurt Tasmanians. I believe they were doing the bidding of their Canberra bosses while in administration but it gets worse. Labor wanted to sell down Tasmania's shareholding, giving up our seat at the table and our influence over a project that shapes our energy future. We refused. We kept our seat, protected our strategic position and we did not increase our financial exposure; indeed, we lessened it.

Tasmania now has a capped equity contribution, strong governance and a final investment decision that reflects a deal genuinely better for the state. I made the point in the Estimates committee that I would like Tasmanians to hear more clearly about the benefits of risk sharing,

long-term value and improved resilience. Communication now is, in my opinion, as important as construction and I congratulate the minister on his handling of that.

The committee also examined energy security, an issue that matters deeply to Bass. The minister confirmed that the last two years have been the driest in succession on record. For Hydro, storages have been under sustained pressure. Climate variability is no longer theoretical or an idea. It is directly affecting the policy and operational decisions that we need to take to keep the lights on, hopefully, without the free politics. Hydro is responding with weekly storage monitoring, prudent management and lessons learned from the 2016 crisis now embedded into decision making. That's very welcome and Tasmanians deserve full confidence that planning remains disciplined, transparent and robust. Energy security is not simply an engineering matter. It underpins every household budget, every major employer and every future industry that we today may not even know about but would be contemplating making a future investment in our state.

For Bass, with its manufacturing, small business and families, the stakes are very high. That's why I also discussed with the minister the question of liquid fossil fuel energy security. I encourage our government, and especially our counterparts in the Australian Government, to never lose sight of this sovereign supply and capability risk in a changing global environment where sometimes other countries pull the trade levers to manipulate other countries that might be dependent on those supply chains.

Estimates also gave us the opportunity to examine the government's work in sport and community infrastructure, and the minister, Mr Duigan, is doing a great job here. I asked the minister to show clear links between those investments and increase in participation. I would hope that an investment, for example, the Northern Recreational Hub, for which stage 1 is nearly finished - Mr Fairs loves this project as much as I do - I hope that an investment like that can later be shown with data and empirical evidence that it has increased participation. We often talk about young people, and I think that is a right focus, but for all ages to improve the health of our community. The minister referenced AusPlay data that shows that Tasmania is above the national average, which is positive. We also raised the sports facilities portal. We made a suggestion enabling local clubs and communities to flag omissions or errors so that platform can be as user friendly and valuable as possible for the public and the minister accepted that.

To York Park, \$130 million for northern football and the Tasmanian Devils. It is state and federally funded at 50 per cent. This is a major upgrade at Launceston's York Park, a combined investment which is establishing York Park as the home of northern football and, importantly, well before Macquarie Point Stadium is completed, subject to the vote in the other House, the first home of the Tasmanian Devils will be in my backyard. Sorry, Mr Shelton, in my area, in Bass, in northern Tasmania, but it's a short drive from the beautiful town of Bracknell. It must be stated clearly York Park will be complete and operational well before - and that's exciting because we've often talked about how the benefits of the Devils will be not just for the people who love football in the south, but for people in all corners of our beautiful state.

We also received an update on the Northern Suburbs Community Recreation Hub, a project that I've been proud to champion from its earliest days and as its project sponsor at that point in time when it moved from being a federal project to a state one, and the state started to pour in quite

a lot of money. The minister confirmed the hub is on track to open early next year. It will, ultimately, deliver 11 indoor courts, dual lining for netball and basketball, governance by PCYC Northern Tasmania, and also operation of the netball component by the NTNA. Wonderful people in both of those organisations. This project really is about a part of a transformation for our northern suburbs.

I believe that our local government and state government, and for that matter the federal government, we have absolutely historically, across both colours of government, have underfunded and underdone the work of recreation assets in the northern suburbs. That is an admission that's been made to me by members of local government and it's something that we've been acting on. The northern suburbs and the families of those communities - Ravenswood, Waverley, Invermay, Mowbray, Newnham, Rocherlea - will, in some ways, change their lives and the way that they're able to enjoy their lives together, playing and learning team sports. Mr Fairs, you would agree, with your work in the foundation.

The team sport element, the mentoring that comes with it, the chaplaincy support, the volunteerism, the ability to pitch in and be part of a mission that's bigger than you - these are all wonderful things, and I haven't even really gone into detail about the physical component of being active, getting the heart rate going. Body and mind - if we together as a group, at all levels of government, implement this effectively, it's going to lead to a much healthier Launceston community. I'm so passionate about it. I'm busting my boiler to be there on its first day.

I come now to the Attorney-General's Estimates hearing which encompassed justice, corrections, and for me in particular, as a school teacher myself, a focus on literacy in the corrections policy. During that hearing, I pursued an issue of fundamental importance, and that is adult literacy in custody. Offenders come to jail with far lower literacy skills than the wider community. That is a simple fact. It makes no observation, or attempts to make no observation, about the causes of crime. I'm not going there right now. I'm talking about how once in jail, we have a cohort of people who have a significantly lower literacy capacity than the average Tasmanian population. What an opportunity.

If rehabilitation is to be real and more than just a hope, literacy ought to be at the centre of our correctional strategy. I love that when -

Ms Dow - It should be at the centre of our curriculum.

Mr FERGUSON - I don't disagree with you on that, Ms Dow, and under the Lifting Literacy policy that the government has adopted, that's precisely the way our schools are now moving. I'm going to come back to that in a moment, but moving to a different and workable evidence-based literacy pedagogy is key.

I love that when Mrs Archer assumed the Justice and Corrections portfolio after the - I'm not sure if I get the dates exactly right - but when she came to the portfolio, I think in 2022, there was a wish to have a greater focus on rehabilitation. That's been honoured by following premiers and the occupants of that ministry.

Australia has moved decisively towards structured literacy, including explicit phonics in our schools. It's evidence-based and it's delivering results. Did you know, Deputy Chair, this has been a contentious area of education debate for decades? We're now landing in a much healthier place. The National Reading Inquiry, which was held, I believe, in the late 1990s or it could have been the early 2000s, recommended this, but governments around the country largely ignored it. It was in the 'too hard' basket. Well, now it's been taken out of the 'too hard' basket, it's being implemented and it's working. We've turned the tables, and it's time for everyone to get on board with what the evidence demands - structured literacy and phonics education. I recently saw an example of it in practice when the minister and I visited the dedicated team at Summerdale Primary School two or three months ago. It was a great demonstration of children from different socio-economic backgrounds all learning, and all getting equal access to that education.

I'm sorry to say it: that has not always been the case with the model that it replaces, where unfortunately, as I have said in this House before, there were kids who missed out because the previous model worked for some kids, not all. The kids on average who missed out the most were those from disadvantage.

Therefore, I took this question to the corrections Estimate - some may be surprised - and I asked whether the same approach is being adopted in our prisons. The Attorney-General outlined existing programs and I was pleased he undertook to examine structured literacy directly, and to consider aligning correctional education with national best practice and what we're doing in our state schools. By the way, our independent and Catholic schools are also doing it. I must give a shout-out here to Catholic education. I, personally, feel that they are the thought leaders in this space, but it is a collective and we are all moving together.

Personally, as an MP for Bass, I expect Tasmania Prison Service to get 100 per cent on board, and this does matter. If people are wondering why I'm spending so long on this subject, it's because I believe it really will matter for the future of our state. When you look at the number of people in custody and the length of time they're on average in custody for, that is a significant classroom and it's a significant opportunity, because inevitably nearly all those people will be released in the medium term. What an opportunity for them to lead more fulfilling lives as positive contributors to the community. A partial contribution to a significant rehabilitation, with which I believe this House would unanimously agree, must be a key component of corrections policy. I was excited about those answers and I look forward to progress.

I also asked about broader rehabilitation efforts. The Attorney-General confirmed a small but important reduction in recidivism and outlined expanded programs in family violence intervention, drug and alcohol treatment and through-care transitional support. Accountability and rehabilitation are not opposites; they should work together to make our community safer.

I also questioned the minister on electronic monitoring and home detention; I'm a big supporter of that for the right cohorts of detained people. Perhaps time doesn't permit, but we are seeing some strong results, which is providing a credible alternative to suspended sentences.

We also discussed family violence reform. Minister Howlett is in the Chamber and I thank her and the Attorney-General for their joint efforts in this space and many previous ministers who

have led policy in this space with a singular focus on keeping people safe - men and women, mostly women- and trying to have policies that help people be safer and of course, children as well. I acknowledge our two ministers and I acknowledge the former ministers, including from the other side of politics. I know there's some consultation now underway for the next important set of initiatives. Victims deserve a system that is built around their safety and dignity.

We also discussed regional access to justice and again, I will be brief because of time. I was pleased to hear the Attorney-General confirming that the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's (TASCAT) presence in Launceston is delivering faster, better access to services for northern Tasmanians in the justice sector. I make the quick point that most people don't realise they need access to justice in this way until they need it, but we actually all need it, from the highest to the lowest. It's amazing how from time to time the people engaged in the justice system one year earlier would never have thought they needed it.

Estimates reveal what a budget truly delivers, not the headlines but the reality. Across the hearings there were a number of themes that, in my opinion, were clear. Discipline, negotiation and strong governance in major energy projects really do matter. Climate-driven energy variability needs to be planned for with care. Community infrastructure like York Park and the northern suburbs hub create opportunities and strengthens the lives of our families, men, women, boys and girls. Literacy and rehabilitation in custody are very important to breaking cycles of offending and putting the tools in the person's hand to help them construct a better life, not just for themselves but for the people around them. Regional access to justice is an evolving area and we need to see those improvements continue.

I believe the people of Bass want a government that backs these aspirations, understands the challenges and then makes the strategic, carefully considered investments to deliver them. That's a standard that I believe in and will continue to uphold.

Before I sit down, I want to conclude on a subject very dear to my heart and that is forestry policy. This afternoon, I again take the opportunity, I think now for the third time, to condemn the federal Labor Albanese government for its shady, disgusting deal it connived with the Greens on the second and last day of the sitting of the federal parliament. It is a gutting betrayal of Tasmanian timber communities, families and workers.

I have seen this before on two occasions. I saw it in 2004 when Mark Latham attempted to shut down the entire native forest sector with a massive cheque which was rejected by the then Labor government, to its credit, and the people of Tasmania at the election. We got out of that. We then saw it again in 2012-13 with the disastrous Tasmanian Forest Agreement, a terrible name for a terrible policy which went through this House and the parliament and was agreed, despite the huge protests of the Liberal opposition against the then Labor-Greens government. We lost that battle, but we recovered when Will Hodgman was elected Premier and we tore up that terrible deal. The forest industry has, throughout all these years, progressively improved its performance, including its environmental performance, but it never gets the credit for it.

In the scrutiny hearing to do with Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, we heard about the extraordinary statistics about regeneration in our native forests - 99.5 per cent regeneration. I made

the challenge to Minister Elli., let's hear more about that. Tasmanians only hear the negative, so let's hear more about it. Unfortunately for this round, it appears that we've also lost because the law has been changed and it happened within 24 hours. Does that meet anybody's standards in this House? Even if you're one of those who's cheering it on, does that meet your standards when the government brings in major changes into this House? No it doesn't. We've always had a two-day rule, and you demanded six but no, that disgraceful deal was done overnight and it was law by Friday morning, from Wednesday night.

Mr Fairs - Shameful.

Mr FERGUSON - It is shameful. My first thoughts are not political. My first thoughts are for the people who will pay the price, and there will be many. I always think about the people who have the greatest distance to this Chamber. They're the ones who will be hurt the most. I will say this very carefully. It won't be the captains of industry who hurt the most because there's all these cheques being promised. It's the families, the mums and dads, the small businesses and those regional communities who will feel this pain. They won't be getting fat cheques. They will be cast aside as they were in 2012-13. There will be foreclosures. There will be auctions. There will be difficult meetings with bank managers and there will be people lining up for the dole.

We can avoid this, and it should have been the mandate of a Labor government, which claims to represent the worker, to have done so, to have thought more of those people living in Winnaleah, Scottsdale, Ringarooma Ledgerwood, Lilydale, Hillwood, George Town, Beechworth. To speak only of my electorate, Nunamara and the Pipers district, and other members could go to their thoughts and think about their towns and communities.

I won't spend too much time but I make the point that it will affect our city economies as well; it always does. I believe that this House should rise up and stand against that decision and work together to see it reversed. We have the capability, with perhaps Labor and Liberal working together, to tell Canberra no. We will raise the middle finger to Canberra on this one. We're not having it. You've betrayed our state and you're going to hurt our communities, and we will not stand for it.

The comments made by environment minister Watt and forestry minister Collins are totally unsatisfactory. You cannot provide reassurance in a sentence that includes the words '18 months'. Eighteen months is not plenty of time for this industry to meet your new standards, which have not even been published. A large percentage of 5700 jobs in this industry are dependent, and will be affected, by that decision taken in Canberra on that Wednesday night. Tasmanian Forest Products Association (TFPA) CEO, Nick Steel, said that he had had a meeting with those two ministers I've named. He said it was appreciated, but it exposed gaps in the federal government's proposal - gaps that could jeopardise jobs, investment and Tasmania's future timber supply. He says:

Today's roundtable confirmed exactly what our industry feared. We are 18 months from sweeping legislative change, and the federal government still cannot clearly explain what it means for Tasmania's regional forest agreement. Our sector cannot operate on vague assurances or political talking points. We

need to know precisely where in the legislation the RFA is protected, in black and white, because without that certainty, the entire forestry supply chain is at risk.

I conclude with his statement:

Forestry is not something you can switch on and off. The RFA underpins all timber and fibre production, native regrowth, plantations, private growers, harvesting contractors, mills, and the manufacturing businesses that rely on local supply. If the RFA is weakened or thrown into doubt, it has real and immediate consequences for thousands of Tasmanians.

I thank Mr Steel for his forthright comments, and there's no romance or exaggeration going on about it. He speaks the truth. I stand with those forestry workers at all points of the supply chain. I'm proud of them. I'm sorry for them. I'm sorry that every 10 to 15 years this happens to them. My side of politics has stood resolute. I congratulate Sussan Ley and the federal opposition for standing firm against those changes, despite the fact that they've gone through, and I'm proud of my government, that I'm part of, that stands with those workers. We will not give up. I will not give up.

I thank the House for listening to my contribution on this very important subject.

[3.13 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND - Chair, there's been plenty of commentary that this is a 'nothing budget', and just as much head-scratching about how the crossbench can possibly support this budget when the last one led to a no confidence motion. That criticism misses something important: the Treasurer has been very clear - this is an interim Budget; a holding pattern. The Treasurer says an interim budget will allow for proper consultation before having to make some very difficult decisions, and it enables the government to see the Fiscal Sustainability Report, the first real long-term health check on our finances since COVID. That is one way to see it.

There is another interpretation that revealing the true number of cuts required to the Public Service before the stadium vote might spook some of the upper House Independents the Premier is relying on to vote for the stadium.

Well, while I can see that there isn't much difference in the numbers in the budget papers, it's the tone that has changed. At least the Treasurer now publicly admits Tasmania's finances are in deep trouble and in need of serious reforms. The conflict will be over what the budget reform actually looks like.

We know the Treasurer has long desired to take the axe to the public service, but the other big shift in tone since the Barnett budget is the Treasurer's acceptance, during budget Estimates, that when you're in minority government you need to collaborate. You need to listen to the crossbench. A minority government is about negotiation, not domination, so I hope the Treasurer is listening now: cuts to public services will not fix the mess we're in.

Before I get to the discussion about what sort of reform I'd like to see and some of the budget areas I'm really concerned about, I want to highlight the worrying lack of transparency and realism in this Budget, a trend which hasn't changed from previous budgets handed down by this government. This lack of honesty paints a picture of a government unwilling to confront the reality of the situation. Even the ratings agencies are calling out the government for the reduced effectiveness of its multi-year planning. In other words, the ratings agencies are even saying your forecasts are 'BS'. Here's what is real. Our net debt ratio has doubled since 2019 from about 66 per cent of operating revenue to more than 130 per cent in 2025, and without action, Moody's warns it could blow past 180 per cent by 2029.

While the government likes to blame the Health budget and public sector bloat for this unsustainable budget position, S&P, the ratings agency, made it very clear that capital spending is also driving the structural deficits. It singled out the stadium, Marinus Link and the North West Transmission Developments as the oversized culprits.

When the Premier compares our debt position to big states like Queensland or Victoria, it is completely misleading. Tasmania's economy is smaller than the Australian Capital Territory's. It doesn't have the capacity to generate revenue like those large states can to pull themselves out of a massive, stadium-sized hole. Tasmanians understand this instinctively. They understand that your spending capacity has to be limited by your earning capacity; but it's a lesson the government hasn't learned.

The government seems solely focused on public sector cuts to fix the budget, while ignoring the other elephant sitting squarely on Tasmania's chest: our massive infrastructure program. It's the biggest in Australia as a percentage of our economy. Our debt is headed to \$19 billion by 2029, and most of that is GBE borrowing for major projects. Over the forward Estimates, the government is tipping \$1.7 billion into GBEs for infrastructure. That includes \$609 million for the stadium - more than half of that from our state coffers - plus the extra \$490 million in borrowings and \$30 million per year in interest.

Compare that figure with schools and hospitals, who get a bit over half of that amount in their combined infrastructure budgets. Because of the misguided priorities of this government, we see school and hospital renovations pushed back, or pushed off the books entirely - but it's fine. At least we will have a new, roofed stadium in Hobart, and that will be good.

One of the risks flagged in the budget papers is further calls for equity injections from our GBEs because of cost overruns on these massive projects. We've already seen this with the *Spirits* - \$75 million and more expected soon. We will absolutely see it at Macquarie Point, a stadium that started at \$300 million and is now six times that. What about Marinus Link, which started at \$3 billion for two cables and is now \$5 billion for one cable? That's a tripling of cost in three years.

This sort of debt leaves Tasmania with no capacity to deal with shocks, whether economic, natural disaster or another major industrial on the brink of collapse. When the Treasurer was asked during budget Estimates if there was any capacity in the Budget to support another struggling major industrial, the answer was no.

The Treasurer has criticised crossbenchers for proposing spending increases, but I remind him that some public sector spending actually saves the government money. Take the audit office; one of the cheapest ways to stop waste and pork-barrelling. During budget Estimates, the Auditor-General said the resourcing they had for performance audits is the lowest in Australasia, so is it any surprise that we have such dysfunctional government business enterprises and rank pork-barrelling?

The Auditor-General also made it clear that increasing funding would be likely to uncover more efficiencies and savings there. There are other areas where spending money saves money: investment in public housing, preventative health, education, environmental monitoring. These will also deliver positive returns on investment.

I also recognise that more spending isn't always the solution. Just look at our correctional services: according to the Productivity Commission's 'Report on Government Services 2025', it is one of the most expensive systems in the country, delivering some of the worst results. I share some of the Treasurer's enthusiasm for improved auditing of public sector spending. Evaluating and auditing whole programs, rather than hollowing out the workforce tasked to deliver the programs, is a much more effective and evidence-based approach than efficiency dividends and vacancy control.

What I don't understand is why the Treasurer is not simply asking the Auditor-General to do this. Why does the Treasurer need to set up a new unit and hire a coordinator and an independent adviser? Is it because the Auditor-General is independent and is not afraid to speak the truth, as inconvenient as it might be to the government?

It is true that the public sector workforce has grown at twice the rate of our population over the last four years, but when I looked at the State Service Workforce reports since June 2021, I also found that the growth of staff has not been uniform across the departments. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania has seen only a 3 per cent growth in its staffing levels over the last four years. That is half the rate of the population growth.

The aptly named State Growth has seen a 15 per cent increase in that period, but the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) takes the cake. Their staffing levels have grown by 30 per cent since 2021. Doesn't that tell you everything you need to know about the priorities of this government?

The budget for the environment was miserly. Here are some particular lowlights I explored in budget Estimates: terminating funding for the orange-bellied parrot monitoring program; reductions in funding for our natural resource management; no funding to implement any of the recommendations from the State of the Environment Report; a massive reduction in funding for climate change; and a massive reduction in funding for biosecurity programs, even the marine research which I singled out for praise in my budget reply speech. Now I've had an opportunity to interrogate the budget papers further and compare the numbers to last year's and guess what? There isn't any new money for fisheries research; it was money that had already been committed to in previous budgets and it's only now been cut by 25 per cent.

Meanwhile, we see outsized growth in State Growth and DPAC, agencies designed to give a leg-up to businesses. I hope this is recognised when the EPU sets about its work trying to rightsize the public. Perhaps they could start with the bloat in DPAC and State Growth and the 20 full-time equivalent ministerial spin doctors employed by the government before they turn to the departments of Health and Education.

I want to get to the real threat to our Budget. While all the political oxygen over the past few years has been taken up by the stadium, the real threat to our budget, Marinus Link, has been quietly building. Marinus isn't just a mistake, it's an economic sinkhole. The government has already poured hundreds of millions into TasNetworks. This year another \$200 million goes to TasNetworks for the North West Transmission Developments. It might not be on people's radar in the south of the state, but in my community it gets a lot of people very angry.

The Energy minister mistakenly thought all the 270 landowners whose land will be directly impacted by this development would welcome it. I've asked him in this place over the last few months to come clean with the number of landowners who are refusing to allow this project across their land and he has repeatedly evaded answering the question. The minister has been trying to induce landowners to sign up to the project with a strategic benefits payment, but it hasn't worked, so now the minister will be forced to compulsorily acquire rights over people's land. How many compulsory acquisitions will be needed? I asked TasNetworks that question last week and there were still 40 landowners who the government had not been able to get to sign up for this project, despite trying for months. This is not how you build community support for a project, by forcing people to give up their right to enjoy their land in order to make way for a giant power line.

I want to talk about the debt Hydro Tasmania and TasNetworks will have to take on to get this project done. Hydro Tasmania is \$7 billion in debt for Marinus stage 2 and the pumped hydro projects, a move that has been described as making Hydro Tasmania increasingly financially vulnerable. TasNetworks already has \$2.28 billion in loans and a 152.7 per cent debt-to-equity ratio. The North West Transmission Developments add at least another \$1.1 billion, and that's before overruns. The North West Transmission Developments are projected to wipe \$16 million per year from TasNetworks' annual profits for the next few decades, and remember, this year it only returned \$15 million to the government. This is why net debt is projected to reach \$19 billion by 2031-32, or \$23 billion if Marinus stage 2 proceeds. TasNetworks expects to run a \$300 million loss on the North West Transmission Developments over 25 years. That means fewer dividends, fewer tax receipts and more pain for the state budget.

Let's also remember who's paying for the billions of dollars of electricity infrastructure that is Marinus Link and the North West Transmission Developments - it's electricity customers. How much will the transmission for Marinus cost you, the customer? According to the whole-of-state business case, it will cost \$80 million from residential customers, \$100 million from small business and \$600 million from major industrials. The government has already committed to covering the major industrials' extra transmission costs from Marinus at a cost of \$39 million per year. You would logically expect the same support for households and small businesses.

The government says, 'Don't worry about it, Hydro's future profits will cover these subsidies', but the whole-of-state business case warns that Hydro taking on \$7 billion in debt to fully

redevelop Tarraleah and build the Cethana pump hydro will likely need to retain much of its profit to offset the cost of these projects. It also warns Hydro's profits are highly volatile. A change to the National Energy Market (NEM) rules, a year of low rainfall, a cost overrun, or a small rise in interest rates and the whole profit projection collapses, which is exactly what we have seen this year. This year Hydro's profits collapsed by \$193.7 million to \$7.5 million, a staggering 96 per cent decline in profit. This isn't just a bad year for Hydro, it's the second consecutive record dry year, described by the company itself as the biggest multi-year drought in recorded history.

While management presents this as an unfortunate weather event, it may actually signal something far more troubling, that climate change has fundamentally altered the hydrology that the entire business depends upon. You would think Hydro Tasmania would have done modelling on future inflows to our hydro dams so they would know with a high degree of certainty how much water they will have to export, yet at government business scrutiny last week when given the opportunity to refer to this modelling to table it, they couldn't produce anything.

I acknowledge that part of the unprecedented decline in the Hydro profits this year is also due to Basslink remaining unregulated, but it shows the sorts of problems Hydro could encounter if there are any future changes in NEM regulations or electricity pricing regulations in Tasmania, which is exactly the sort of risk highlighted in the whole-of-state business case.

Let's not forget the government is relying on profit projections over 25 years or more before this thing pays for itself. How many changes of government and energy policy are we likely to see in that time? Just look at your federal Liberal colleagues and their recent abandoning of net zero. If Dutton had been elected Prime Minister, forget the hydro, we would be going nuclear and Marinus would be a stranded asset.

The government is barrelling ahead with a massive high-risk investment predicated on no changes in the energy regulation system to ensure it delivers the projected profits. Good luck with that. Meanwhile, there are seven gigawatts of renewable energy in the pipeline in Tasmania, all waiting to be built. According to the whole-of-state business case, Hydro only needs 800 megawatts to maximise returns from Marinus. Anything beyond that will actually dilute its profits, so the plan to offset the extra costs that Marinus will add to businesses, major industrials and ordinary residents with the windfall profits Hydro expects from trading over the Marinus link to the mainland may not even materialise.

During scrutiny, the Energy minister admitted there is now a gap between what Hydro can supply power for and what major industrials can afford to pay. You would expect this is why power price negotiations between Hydro and Bell Bay Aluminium have dragged on for so long. The old model, cheap hydropower for manufacturing, is gone. Hydro wants mainland super-profits instead, which puts the viability of our major industrials at risk. If even one major industrial shut down, the consequences for Tasmania will be devastating.

However, perhaps the biggest, most concerning issue we are facing from Marinus Link, which was highlighted during GBE scrutiny last week, is the government's claim that Marinus Link will reduce wholesale electricity prices in Tasmania. Why is this relevant? It is because we are in a cost-of-living crisis, because the cost of rent is going through the roof and the cost of

groceries is skyrocketing. We know this because this is what we are hearing back from the community sector organisations that support these people, the ones the Treasurer is probably lining up for future cuts. We know this because of the increasing number of people who are skipping meals to pay for their power bills or going without their medication just to pay their rent and keep their lights on.

Increases to power prices matter a lot. In fact, that was one of the reasons the energy committee that I sit on was set up in the first place. Tasmania has the highest power bills in the nation because we live in the coldest place in Australia and have old, poorly insulated housing stock. That's why increases in power prices hurt Tasmanians so much.

I want to share with the parliament this exchange during GBE scrutiny between the Energy minister and Vica Bayley. For those following at home, this occurred during government business scrutiny of Hydro Tasmania on Tuesday last week. Mr Bayley asked the Energy minister about a document prepared by Treasury as part of the whole-of-state business case. It is called the Marinus Link Electricity Market Modelling Final Report and was prepared on 14 December 2024, a document that was not even released to the public until after the state election in August. You might remember that it was only released after the government had signed us up to Marinus Link, the biggest investment decision in our state's history.

Back to the Deloitte report, which was written in December last year but hidden from the public until August. This was modelling the government commissioned. The modelling relates to future energy prices in Tasmania, so you would think the Energy minister would be very familiar with this report. He's had it for almost a year. If anyone wants to see this report, it's on the Treasury department website. If you search for the whole of state business case, look for the Deloitte report. Page 15 of that report says,

- In the absence of Marinus Link, limited interconnections through Basslink results in the Tasmanian market to remain protected from rising mainland prices.
- The introduction of Marinus Link, (in particular Marinus Link 2) facilitates greater levels of integration between Tasmania and mainland markets as prices in both markets converge. Thus, Tasmania's exposure to mainland NEM coal phase outs and sharply rising load is heightened, resulting in substantial increases in Tasmanian prices (with Marinus Link when compared to no Marinus Link scenarios.)

Mr Bayley asked the Energy minister why, when Deloitte is projecting a 59 per cent increase in the wholesale electricity prices from 2031 in Tasmania compared to a no Marinus scenario, is the assertion that Marinus Link will lead to lower wholesale electricity prices? He asked the minister where he got his data and analysis from to support this claim. Unfortunately, there's no *Hansard* from this hearing yet, but the recording is available online for anyone who wants to go and hear it. The exchange I'm referring to starts at the one hour and 10 minute mark. The Energy minister wasn't able to explain this discrepancy. He couldn't explain why the Deloitte report models Tasmanian wholesale energy prices increasing by 59 per cent. Instead, he dismissed it as

a Treasury document. The minister said he relied on the final investment decision assessment report, or FID report as we refer to it, then objected to any further questions from Mr Bayley about this.

The FID report was a document prepared by a committee chaired through State Growth. A redacted version was made available by the government after it signed us up to Marinus. You can find this document on the ReCFIT website if you are interested in reading through a redacted document. What is interesting is that there is no modelling referred to in the final investment decision assessment report. The only modelling that has been publicly disclosed by the government about the impact and wholesale electricity prices from Marinus Link is the Deloitte report. By the way, the Deloitte report shows that while Tasmania's wholesale electricity prices will increase by 59 per cent thanks to Marinus, Victoria's wholesale electricity prices will go down by 7 per cent from 2031, which goes to prove my point: Tasmania is taking all the risks and most of the costs and all the benefits of Marinus flow north to the mainland.

Mr Bayley, unimpressed by the answer from the Energy minister, came back to the issue later and asked again about this and highlighted that the FID assessment document doesn't reference any work that models wholesale electricity prices. In response to this, the Energy minister said, 'my consistent strong advice is that prices will be lower under a Marinus scenario than a no Marinus scenario'. Frustrated by this response from the minister, Mr Bayley then asked the chair of Hydro Tasmania if they were aware of any modelling that contradicts the modelling by Deloitte. His answer was simply that mainland prices that we can access via exports will become more advantageous to us. He went on to say he had nothing to add on the veracity of the Deloitte modelling, and he will leave Treasury to account for their modelling.

Where does that leave us? Until the government is able to produce modelling to prove that wholesale power prices for Tasmanians will fall with Marinus, we are left with the Deloitte modelling which says it will go up by 59 per cent. I suggest we should be very worried about the increases to power prices we will see from Marinus.

What is the government going to do to lower household electricity consumption? The answer is very little. Its most effective policy was its energy saver loan, which was available for people to get no interest loans of up to \$10,000 to install solar panels or heat pumps or insulation to reduce their power bills. It has been cut. It was a good policy. It didn't do much to assist renters, but it was popular with homeowners. Now it's finished and I can't see any funding in the budget over the forward Estimates for this program to continue.

I asked the Environment minister today whether she was doing anything to assist landlords to improve the energy efficiency of rental properties, but she wasn't able to identify anything in a three-minute answer. To put it simply, the government is doing nothing to bring down power bills other than rebates. In truth, it is pursuing projects that will do the opposite and drive power prices up.

Over the past financial year, almost 200 residential customers had their electricity disconnected because they couldn't afford their bills. That is twice the number from two years ago and it's just the tip of the iceberg. According to the TasCOSS CEO, who gave evidence before the

energy committee earlier this year, there are 50,000 Tasmanian households who are living in energy poverty. She said energy poverty is when a household is either rationing their energy by going without basic activities like showering, cooking or using their heater, or foregoing the essentials such as fresh food, medicine or rent, to pay their electricity bills. There are now 13,400 Tasmanian customers repaying an energy debt; twice as many since the COVID-19 pandemic, and there has been a 21 per cent increase in customers entering retailer hardship programs in the past year. If 50,000 Tasmanians live in energy poverty right now, what is going to happen in 2031 when we start seeing the large increases to their power bills caused by Marinus Link?

[3.36 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER - Chair, it was a pleasure to appear before both Estimates committees to speak about the government's strong investment into the vitally important areas of Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing; Ageing; and Aboriginal Affairs in the 2025-26 state Budget.

The health and wellbeing of Tasmanian families and communities is our number one priority and this budget reflects that, with a record investment of nearly \$10 million every single day into our health system.

Health makes up more than a third - 34 per cent to be exact - of the entire state Budget, which ensures that we can continue to deliver better care to Tasmanians when and where they need it most, while responding to rising demand, especially in our hospitals. I was very pleased to speak to the significant investment of \$70 million over the next four years to implement our new four-year elective surgery plan, which was launched in June. This follows the first four-year plan, which saw a record number of elective surgeries delivered for three years in a row and the highest per-capita admission rate for elective surgery of any state or territory. A significant 22,500 elective surgeries were performed in 2024-25, which is more than 61 surgeries every single day. There has been a 46.1 per cent increase in the volume of elective surgeries conducted each year compared to the level delivered prior to the first elective surgery plan.

Delivering for Tasmania, we're also investing in more care options in the community. For example, applications for postgraduate scholarships are now open to help Tasmanian pharmacists gain full scope of practice credentials. Once trained, pharmacists will be able to assess, treat and manage more common health conditions such as ear infections, reflux, rhinitis and skin conditions including shingles, eczema and wounds.

I was also pleased to table the latest long-term plan for healthcare in the Tasmania 2040 progress report and the implementation plan for the next three years. Highlights of the progress report include launching the general practice sustainability and viability grants initiative to strengthen general practices in rural and regional areas of Tasmania; completing new ambulance stations in Burnie, Glenorchy and Oatlands; and expanding Hospital in the Home South from 12 to 22 virtual beds, plus eight new geriatric evaluation and management care beds, a first-of-its-kind service for Tasmania.

We're also increasing the scope of practice for nurse practitioners who are qualified to provide early intervention for acute and chronic conditions. Ultimately, this will decrease hospital

admission and readmission rates, and improve follow-up care by providing services close to where patients live and work. The Tasmanian nurse practitioner strategy consultation paper has been released to advance the role of nurse practitioners across the health system. This strategy features four key themes: developing person-centred models of care and addressing barriers to practice; growing the nurse practitioner workforce and recruiting nurse practitioners with skill sets to address Tasmania's healthcare needs; raising awareness of nurse practitioners' scope of practice; and workforce and succession planning for the sustainability of nurse practitioner roles.

I'm very proud that we're delivering on the election commitment to provide scholarships to help existing registered nurses in the Tasmanian Health Service gain a Master of Nurse Practitioner qualification, and I was pleased to update the committee on the area of preventative health.

Public consultation on the new 20-year preventive strategy began in October 2024 with the release of a discussion paper and there has been extensive input from the community since this time, with over 5000 responses received.

More than 2000 organisations were directly invited to participate in consultation and through Health Consumers Tasmania, co-design sessions were held in several regional communities across the state. The round one consultation summary report has been released and is available on the Department of Health's website. Feedback from round one will shape the draft strategy and first action plan which will be released soon for public feedback and will also inform the 2026-27 state budget. We expect to release the final strategy by May 2026, with the first action plan commencing in July.

In Mental Health, we continue to make significant investments to support the mental health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. Over the past decade we've invested \$564 million to shift the focus on services from hospital-based care to community-based support. This Budget invests a further \$62 million over four years for mental health and alcohol and drug services, including community organisations.

Today, I would like to take the opportunity to thank our health workforce for their ongoing work: the nurses, doctors, paramedics, allied health professionals and countless support staff who serve our Tasmanian community every day.

It was also a pleasure and an honour to address the committee as Tasmania's first Minister for Ageing. As I said at the table, ageing is not just about growing older, it is about living well, being valued and staying engaged. I was pleased to speak about investment in the services, infrastructure and partnerships that will enable older Tasmanians to thrive in communities that respect and celebrate their contributions.

This included our investments in the Older Tasmanians Action Plan 2025-2029 that responds directly to the voices of older Tasmanians and addresses key themes raised during engagement, including tackling ageism, promoting social inclusion and enhancing safety, participation and respect. Funding is also included in the Budget to support the implementation of the action plan, with priority actions already underway, including establishing a governance group to guide delivery.

I was pleased to update the committee on our commitment to elder abuse prevention with over \$3 million allocated on specific initiatives such as funding for the Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline, the Elder Relationship Service and community awareness programs delivered by COTA Tasmania, the Migrant Resource Centre and Welcome Cultural Services.

Last but not least, in relation to Aboriginal Affairs it was my pleasure to reaffirm for the committees our strong commitment to Closing the Gap and improving the lives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. We're investing in a number of areas to progress this, with funding to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Community Alliance and of course funding to progress our commitment to a truth-telling and healing process.

In particular, I want to reflect on the discussion in the Legislative Council Estimates committee. I really appreciated that discussion, which was very respectful and very valuable for everyone, I think, at the table. I particularly thank Greens MLC for Hobart Ms O'Connor, who said at the table it did move a few people to tears, which really underlines the importance of this portfolio and its priorities, not just for Tasmanian Aboriginal people but for all Tasmanians. Working together, we will continue our commitment to Closing the Gap and improving the lives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

[3.44 p.m.]

Ms DOW - Deputy Chair, I want to begin by saying that although the government says this is an interim budget, it's really only a taster of what's to come in May. That's when the kicker's kick is going to be. The government needs to be very upfront with Tasmanians between now and May about the true impact of the choices they make in the deliberations of that budget and the impact and consequences that will have for Tasmanians right across our state. I want to put that on the record. They need to be upfront. It's not something that they do very regularly but the time has come for them to be upfront, because there will be people across this state who will suffer the consequences of the decisions that are made in the upcoming May budget.

This interim quasi-budget doesn't contain any election commitments. It has many previous ones that have been committed to over the events of the last few early elections that have been brought on by the Liberals. There's no certainty on any pre-election commitments that have been made by this government. There are significant shifts in funding commitments that were made prior to the election and then changed after in this interim Budget.

As we've said in this place before, the Liberals will always put themselves first, and the current state of Tasmania, I believe, is testament to that. Don't take any commitment or any promise that they have made to you across your communities for granted. Just ask the salmon industry, the tourism industry, the greyhound industry and now the North Launceston Footy Club.

This place never ceases to amaze me. The standards have declined so significantly since I was privileged enough to be elected to this parliament back in 2018. There has been a steep decline. You only have to look at question time this morning, when we had a minister of the Crown who came to the lectern, gave one answer, and then when it was determined there was evidence to suggest otherwise contrary to that answer, they corrected the record. That individual is a minister

of the Crown. That is a privilege that does not come lightly. There is only a very small number of Tasmanians who ever get the privilege to do that in this state and be part of government and change people's lives forever. I just say to the Premier what is the standard that you sit by and accept?

Yesterday, we called on the Premier to intervene in the situation that occurred with Tasracing, the TasInsure policy and the actions of the minister and to investigate that. That's a fair and reasonable thing to do. As I sat in this place this morning and observed the relevant minister providing snide remarks across this Chamber to our acting leader, who was only doing her job and doing it very well indeed to get to the bottom of this issue, I thought there should be an investigation into this and the Premier should demand that there is.

The second thing I want to talk about that happened in this place this morning that never ceases to amaze me is the member for Bass, Mr Ferguson. I agreed with him this morning when he said that people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. His government doesn't have a leg to stand on when it comes to doing a deal with the Greens, yet they criticise the federal government over recent policy reform announcements. On this side, Labor will always stand beside forestry workers. For me personally, my family's livelihood has been derived from the forest industry over generations. We stand by our forestry workers and we support our forest industry in Tasmania. The hypocrisy of those on the other side is glaring.

The other thing I would say to the member for Bass is that people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. The only reason he's on the back bench as a member for Bass is because he was embroiled in the state's biggest infrastructure stuff-up in history and had to step aside as the Deputy Premier of this state and minister for Infrastructure and a number of other responsibilities. He's really not in any place to lay criticism about the conduct of others.

The third point I will make is about the now Deputy Premier who was the Treasurer. He comes in here and criticises Labor every year, and even this year, about not having an alternative budget, but seems to forget that he's the only Treasurer in recent history who didn't have his budget passed. He doesn't have a leg to stand on -

Mr Jaensch - Because you blew up the process.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Mr Jaensch, please.

Ms DOW - I will tell you what happened - that's the next point in my speech actually, Mr Jaensch. We come in here and the Premier blames us for causing an early election, when in actual fact there was a vote of no confidence in the Premier in this place. That was supported, yes, by Labor, but also by the Greens and Independent members of this parliament. That's what happened, and the Premier went to the Governor and requested an early election, because he is the only person who can do that. That's what happened.

The fifth thing I want to talk about in the preface of my speech today is the Independent members and the fact that they have enabled this Liberal government to be in power. They have backed them. You can't have your cake and eat it too. You can't criticise Labor and say you want to work with Labor, and yet back in and enable this government to be in power. You have

responsibilities; you are accountable. You're part of a minority government. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

Estimates is such an important parliamentary process, and one that I really enjoy each and every year, because it really is the only time that we get answers to questions. We get to ask questions not only of ministers, but through departmental staff. Quite frankly, we're able to glean some good information during this Estimates process.

I note Mr Ferguson's comments that we weren't prepared and we didn't ask the right questions. Well, I think we did a fantastic job. We don't have 26 advisers, or however many some of the ministers had beside them at the tables during Estimates. We have a very small but competent team, who worked incredibly hard to pull together our work and preparation before the Estimates process this year. I want to put on the record my thanks to my colleagues, and congratulate them on their efforts and the information that we were able to glean from this government. I thank them for their performance during Estimates, but also to our small but highly capable and competent team who assisted us with that process.

I also want to make mention of the parliamentary staff, who have done an amazing job this year. It's been a year of ups and downs, and there's been an enormous load with committee work as well. What happened through Estimates and then GBEs was a culmination of a huge amount of work for you, too. I thank you for that. I thank the Hansard staff, who worked into the early hours of the morning, in many instances, to prepare the *Hansard*. That was a tremendous job as well. I want them to know that their efforts haven't gone unnoticed.

My observation during Estimates was that many of the ministers relied heavily on their advisers and staff - in many ways, it wasn't a bad thing. It enabled us to get information, and that's a very good thing, and part of a transparent budget Estimates process.

I want to begin with the Health Estimates. Although I'm not the responsible shadow minister for Health, I was able to be part of that hearing. It was good to be part of that, and with my colleague Ms Haddad, we asked a series of questions to the Health minister. The first that we kicked off with was about the salary of the Secretary of the Department, which is an extraordinary figure of \$700,000. I think that's a reasonable question for us to ask given the current state of Tasmania's health system, the health status of many Tasmanians, and the current state of services and service delivery right across Tasmania. It doesn't stack up. We don't think it passes the pub test, and there wasn't really any explanation given during Estimates as to why that level of remuneration is being provided to that particular secretary.

We then moved on to ambulance ramping and the government's signature policy of the 2024 election - they would ban ambulance ramping. They haven't done that. It was just another election slogan. We learnt about their plans to reduce the Transfer of Care protocol to 45 minutes, with little regard, I believe, to the impact that this will have on our already overstretched emergency departments across the state. We know that the ANMF have been speaking very strongly and very loudly about their concerns. I note that during the 2025 election, the Liberals committed to working very closely with the ANMF. I hope that they uphold that commitment, because it's absolutely essential that our nurses and our midwives are supported across the state and as part of this

transition process. I do note that, despite there being some successes in reductions in times of ambulance ramping - which is a good thing, and I will give credit where it's due - we need to make sure that people aren't waiting an unnecessarily long time for an ambulance to get to them out in the community. I understand that that's still happening. There's work that still needs to be done about that. We also need to make sure that the pressure that's on our emergency departments isn't too great as a consequence of this policy being introduced by the government.

I had the opportunity to ask questions about North West Health, which I'm incredibly passionate about. The minister, through questioning, ruled out reopening the hydrotherapy pool at the North West Regional Hospital, and I will continue to provide advocacy about the importance of that facility. I will seek to understand how the government's current policy position about access at the support schools at both Burnie and Devonport, in the new builds, will ensure that people can have access to therapeutic services and access those facilities during the hours those schools are operational. That's not clear yet.

We've spoken about the mother-baby units and the importance of those, after those being a very long-held policy of the Labor Party in a number of elections now, and a policy that I care deeply about. I still would like to see permanent beds on the north-west coast, because I believe that we shouldn't be disadvantaged. We're just as important as every other part of the state and we shouldn't just have an outreach service. If anything, access to services is diminished across those regional and rural areas. We do miss out on many services in the north-west, and there is a need for greater support. I'd love to see the government continue to provide that service and provide a more permanent extension of that service. I will continue to advocate for that.

We also talked about the mental health precinct, the upgrades to Spencer Clinic, which is absolutely critical, at the North West Regional Hospital, and the time frames for that and how that's actually been pushed out. Now we won't see that being built until 2028.

We talked about parking at the North West Regional Hospital, which is still very, very difficult for people, particularly elderly people arriving for appointments, and for our staff. There was one interim solution noted by the Secretary of the Department, which I think was going to create about 20 more parking spaces, but there is a real need for a long-term solution. I know through speaking to Burnie City Council that they're very willing and open to working constructively with the state government to make sure we can get more parking available and some solutions in place to ensure a better flow of parking at the North West Regional Hospital.

The other thing that I asked about was the Hospital in the Home program for youth mental health services on the north-west coast. I was really surprised to learn that the scope of that service is only in the Devonport region. Whilst that's important, the north-west is much bigger than the Devonport region. I know that the call for funding for that service came directly from the impact of an inability to access youth mental health services in the Circular Head region, in particular on the west coast. There does need to be an extension of that program, to ensure that it is available right across the north-west coast, not just in the Devonport area.

The last point that I want to make about Health was TML Pathology. I've had a lot of constituent inquiries, and I know a number of my colleagues have, about the new service that's

been introduced at the North West Regional Hospital. These are not only from clinicians, with delays to diagnostics and getting access to treatment because of that, but just generally from the community and concerns about the accreditation. I understand the accreditation has been undertaken, and I would ask that the minister update people on whether or not that met the accreditation requirements, because I think there would be a lot of people on the north-west coast who would be interested to know that.

That brings me to my shadow portfolio of Infrastructure, which I've come to really love and enjoy since I've been involved in it. There is lots to look at. We kicked off with the unanswered questions that still exist about whether or not TT-Line is solvent, and when ministers of the Crown knew about that specifically. I was surprised during that: Infrastructure minister Kerry Vincent was very generous with the answers that he gave across a number of areas. I thank him for that. He's very pragmatic in his approach, and I like that. That's a fresh change from the ministers on that side. I would say minister Archer was pretty good as well in providing answers, which was pretty good.

The one thing that Mr Vincent didn't really appear to be very prepared about was what had transpired during the time in which the Auditor-General had informed members of the government about his finding and direction that, in fact, TT-Line were insolvent. We asked a lot of questions about that to Mr Vincent, and I have some subsequent answers on notice. It does highlight a really important matter, and that is about transparency and the seriousness of this issue, which I don't believe the government has come to grips with yet.

I will say again, I've said it before in this place, that I'm incredibly concerned about the way in which the government, in particular the Premier, has dismissed the findings of the Auditor-General, who is employed as the Auditor-General of this state. It's remarkable to think that he can just dismiss that. Following on through GBE hearings, the Auditor-General has subsequently written to the membership of the committees expressing, again, his concerns across three key areas regarding the solvency of TT-Line. He also wants access to the independent legal advice that TT-Line sought to verify its financial position. I ask the government to provide that information because it's important and the Auditor-General should be given that opportunity for that to inform his further work across this issue.

The amazing other thing during government business enterprises, was the fact that the minister, Mr Vincent, had no idea that the chair of TT-Line was going to table his legally constructed letter to the Auditor-General about his findings. I mean, the minister of the Crown wasn't aware of that. Who's running the show? It's clearly not the minister for Infrastructure. Is it the Auditor-General? Is it the chair of TT-Line? Clearly, it's not the Premier. Has the government learnt nothing throughout this whole process? As others in this place have said, the questions about TT-Line's solvency are primarily due to the actions of this government and their ability to forget to build a berth and the financial ramifications that that has had for that company. Absolutely no forethought or insight into the fact that you're actually responsible and accountable for that. The minister also wouldn't tell us what's required for the further bailout of TT-Line, and that's one of those things that I talked about at the beginning of my contribution about the need for transparency. For Tasmanians need to be well informed ahead of time of what they're going to have to be accountable for.

We also spoke at length about our roads, which is a particular passion of mine. We had some good discussion about the safety of road workers having to run out onto the road to fill potholes and then run back off again. I've seen that a couple of times as I've been driving around and it does concern me, so I raised that with the minister. I also raised the fact that there was very poor signage on certain segments of the road, particularly on the west coast. Sections that were completely broken up, shattered in pieces had no signage to alert people to that. As I've said before, I have real concerns that people will die because they hit those potholes particularly, if you have tourists who aren't familiar with the roads - the damage that people were incurring to their tyres. You don't even have signage up to warn people, let alone doing anything about fixing them.

We talked about different techniques. I asked the minister about why we were building our roads to Victorian standards rather than Tasmanian standards. He undertook to look at that, and I appreciate that. He said that they were looking at using different materials around different parts of the state, which is just common sense, particularly when you have weather like you do on the west coast of Tasmania. You should be using local materials from quarries and the like on the west coast to make sure that the road is built to the right specs so you don't get the breakdown in the wet conditions.

We also talked about maintenance contracts, particularly across the north of the state and concerns that the Civil Contractors Federation have about the financial viability of that for some of their members. It was good to have some open discussion about those things as well and I will follow those up with the sector.

We talked about the Bridgewater Bridge and that the government promised to deliver that on time and on budget and the fact that it wasn't delivered on time, there was only one lane opened in the timeframe that the government said and the rest was opened later. I couldn't quite get Mr Vincent to accept that, but it is a fact and, once again, the government weren't truthful about that.

We talked about TasPorts and the fact that they are looking at rationalising their assets was the term that they used. There's going to be some work for the government to inform Tasmanians about what that is. I understand TasPorts will be reviewing their master plans around the state, which have been in place since 2018, with a view to doing just that and rationalising assets. That needs to be a very open and transparent process.

I'm going to keep moving, Deputy Chair, I'm going to run out of time.

That brings me now to Aboriginal Affairs, a new shadow portfolio responsibility that I am enjoying immensely as well. We spoke to the minister about the government's commitment to treaty and the fact that earlier this year it appeared that the government had walked away from a treaty process and their commitment to that. I understand, however, through discussions with the minister across the table that that isn't the case and that you are still committed to treaty, which is positive and very good given that was the commitment and is the desire of members of our Aboriginal community. It's still not clear when the commissioners will be appointed as part of the truth-telling process; I hope that the minister can provide some updates on that soon. There was a report that the advisory group did and I understand you were going to provide some more

information about when that will be made available, as well as a follow-on to the report on truth-telling and treaty that was done a number of years ago.

We spoke about the importance of Aboriginal languages across Tasmania, and I know that there's work being done on that in Circular Head, by Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation and others. It's something that I would really like to see progressed across the state as well. We also spoke about land hand backs; how you want to see that facilitated, and the great length of time in this state since there have been any land hand backs and how important that is to Tasmanian Aboriginal communities.

That brings me to Tourism, another new shadow portfolio, but this is one of those portfolios that is a shining light in the Tasmanian economy and there are Tasmanians doing fantastic things in tourism across this state. It is one of our industries that is growing and going from strength to strength. I'm concerned, however, that that is going to be jeopardised by the government's financial management. At the last election in 2025, the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, committed \$38 million across the forward Estimates to destination marketing for Tourism Tasmania and committed to that funding. What do we see in the interim Budget? There's only \$10 million for that destination marketing. That doesn't signal confidence to Tourism Tasmania or our industry as a whole - the fact that if we're looking to destination marketing with airlines, with getting people to Tasmania, our marketing campaigns, like the 'Come Down for Air' campaign, which are so critical in maintaining the momentum that surrounds our tourism industry. The minister wasn't able to confirm to me that that money will be in the budget in May, and I know that's incredibly concerning for the tourism industry as well. I ask again today, that the government commit to that funding commitment of \$38 million to the tourism industry, and I will continue to advocate for that right up until May and we know what's in the budget.

We also spoke about the *Spirit* preparedness plan, aviation industry marketing, as I said before, and some of the other grants that the government has committed to. I look forward to the implementation of the *Spirit* preparedness plan grants to get some of that infrastructure that's required, particularly for caravanning, in place and ready for the arrival of the *Spirits* in - fingers crossed - October next year.

Local government was the next hearing that I participated in. The minister, Mr Vincent, was very clear that there won't be a postponing of the 2026 local government election to accommodate for the legislative changes that the government is going to bring to this parliament in the spring. We talked about the fact that the Budget doesn't have any new funding or incentives to support those councils that want to work more strategically together across the state. I know there are councils in my electorate that want to do that, and others around the state that may even be interested in some type of voluntary amalgamation process. It will be very difficult for that to occur without any type of incentive funding, and we've always said that, and we spoke about that during the Estimates process.

We also spoke about the poor culture across local government, the workplace health and safety improvements that need to be implemented across local government organisations and the significant issues with workforce in local government across this state. There isn't a workforce

development plan for local government and there should be, and we ask the minister to commit to that.

We also asked the minister to run a campaign encouraging people to run for local government in the 2026 elections. Local governments copped a lot of flak in recent years, elected representatives have been under a lot of pressure and there's been a lot of cultural issues internally and across the community when it comes to local government. We need good people to be involved in local government in this state, it's an important level of government that provides important levels of service to communities and Mr Vincent took up our concerns about that and committed to running a campaign, which will be a very positive thing.

There are two last things that I will mention. I sat in on the Primary Industries hearing and I still have concerns about biosecurity in this state, and the proactive approach to biosecurity. It seems very reactive, and we do have incursions, but that proactive work doesn't seem to be doing it, and I would ask the minister to commit to undertaking that.

I also went to hearing on inland fisheries and I found that fascinating. I come from a long line of trout fishers. My dad always talks about the cormorants and how they are impacting on the inland fisheries and the stock.

Mr Abetz - They were bad last season.

Ms DOW - Yes, and they continue to be bad. It was interesting to listen and get a good understanding of that and I'm pretty keen to do a bit more work in that area and see if we can't address that because we all understand the importance of our inland fisheries for recreation, but also for our waterways and it is a great Tasmanian way of life. The government needs to get on top of the cormorant increase in population issue because it's decimating the trout fishing seasons in Tasmania and that's not a good thing, and it's not a good thing for tourism either.

The last thing I want to speak about in the last few minutes I have is that I sat in on TAFE scrutiny as well. I continue to be disgusted in the approach to TAFE in this state. The fact that the government doesn't even have vocational education and training or TAFE in the title of the minister says a lot. Eighteen Tasmanians are going to lose their jobs two days out from Christmas, which is shocking. Privatisation by stealth is happening right across TasTAFE. You won't hear the minister say it, but directly through the questioning that we had, particularly about those courses that have been cut, they will be provided by the private sector. It's a cost-cutting measure by this government and we should not be diminishing the creative industries in Tasmania. They're an important part of our economy and our community and they should be available through vocational education and training. I wonder if the Minister for Skills and Jobs consulted with the Minister for the Arts before he made those decisions to cut those courses and the impact that would have, particularly on creative design and the fashion industry for people wanting to pursue those careers in Tasmania.

We also talked about the staffing issues across TasTAFE. The government's commitment when they brought their reform package into the parliament was that no jobs would be lost and there would be more jobs created. Well, 18 jobs are going to be cut. They said the courses will

grow, but courses are going to be cut, and they said no privatisation, but in fact courses are being privatised. They also said they would employ 100 more teachers across Tasmania, but when we asked Minister Ellis how many teachers had been employed, there was 80. It's another broken promise. They haven't employed 100 teachers across Tasmania. It's just another example of how dishonest this government is.

I also asked about the report and review that was done of Drysdale and the minister committed to getting back to me on that. I hope that report will be made publicly available because I'm very keen to review that and look at it through my shadow Tourism portfolio. We understand the importance of having a good foundation of skilled workers and access to skills and training in the hospitality and tourism industries as well.

In concluding my response to the Estimates and GBEs process, the damage done to democracy, the institution of parliament and the institutions of government by this government over the last 11 years are going to take years to repair. The Budget is one example of that, but the conduct that we see day after day in this place is yet another. Democracy has diminished under this government, there's no two ways about it. They're not truthful with the Tasmanian people. They come in here and say one thing, then say another to cover it. There's no investigation into poor conduct and quite frankly, we're all here because Tasmanians deserve better access to services and they deserve leaders who are going to do the right thing by them. This government currently isn't doing that.

[4.14 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY - Honourable Deputy Chair, I am delighted to rise to speak about my reflection on the budget Estimate sessions I attended. I really enjoyed all the sessions and learned so much from them. I had the privilege of asking a series of questions across a wide range of portfolios, from Education and Disability Services to veteran services, family violence, Health and Wellbeing, Mental Health, Tourism, Energy and the Environment.

Although my questions related to many different issues across a variety of government services, there was a common theme running through all my questions and the answer was the same. How can we plan better to help people and how can we improve the services they rely on? Today I would like to reflect not just on what was said at the Estimates committees, but on how we can learn to do better, the practical change in planning that could make a real difference to Tasmanians' lives.

I would like to start by talking about Health Estimates. In my questions on Health, I acknowledged the government's \$3.5 billion commitment to the state's health system this financial year, which remains one of the highest expenditures, accounting for 34 per cent of the Budget. This has more than doubled in 10 years.

Despite the massive increase in hospital funding, emergency departments are still facing continuous congestion and there are shortages of hospital beds despite the number of beds being increased in recent years. How many hospital beds do we need? The number of beds in public hospitals has declined from 4 per 1000 people in 1999-2000 to 2.5 per 1000 people in 2017-18. This is despite Tasmania having a larger proportion of elderly people.

The department has reported a significant increase in the number of beds in recent years. The most recent published data by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that in 2023-24 Tasmania's public hospitals had 1712 beds across major districts and mental health sites. That is a rate of 2.98 beds per 1000 people, which is above the national average of 2.47 beds per 1000. However, this is well below the number of beds in Tasmania in 1999-2000 and that of OECD countries of 4 per 1000 people.

How many beds do we need in Tasmania? Going back to the 1999-2000 figure and the OECD figure, which is 4 beds per 1000, I feel that all we need is 2000 hospital beds in Tasmania. We are only 250 short of that, currently at 1747 beds, so we are not far away. Moreover, Tasmanian hospitals are still experiencing a growing problem with bed-block where elderly patients or people living with disabilities who are medically fit to be discharged are stuck in hospital. Many people are waiting weeks or even months for a place at an aged care facility or supporting accommodation services. Recent figures suggest an average of over 100 elderly Tasmanians, which is equivalent to three hospital wards, are waiting to be discharged.

This contributes to a bottleneck in hospital operations resulting in overcrowded wards, delayed admissions from emergency department and ambulance ramping, all which strain healthcare resources. The discussion recognised that this is a complex problem and requires multiple solutions and increased investment in aged care facilities, home care services, urgent care centres and work on preventative health, as the government outlined in its recent 20-year Preventative Health Strategy report. Moreover, there is an urgent need to work with the federal government to increase its contribution to health funding to the level of 45 per cent that was agreed in the 2023 National Health Reform Agreement, up from the current 36 per cent.

The Preventive Health Strategy and the Older Tasmanians Action Plan remind us that health is not just about the hospital. It's about safe footpaths, good urban design and transport that lets older people move confidently and avoid falls. It's about tackling elder abuse with awareness, helplines, counselling and strong legal protections. It's also about whole-of-government action on health, housing, planning, transport, community services, all pulling in the same direction. Crucially, it's about making sure prevention and healthy ageing actually reach low-income and disadvantaged communities, not just people who are already motivated and well. Moreover, we must make older Tasmanians visible in our campaigns, our photos and our priority - not as an afterthought but as a central focus.

In addition, we heard in Estimates about significant investment in Mental Health: a new house, safe havens, recovery colleges, new facilities in Launceston, the north-west, St John's Park, and a stronger statewide helpline. The opportunity now is to plan so that these services join up instead of becoming isolated islands. Access to mental health support, A Tasmanian Lifeline, community teams, hubs, inpatient and outpatient units and primary care all need to be designed as one connected pathway. Moreover, community services should genuinely come first, with hospitals as a back-up, not default. That means planning for accessible community mental health in low socio-economic and rural areas, and an easy visible entry point - one front door that doesn't require people to navigate complexity when they are already unwell and having to resort to emergency services for help when community services are not available.

The second Estimates was about children, women and family violence. One of the clearest messages is that women are continuing to experience family violence. Many are staying with violent partners simply because they cannot afford to leave and cannot find secure housing due to the rising cost of living. The government outlined a range of existing responses: crisis accommodation, collaboration with Homes Tasmania, prioritisation of victim/survivors, and the Safe at Home program. These are important and they do save lives but if we look forward, there are several planning sessions. We need to plan housing policy and family violence policy together, not separately.

Housing is often treated as one portfolio and family violence as another yet for women and children, they are the same problem. Planning needs joint targets. For example, a dedicated pipeline of long-term, affordable housing, especially reserved for family violence victim/survivors with clear time frames and publicly reported outcomes.

We also need to design systems about victim safety and privacy. We heard that some women experiencing homelessness don't want any data disclosed about where they are staying, in case a violent partner finds them. That means our planning must include secure information systems, trauma-informed data-sharing protocols, and genuine choice for women about what is shared and with whom.

Thirdly, we need to use lived experience to shape services. Just as the Disability Commissioner role was designed to be held by a person with lived experience of disability, we should build lived experience of family violence into advisory body funding, design and evaluation of housing and safety programs. If you plan with these principles, we move from reacting to crises to building a safer, more stable system for women and children.

The third Estimates was about Education. I asked about the rise of psychological injury in workers' compensation claims, and burnout among our teachers and how that connects to student outcomes, including Tasmania's NAPLAN performance. The minister acknowledged that we have invested heavily in schools and hired many more staff, yet outcomes have not improved.

We heard about initiatives such as making school time count to reduce administrative burdens and free teachers to teach, and multi-school organisations and school grouping to share leadership, streamline administration and create stronger systems around schools.

From a planning perspective, some key actions emerged. Treat teacher wellbeing as a core infrastructure, not an optional extra. Just as we plan for buildings and digital systems, we must plan for the human system that makes education possible. That means setting clear targets to reduce unnecessary admin, measuring this reduction and reporting publicly on workforce wellbeing, not only on exam scores.

We need to design reform around school days and classroom time. Every new program, policy or reporting requirement should be tested against one simple question: does this give teachers more time with the students or less? Planning must include admin impact assessments, so we stop layering more work onto already stretched workforce. Our teachers need to have the time to get back to basics - teaching. They need real engagement with students and a move away from

digital devices - back to pen and paper and whiteboard, where children can truly develop critical thinking, and develop personal initiative and resilience in their learning.

We need to link education reform to the future skills Tasmania needs. When we talk about improving NAPLAN or pathways to years 11 and 12, we must connect that to the growing demand for skilled workers in areas like digital technologies, science and trades. Better planning means aligning curriculum, TAFE, apprenticeships and university places with actual future labour needs, and communicating that clearly to students and families.

We should not be cutting TAFE funding at this time, when we need skilled workers more than ever. If we plan education as a coherent system, not as isolated programs, we support both the people who teach and the people who learn.

My fourth Estimates was on disability and older Tasmanians. Several of my questions focused on disability rights, restrictive practices, and abuse of older people. Recent reforms such as the new *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act*, the establishment of a Disability Commissioner, and the elevation of senior practitioner roles are strong foundations.

We also heard about the national network to improve safeguards for older Tasmanians, especially in relation to financial abuse and enduring powers of attorney. We need to move from reactive regulation to proactive safeguarding. The increased reporting of restricted practices is a good sign. It means practices are coming out of the dark and into the light of regulation. However, more must be done in relation to the abuse of older people - particularly in relation to potential systemic abuse issues where guardianship or administration can be weaponised to control other people, and they become subject to unnecessary and restrictive guardianship or administrative orders.

Application for guardianship or administration under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1995* can be made by family members, friends, medical professionals, or aged care staff. Applications are often made when applicants feel that it is in an older person's best interest for a third party to make decisions regarding the person's finances, legal affairs and lifestyle or medical decisions. Instead of upholding an older person's right to inherit dignity and the right to make choices that affect them, too often we see an older person have a fall at home and go to hospital, only to suddenly find themselves subject to a guardianship and administration order application that is designed to protect them. When this happens, the older person often loses all control over the process and, despite the changes to the *Guardianship and Administration Act* on 1 September 2024, which were meant to protect the rights of older people and people with disabilities and give people with impaired decision-making abilities the support they need to make their own decisions, they instead continue to be subjected to the best-interests approach, where others make decisions on their behalf, often without any consultation with the people with impaired decision-making.

There is also urgent need for hospital, aged care and disability service providers to receive funded, intensive training to better understand the 1 September 2024 changes to the *Guardianship and Administration Act*. At present, there is some confusion among those entrusted with people's care regarding an application for guardianship or administration without first exhausting all other possible support options, or listening to what a person's wishes and preferences are, as required

under the act. Older persons and people with disabilities continue to feel like they are not being heard and that their right to autonomy is being ignored.

Many risks arise at the point where systems intersect, such as hospital discharge, housing transition or changing guardianship arrangements. Planning needs a joint framework across health, justice, aged care, housing and disability services, so people do not fall through the cracks. One area of focus could be developing a Tasmanian elder abuse act which could operate to protect older persons in the same way as the *Family Violence Act* protects people from partner violence. Often older persons are unable to get the help they need when they report abuse to police, especially when they report emotional and financial abuse or coercive control. When we plan for people with disability and older Tasmanians, our system becomes safer, more respectful and more effective.

My fifth Estimates hearing was on veterans and legal support. Another group we must plan for better is veterans. I asked about two particular issues, the closure of specialised free legal services after the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, leaving a gap for complex DVA compensation claims and other related DVA matters. I also asked about the Veteran Acute Housing Program which aims to provide crisis and transitional accommodation for veterans at risk of homelessness. The honourable Minister for Veterans' Affairs acknowledged that legal support is critical and that housing projects are being developed in partnership with RSL Tasmania and Homes Tasmania.

The planning lessons here are clear. We need to plan veteran services as a joined-up package, not as isolated programs. Housing, mental health, financial counselling, legal advice and family support are all interlinked. A veteran who is one step away from homelessness often also has complex legal and health issues. Planning should ensure that support is wrapped around the person with a clear referral pathway and shared data.

We need to measure success in human terms, not just bricks and mortar. It's not enough to count the number of homes built. We should be measuring how many veterans successfully transition into stable, long-term housing, how many avoid re-entering homelessness and how their wellbeing changes over time.

We also need to ensure continuity of specialised services. When a specialised legal service closes, the need does not disappear. Planning must include contingency and transition arrangements since the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has concluded so that expertise is retained and veterans are not left without legal help. Although veterans can obtain advocacy support from RSL hubs, they cannot provide veterans with specialist legal advice services since the defence and veteran legal service at Legal Aid closed. We need to continue funding specialised defence and veteran legal services at Legal Aid or another community legal service to ensure that veteran and defence personnel are able to get the legal assistance, referrals and support they need.

The sixth Estimates was about young people, digital addiction and creativity. I also raised concerns about digital addictions, social media, gaming and screen time for children and young people and the impact on mental health, learning and behaviour. We heard about the national plans to delay social media access for children under 16 and about local initiatives that give young people

alternative outlets such as art programs, youth orchestra, storytelling projects and street art festivals supported by councils.

If we want to improve planning here, we can treat digital wellbeing like any other public health issue. That means integrating education, regulation and support with clear guidance for parents, consistent school policies and mental health services that understand digital addiction and provide safe digital alternatives that promote connections rather than harm.

We need to invest systematically in positive outlets. Arts, sport and community activities are not a nice extra, they are core to prevention. Planning should ensure stable funding for youth art, music and sport, particularly in communities where disadvantage and digital overuse are greatest. We also need to co-design with young people. Young people understand the digital world better than most adults. Planning that includes their voices in school, local government and state strategies will be more realistic and more effective.

The seventh Estimates was on climate, energy, environment and tourism. I also asked some questions on climate risks, renewable energy, marine energy, tourism safety and environment protection. We heard that there is a common challenge. Tasmania is rich in natural assets but planning must keep up with the changes. We need to align energy planning with environmental and community impacts. Whether it's large-scale wind farms, transmission lines or marine energy trials, we need long-term strategic planning that identifies suitable zones, protects threatened species, respects local communities and considers alternative sustainable energy.

In addition, we need to plan for safe and responsible tourism. We heard about overcrowded national parks, unpredictable weather and the impact on wilderness and emergency rescue resources. Sadly, since the last Estimates committee we have heard there was yet another loss of a trekker from New South Wales at Federation Peak. Better planning means stronger safety messaging in multiple languages, clear digital information, track management that matches visitor abilities and consistent collaboration between Tourism Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife and emergency services.

We talked through the Estimates about sport and tourism and how one of the best investments in sport was the government investment in Hawthorn club of four games a year. It's now been 24 years of \$4.5 million per year and brought in \$20-30 million of economic boons.

Mr Shelton - Imagine what can happen with our own side.

Prof RAZAY - I hope we should continue with this best investment beyond next year.

What ties all this together? When you put all these areas side by side - housing, family violence, education, disability and ageing, veterans, health and wellbeing, mental health, energy, tourism and climate - a few planning principles stand out. First, we must plan across silos. People's lives do not fit into neat portfolio boxes. Housing is connected to safety and good mental health. Education is connected to mental health and future employment. Digital addiction is connected to community participation. Planning must reflect these connections. Second, we must plan with people affected, not just for them. Lived experience of disability, family violence, veteran life,

youth or ageing, needs to sit at the decision-making table and not just in consultation documents. Finally, we must be courageous in tackling difficult decisions and ask ourselves what went wrong.

I conclude by saying, I asked my questions at the Estimate committee from a background in health and from my deep love of the state. Science teaches us to observe carefully, to question our assumptions, and to test innovative approaches. If we bring that same spirit to our planning across all portfolios, we can build services that are safer, fairer and more effective for the people who need them most.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect with you today. I look forward to continuing to work together toward building a stronger, healthier and, most importantly, happier Tasmania. Thank you.

[4.42 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, I commend the Treasurer on his first budget, noting the particular challenges of delivering in his first months in his role an interim budget with a short lead time, while simultaneously commencing the budget development process for next year's full-year budget. I participated in Estimates Committee A for the sessions examining Mr Abetz's portfolios of Treasury and Finance and Macquarie Point Urban Renewal and Mr Vincent's portfolios of Housing and Planning, Infrastructure and Transport, and Local Government. I thank both ministers for their preparation and engagement in the process and for providing access to departmental staff and information in response to the committee's questions.

Our committee was chaired by Deputy Speaker, member for Clark, Helen Burnet, and I also thank her for her work in the chair. I would also like to thank the parliamentary staff, Hansard and technical staff who supported the hearings, the ministerial office and departmental staff who worked on successive draft of budget bids and papers, the Cabinet, the budget committee of Cabinet and the Treasury officials who supported and informed the process of developing, negotiating and finalising the budget papers and all the individuals and institutions and community organisations and peak bodies that informed the budget process through their submissions.

I acknowledge that this process began last year to inform the Budget that was tabled for scrutiny and debate in May this year but did not progress to the Estimates stage before Labor forced a state election, which they will on one hand deny and on the other take credit for, in the name of budget repair. A significant part of this work informed the subsequent development of an appropriation bill that was required to ensure the continuity of essential services and initiatives and to keep the machinery of government operating for a defined period covering the caretaker period and the formulation and passage of a new interim Budget for the balance of the financial year, the process that we are close to the end of now.

Again, I acknowledge that countless hours of work of department and ministerial staff to prepare and check and finalise these papers that are right in front of me today and the volumes of supporting and explanatory information that come with them, in some cases for the third time in less than a year.

The tabling of the Budget was followed by a sitting week of budget reply speeches, followed by a week of Estimates hearings and now this debate, which is the priority for government business this week. As the Premier mentioned in his contribution, the whole process is already underway again for the next full year budget for the 2026-27 financial year and forward Estimates. I thank, in advance, all those people who do this critically important work and are about to do it all again, through a process that ensures not only rigorous accounting for public funds, but also independent scrutiny through public hearings and debates, so Tasmanians can see how their money is being used to meet their needs.

At least, that's how it's supposed to work. All the people who've worked all year on preparing, checking and finalising these budget papers, and the people who trust the opposition and crossbench to check the government's work, might be surprised and somewhat disappointed to know that in the hearings that I attended, these budget papers weren't open on the table. Committee members mostly did not ask questions about the budget outputs or budget line items. The very people who sent us to an election in the name of budget repair did not spend their time asking about the fiscal strategy and plans to return the budget to surplus, even when they had the Treasurer and Treasury officials captive in person across the table from them for four whole hours.

Instead, they spent most of their time asking the same questions on the same issues that dominate daily Question Time. Estimates now is like a whole week of Question Time, with the added benefit of having access to senior department staff, no time limits for questions, and no requirement to limit questioning to the specifics of the budget and, like Question Time, a lot of the questions are less about seeking information about the budget and more about scoring political points from the government. To be fair, not all members conducted themselves in this way, and not all questions were political in nature, but most did and most were. It could be reasonably argued that every government policy, project and decision has an impact on the budget, so everything is relevant to the budget and, therefore, fair game. However, when Labor's first line of questioning to the Treasurer was about who knew what and when about TT-Line solvency or TasInsure announcements, which they'd asked all the preceding week in parliament, and when the Greens member's first question was to ask each minister if they personally were subject to Supreme Court proceedings, then they're clearly playing the person, not the ball.

It hasn't always been this way. When I was first in parliament, these hearings started with a period of general high-level questioning in what we called 'overview,' but then addressed relevant budget chapters and outputs in a methodical way. Committee members asked questions on rotation and the committee chairs kept the whole process on track. They did this to ensure that the hearing covered the material in the budget papers and that everyone got the opportunity to ask their share of their questions, and that anyone watching or listening or reading the *Hansard* could see that and have some confidence that the budget papers, which show how their money is being used, were scrutinised before being approved.

I started my career in parliament with this experience of what the Estimate process is for and how it works or how it's supposed to work. I really don't know when or why it changed from that. I understand that the parliament, at any point in time, is master of its own destiny, and that sessional arrangements are as agreed between the representatives of the different parties, and that the parties other than government have greater say because Estimates is really about them scrutinising the

government's work. I haven't been directly involved in these decisions, but I see that the House of Assembly Estimates committees have trended away from being a structured examination of the budget papers themselves and become more of an extended Question Time. Interestingly, the Legislative Council has not gone this way. As someone who's appeared before both House and Legislative Council Estimates committees over a number of years, I know that the Legislative Council Estimates sessions are more similar to how the House committees used to be. I don't quite know why this is. It could have something to do with the general perception that the Legislative Council, as the House of review, with a higher proportion of Independent members than the House of Assembly, is less driven by party politics and more interested in actually harvesting new information about each portfolio.

The changes in the way the House Estimates committees work have also happened over a timeframe over which fewer and fewer opposition and crossbench members have had their own experience of being in government. When I was first elected and we formed government for the first time, as a Liberal government, most of the opposition and some of the Greens members even in the Estimates tables had previously been ministers themselves. Right now only one non-government member in this house has been a minister before. Interestingly, that member also made reference in his contribution to the need to review how these Estimates committees work.

I'm not raising this to have a go at people who haven't been ministers before but because, in my own experience as a minister, the Estimates process was an incredibly important and valuable part of the annual parliamentary cycle. That's because, from the preparation of the budget bids to the final approval of the budget chapters and preparations for Estimates hearings, it forced me to understand every part of the budget I was responsible for, not just the hot topics requiring urgent attention. It made me question and test the information presented to me by departments because I needed to be able to make informed decisions, and explain and account for the budget items that were in my name.

At any given time there are a wide range of issues competing for attention and priority at portfolio level and in parliament. The Estimates process enforces discipline in preparation and presentation of detailed information on all aspects of the budget, not just those that are most urgent and important at the time. I found this discipline essential as a minister, particularly after taking responsibility for new portfolios for the first time. That's why, in my view, the Estimates process is also so important for our parliament.

To treat a week of Estimates hearings as an extension of Question Time and an opportunity to re-prosecute the same few topical issues already in play really misses the point of the whole Estimates exercise, which is to scrutinise the whole budget on behalf of the Tasmanian people. The committee members and those they represent miss out on the detailed understanding of the budget they need to effectively hold the government to account throughout the year, or anything other than just political hot topics.

I can understand that political tactics might favour taking every opportunity to score points rather than exploring the details of the budget, but the quality of the debate suffers as a result. Even more so if members and their parties choose to know less about the complex things like the budget in order to prosecute a more simplistic argument for political purposes. So we ask, is this what the

people we represent expect of us? Is this what hundreds of experienced public servants spend countless hours over several months at a significant public expense preparing us for with the development of these budget papers? Is this what successive parliaments over generations intended when they embedded the Estimates process in the Westminster system? I don't think so. I don't think they dedicated a week of hearings, a week of reporting back and many months of preparation and the scarce public resources consumed by all that just for a week-long Question Time.

I would welcome the opportunity of a discussion in this place about what we actually expect from the Estimates process and what its role is in the proper governance of and accountability for the responsible use of public money, and how we can ensure we are delivering good value for the taxpayer from the time and effort and resources that it consumes. At least one other member in this place has indicated a similar interest and I will definitely follow up with them on that.

That being said, the Estimates committee hearings that I participated in progressed smoothly and without incident. Everyone at the table had the opportunity to ask questions. I thank the Chair again for enabling that.

There were times when our Chair was the only representative of their party at the table and took their turn in the rotation asking questions of the minister and the departments. I understand that this is perfectly acceptable under the relevant orders but on occasions, I observed that the Chair was distracted by preparing their questions and wasn't able to follow the flow of the conversation well. There was also occasionally tension between the Chair and other members seeking the call to ask questions. This was managed well on the whole but I do think this is a situation that should be avoided where possible. This is another matter that might be considered in a review of how we conduct the Estimates process in the future.

Another observation I have is how the room changes when media teams drop in on Estimates hearings. Typically, this happens at a time in the daily media cycle that allows for footage and stories to be secured in time for editing and broadcast the same day. Sometimes this has a noticeable effect on the behaviour of the committee as members seek to be the story that makes the news that night and ask questions or make statements that are more about political mileage than budget scrutiny while the cameras are in the room. Again, I don't think this is what Estimates hearings are for but it's what they've become. Public hearings are important, and the live broadcast ensures that citizens can watch their parliament at work wherever they're watching from but inviting the media into the hearings does change those hearings. I believe that's another thing worthy of review.

Beyond these observations, the formal reports of the committee cover the range of matters that are discussed across the hearings. Members have reported on various highlights and insights they had in their contributions in this debate, as well as media announcements during the hearings. It would not add to the debate for me to read all those lists in again. However, I hope that the opposition and crossbench members felt they made good use of this opportunity to explore the Budget in detail, and to ask questions of ministers and departments responsible for their parts of it because that's what the process is for. When this House ultimately votes to approve this Budget, all those people are accountable for it, too. If you've scrutinised it and you've voted for it, you own it.

I know the ministers and their officers will have benefited from the intensive preparation processes which ensure they are able to answer questions on the budget areas they are responsible for, as they should. I congratulate the ministers, Mr Abetz and Mr Vincent, for doing the work and being across their portfolios, and giving the committee access to their departments and information. I thank all those involved in the preparation and delivery of the Estimates materials and the conduct of the hearings themselves. I commend the interim Budget to the House.

[4.59 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON - Chair, I welcome the opportunity today to reconfirm some of the great funding opportunities and budget announcements confirmed through the Estimates over the past few weeks. It is a bit of a strange affair where we had Estimates a few weeks ago then we've gone through the GBE hearings, and it's all come together with this budget reply on the third reading and discussion of the Estimates process.

Our interim Budget delivers for Tasmania, it delivers for the people of Tasmania and it delivers for all the electorates. Thank you to the Treasurer and his team for their hard work on this interim Budget, and for their work through the Estimates process. We all know a huge effort goes into the Estimates process, with the ministers and their teams. To all the staff who helped ministers get through this process, we thank them for their diligence and their work.

This is not my first Estimates, as everybody knows. Since 2010, I've been lucky enough to participate in this process and I've seen it from all sides. I've been initially a backbencher. I was then what I believe is the first chair from opposition. When Labor was in government, I chaired one of their sessions one year.

Mr Winter - You would have been pretty fair, wouldn't you?

Mr SHELTON - I was always fair. Honestly though, the Greens always outdid you.

Mr Bayley - Hear, hear.

Mr SHELTON - Labor should have had more, but somehow or another, Cassy always gets more questions than Labor. I don't know how that works, but she was good at that, but as fair as I could have been. Mind you, I did have arguments with her when she complained that she wasn't getting enough and I had to bring out the list and so on.

From all parts I've witnessed that as the minister and I've witnessed it from the speaker's chair looking at the screen. It is an interesting process. It's part of our democracy to get that information out, not just to the members of this House to go through the question process, but for people watching it - it is televised and it is wonderful information for them as well.

Chair, we had fun sitting beside each other. We basically were in that situation where you asked a question, then I did, and so forth. It is a bit disingenuous when the opposition, or it could have been the Greens, talked about DDs. I'm pretty sure I had a couple of the ministers on the ropes, and I just needed another question but the rotation never allowed me to get to that next question. Something for everybody to think about.

In talking about the chairs, I thank them because it is a very big week, very big day each day that disappears on them and they take a big sigh of relief at the end of it. For the Chairs who went through this process, very well done and it does turn into a bit of a gruelling week for them. Congratulations, first of all, for surviving it but, as I said, it is a very important part of our democratic process.

Everybody has their own view about how they should go about it and I concur with the member who just resumed his seat. I've seen a difference this year with the media coverage and the impetus to perform when the media was in there. I can go back to the early days, whether we were in opposition or then in 2014 on when the cameras basically were in there for the coverage, they were in there always for the first 10-15 minutes and there are lights on and there are cameras on and as the chair, it was quite difficult at times because it was about that media grab and the question and the answer and so forth. This year I didn't see that as much, a couple of times it happened, but in general terms, it was quite respectful and there was a couple of moments when the level rose, but generally speaking it was good.

This is not about the outputs anymore like it used to be. These reflections have been a general reflection. This budget puts Tasmania first and delivers an increased investment in health, education and housing. This budget secures record investment into the cost-of-living relief, health, housing and education, as I've just said.

For my electorate, and I'd like to go through my electorate and some of the funding outcomes for that. The funding for the construction of the new Child and Family Learning Centre at Longford was in the Budget. This will offer additional flexible space for early learning and education services. An expansion of the delivery of the school lunch program across northern schools, along with a free universal school breakfast program. I was talking to a friend of mine who works at a school as the groundsman. He was talking about how beneficial that program is for a lot of the kids who come to school without having a meal. It's a fantastic program. You wish you didn't have to do it, of course, but it is a vital program.

This budget also provides a continuation of the \$74 million investment into the new Brighton High School to deliver years 7-12, and building upgrades at Campbell Town District High School, Deloraine High School and Dodges Ferry Primary School. There is funding for playgrounds and sports courts upgrades for the Bothwell District School, Glenora District School, New Norfolk Primary School, Oatlands District High School and Orford Primary School as well. It also rolls out solar panels under the renewable energy schools program in government schools, including St Mary's District School, St Helens District High School and Prospect High School.

We are continuing our commitment to Health by delivering Stage 2 of the \$3.9 million upgrade to the Midlands Multi-Purpose Health Centre. I know the volunteers of that centre and the community of Oatlands very much appreciate their multi-purpose health centre, and are always asking for more assistance because they know that with an ageing population there is always going to be more to do.

Our delivery of the new Northern Heart Centre at the Launceston General Hospital (LGH) will include a coronary care unit and two cardiac catheterisation labs, among other exciting additions.

There will be funding for The Bubble, to support the expansion of access to women's health services.

This government has committed to a 10-year funding program in the amount of \$634.7 million for Stage 2 of the LGH redevelopment. The LGH, of course, isn't in Lyons, it's in Bass - but whenever we spend money on Health at the LGH or the Royal, it supports one end or the other of Lyons. Of course, Lyons is the largest and the best electorate in Tasmania. This funding will double the size of the LGH emergency department and a new, purpose-built mental health centre.

New construction for Bicheno's and Longford's ambulance stations has also been included, improving the infrastructure and services provided by this incredible group of first responders at Ambulance Tasmania.

Chair, we all know tourism plays a huge role for the Tasmanian economy, and we have provided funding for the Mt Field National Park to develop the car park upgrades and a new arrivals concourse. Tasman Arch and Devil's Kitchen will see improvements to the track and viewing opportunities.

Planning will commence for the proposed works to include a new Freycinet National Park Visitor Gateway with a sustainable access to the park, along with continued delivery of the Freycinet Peninsula wastewater plan. The Freycinet Tourist Icon project will also be delivered, enhancing tourism facilities and amenities, including a new foreshore walk and a new lookout.

Maria Island hasn't missed out. It will benefit from the improvements to the wastewater management and water supply infrastructure.

This government has committed to cost-of-living assistance by tripling the First Home Owner Grant to \$30,000 and by stamping out stamp duty for first home buyers buying homes up to \$750,000.

I need to mention neighbourhood houses, which all sides of the House support, and the neighbourhood houses support the community so well. They are being assisted through the Connector program, allowing them to continue their great work delivering to their communities. Likewise, funding for the Kentish House in Sheffield has been provided, to ensure they continue the services and delivery around the Sheffield area.

Upgrades to the Bridgewater Police Station and the funding for the St Helens Police Station construction project will provide modern, fit-for-purpose facilities for our wonderful police service in those areas.

The Budget also made provisions for the extension of the half-price bus fare, allowing the public to utilise public transport at an affordable price. Transport upgrades and funding will allow the new park-and-ride facility at Midway Point, amongst others, and will also allow for the continued planning for the duplication of the causeway at Sorell. Construction is set to commence in 2026, subject to approvals, of the causeway between Midway Point and Hobart Airport, which will be a great benefit to the residents in that immediate area.

The final 10 kilometre section of the \$500 million Midlands Highway Action Plan works will commence in 2026, between Campbell Town and Conara. This government has delivered an interim Budget which will deliver for the people of Tasmania. It will allow us to continue to work towards our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. In saying that, and the Treasurer has said many times, there is still more work to be done. We talk about that work that needs to be done and how we cope with the future. From this side of the benches, we need more input, we need to grow the pie in order to cope with the increasing expenses that we see year on year.

With that in mind, of course, I would just like to spend a little bit of time on Mac Point. Macquarie stadium is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which will set Tasmania up for the future. It will grow our state by driving our economy. It will create local jobs, enliven our city, and will deliver the AFL team our state so rightly deserves. It's time for us to get behind and jump on board this build. We cannot afford delays. We need to build it as quickly as we can. As we know, we've always talked about cost escalation. I've said in this place before, the best time to build infrastructure is yesterday. Every day we go past that, it costs more. Not pre-empting any decisions that the upper House make, but hopefully, trying to persuade them that this project is for our tourism industry, our local businesses, hospitality, our economy, Tasmanian jobs, and so much more. Now is our time. Our plan is to deliver a world-class arts, entertainment and sports precinct at Macquarie Point with a multipurpose stadium at its core.

During the construction of the project - and these numbers have been talked about many times, so I'm just reiterating - this project is expected to add \$269 million to the Tasmanian economy over five years and create 1500 direct and indirect jobs. In fact, the independent economic report into the stadium commissioned by the Hobart City Council stated that it would be transformative to the economy. The impacts on the CBD and Hobart Council were more than \$143 million in positive economic benefits per year during the construction phase. Once operational, this figure equates to approximately \$179 million in financial benefits to the city of Hobart alone. We are close to having our own AFL team, and not many of us in this Chamber can say they've been talking about this for 40 years, so I'm showing my age. Nevertheless, I've been in discussions for all my sporting life about an AFL team and how our young people who come through AFL and then have to be shipped off or drafted to the mainland to go over there and play. This is a dream that a lot of Tasmanians have waited for for a very long time. This is about the boys and girls of our state who dream about playing for the elite level for Tasmania.

With the addition of the high-performance training centre, the construction of the stadium and its flow-on economic benefits for the state, this project can be seen - has to be seen as a good thing. Upon its completion, the stadium will have a seating capacity of 23,000 people. The precinct will contain a 1500-person-capacity function room, with full-catering facilities, back of house areas, and below ground service areas. There will be capacity for out-of-season events such as

concerts and festivals catering for crowds of up to 31,500 people. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Foo Fighters and those types of bands could come to Hobart in the stadium in the future? So much for the fact that the naysayers said that we would never get bands like that to Tasmania. Well, we have one coming and we don't have a stadium, so how many can we have here when we do have a stadium?

From my perspective, I know I've made the announcement about my connection to country football, and the revival of country football is another great thing that will come out of the stadium, with more young people playing or trying to get to that elite level. They won't all get to that elite level, but they will filter in and out to the regions, and fill up the country football sides that are actually having difficulty finding enough players at the moment. From a regional perspective, it will be a great thing. From a tourism perspective, it's a great thing. We will have two ships floating across between here and Melbourne; home games will attract many people from Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne to come across on the *Spirits* that are at the moment, or will be when they get on the line, 40 per cent under capacity, so it will help fill that capacity and help boost the tourism industry.

If our fears are fully realised with what Labor and the Greens have done about forest industry, then I just wonder with the Greens, if they should be backing this stadium as a tourist-based stadium to improve our tourism industry through the winter time, attracting all those footy fans from the mainland, so that we can boost our economy. Nevertheless -

Mr Bayley - The expert advice says not to do it, so that's what we're following.

Mr SHELTON - We all have our opinions on that, but it will be a great thing, I have no doubt about that. I thank the House for allowing me the time to make this contribution, and again, I thank everybody involved in the Estimates process for the hard work and effort that went into it, and I hope everyone got something out of it.

[5.20 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE - Deputy Chair, this is the first time I have responded to what has been an overload of information, as we all know in Estimates. I have been left with an overwhelming sense of a long fiscal shadow hanging over Tasmania, one that the government and the Treasurer are unequal to tackle. I had hoped I was wrong, but I know that I'm not and I've just discovered why. Just a few minutes ago in the Legislative Council, the honourable Dean Winter revealed that he struck a deal with the government.

Mr Winter - I reckon Dean Harriss.

Mr GEORGE - Dean Harriss, I'm sorry. You're always at the front of my mind.

Mr Winter - Maybe one day I will also get to the Legislative Council.

Mr GEORGE - I have written Dean Winter. I'm so sorry. My apologies to the member. The honourable Dean Harriss revealed that he has struck a deal with the government.

The entire Liberal Party parliamentary benches have undertaken to break their election promises and they will raise taxes - taxes that it promised in the election campaign not to raise. Why? To pay for the Macquarie Point stadium. The government has also promised Mr Harris deep spending cuts. Why? To pay for the stadium.

I fear that we are left, after the mini-budget and the Estimates with a razor gang getting stuck into the state's public services and frontline community organisations, which will be expected to fill the ever deeper holes that the government has abandoned. In a fine example of understatement, Community Services minister, Madeleine Ogilvie, conceded:

I absolutely acknowledge that our community sector organisations are running very lean and it is difficult.

It's not difficult, minister. They are up against the wall. It was no exaggeration when they warned me that there are no more efficiencies to be found. Yet pared to the bone as they are, the Treasurer is seeking even more so-called efficiencies, to which the Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs tepidly responds:

Put your budget bids in and I will advocate for you.

Somehow, I doubt the government's razor gang will give her the time of day. Instead, what we get is yet another expensive exercise, this one costing \$150,000 to analyse what the Neighbourhood House network is doing, despite the fact that we know what they're doing. They have every reason to feel menaced as the government delves into staffing operational costs and, here I quote, 'whether they are representative of the need of Tasmanians'. If that doesn't send a shiver down the spine of all those committed, underfunded, overstretched workers, they're a hell of a lot stancher than I am.

I can give you the answer absolutely free of charge about the outcome of a long investigation. Yes, they are relevant. We know what's needed for Neighbourhood Houses: more staff to make their jobs safer and better, and more funding to reach more of the growing number of people in need who turn to them as public services fail.

I wish good luck to all seven Neighbourhood Houses in Franklin and to all the others around the state, as well as all the other community-based organisations as the Treasurer sets out to plug the growing debt hole while refusing to countenance increasing revenue sources. That is, until it was revealed today that, in fact, they will as they plough yet more money into the vanity project of the Mac Point stadium.

This government now has to live up to its promise that the stadium's debt burden, added to overall debt heading towards the \$20 billion mark, would not end up compromising Tasmanians' health, education and housing security. How it will achieve this with a downgrade to the state's credit rating from the two big global ratings agencies is anyone's guess. My bet is that the Treasurer is hoping for a miracle that will never come.

More positively, I was encouraged to hear the Attorney-General commit publicly to speedy progress in implementing much-needed reforms to the *Integrity Commission Act* to make the

organisation fit for purpose at long last. Transparency, integrity and accountability, as we've heard in two MPI's this week, are core to how our democracy works and they were core in both of my election campaigns this year. I look forward to a draft of the amendments within the next couple of weeks, if the Attorney-General is to abide by his self-imposed timetable. The outstanding question is whether the grossly underfunded commission is going to be able to do its job with a broader mandate, mandatory reporting on the horizon and lobbying oversight.

Mr Harriss mentioned in the Legislative Council today that the parliamentary party has agreed to \$500,000 in extra funding for the Integrity Commission. As the Attorney-General will well know, that does not even begin to cover the cost of the operations the Integrity Commission will need to conduct if it is to do its job. It's an outrage and it brings us back to the Budget. What a shame the Attorney-General will not commit to full funding, which he refused to do in the Estimates, merely telling MPs that we could hold him to account. I hope MPs may yet decide to take Integrity Commission funding out of government hands and place it in the remit of the parliament itself, as with the Independent Commission Against Corruption in New South Wales.

Government plans to impose a system of licensing on roadside stall holders came up in Estimates. This is deeply concerning to many across the state, particularly amongst my constituents in the Huon Valley. Regardless of what they do on the mainland, Tasmania has a grand tradition of roadside stalls that has appealed to locals, tourists and everyone else for decades. I know of no one who believes the current laissez-faire approach to this wonderful tradition should be tampered with.

I challenge Primary Industries minister Mr Pearce's claims of 10 salmonella-related deaths over the past two years. My research finds nothing that can justify that claim on a nationwide basis and absolutely nothing that connects roadside stalls in Tasmania to deaths or even disease outbreaks. Minister, show me the evidence or back the hell off. The minister promises a public consultation process, but they tend to follow a pattern: (1) government decides what it wants to do; (2) government sets up a consultation process and spends lots of money on it; (3) Tasmanians go to the trouble to respond; and (4) government produces a report that reaffirms (1). It's a circular argument for this government. Minister, leave our roadside stall holders alone. Let them continue to ply their trade with no additional costs, no additional administration, no red tape.

I can't let industrial salmon go unmentioned. To the renewed outbreaks of disease spreading through the south of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and now, apparently, on the east coast in Okehampton Bay, where Tassal has applied to use the new antibiotic, florfenicol, on its suffering fish. Yet another outbreak of disease is occurring in the south of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, with one more diseased pen being treated with florfenicol as of today. Summer's warming waters haven't even hit us yet and already the companies are dumping florfenicol by the tonne.

In the wake of Estimates appearances, I fear the Premier, the Environment minister and the minister for Primary Industries have such a paucity of information available to them that they don't recognise the threat to Tasmania's waterways, marine life, communities and, in the end, Tasmania's brand. Not one of the three of them could explain how they can claim the rock lobster fishery near infected pens would be closed 'for only a short time' when testing of the creature's flesh for

antibiotic residue had not even begun. That is wishful thinking. It is not evidence-based and it was grossly misleading.

The local rock lobster industry is now subject to the whims of the multinational salmon companies. This summer, we are leaving it to the multinational corporations, notorious for their corruption globally and the destruction of marine life, to manage our waterways under the benign supervision of the EPA, a regulatory body that, despite the passage of 10 months, has still not completed a proper investigation or prosecution of the industry's egregious breach of regulations during last summer's biosecurity disaster in which rotting fish matter washed up on our beaches.

I cling to the hope that the planned investigation into the salmon industry may still pay dividends in protecting our waters from the voracious demands of this industry with its plans to double production in Storm Bay but I fear the government may revert to type and ignore whatever recommendations result from the inquiry that do not suit the salmon industry, as it has often before. If that occurs, I have little doubt the government will be aided and abetted by its junior coalition party, the Labor Party, and in the end, I believe exposing the impacts and destruction of this industry would generate enough public outrage that the government will have no alternative but to act.

Dr Broad - You put them into government and you're blaming us? Come on.

Mr GEORGE - You work much more closely with them than the crossbench does. Tell me where you stand against them.

Dr Broad - Come on, your vote -

DEPUTY CHAIR - Order.

Mr GEORGE - Honestly, you guys need to get real and start acting like an opposition.

Opposition members interjecting.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Order. Member for Franklin, please continue.

Mr GEORGE - Finally, a brief reflection on Estimates themselves. If Estimates are to continue to give government backbenchers the opportunity to ask questions, then may I please beg them to depart from the official questions provided to them by party leaders, and genuinely seek information of importance to your constituents. These backbenchers are surely brighter and far more capable than trotting out Dorothy Dixers, complete with bloviating preambles, that provoke interminable ministerial pontification also delivered from an official script. Honestly, if government backbenchers don't have a mind of their own and are incapable of holding ministers to account on behalf of their Tasmanian constituents, we would be better off without their input.

[5.32 p.m.]

Ms BROWN - Chair, from the outset, I would like to just unpick one of the comments that Mr Shelton made, which he's completely wrong about, and it is Franklin is the best electorate in

Tasmania, closely followed by the rest, but it is Franklin, thank you very much. I now rise today to offer my reflections on the Budget and the Estimate process, one of the most important periods of our parliamentary calendar. It is a period where we keep this government accountable, where their commitments are tested, where their promises are weighed and where the decisions made behind closed doors are brought to light.

Mr Jaensch made a comment of what's changed to make the Estimates process change; I say to that, member, you might want to have a look at your government, because it is the behaviours of your ministers that has changed, the backroom deals and the really abysmal behaviour of the ministers, and this is the standard that is walked past by the Premier so there's your answer.

This has been a marathon of back-to-back sitting weeks, Estimate hearings, GBE scrutiny and more parliamentary sittings on top of that. It's taken an enormous effort from everyone involved and it would be remiss of me to not put on the record my appreciation of those people. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the parliamentary staff: your professionalism, your calm under pressure and your dedication to keeping this place functioning is extraordinary. Late-night sittings and logistical challenges, your work underpins the work that we do in this place, and we would quite frankly struggle to do it without you. To the thousands of public servants across Tasmania who prepared for Estimates and GBE hearings, thank you. I know the countless hours that you've put into reports, briefing notes, data, research, speeches, and coordinating the members; it is, quite frankly, extraordinary. Their commitment to the Tasmanian people should be deeply valued by this government as of all of us in this Chamber.

I would like to express my appreciation of the Chairs. Of Committee A, we had Ms Burnet and Committee B, Mr Fairs. Chairing estimates is not simply just a procedural task, but it requires discipline, it requires fairness, patience and the ability to manage passionate MPs who are trying to advocate for their communities under tight timeframes, and you both handled that pressure with professionalism and they deserve acknowledgement for that.

I turn to my first Estimates session, which was housing with minister Vincent. The depth of the housing crisis in Tasmania is immense. It's not simply spreadsheets; it's not simply statistics. It is the daily lived experiences of thousands of Tasmanians, people living in unsafe homes, people couch surfing, people sleeping in cars and people waiting for years, year after painful year, waiting for a call for their home.

I came to the Estimates hearing with over 30 pages of questions for the minister, and I make no apology for that. Every question on those pages was for my community, for the people of Tasmania, real families in Tasmania, people struggling, and this underpins the failure of this government when it comes to the housing portfolio. This is a government that has failed to address the crisis and, quite frankly, it has become worse under this government.

Two hours goes far too quickly for the scale of this government's failures, and the last hour was dedicated to the planning side of that portfolio. I raised questions about mould in Homes Tasmania properties, homes that are quite frankly not safe for Tasmanians. The minister agreed that mould is unacceptable in housing homes, yet that statement does nothing for Tasmanians

currently living in mould-infested homes because their properties are old, they're structurally damaged and they're not receiving the maintenance that they deserve.

We know that mould contributes to chronic illness and poor health outcomes, and yet maintenance continues to lag. A government that takes housing seriously, that seriously prioritises housing in Tasmania would never allow this to continue. Then I turned to the protocols about asbestos in these homes. The minister assured me in very confident terms that there is a proper process in place: a specialised contractor will review and report. Very good, and these contractors will respond very, very quickly but Tasmanians know better. My constituent who reported disturbed asbestos was told to wait because the relevant person wasn't available. Well, that's not very, very quickly, and that's dangerous and that's neglectful, and that is the type of living situation that Tasmanians are living in.

I will always give credit where credit is due. The minister did honour his commitment to me when he said that he would go and personally review this house, which he did. He went to the home of my constituent. He reviewed the house and promptly had her moved. That underpins the seriousness and the type of home that this person was living in, so I thank the minister for that. Tasmanians deserve a system that works without a member of parliament needing to intervene. They deserve a system that protects them automatically, not subjectively, not occasionally, and not only when a minister turns up. They deserve a system that is built on safety, accountability and to allow them to live with dignity.

The Anglicare Tasmania September snapshot shows a 54 per cent increase in Tasmanians living in inadequate or substandard homes. I want you to think about that statistic and think about what I just told you, think about the types of people that that statistic represents. It represents families escaping family and sexual violence; people trying to rebuild their lives; older Tasmanians on fixed incomes; parents working multiple jobs; children who deserve stability; and people who just simply want to live a life with dignity. These are good people, these are hardworking people, and these people deserve better than the government's excuses.

What about the tenants who never contact a member of parliament, who trust Homes Tasmania to do its job? These people deserve so much more, and they deserve to be looked after the same way as those who do contact a member of parliament, but unfortunately, they have been abandoned. Underwhelmingly, I asked about the Housing Connect Portal next, which was sold to Tasmanians as a major reform, one that would bring transparency, accessibility and real-time information. Great: instead, we learned that it's \$2.4 million over budget and it now costs \$5.5 million, and on top of that, it's running two years late, but who knows if we will even get there in two years. It might be longer because this government is addicted to over-promising and under-delivering. Tasmanians deserve better than repeated cycles of delay and budget blowouts.

I questioned the government about its promises to expand the Rapid Rehousing program to 150 properties. I'm sure everybody in here has heard me speak about the Rapid Rehousing program and how much that I personally care about this program. It is quite devastating to hear that the amount of houses that we have in this program is 43: not even a third of the target of 150. This program is essential. It provides immediate, safer accommodation for people fleeing violence. It saves lives and this government has allowed it to stall. I am devastated by this failure of this

government because the consequences are not abstract. They are dangerous. They are devastating. They affect real lives, mostly women and children who deserve safety, stability and hope.

I can promise this government that I will continue to fight for them. I will not step back. I will not be silent on this, and I will hold this government to account every day that I stand in this Chamber and that is a promise. We on this side of the house know that housing is not just four walls and a roof. Housing is the foundation for everything else. It is health, education, employment stability, safety, community and we know that when people have access to safe, secure housing, they can get back into the workforce; children can re-engage in school. They can address health concerns without barriers. They can rebuild their lives. Housing is a human right, and it is about time this government treats it as such.

The minister recently said the buck stops with him. If the buck stops with him, he needs to start acting like it because 5380 primary applications are on the housing register - a record high. That is not leadership. That is failure. Also, that number of 5380 primary applicants represents many more people.

Tasmanians deserve a government that sees housing as the priority it really is. It's not just a talking point or a political inconvenience. I look forward to seeing what the Housing minister does with his commitment to acting on the north-west coast because we know that the north west is seriously lacking in social housing as well as Rapid Rehousing properties. I look forward to keeping Mr Vincent accountable when it comes to housing.

I was also involved in the Prevention of Family Violence Estimates session. I am pleased that the minister accepted my proposal for her to update her portfolio title to include sexual violence at the next Cabinet reshuffle. It's long overdue and it matters. Words and titles matter because they signal priorities. It shouldn't have been up to me to prompt the minister. This should have been on the government's radar. This should have been something they did proactively because we know family and sexual violence is one of the most urgent crises we face in Tasmania.

It was profoundly disappointing that the minister was unaware of the six vacancies in the Arch command centre. This isn't just a minor staffing issue. This centre is responsible for monitoring high-risk perpetrators and keeping Tasmanians safe. The vacancies in this area are putting people at risk. For the minister to not know about this issue is not good enough.

With your indulgence, I also highlight that I hosted an event today for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Thank you to all those members who attended, who listened and who took the voices of the organisations and the victim/survivors seriously. I would like to thank Fiona, Bree and Kira who spoke so powerfully during this event. They spoke about needing proper funding for these organisations, stronger legislative reform in these areas, better systems that do not let perpetrators slip through the cracks and the importance of truly listening to victim/survivors. Their courage is extraordinary and their stories strengthen our resolve. I am determined to see a Tasmania where women and children are safe, respected and free from this violence. I will hold this government accountable until this vision becomes a reality.

Turning now to my shadow portfolio of Heritage and Arts, I was particularly unwell last week and I'm still waiting for my gold star from Prof Razay. I thank Brian Mitchell for stepping in during that Estimates session on my behalf. I would like the minister to know that I was watching keenly at home from my couch.

The questions raised on my behalf were about Woolmer's Estate, Heritage Tasmania and the TasTAFE courses that have had their subsidies brutally cut. A central part of our cultural identity and economic vitality is wrapped up in heritage and arts. The Heritage and Arts portfolio is not a luxury add-on, it is at the centre of who we are as Tasmanians. It drives tourism, creates jobs, fosters innovation and preserves our shared stories. Neglecting these sectors is short-sighted and harmful. They deserve proper investment, long-term planning and a government that recognises their value.

I thank our Labor team, our small but mighty team in the leader's office, our media staff, advisers, communications advisers and the mighty Pam Voss. They are all powerhouses, each and every one of them. Their dedication, expertise and commitment to the Tasmanian community gives each one of us on this side of the House the ability to stand in here and advocate with strength and clarity.

The Estimates process is a mirror. It reflects the reality of government priorities. This year, the reflection shows a government falling short. It reflects a government falling short on housing, on preventing family and sexual violence, on basic delivery and delivering on the needs of the Tasmanian people. I will continue to bring the voices of my constituents into this Chamber and to hold this government accountable, and I will continue to fight for a Tasmania that is fair, safe and thriving.

[5.54 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS - Deputy Chair, I rise today to speak to the interim Budget before this place in the wake of the Estimates process. Being thrown into the role of committee chair was, to say the least, interesting and a very steep learning curve, but something I really enjoyed. I thank those members from the opposition and crossbench for their often-probing questions in relation to this interim Budget. Most of you were very well behaved. I also thank the Speaker, deputy Speaker and the amazing staff who basically babysat me through the whole journey since I became a deputy Chair or Deputy Speaker in this place.

I sincerely thank all the staff, the Hansard staff who have to try and get every single word in there and when there's three, four or five people talking at the same time, it's very hard. I thank Ms Brown for her kind comments to myself and the Deputy Chair, Ms Burnet, because she did a wonderful job as well. For the most part, the process was a shining example of our democracy at work, where non-government members of this place get to probe and seek detailed responses to the issues they care about.

This government has been open and transparent in relation to what has always been described as an interim budget. The interim Budget delivered by the honourable Treasurer a few weeks back could have been a slash-and-burn budget designed to achieve an instant surplus but self-evidently, this kind of response from the government would have done enormous harm to Tasmanians in

terms of service delivery. Essential services the Tasmanian people rely on would be adversely affected, placing enormous strain on families, businesses and community groups. Instead, this government chose wisely. Through this interim budget, this Rockliff Liberal government has taken the sensible decision to manage spending over the forwards with a view of producing a modest operating surplus four years from now. Not slash-and-burn, but a mature and responsible pathway forward allowing for continued economic growth of the Tasmanian economy; a hallmark of Liberal government since 2014.

One thing is very clear to me: a slash-and-burn budget over the next few years would inevitably tank the Tasmanian economy; an economy that has consistently performed at or near the top of national rankings; an economy that saw the creation of 51,000 jobs over a decade; an economy with the lowest unemployment rate of any state of the nation at four per cent; an economy that is now 20 per cent larger than it was a decade ago. We export more now than we did a decade ago for that matter too.

We have an investment pipeline worth tens of billions of dollars. We have incredible opportunities ahead of us with the Marinus Link in the north and the renewable energy generation it will support. We have an incredible opportunity with the multipurpose stadium planned for Hobart with the parallel creation of an entirely new industry to our state, the Tassie Devils Football Club. It will be a massive economic driver, and I will talk some more about that shortly.

Make no mistake, there are some difficult decisions ahead for this government. We all know this, and we will make them responsibly. I'd also like to remind the House that the delays to passing a budget this year have caused considerable distress to a number of community organisations in my seat of Bass and right across Tasmania for that matter; organisations I care deeply about because I well and truly know the value they provide to our wonderful, diverse communities.

This House now has the opportunity to pass the interim Budget which will see funding finally flow to the Neighbourhood Houses. Their hard-working staff turn up to work or volunteer every day to service the needs of their community with care, compassion and understanding. The past six months has been very, very rough for them, we all know that, with their funding held up because this House refused to pass the May budget.

Members of this place would do well to reflect on their impact of their decisions and what they've done and the impact they've had on charities rather like Shekinah House in Launceston for example. Shekinah House is a charity that assists Tasmanians who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or are socially and financially disadvantaged. I have seen first-hand, as have you, Prof Razay, the house supported by more than 50 volunteers; a very small team as well as them, but they do the most to help our most vulnerable citizens. The May Budget featured \$100,000 investment in Shekinah House to upgrade and expand their infrastructure and services to help the homeless and disadvantaged. As cost-of-living increases all over Australia, the need has never been greater. Seven months later, that funding is still sitting in this interim budget, undelivered. Passing this interim budget will see those funds flow to Shekinah House so they can continue to do the amazing things they do in the Tasmanian community and in my seat of Bass.

Through this government's Tasmania community food relief grants programs 2025, there is also a \$10,000 grant provided for Shekinah House to deliver fresh, healthy food to those Tasmanians who are struggling to put food on the plate for themselves, their families and their children. Failing to pass this interim budget will see our most disadvantaged and vulnerable people even more disadvantaged and stressed, which to me, is unacceptable.

This brings me back to the stadium. There are those in the community who believe there will be more money available for health and education and police if there is no stadium; but the budget reality tells the story of how much more we are already spending in those areas. Let me put some meat on those bones: across the 2025-26 budget and forward Estimates, investment in health, education and public order and safety accounts for more than 68 per cent of total government expenditure. Compared to the 2024-25 budget and forward Estimates in health, it has increased 12 per cent to \$14.5 billion. Over the same period, education has increased by 5 per cent to \$9.9 billion and investment in public order and safety has increased by 9 per cent to \$3.9 billion. To those opposing the stadium on those grounds, be aware this government is already doing it with record investment.

My views on the stadium are well-known in this place and to the people of Bass; views I formed after a deep dive into both the costs and benefits. It became very clear to me that the stadium is a once in 100-year opportunity to stimulate the state economy even further, to provide jobs and opportunities for Tasmanian families, and see Tasmania on the national stage every AFL weekend for decades. The tourism marketing value of our Tassie Devils team travelling through the country each and every year for the foreseeable future is alone worth millions and millions of dollars. That's year after year. This Rockliff government also has the form to deliver this world-class facility.

Amid all the negativity, there is the outstanding Bridgewater Bridge, delivered on time and on budget. It is a game-changer in terms of productivity for our state, as the stadium will be. With thousands of direct and indirect jobs created during the construction phase and thousands more when its operational, the stadium is a transformative project not just for Hobart, but for Tasmania - and not just for this year or next year or the year after, but for the lifetimes of most of us in this place and beyond.

Realistically, we could talk about the economic benefits of the stadium until well after the cows have come home, but the real benefits of the stadium are less tangible than dollars and cents. This stadium will give young Tasmanians the real hope of growing up and living in a vital and prosperous state - a state that is alive with opportunity and prospects for their future: a state that isn't stuck forever like a fossil in a rock; a state that believes in itself with a can-do attitude and a willingness to muck in and get things done; a state with a vision for its people that goes well beyond any specific budget cycle; a small state that others around the country look to with wonder and admiration for what we have achieved.

As a former broadcaster, I would often field questions from my audience about why political thinking is short-term and short-sighted sometimes, and why governments are reluctant to take a longer-term view - decades, rather than a few years. We have all seen what happens when

a strong government seizes a golden opportunity to make bold decisions to provide a facility, not just for our times, but for a long time to come.

It's become very clear to me that there are some in this state - I believe, a minority - who want no change, under any circumstances. They will always concoct 100 reasons why it shouldn't happen. That's the easy path to economic, civil and cultural stagnation. To fail now will create a very slippery slope for young Tasmanians who would like to stay and build a life for themselves and their future families, and why wouldn't they want to build it here? It's the greatest state in the country. We must not leave them a legacy of lost opportunity.

To achieve success, the path is often hard and littered with obstacles and obstructions, as we have seen. Yet at the end of the argy-bargy, there can only be one decision, and that's to go boldly forward, because an opportunity like this stadium project will never come our way again. While there will still be some who claim we can't afford to build it, there are more of us, in this place and out there, who will help fund their futures by building it anyway. It is my firmly held view that we simply cannot not build this stadium.

With this transformative project underway, alongside responsible and sensible budgetary measures, we can walk, talk and chew gum at the same time, all the while sending the message to potential investors in Tasmania that we are a happening place, a can-do place, a place that has confidence in itself, and a place that is open for business. I am very proud to stand on the side of progress and advancement and opportunity for our state now and into the future. I have complete confidence in this Rockliff Liberal government delivering a stadium we will all be proud of. Let's get on with it.

I commend the interim Budget to the House.

[6.04 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Chair, I'm very pleased to present my response to the Estimates and, like Mr Fairs, I would really like to thank the support of the deputies for both committees I chaired and for Mr Fairs and his work in looking after Committee B, as well as the staff for doing a power of work to deliver this compressed festival of Estimates. I know it was a difficult struggle with such a tight timeframe, but for me, it was a good experience to hear from each of the members and their contributions, their interests in the Budget and their concerns. It was a great gift for me to experience the Budget and hear from everybody; to see the committees in action. Sitting in on so many sessions provided me with the perfect learning opportunity for me to understand other portfolios that fell within Committee A, and to gain a greater understanding of the importance of prudent financial management.

I want to put into context how we got to this point when we were considering the 2025 Budget and what really should have been shaping the Budget. I will just run through a few things that happened before the Treasurer, Eric Abetz, delivered his budget.

Over summer, we saw fat globules of fish landing on beaches and polluting many of our beaches. It raised alarm bells for many coastal dwellers, and many of us who are concerned seeing this climate and commercial catastrophe unfolding on our very shores.

Also from that time, there was the dumping of thousands of kilograms of emergency-use antibiotic florfenicol in fish pens in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. It was twice the amount that has been used in a whole season for Norwegian salmon, but I will go to that in a moment. We know that this is going to be used in an emergency context, for emergency use in Okehampton Bay. I would just like to quote from an article put together by members of Safe Water Hobart:

Seven hundred kilograms of florfenicol used in just 13 days is an awful lot. This treatment dose is more than triple the antibiotics used in Tasmania in all of 2024. The Tasmanian salmon industry often claims to follow world's best practice. However, 700 kilograms is twice as much antibiotics as Norway uses to produce 15 times more farmed salmon.

I raise this because of significant impacts on our state's reputation. With our state's laissez-faire attitude to big salmon farming, we need to consider the impacts of climate change, of international markets, of local environmental stressors that were disastrous over summer and continue to be, and are threatening to be for the summer ahead.

In other events this year, during caretaker mode, we had the huge Marinus deal pushed through, with no notice. You might recall that in just 11 months - and this is separate to what happened during caretaker mode - but in just 11 months, Marinus' projected costs went from roughly \$3.8 billion to \$5.5 billion, before being erratically revised.

During caretaker mode again, TT-Line was provided a line of credit of \$75 million with the suggestion of a future \$25 million, which now looks inevitable and even insufficient. TT-Line have now been referred to ASIC by the Auditor-General because of potential insolvency. or concerns about it being insolvent.

I suppose the message there about these things that happened before the election, during caretaker mode, was that it's a very similar pattern to what happened previously with TT-Line before the previous election. I just wonder how that was all taken into account, all these big-ticket items were taken into account, when putting this Budget together?

If we just stay with TT-Line for a minute, and I know this has been prosecuted many a time in this House, but there were too many mistakes along the way, with the Devonport berth 3 costs escalating from an original \$90 million to \$500 million. The *Spirit* vessel replacements - we're now looking at \$900 million total cost for vessels, with bailouts to Finnish shipyards along the way. Then we have additional costs such as the hull strengthening and the costs associated with the vessels storage being berthed in Scotland, then in Hobart, now in Victoria. I know that decision-making is not easy, but high sitting fees for directors and senior executive salaries for some of our senior public servants and those on GBEs should in some part reflect good decision-making. I hark back to 2020 when Saul Eslake said, "The *Spirit* replacement delays were costing the Tasmanian economy at that point \$350 million per annum" Ironically, if you line up all those costly mistakes and delays - and there were international reasons that were out of the government's hand - but mistakes or delays they were, you could fund a stadium by now.

The Treasurer's austerity budget delivers a debt of billions over forward Estimates and with its increased borrowings and interest to repay. This will be all the harder following the downgraded rating from Moody's than Standard and Poor's, all occurring after the Budget. There are major concerns when you have a downgrade by rating agencies. I found the Treasurer's response to the media after one downgrade and then another breathtaking because it is said to the world, 'There's nothing to see here. We can manage debt. We won't let TT-Line fail. We will build the stadium despite the backdrop of debt', despite the concerns raised about the millions of dollars to pay just on the interest, in an environment where those borrowings will cost more with the downgraded credit rating and higher interest rates. This track record, all the things I listed and more, casts doubt on the government's ability to deliver the stadium project, throwing forward Estimates into severe doubt.

I want to talk about the stadium - it would be remiss and quite unusual for me not to talk about it - but during Estimates and during some of the discussion in this House, the stadium has become the elephant in the room. Labor refused to acknowledge the impact of the stadium on the Budget: the burgeoning costs associated with the project; the multitude of reports. There are so many things to consider, but end to end, I would love to know and I haven't done the calculations, but I would love to know how much in total we have spent so far on the stadium. Ms Johnston asked the director of the TPC, Mr Ramsay, about the costs associated with the TPC considering the stadium, and that was about \$1.3 million for that work, which was a significant amount of work and I commend the work and the information that's been provided by experts along the way. It hasn't been listened to. It has been denied. It has been ignored quite often, mostly. More's the pity, because it's important when you are dealing with public monies, to get the advice, to heed that advice, to base your decision on that advice, but certainly heed that advice is number one.

The TPC estimated that the public loan costs will be \$1 billion at the end of the construction period and \$1.8 billion after 10 years. There are calculations to suggest that that's about \$4100 per household in Tasmania, which is the highest amount, I will say again, the highest amount that any community has to pay for the building of a stadium. It's more the pity for Tasmanians who will not necessarily benefit from a stadium, \$4100 is a significant impost on households, and we don't have necessarily a high level of income for many Tasmanian households, but that's what we're expecting them to pay. No doubt there will have to be other sources of money, perhaps through increased taxes, which hasn't been ruled out, but there will be costs associated with the stadium. We will never forget, I don't think, Tasmanians will never forget how much this stadium may cost them.

Events will be unaffordable because of austerity measures, so many of the people who won't benefit because of the stadium will be suffering from a lack of services provided to them through community houses, through Neighbourhood Houses or through those services that will be cut and through those public sector services that will be cut because of the austerity budget.

I've laid out some big-ticket items. We've talked about TT-Line, Marinus, the likely possible stadium - that impost and the cost that has already been borne by the Tasmanian community. I want to talk about the other side of the story. We've talked about the big-ticket items that the government is hell-bent on pursuing, but what about the other side of the story? How is it that on the one hand

there are many cost savings to be made, and on the other there is the expectation that spending can only occur on a 'Would be nice to have' project, such as the stadium.

I will start with the many statutory organisations such as the EPA, the Integrity Commission and the Auditor-General are underfunded and unable to do the work that is intended for them and their regulatory requirements are underfunded. We know in TASCAT there is a significant backlog. It was revealed by the Attorney-General under questioning that there's a likelihood that the Industrial Commission will be rolled up into TASCAT without the services and without necessarily the staff and the skills going with that. We know and we hear it from our stakeholders that cuts to services will bite hard. The stadium is a divisive issue and those who benefit will be the 'haves' and then those who won't be able to afford things or those who rely on the services that will be cut.

It's some comfort that privatisation of the public sector is supposedly off the table but that's yet to be seen. I know full well that there is concern with Metro about privatisation and that's privatisation by stealth that seems to occur with a few changes by a lack of love provided to our public transport system. We don't know if the rapid bus transit, if it's ever delivered, will be a privatised service, rather than an investment in public transport required now. We see that the government has provided services and increased their subsidisation of private services. It's a good thing if people are using public transport but it shouldn't be at the cost of not giving enough love to Metro.

Budgets are a choice. They can be based on ideology, they can be based on need, sometimes it's favouritism. It might be on impulse, it might be in response to public pressure. Sometimes budget decisions are made on the whim. Budgets in a place like Tasmania have often been shaped by infrastructure needs versus social needs versus environmental needs.

I will talk now about the needs of local communities beyond sign-ons to costly projects like Marinus and the stadium - costly projects that haven't been delivered well, like TT-Line and the pipeline projects that don't change the way we shape the place in which we live.

Closer to home, Vica Bayley and I attended the last community playgroup session in Chigwell Community Garden, which is likely to close because of lack of funding. It's run by the Neighbourhood House, and it shouldn't be reliant on being thrown a lifeline to survive. This is providing a very important service in one of our northern suburbs. It is a hub for people to be outside; for kids to play outside in a beautiful setting.

One of the various community groups I've been contacted by is Learn to Drive, who fear cuts to their programs will make it harder for many groups to gain driving licences and be safe on our roads. The salt-of-the-earth people who provide that driver mentor training often go beyond just delivering driving lessons. They help with social needs as well. You would be fully aware of that, deputy Chair.

There are events like the graduation for the Be Hers program, in partnership with TAFE, which was a group of multicultural migrant and refugee women who had the chance to learn skills in a group supported by TAFE teachers. It is an important part of our social fabric to be able to

deliver those services. If the TAFE course aren't there for them, it is a significant challenge for those women to gain employment.

While we see elite sport getting handed a blank cheque, community and grassroots sport is left behind. We heard about the North Launceston Football Club. It was a political budget decision by the sounds of it, whether they should get funding or not, which is a travesty of process.

We also know that cycling advocates are concerned about the future of active transport funding grants, which seem to have gone the way of the Collins Street bike lane. Those active transport grants are important for the local councils who have relied on a 50:50 funding split from the state government. These are projects to deliver bikeways and walkways in local communities to keep people healthy and connected. The \$4 million over four years that had been allocated has just been popped into the first year and has gone into a project, the Huntingfield pedestrian bridge, which is an active transport link across the highway at the Algona Road roundabout. That was a public works consideration, and the first thing to go in that multi-million-dollar contract was the active transport bridge. Robbing Peter to pay Paul, that money, which should be going to various councils, is now going into what should have been an infrastructure project. We did have a commitment from minister Kerry Vincent in relation to ensuring that we're thinking about active transport links as part of projects. I would like to see that in writing. We need that kind of project to help communities across Tasmania stay active, healthy and connected.

The other critical piece of moving people around the city is public transport, which is a significant building block of an advanced society. If you go to any country or any city where there's good public transport, it speaks volumes. Meanwhile, we have an ailing bus system that has not been shown the love it should have. Only 3 per cent of people bus to work in greater Hobart. Real-time tracking of buses is still a significant problem. That was denied at the Metro Estimates committee, even though I've had personal experience and hear about this all the time from public transport users.

When we don't have reliable and predictable services, people don't use them. It's as simple as that. We need to get to that point where we can have faith in our bus service. We should be aiming for more than 3 per cent of people using public transport, but they won't use it until those buses are arriving on time, they're more frequent and the bus services that have been cut are restored. Not that we are going to see that any time soon: another travesty, another lack of investment in an intelligent way of getting people around their communities and to work. Productivity goes down when you don't have a good bus service.

We also heard the tale of woe of the Cubic common ticketing for public transport. I believe the project started in 2017 or 2018 and is up from \$9 million to almost \$60 million, with no clear end in sight. It is a costly mistake to pursue projects that don't stack up and don't deliver for a clever city and community. There are fares and bus services that won't be even considered for reinstatement until the Southern Tasmanian Network review is finalised.

These are just some of those services that will have to give way to make space in the budget for the stadium project. The impacts can be devastating. It's a false belief that cutting public services will result in good outcomes. When public service jobs are gone in areas such as teaching,

we know that teachers are under a lot of stress. That's just one example. I know of many people in the public sector who are doing it tough because of the stress they're under.

Planning is a passion of mine, and we know that delivering good planning outcomes is good for the environment, if we are not building on the borders and pushing housing out into bushland, into farmland. It's not only going to be cheaper to build medium-density in infill in the inner city, but it's also going to have better environmental outcomes, so we should be trying to do that. We know that there are advocates - such as the Planning Institute of Australia Tasmanian branch and the Greater Hobart Committee - who are looking at having medium density in infill areas along the Hobart to Glenorchy transit corridor and improving density, allowing housing to thrive and to be built there. As a pilot project it could be really beneficial. We have nothing in the Budget. In fact, it's been denied. You don't want to push out on the urban boundaries. We want outcomes that are good for the environment, and we're not seeing that necessarily in this Budget. By not putting pressure on our stormwater and waterways, we can reduce the impacts and costs of building. We have to be ready for a climate-resilient future. There's still a long way to go.

In the couple of minutes that I have left, I'd like to give a shout-out to minister Bridget Archer and her approach to preventative health, and recognising that there is that opportunity to invest in our communities by making health the first course of things you do to keep people out of hospital. Keeping communities healthy, making them resilient in the face of climate change, is something that we, as a state, should be working towards. There is so much to be done there, and I think that minister Archer and the Premier should be commended for showing leadership in resilience, and being ready for those challenges of an ageing and unwell population. We should be aiming for the healthiest island in the world.

We've had lost opportunities with this Budget, and I think there are things that we should be considering. We live with global uncertainty in the face of wars, of other global events, of climate change and natural disasters, and we need to be spending well for our community. It's so important to get this right. We're going into an area of spending which I don't feel is the right thing for Tasmania.

[6.34 p.m.]

Mr VERMEY (Clark) - Chair, almost last to go. Thank you for this experience. It's been a great learning curve that I'm finding my way through, and thank you to the chairs and deputy chairs and staff over this period. It's been very good, and Ms Burnet, you did a great job. Some challenging times there as well and you held it together well.

Tasmania has come a long way over the past decade. A more confident, outward-looking state, Tasmanians are backing themselves, growing confidence and ambition and pride. Tasmania has what the world wants - quality, authenticity, integrity and sustainability. This strength is reflected in exports, global partnerships and national reputation. Tasmania also expects a fair, safe justice system, and reforms are being delivered on that expectation. Business confidence remains strong and resilient. Small business, the backbone of the state - Tasmania has more than 42,000 small businesses, which constitute 97 per cent of all Tasmanian enterprises. As the stat has been put up a few times now, 51,000 more jobs have been created, business confidence is high, and we have a strong economic plan.

Over 100,000 Tasmanians are employed by small businesses and micro businesses: strong community roles, family, jobs, local risk-takers, local community contributors. Our online business opportunities are growing, with a new 24/7 digital continual tool launched by Business Tasmania, a website designed specifically for small and micro businesses. It's simple, practical and easy to use, built from direct business feedback. This helps business prepare for natural disasters, cyber risks, supply chain issues and disruptions.

Our export success is growing and going very, very well. Tasmania continues to excel in global markets. I would like to highlight Marinova, which is an amazing business which I had links to from the beginning. I've seen that grow. It's an amazing business with seaweed that has been taken up all round the world and lots and lots of opportunities. Three Warriors is another one, a national export award winner in make-up. You wouldn't think those opportunities could come from Tasmania and be taken up around the world.

Export strengths include advanced manufacturing, food, aquaculture and creative industries. Export value reached \$6.16 billion in 2023-24, the second-highest on record. Trade across Asia, Indo-Pacific markets are strong, with Tasmania's brand advantage of quality, authenticity and sustainability.

We acknowledge we've had a few little hiccups along the way, but I'm a new person who's come into this area, and I want to be able to make a difference. I see we have new boards on TT-Line and TasPorts communicating, working together, fixing the issues and getting the jobs done. It's been disappointing to see some of the negativity going towards that, which is a great business, it's a strong business. It supplies Tasmania, gives access to productivity that's going out and coming into the state. It's bringing tourism. A lot of people seem to sort of keep on knocking it to the point that, if we don't look after it, we're damaging the brand. We have to get around it and get together on it there. There have been issues, but we're going forward, and we can't afford more negativity against one of our major contributors to Tasmania being on the map. It's been a little bit disappointing seeing that happening.

The other things are some of the little gripes that I've seen against ministers, the personal attacks, whether it be against minister Mr Ellis. -

Mr Abetz - Just shameful.

Mr VERMEY - I just don't think we need that point scoring. Where I've come from - and people perceive parliamentarians to be doing this all the time - it's not a great outlook, and I hope that I don't find myself going down that channel.

We're providing an opportunity in Clark, an opportunity to grow jobs, to show investment that can come to the state - and the project, the stadium, will deliver this. It is a high cost, but we've got to take that risk and opportunity. We can't say no to everything all the time, and having the federal government putting money into it, the AFL putting money into it, then us putting money into it, we're already \$600 million ahead. If we don't develop the site, it stays as that wasteland and it's that opportunity gone. Having this, I firmly believe it will drive jobs; it will create creativity,

it will provide investment in the future, which gives that ambition for people to stay in the state, create a strong state and a want to be here.

Our unemployment rate is about four per cent, which is a fantastic achievement, and our youth unemployment is only at nine per cent. Ten years ago, it was about 18 per cent. We are heading in the right direction, and we are keeping people here. Our population has grown by 12 per cent and we want to still see that growing. We need more young people. We are an older population, so we do need a few young people around to look after us.

We've introduced and passed legislation in this House for a new \$30,000 First Home Owner grant, helping young Tasmanians and families to achieve the dream of owning their own homes, their first homes. Along with this, we've helped 6000 Tasmanians into home ownership through government stamping out stamp duty, exempting over 4000 properties purchased as of 7 November 2025.

Education funding that we're putting into the Budget demonstrates the government's continued strong commitment to education, with a record investment in the Education portfolio with the Department of Education, Children and Young People of more than \$2 billion in 2025-26, and over the next four years, \$8.9 billion. Twenty-four schools have had major upgrades within the state with \$10 million allocated for playground and sports grounds, and over 103 sites around the state to benefit. We have \$20 million towards VET facility funds, developing modern, fit-for-purpose vocational educational training centres, facilities, industry-standard equipment, for our own secondary schools, colleges and trade courses.

Whilst on Committee A, I had the Premier representing Brand Tasmania; Bridget Archer, Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Ageing and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Kerry Vincent, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Housing and Planning, and Infrastructure and Transport; the Treasurer, Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal; and Minister Felix Ellis for Business, Industry and Resources, Minister for Skills and Jobs, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management. Looking at all those, I see a good strength.

For the police, there's more equipment coming through, there's support for them and the fire department, and we certainly need that. As Mr Ellis has said; with the backing of forestry - that fire side, that protection for some of our beautiful natural resources that were logging areas and are protected, we still need those foresters and that investment to protect those assets for tourism within our state.

I feel that the interim Budget is that stopgap. We didn't need to go straight into a hard-dive, cutting Budget. We're going to work with a natural attrition of public servants, and working with people to bring that down naturally, without cutting too many jobs at all. We're going to just let that sort of go. We will seek people who want to potentially come out of jobs but doing it in a natural way, instead of cutting jobs, over a four-year period.

We have to work within our means, in a way to give strength to our economy and to our business sector, so they're looking for the next opportunity, and that comes from the investment.

It comes from having the stadium here. It shows that we are open for the business and it's bringing jobs and people here to work, and looking from that outside in to see what opportunities they can then create for us. That money goes back into roads, it goes back into education, it goes back into hospitals. We have to have plans that are not reliant so much on federal money, even though we're not getting our fair share of the federal money.

We have to look at different ways to be able to try to generate that wealth. I know we have some hard decisions to go forward, but I feel that we are in a good place and we all know we have to do the hard work ahead. I want to be part of that and I feel we are in a good space, and I'm looking forward to the work that has to be done over the next three years or so. With that, I say thank you, and I look forward to our next time back in parliament. Thank you.

[6.46 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ - Chair, one could nearly be forgiven - that last Sunday was the first day of Advent and that we're nearing the Christmas season, given some of the contributions that have been made during the budget Estimates contributions. Can I say to member for Clark Mr Vermey, his contribution that I had the pleasure of listening to was a pleasant divergence from some of the other contributions.

One of the great things about our democracy is that we do have transparency, that we do have these budget Estimates that allow private members of the parliament to question the executive of government and the various public servants, head of agencies, et cetera, to get the sort of detail that members are interested in.

As I said in the interim Budget, the interim Budget seeks to lay the foundations to futureproof Tasmania through what will be a challenging period to bring our expenditure back into line with our revenue to ensure that we have balanced budgets. Having listened to a lot of the Estimates hearings and been personally involved, and reading some of the *Hansard* records, one could be forgiven for thinking that we had not just had an election on the pretext of the need for budget repair. That was the basis of the no confidence motion in the Premier. As a result, we went to an election, an unnecessary and expensive and dislocating election. During the Estimates, as Treasurer I was hoping that I could glean from the contributions, glean from the *Hansard*, suggestions and proposals for budget repair. Not a single one. Those who sent us to the early election were demanding that we pay the public servants beyond a normal wage increase up to 21 per cent. Excessive demands, which everybody in their heart of hearts knows are unachievable and would be grossly irresponsible. Guarantees were sought that not a single public service position would be lost. There was not a single suggestion on budget repair that came forward, especially from the opposition, not a single suggestion which, unfortunately, confirms to me yet again that they are great in wallowing around in a sea or a mud pool of negativity, but they can't come up with the solutions that are needed for the future.

We as a government have dedicated ourselves to ensuring that, now that we're over COVID, now that we're over two state elections, and the federal election thrown in between for good measure, and the payments that were needed for the commission of inquiry, now that we are through all that, we can get a glide path back to a balanced budget, which is vitally important. As I have said on numerous occasions, borrowing to maintain our lifestyle today, which our children

and grandchildren will need to pay off with interest in the future is not good economics, it's not good public policy, nor is it moral.

Talking about the contributions that were made, I was astounded that one of the Labor shadow ministers took it upon herself to question a government minister about a speeding offence some 10 years prior. I nearly dare to ask the question: if there were a full House, who in this place has not had a traffic fine or charge? I suspect not a single hand would go up, yet somehow this shadow minister voted no confidence. The need for budget repair. We had to go to an election, yet the opportunity was provided to her. What did she do? Seek to prosecute a traffic offence of a decade ago. This is the mentality and an insight into how the Labor Party currently does its business. No wonder they are under federal administration because the people in Canberra and the Labor Party around the country simply don't trust them. When you have performances like that, I have to say, I can't blame them for the federal intervention and I suggest that they need to keep it up for quite some time.

We do have our challenges in balancing the budget, but we do have, currently, the lowest unemployment rate in the country and, historically, exceptionally low for Tasmania, high business confidence growth in our economy. There are a lot of positives. On the negative side and I'm willing to acknowledge that and I've spoken about it, the credit rating downgrade, whilst the movement from negative to stable is, if you like, a sort of a positive, it is based on us going down a notch and what that tells me is that we need repair, but the credit agencies are saying, given what was in the interim Budget and our statements, that there is confidence that we will be getting to where we need to be and ought to be, and as a result, they've given us the stable characterisation.

That requires all of us in this place to do our task. Sure, we're a minority government, and as a result that relies on other members of this parliament to back the budget repair which the majority sent us to an election about just a few months ago. You can't have it both ways, so I plead with this parliament to ensure that you turn your talk into action, that you walk the talk, that you do that which is necessary. The diversions that we had during Estimates hearings on all sorts of matters because Labor didn't want to acknowledge that the bed blocking that occurs is as a result of a lack of federal money. We have 100 people currently in beds in our hospitals because there aren't aged-care places or disability care places for them - three wards. I think the member for Bass, Prof Razay, mentioned that in his contribution, and yet the Labor members, none of them, have been willing to say that this is an atrocity, this needs to be fixed and we will use our contacts in Labor to get Canberra to do the right thing. It was crickets.

It might be as a result of them still being under federal administration that they have to say what Canberra wants them to say, but I would have thought as local members they would have stood up and said we might not like the Liberal government. That's fair enough, but on this we can agree. Surely, if today, I could stand with the secretary of the CFMEU, Rick Hassett, in a common cause for the stadium, I would have thought if I can do that, why can't Labor do that with us on this side, for the sake of those who are stuck in hospitals against their will, causing great dislocation to our hospital and great expense to our health system?

A lot of people made reference to the stadium. It is clearly an economic enabler. It will be of great benefit to our state. Whatever the resolution of it, and I've been exceptionally disappointed

by some of the comments that have been made to the effect that the fight will go on despite the vote of the parliament. In a civil society, you can agree to disagree, and there are friends of mine who aren't that supportive of the stadium but you know what? We're still friends. We still get on with each other. You don't have to take these differences of opinion as a huge division in society, and all this talk about society being divided, it's only because people seek to drive the differences into divisions that allegedly cannot be healed.

My view has been that if you win you don't gloat; if you lose you don't moan. That's the way our democracy works; yet I have heard, and a release was put out, I understand, by Mr Roland Browne, saying that the reality will doom this stadium and the fight will go on. This is the same Mr Browne, not Mr George's constituent, but one from Clark, one Mr Roland Browne, not Robert Brown, but he's the same man who told the Tasmanian people through his anti-stadium group that the numbers of the two rallies of the last couple of weekends were 'similar'. They were similar inasmuch as they started with a one five, but there was a zero missing on the end, wasn't there, for the anti-rally. To say that a rally that had 10 times the number was 'similar to', can I say the people don't believe you. We've had a good community discussion about this, and whichever way the upper House votes, let's accept the decision, move on together, and keep working for the benefit of our state rather than trying to pull the show down.

There are many things that I could comment on. I did comment on the disappointment that none of the opposition came forward with ideas as to how to make savings in the budget; yet interestingly enough, when we gave public servants, and I will say our fellow public servants, because we are all in this together as servants of the public, when they were given the opportunity to identify areas of savings, within a matter of days we had over 200 recommendations. Isn't that great, that individual public servants are able to identify things, yet the Labor Party were unable to come up with one suggestion. That, I must say, is a matter of regret.

I have a suspicion as Leader of the House that we might be sitting late, given the issues that we still have to deal with, so I will stop my comments here other than to say that I as Treasurer have been greatly indebted to the officials in the Department of Treasury, from the Secretary, Gary Swain, down; and to my office staff, chief of staff Matt Hochman, and all those who have assisted me greatly: Megan Hickey, John Gourlay and John Wise. They have been exceptionally helpful. The public service of our state serves us exceptionally well, and I for one am most appreciative of their service. With that, chair, I commend the Budget and the reports of the Estimates committees to the House.

Proposed expenditures and resolutions agreed to.

Bills and titles agreed to without amendment.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2025 (No. 63)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 64)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Debate Motion Forthwith

[7.01 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent:

- (a) the three resolutions from the Legislative Council in relation to a code of conduct for members, independent complaints commissioner and statement for members in relation to alcohol and other drugs being considered together; and
- (b) a motion without notice in respect of consequential amendments to the standing orders from being debated following consideration of those resolutions.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

**Consideration of Messages of the Legislative Council -
Ministerial Code of Conduct**

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I call on the order of the day for the consideration of the messages from the Legislative Council in respect to code of conduct for members, independent complaints commissioner and statements for members in relation to alcohol and other drugs. I move -

That the resolutions from the Legislative Council be agreed to and the blanks be filled up with the words 'and the House of Assembly'.

The three notices of motion have been presented for consideration: the members statement on alcohol and other drugs, the proposed code of conduct for members of parliament and the independent complaints commissioner. Each of these motions have been developed in response to recommendations made in the Motion for Respect Report into Workplace Culture in the

Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services. Together, they form a critical part of our commitment to building a safer, more respectful and more accountable parliamentary workplace. Members of parliament are entrusted with upholding the integrity of the institution and ensuring a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace. The report made it clear that cultural change must be more than aspirational; it must be visible in behaviour, policies and leadership. The proposed actions provide practical tools that set clear expectations and reinforce our shared responsibility to uphold the integrity of this institution. The Motion for Respect Report identified alcohol as a contributing factor to harassment and unsafe behaviour in the parliamentary settings. This motion acknowledges that the risk links to work health and safety obligations and commits members to responsible consumption of alcohol and bystander intervention.

The Workplace Culture Oversight Committee's second interim report reinforced the need for cultural expectations about responsible consumption of alcohol and acknowledged a first step for members in recognising the risk associated with alcohol in the workplace. I believe this statement delivers those expectations. It sets out clear acknowledgements: impairment increases; WHS risks; alcohol correlates with harassment; and members' roles do not excuse irresponsible behaviour. It commits members to managing risks, respecting non-drinkers, and intervening when inappropriate behaviour occurs.

While this is a positive cultural signal, I note it is not enforceable. The Motion for Respect report recommended stronger policy levers and accountability measures. While this motion does not create sanctions, it does articulate a set of standards for acceptable behaviour, which is certainly a move in the right direction. The statement is a practical measure setting the standard of behaviour expected by members.

Notice of motion No. 19 is the code of conduct for members of the parliament. The Motion for Respect report recommended a clear, enforceable code of conduct for members to ensure a safe and respectful work environment. This motion delivers that through principles and enforceable standards.

The code establishes respect for the rule of law, the separation of powers and ethical leadership; recognition of Tasmania's Aboriginal peoples and their enduring connection to the country; a commitment to safety, particularly for children and vulnerable people; zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation; clear expectations about conflicts of interest, lobbying and the use of public resources; mandatory induction and training for all members; and an independent complaints process with proportionate and evidence-based outcomes. The code also provides for regular review of the publication of interpretive guidelines to support members in meeting their obligations.

The Workplace Culture Oversight Committee emphasised induction, review and independent oversight, which I note are reflected in this code. I note that part 1 of the proposed code sets principles of respect, integrity, cultural recognition and safety. Part 2 introduces enforceable standards, workplace behaviour, conflicts of interest, lobbying, online conduct, including AI, confidentiality and mandatory induction. Part 3 establishes governance, ethics advice, training, complaints processes and review.

A clear strength of the proposed code is that it embeds Work Health and Safety duties and explicitly prohibits bullying, harassment and discrimination. These are core recommendations in the Motion for Respect report. I am pleased to see that the code seeks to address emerging risks such as online behaviour.

Notice of motion No. 20 is the establishment of an independent complaints commissioner. The Motion of Respect report calls for strengthening of the current limited mechanisms for responding to complaints regarding the conduct of parliamentarians, and places a strong emphasis on independence, procedural fairness and victim-centric processes. I appreciate that this motion responds to those priorities.

The Workplace Culture Oversight Committee has also highlighted the need for sanctions and remedies to be proportionate to the seriousness of the breach of the code, transparency and regular reporting. These principles are embedded in the model through structured processes and mandatory annual reporting requirements.

I am pleased to note that the motion proposes to include a confidential intake process for complaints, ensuring privacy and safety for those who come forward. It also responds to the importance of achieving early conciliation where feasible and, where necessary, formal investigation of breaches of the code of conduct. This motion creates a clear and independent pathway for handling complaints. It strikes an important balance between confidentiality and parliamentary privilege, while ensuring that sanctions are proportionate to the nature and severity of the breach.

While this model is a significant step forward, I note that it does not fully respond to the Motion for Respect vision of a holistic system covering all parliamentary participants. Its scope is focused on members and those who interact with them professionally, leaving broader cultural issues to be addressed through other mechanisms.

Establishing a new office for an independent complaints commissioner could require significant funding for staffing, infrastructure and ongoing operational costs, but an alternative option of the commissioner and deputy commissioner being held on a retainer is provided by this motion. This provides a more cost-effective but equally fit-for-purpose model.

The committee has noted models such as that operated by the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly, in which the Speaker engages an independent commissioner on a retainer. There is no bureaucracy supporting the commissioner. The assembly is able to review the commissioner's workload from time to time in order to revise the retainer.

In this motion, the committee has proposed the appointment of a commissioner and deputy commissioner on the basis of gender balance. The committee has not recommended the employment of any other persons. This structure is based on the most economical approach for a parliament made up of two Houses and 50 members, while gender balance ensures that complainants who are the victims of certain conduct can feel safe coming forward and providing information.

These motions, in combination, form a critical part of our commitment to building a safer, more respectful and more accountable parliamentary workplace. As such, I wholeheartedly commend them to the House.

Prior to others speaking on this, I will mention the Workplace Culture Oversight interim report No. 2, the Code of Conduct for Members independent complaints commissioner process, and Alcohol and Other Drugs Statement. The current members of the committee are myself; the honourable Speaker; the honourable Josh Willie MP; Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP; the President, the honourable Craig Farrell MLC; the honourable Ruth Forrest MLC, who is the Chair; the honourable Sarah Lovell MLC, the deputy Chair; and the honourable Tania Rattray MLC. Other members have been involved along the way as well, including your predecessor, Ms O'Byrne, Ms O'Byrne's predecessor, Mark Shelton, making a good contribution, the honourable member for Montgomery, Ms Hiscutt, former Greens leader Ms O'Connor, and former honourable member Rebecca White.

We are going back to September 2022 when Sarah Bolt's report was first tabled. I remember a very united approach where we had a media conference at the Premier's Reception Room on level 11 of the Executive Building, attended by then Leader of the Opposition Ms White, myself, then Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor, Ms Forrest, the Speaker, and I believe the President, the honourable Craig Farrell MLC.

That report was confronting and it went back some way. People availed themselves in a confidential and a safe way to detail their lived experience and the circumstances they had encountered in this place or across the working environment of MP across successive governments. That report is confronting, and offers a number of recommendations. I commend Sarah Bolt, the former anti-discrimination commissioner, who led that considerable and important body of work. From that body of work, the course of the last more than three years has culminated in where we are now. I commend all those who have engaged in the process and those who had the courage to come forward and detailing their lived experience. It is through people coming forward with the courage of their lived experience that we are able to learn and, of course, act on the matters that are before us today. It's on all of us, to encourage and, indeed, lead by example when it comes to a safe cultural workplace, when it comes to being respectful, kind and, naturally, vigorous in debate, as people expect us to be, but done in a very respectful way. I believe the independent Complaints Commissioner processed the code of conduct for members, and the alcohol and other drugs members statement, which, I believe, from my discussions with the member Ms Forrest just yesterday, is the first, or one of the first, alcohol and other drugs member statements in the country.

I commend Ms Forrest who, for the majority of that time, was Chair of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight and did an enormous amount of work bringing everyone together, scrutinising the detail. We had people come to speak to us. We had a really clever consultant, Andrew -

Mr Ferguson - Andrew Young.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Young - thank you, Mr Ferguson. Andrew Young, who has supported us to where we are today as well. Mr Young did avail himself to members to speak to and get some more information and ask questions on the interim report number two and the motions and the like, as I understand it, and I very much appreciate Andrew's work, but I commend Ms Forrest for her chairship of what has been and will be an incredibly important body of work. I commend the motions to the house.

[7.17 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to make a contribution on behalf of the Labor Party to the motions before the House this evening and reflect the comments of the Premier about commending the work of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture and Oversight. Work that has continued for many years and has been indicated across many members of both Houses. It has been great to see the dedication and the commitment to see this body of work through so that each of us in this place, in both Houses of the parliament, can commit to and accept and maintain the standards that are outlined within this body of work.

I, too, thank the former commissioner, Sarah Bolt, for her work on this and acknowledge the work of Andrew Young and his availability here for further follow up and questions in what is a significant moment in the history of this place. It's great when Tasmania leads the way and makes sure that it aligns with things not only happening nationally, but internationally. There's an international movement to ensure the safety and inclusion of workplaces, particularly in parliamentary workplaces, and in our Westminster system, we can be proud that what we are adopting here today will be considered as best practice.

Acknowledging the work of the committee and the secretariats that supported that joint sessional committee, we know that one of the elements of safety is workload and the pressure and the interactions between people. We know that across both Houses there's been deep pressure in our secretariats to support the work of various committees, so I want to put on record our thanks for that work and the support of that committee. The engagement and the participation in this process clearly demonstrated the motivation for change and the desire for change. The survey for participation had over 56 per cent participation with people who, as the Premier said, shared their concerns and their lived experiences, and it's important for us to respect that in the way that we've brought all this together, but also in the way we continue to engage with each other and align ourselves with the expectations that are set out here.

In the Bolt report it was found - and it's been acknowledged and there have been improvements - but it was found in the report that there is evidence of bullying, harassment and discrimination, and that the current processes or expectations about a code of conduct weren't fit for purpose. It was recognised that there wasn't a clear process for complaints nor any trust or confidence in that process. There's very much a need for these different instruments to be, for the first time, created, but also for those existing instruments to be improved. It does include some enforceable standards on the use of resources, conflicts of interest, on lobbying and disclosures, on bullying, harassment and those behaviours that we expect, but they are written down - on bullying, harassment, sexual harassment - but also the importance of bystander responsibilities. Often a person who's experiencing a certain moment or event or pattern of behaviours towards

them might not have the internal personal courage to raise it, they might not feel confident to do that, but if someone else sees something happening and they know that that's not okay, there's a responsibility within these standards to, within your level of comfort and capability, do something about that. That's what I'm thinking we all have to commit to and share here. There's also a recognition that these behaviours aren't just in the real world, but they're also in the online world, and we need to be respectful as we engage there.

There will be an expectation to make a public affirmation. There will be an expectation of training and records of that training will be kept. We've thanked the secretariat, but we're going to need to make sure that for these processes to sustain themselves and to be useful and practical, there is the appropriate resourcing ongoing to make sure that this plays out in the way that's intended. There is a statement that I will actually read through in terms of expectations for members about alcohol and other drugs, and it's important to note that it's not prescriptive, but it's behavioural, and gives a sense of what's appropriate and not in creating a fairer and a safer and a more inclusive work environment.

I suppose it begs the question, although there's been so much work done in the Bolt report and by the joint sessional committee since, why does this matter? Why is it important? It's important because this institution should operate and behave in a way that garners the deepest respect from Tasmanians. It goes through restoring public trust, knowing that we are affirming our commitment to these expectations, and it sets the tone for how things would happen in a parliament and on behalf of our community. It sets the enforceable standards, establishes oversight and creates transparency and fairness in process for people. This is our workplace. It's a unique workplace, but it creates that environment for all of us.

I suppose what's important, as we work through the particulars, is that we need to be leaders by example. We have a collective responsibility here and we need to commit to always doing better and to find our way to participate in these instruments in a way where we check ourselves, but we also know that we're doing it within a structure.

In adopting the code of conduct for all members - it is set out as a series of principles. There are enforceable standards about having to declare the affirmation and there's a period of time within which to do that; how we conduct ourselves in our public offices; about our responsibilities to financial and other interest disclosures; and, most importantly, our commitment to creating the safe and respectful workplace, both in the physical workplace and online. There are responsibilities for information management, induction and training, and on how we manage complaints. There's a governance layer to it as well on ethics and integrity, the induction and the training, the resources and the awareness of that, how complaints and investigations are handled and then how the findings, remedies and sanctions are managed. There's capacity and responsibility for review and how the guidelines will be published and people engage with those.

The resolution to establish an independent complaints commissioner sets out a number of guiding principles:

That the independent complaints commissioner and the deputy be guided by the following principles in the performance of their functions.

That's about integrity and independence, fairness and proportionality, respect and safety, accountability and efficiency. I believe that this is the glue that brings it all together.

The piece I believe is important is about the agreement that we make in terms of alcohol and other drugs. It acknowledges that we have a unique workplace. It acknowledges that attendance at social and community events, official functions, protocol and other activities where alcohol is served is a frequent feature of our work as elected members. It acknowledges that we value the reputation of the institution of parliament, public trust in us as members, and the safety and welfare of the people we work with. It acknowledges that impairment from alcohol or other drugs can significantly increase risks to workplace health and safety, including during work-related travel. It acknowledges that alcohol use is correlated with sexual harassment and assault. It acknowledges that we accept that our role as elected members of parliament doesn't excuse us from irresponsible consumption of alcohol or from being more generally impaired by alcohol or other drugs.

By adopting this code this evening, we commit to managing the risks associated with alcohol and other drug use and acknowledging our shared responsibility under the *Work Health and Safety Act* to maintain a safe and respectful workplace for all. We commit to the principles of responsible consumption of alcohol and preventing the adverse consequences of impairment from alcohol and drug use on staff and other members in the workplace. We respect the choice of an individual not to consume alcohol in any setting where alcohol is served.: that we recognise and respond to inappropriate behaviour - and this is the bystander principle, intervening where needed and encouraging the support of others to speak up.

I thank everybody who's been a member of the joint sessional committee and the secretary who's brought it forward. I acknowledge the work of former commissioner Sarah Bolt and Andrew Young. We commend this with the support of the Premier.

[7.28 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, this report has been a watershed with the Tasmanian parliament. I thank Sarah Bolt for her work as the anti-discrimination commissioner in bringing the Motion for Respect report to parliament in August 2022, over three years ago now. It was a report that came on the back of the Jenkins report in the federal parliament. Both of those reports, both done by women, mean we have no excuse not to have a forensic assessment of the sort of workplace that we, as members of parliament, our staff and all the members of the parliamentary services work within.

What the report laid bare for everyone was that the Tasmanian parliament had for decades been an unsafe workplace, where harassment, bullying, assaults and even sexual assault were a too-common practice, and abusive and disrespectful behaviour was normalised. There are a lot of reasons for that but, essentially, it was about culture. Culture will remain harmful when there is a lack of leadership and a lack of systematic processes, policies and administrative practices to prescribe people's behaviour and provide guardrails for what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Leadership is important, but we also need the details of what happens when people don't behave respectfully, or behave in a discriminatory or even unlawful manner. We also need guardrails within administrative practices, codes of conduct and policies that remind, direct and educate people about what appropriate, respectful behaviour in the workplace should be.

Why do we care about having a workplace that's safe and respectful? First of all, I think everyone in this room has been involved in this journey. The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, myself and all other members who have sat on this committee understand that we, like everybody else, must abide by the law. We have a duty to the people we employ. We have a duty to people who are employed within the Parliament of Tasmania. The Premier has a duty to people who are employed in the public service, who work or are contracted to, or are seconded into the work of ministers and elected members, our officers or any other work. We have a duty to protect them.

Higher than that legal responsibility, we have a moral responsibility to provide a safe and respectful workplace for people in this building.

It is the most unusual workplace and that's why it has taken so many years to get to the point we are now. There might be staff or previous members who were involved in the Motion for a Respect report, who gave evidence, who have been saying, 'Why does it take so long? What's been going on with that committee? Are they purposely trying to stall? Why?' We've gone through a process that has, unfortunately, taken years to unpack the complexity of the sort of workplace we have.

The Ministerial and Parliamentary Services workplace spans very different contract conditions. We have elected members and we have people who are paid staff of elected members. We have people who are employed in the State Service who are working in ministers' offices. We have people who are working on contracts. We have people who are employed just for the Legislative Council and just for the House of Assembly, and we have a whole section called the Legislature-General which works to both Houses and provide services to both Houses. Within that, we have people who are on a specific contract, a Crown prerogative contract, which is just for a term of employment, and we have people on standard State Service contracts. There are reasons why there are differences, and the reasons fundamentally relate to our democracy and maintaining the Westminster system, the separation of the Houses of Parliament, the separation of parliament from the operation of the government and the management of government business of the day. These things matter. They are administratively difficult.

I commend the Premier for the fact that he has committed his time to being on the committee. There's been a lot happening in the last two years, in particular. He has shown a personal commitment by showing up and also by putting the effort into working with the Speaker of the House, the President of the Legislative Council, the other members from both Houses who are on the committee and the clerks of both Houses to try and work through the complexity of how we come up with the pieces of paper that we have here today: a code of conduct for members; an independent complaints commissioner; and the alcohol statement.

Each of those has required a lot of conversations between two Houses that by virtue of a nearly 200-year-old parliament, have some pretty rigid ways of talking to each other. I feel like we've landed in a really good place. I've participated in the process and Ms Cassy O'Connor MLC participated as Leader of the Greens before me.

We've worked really hard with Andrew Young, the consultant, and his two fantastic staff, and I apologise to them for not remembering their names, but there were three people who

supported the committee in this work. We did the work of looking around other parliaments. We didn't just create stuff from scratch. We looked at other parliaments, and it's my understanding that what we have in front of us, in many respects, is nation-leading - and it should be, because it's the most recent thing that's been adopted by a parliament. I think we should take some satisfaction in the fact that, being a smaller jurisdiction, possibly, but the nature of Tasmania, we have worked together in good faith and come up with something which has some meat on the bones. It has been a fine balance, it's a fine dance, because we must maintain our democracy, we must maintain the separation between the Houses, and we must maintain parliamentary privilege.

Embedded within parliamentary privilege are the protections that we need as members of parliament to be able to speak without fear, on behalf of the people we speak for, on uncomfortable issues. If we don't and can't speak on uncomfortable issues, we can't do our job. It's very important that we have strong rules that guide our behaviour, but nonetheless do not shut us down. We cannot have the rules of debate in parliament being weaponised to shut down the truth that hurts other members' ears. The Greens will always stand up and fight for the right to be able to speak the truth, as uncomfortable as it is - and sometimes it is uncomfortable. The language that we use to talk to another member - of course that is up for a conversation about whether that's appropriate and whether that's respectable, but the words and the truth - we will always defend the right to say them.

We believe that this process that we have in the code of conduct does recognise some of the modern issues that confront parliamentarians and particularly about matters of social media. Social media is difficult, and our online behaviour, so we had conversations about what happens in the Chamber, what happens outside the Chamber, and how far a code of conduct for members should stretch outside the Chamber. Obviously, it's very important that there are limitations on how that works. We move around in the community. We've worked in good faith together, and we will keep an eye on it to make sure that it, you know, rolls out. I think all members are looking at this period to consider how it goes.

There was quite a conversation about whether these should be enshrined in legislation, or whether they should be, as I understand they will be, essentially attached to the Standing Orders; something which stands for each term of parliament and will need to be reapproved in each new term of parliament as it commences.

I want to say that since the report has come out, and while the Workplace Culture Committee has been doing its work, we've already seen the tone of things change in this parliament. Honourable Speaker, I commend you for your role in that, and also Michelle O'Byrne before you. Both you and Michelle O'Byrne have dramatically improved the tone of debate in the Chamber.

Members - Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER - Thank you.

Dr WOODRUFF - I'm not just flattering you for no reason, but it is felt. It gives me space as a woman, and as a Greens, to be able to speak the truth without being belittled in whatever tone

I get as I stand up here. It's important. It makes a difference. I think other women feel that. We feel able to be heard and able to speak, which is really important.

I've thanked other people on the committee and I thank both the Clerks at both Houses, because there's also been a structural change that's happened. It's not just the pieces of paper we have in front of us. There's been administrative and policy and structural changes that have happened within Legislature-General and parliament, so there's been a lot of stuff happening in the background, including surveys with staff, and that will continue on. The documents we have in front of us, the independent complaints commissioner - establishing that body to oversee any complaints and a process for managing the code of conduct for members, and the statement for alcohol and other drugs, which is really important. It sets the tone for what is expected for a safe workplace, but also recognises, as I think everyone on the committee said, alcohol can be used both ways. It can be a powerful lubricant and can be a social good. It can also go too far and create conditions which are potentially unsafe for the user and for other people around. I think we all recognise that it's something to manage, but we also recognise it has its place and its values as well.

On behalf of the Greens, I want to say how pleased we are to be adopting these here today. I thank other members who were involved in the process, and I look forward to this rolling out.

[7.42 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I won't take too many moments of your time. I just wanted to stand because I'm probably the only person in the House who has worked in the New South Wales Parliament, in both the old and the new parliament in Canberra, as a reporter in the Tasmanian Parliament in the 1970s, and now as an MP.

Firstly, I absolutely commend the Premier, members of both Houses, Sarah Bolt, Andrew Young, and everyone else who has worked on this. I would like to bring a certain perspective to it, because the behaviour, in my time - the late 1960s and 1970s - looking back now, was appalling. This House has come on a long, long journey in 50, 60 years. I learn a lot from this, because my behaviour, in the past, has transgressed almost all of this.

I would just like to say that this is an excellent moment of learning for me. It is. It's caught me by surprise, because sitting there reading it makes me realise that so many people are bullied, victimised, damaged, hurt, sacked, abused - because that was part of what regular parliaments were like in those days. Men were particularly the perpetrators - women and men, but particularly women were the victims. The non-members' bar of Parliament House was a really, looking back, a sort of desperate place. Those of us with power behaved in a way which demeaned and bullied those without it, so thank you.

[7.45 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Thank you, Mr George, for that and the honesty. Speaker, I rise to speak to this report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight, and at the outset, I'd like to say that there's been a power of work. I acknowledge the work of all the committee members. I know that there have been various committee members along the way: the Premier, Dr Woodruff, the Leader of the Opposition, and also the clerks' work, the consultants in

sharing their knowledge and doing the groundwork. I also acknowledge the work of the parliamentary staff involved on good governance, based on the Bolt Report. Thank you at the outset for the work that you've done.

The code, the recommendations, the establishment of the position of the complaints commissioner, the alcohol and other drugs policy for members all provide a sound basis for a more respectful and safer workplace. As Mr George has acknowledged, parliaments haven't been known as great places, and we've seen that in so many situations. The work of Sarah Bolt, and also the work of Kate Jenkins in the federal parliament have been groundbreaking. It is very important to ensure that we take the right steps for that culture of respect, the culture of a safe workplace.

I think this provides a very sound basis and a good place to start. I think we should take it as an iterative process. There must be a degree of acceptance from members, and with that acceptance there's the ownership for these recommendations to be successfully implemented. Hopefully we won't have to use a lot of them, but I think having the groundwork there is really important.

There have been many attempts to improve workplace culture and respect. I think of local government levels where I have been involved over the years in trying to create better workplaces. I know that other people in this place have had that same experience in local government and it's been pretty much an uphill battle to get that respect. At the outset, having respectful behaviour takes a huge shift for some people. I think a bit of self-reflection, as Mr George has shown, is important for us all.

We've had a budget, and Estimates replies, and I've taken note of some of those comments from Mr Vermeij and even the Treasurer. We have to think about being in somebody else's shoes, seeing what their experience might be, what their personal story might be. We don't know what kind of bad day they've had when they've left home, what's happened, or indeed throughout life; I believe it's incumbent on all of us to take this very seriously, to think about it, but to own it as well.

I believe in any scenario it's good to try and seek empathy. Not everybody has empathy, but we are in a leadership position, we are leaders of this state. We have expectations not only of ourselves, but our community has expectations of us. I think it's important to lead by example. Some of the things that we're adopting tonight won't necessarily go all the way to making this the best workplace, but it is a good start. It's about how we can lead by example. Often we have events here, we had year nine students who had come from all over Tasmania last week and we had discussions with them in small groups. We often say you can't be what you can't see. I think there's a grain of truth or understanding, if we consider how we behave. So if we're projecting poor behaviour, and we do it all the time, don't we, in Question Time and so forth? It's not going to be all sweetness and light. Nobody's expecting that, but we need to consider what impact that has on the broader community. I really think that this has come a long way. I will just read that first clause in the preamble. I believe this sets it up really well:

This code sets out the ethical and behavioural standards of conduct expected of members of parliament elected by the people of Tasmania. The actions of members of parliament have an impact on the lives of all

Tasmanian people through the legislation they enact, and the public confidence in parliament through the behaviours they model.

I commend this and I thank everybody who's been involved in bringing it to this parliament.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Standing Orders and Rules of the House - Amendment

[7.52 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, before I move the last motion, can I thank contributors for their very genuine thoughts and reflections as well. Some of us have been in this place a little longer than others, and clearly from Mr George's contribution, which was very powerful, thank you very much for that, Mr George. You've seen a lot and experienced a lot in your time with various parliaments. To draw on your experience and how far we've come to this point is good.

This further improves a safe workplace, a respectful workplace, and one where everyone can feel they can make a contribution irrespective of their view in a very considered but, most importantly, a safe way. I thank everyone for their contribution and enormous amount of effort once again from the committee most particularly, but also again, those who spoke about their lived experience in the Sarah Bolt report. Again, it is very powerful reading in conjunction indeed with what we are approving today. Honourable Speaker, with reference to the interim report of the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Cultural Oversight Paper No. 26, I move -

That the Standing Orders and Rules of the House be amended as follows:

- (1) in Standing Order 2 leave out paragraph (d); and
- (2) in Standing Order 325:
 - (c) after privileges leave out 'conduct' wherever occurring; and
 - (d) leave out all the provisions of the code of conduct.

The SPEAKER - Do you want to speak to that at all, honourable Premier, or does it stand alone?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I think it speaks for itself, honourable Speaker. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Custodial Inspector Amendment (Protection From Reprisal Bill) 2025 (No. 44) - Consideration of Legislative Council Amendments

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the following item of private members business being dealt with during government business time: order of the day 18, Custodial Inspector Amendment (Protection From Reprisal Bill) 2025 (No. 44), consideration of amendments of the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

CUSTODIAL INSPECTOR AMENDMENT (PROTECTION FROM REPRISAL) BILL 2025 (No. 44)

In Committee - Consideration of Amendments of the Legislative Council

Ms ROSOL - Chair, I move -

That the amendments of the Legislative Council be agreed to.

I begin by thanking the minister and the government for agreeing to do this in government business, rather than waiting for our private members time, which would have meant that we had to wait until next year. We're very grateful for you bringing this forward today so that we can debate it and agree to these amendments and have this bill passed. We know that will make a difference for people.

Members may recall that during the debate on this bill, the Attorney-General flagged several suggested amendments to the bill. Subsequent discussions prior to debate in the Council narrowed down the proposed amendments to two, and these two matters were addressed in amendments passed by the Council. These discussions were constructive, and I'm pleased that we were able to bring forward amendments that address all the matters that remained of concern following the first debate in this House. I thank the Attorney-General, his office, the department and the Custodial Inspector for their constructive engagement on this bill.

Clause 6 reduces the timeframe for tabling inspection reports from 'not before 30 days' after the report has been provided to the minister, to 'not before seven days'. Members may recall that during debate in the House of Assembly, the Attorney-General indicated that the government believes seven days is not a reasonable timeframe for the government to consider the report before tabling. We're inclined to agree that seven days is a fairly narrow timeframe. It is also relevant that the Custodial Inspector's recommendations didn't provide for an explicit timeframe, just for

a timeframe shorter than 30 days. On this basis, we were comfortable increasing the timeframe to 14 days. We understand that the Custodial Inspector is comfortable with this amendment.

Our second amendment was to clause 10, which amends section 34 of the principal act to extend protections for the provision of information on similar terms to section 35 of the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*. This clause extends the coverage to provision of information made for the purposes of the act, rather than just under the act, and extends to civil liability, as well as adding a qualifier that the protections only apply insofar as the information was provided in good faith.

Our second amendment relates to this clause. As currently drafted, our bill does not apply solely to information provided to the Custodial Inspector or an officer of the Custodial Inspector. In contrast, section 35 of the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021* applies to information provided to the MPM of the subcommittee. The current section 34 of the principal act does not apply solely to information provided to the Custodial Inspector, or an officer of the Custodial Inspector. On this basis, when drafting, we retained the broad application so as not to inadvertently weaken this provision. As we understand it, the Custodial Inspector is comfortable with the government's proposal to have this provision only apply to information provided to the Custodial Inspector, or an officer of the Custodial Inspector. The amendment very closely resembles the provisions in section 35 of the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*.

[7.59 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT - Chair, I thank the Greens member for Bass for speaking to these amendments and commending the government for conceding, or supporting bringing on this legislation this afternoon, prior to the end of parliament, so that we could actually get the bill sorted, done and dusted and passed. We certainly support that and are grateful for the opportunity to support the Greens with this particular bill and those amendments in the upper House. I don't need to say too much more. The amendments were discussed and we consulted with the Greens prior to the amendments being put upstairs. The government is satisfied with those amendments and the 14 days which we flagged in this place and then were put upstairs; likewise with section 34 with the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*. We believe it does, overall, strengthen the protection for people who provide information to the Custodial Inspector and, overall, the government is pleased that we established the position of the Custodial Inspector all the way back, nearly 10 years ago now, in 2016. It provides for an improved independent and proactive approach to oversight of our custodial facilities. We also recognise there's more work to be done - much more work to be done - but this is an improvement and the government supports these amendments.

Ms BUTLER - Chair, I'd also like to thank Ms Rosol for introducing these amendments and we also support these changes. What's really important is that the changes these amendments introduce are to do with transparency and with making sure that the Custodial Inspector and the reports provided by the Custodial Inspector, especially the recommendations provided by the Custodial Inspector, are activated and implemented. Hopefully, this will start that process in a more transparent way.

It is concerning still that the government, especially because of the way that they operate at the moment, will receive Custodial Inspector reports before they are tabled in the House, which does give them that opportunity to create a narrative, create media lines and so forth, if there is

anything within those reports that they're not happy with from a public relations point of view. Why they can't be tabled directly by the Custodial Inspector into the parliament, I'm not sure, but this is a start. It does provide some shortening of that timeline.

It's also important to note that the Custodial Inspector just released yet another report, which was the security contractor transport of young people in custody. The main reason that this issue was brought to the notice of the Custodial Inspector is because they do conduct random investigations or visits to Ashley Detention Youth Centre and this was information that was provided to them by a young person at Ashley. What was really concerning in this report is that the security officers who were found to be at fault had not made any documentation of the incident and it happened last November. There was also very little follow up and documentation by the workers at the centre on this incident.

I also note that each response to those recommendations from the department, as for the proposed completion date, all say 'timeframe to be clarified following further internal scoping and prioritisation processes'. That's very bureaucratic and it makes sense, but we need to have timelines for when recommendations from the Custodial Inspector can be implemented. That is another area which is lacking, because there's a number of recommendations made by the Custodial Inspector over many years that simply haven't been implemented or are still in the process of being so.

There are certainly areas where this can be improved, especially in the light of the investigation into institutional sexual abuse, especially the investigation into Ashley. This report from the Custodial Inspector - I was just aghast that this could still happen, that we could have security guards who don't have the appropriate Working with Vulnerable Children checks: that assumption that we just thought that the Ashley workers were actually moving with those young people from the Ashley site to the Launceston General Hospital. Well, they weren't. They were with security officers who had no training on how to handle them. We need to do better, and I thank the Greens, again, for introducing this. There's still a lot more work to be done in this area, though. Thank you. We support this.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

Reported the Committee had resolved to agree to the Council amendments.

Resolution agreed to.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (No. 58)

Second Reading

[8.07 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill delivers on the government's commitment to prevent the University of Tasmania (UTAS) from disposing of land at its Sandy Bay campus without the explicit approval of both Houses of Parliament. It also provides the flexibility for the university to retain a modern science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) precinct at Sandy Bay.

As Tasmania's only university, UTAS is central to our state's future - educating our young people, skilling our workforce, and sustaining the institutions on which Tasmanians rely. Many Tasmanians have personal connections with UTAS - as students, alumni, employees, or through family and business ties. Like many members of this House, I studied at the university, and my family's links span three generations. It is part of the fabric of our community. The university has a long history across Tasmania, with campuses in every region. The southern campus at Sandy Bay was built on land gifted to the university under the *University of Tasmania Act 1951*.

Members will be aware that UTAS began establishing a presence in the Hobart CBD in 2007. In 2019, it announced its intention to consolidate its southern campus in the CBD and redevelop Sandy Bay as a mixed-use precinct. That proposal, set out in the 2021 masterplan, attracted significant community opposition. In an elector poll conducted by the City of Hobart in October 2022, more than 74 per cent of voters opposed the relocation.

In response to those concerns and as part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, the government introduced legislation in June 2024 to amend the *University of Tasmania Act 1992*. That bill required any disposal of Sandy Bay land to have the approval of both Houses, preventing unilateral action by the university.

In November 2024, the university announced it would retain a STEM precinct at Sandy Bay. This was a welcome development. Contemporary STEM facilities are critical to our State's growth. They will help us skill Tasmanians for the future, increase the competitiveness of our industries, and strengthen Tasmania's place in the national economy. Without this bill, Tasmania risks falling behind, with modern facilities delayed until well into the 2030s.

On 28 November 2024, this House debated and passed the *University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2025* with amendments. Those amendments supported the STEM precinct by excluding land above Churchill Avenue from the protections in the bill and rezoning that land from Particular Purpose Zone 3 to Inner Residential. This rezoning is the most pragmatic way to enable the University to progress the STEM precinct, avoiding the lengthy Hobart City Council rezoning process.

The bill passed this House and was tabled in the Legislative Council on 11 March 2025. However, following the State Election, it lapsed at prorogation on 11 June 2025.

The bill before us today is consistent with the version passed by this House in November 2024. It includes the rezoning provisions, and Clause 7(3) makes clear that rezoning applies only to the defined parcels of land, still held by the university on both commencement day and Royal Assent, and that it cannot extend to land protected as 'vested land'. This safeguard ensures that the rezoning mechanism operates only as intended.

In summary, this bill strikes the right balance – protecting the public interest, respecting the university’s role as an education provider, and enabling the university to advance its STEM precinct at Sandy Bay.

I commend the bill to the House.

[8.12 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand and speak on this bill, in which we're still dealing with the broken promises from the Liberal government from 2024 let alone getting to the 2025 broken promises - and this is perhaps the biggest one.

This is a Liberal government that went to the 2024 election promising to keep the university in the Bay. I do miss Mr Behrakis being here, because I did enjoy the debate last time. Mr Behrakis didn't want to speak to it because he knew what he and minister Ogilvie had done to the people of Clark when they promised to keep the university in the bay, as was the headline on the day they announced this policy, and what the actual bill as amended then, and now what the completed bill actually does.

The University of Tasmania proposed to the state, to local government - and I will declare that I was one of the Greater Hobart mayors at the time just after the announcement, but I worked through them during that time with Glenorchy, Clarence and Hobart about this deal. They had the support of all four Greater Hobart councils under Lord Mayor Hickey in particular; Deputy Mayor Burnet, I remember her being quite closely aligned with this. The Mayor of Glenorchy, Mayor Johnston, was supportive of moving the University of Tasmania into the city; and the Mayor of Clarence as well. I remember Doug Chipman being supportive. All the mayors came together to support moving the University of Tasmania into the city.

This was as well as the state government, including the now Premier, then-minister for Education, Jeremy Rockliff; then-premier Will Hodgman, who wrote letters. Minister Abetz, then Senator Abetz, actually lobbied and campaigned for more federal government support to support moving the university into the city. All three levels of government - local government, state government and federal government - all working together to realise this vision from the University of Tasmania to move themselves into the city. Brand new STEM facilities, the new Forestry building - which, I understand from a function I've just been at, is now ready to go and will be available for students next year. Absolutely fantastic. What a vision for our city. All three levels of government committed to it, working together.

Then came the politics - the populist politics. The worst of populist politics that came together in the vote through Hobart City Council that moved many local government representatives, including the former member and alderman Behrakis and others, from being very supportive of a visionary concept like this to being opposed on the basis of local politics - the worst of local politics.

The policy of this Liberal government actually said they were going to freeze the assets of the University of Tasmania; the only university in the state was going to have its assets at Sandy Bay frozen. Having supported the move and given them all the political will they needed to

progress this plan to purchase property, to get moving into a 21st century education model, the Liberal government decided for political reasons at the 2024 election to move to freeze the assets of the University of Tasmania: an astonishing policy for an apparently serious political party to take. So unserious was the policy that before the bill was even debated, they announced amendments to their own bill, which is where we get to today.

This is not the original policy; it's not the original bill. This has been amended and now arrives here for a second time in its full complement and it does exactly the opposite to what the Save UTAS group wanted. This now rezones the area above Churchill Avenue for housing. Bravo. This is what the university wanted, and what Labor's policy was when I announced it in June last year. The University of Tasmania, in moving into the city, has excess land and buildings they are simply not using any more. This bill allows that land to be rezoned.

You can be almost certain that this land would not have been rezoned by the City of Hobart because the University of Tasmania would not have initiated this rezoning of the land for political reason. But because of the Liberal government - and we're very happy to support this bill because it's our policy, this bill rezones the land and allows up to 2000 new homes to be built. That's fantastic. It's exactly what should happen in Sandy Bay. It's exactly what should happen in our city. It represents a huge opportunity for in-fill housing in a suburb like Sandy Bay that, frankly, could do with it. I know that won't be popular in some areas. New housing in areas often isn't. But the land is ripe for rezoning.

New homes that get built there will still have to adhere to the planning scheme. The City of Hobart will still take any application from the university or a prospective new buyer and it will have to go through a planning system according to the zoning that they've selected and the Statewide Planning Scheme that has been put in place.

The opportunity and the vision is for the University of Tasmania to move into the city, as they've done partially, particularly through the new Forestry building, and to provide new housing. At the heart of our policy is the autonomy of the University of Tasmania to make the right decisions for the university. I am disappointed that they're not going through with a full move into the city. I understand the reasons why, but I would have loved to have seen that STEM facility built in the city, as was originally planned through the City Deal endorsed by the Kingborough, Glenorchy, Hobart and Clarence councils, the state government and the federal government. They made the decision to stay at Sandy Bay for reasons that - I won't verbal them, but they're pretty obvious. It's disappointing that they haven't been able to go ahead with that proposal into the city.

Much of the conversation, led by the university but supported by local government, by state and federal representatives, has been about giving more young Tasmanians access to world-class university education in the city, in a place that's more accessible to them. I remember the comments from former mayor of Sorell, Kerry Vincent, who passionately spoke about how people from his area out at Sorell need to get access to university, and getting to the city is so much easier if you're coming from a place like Sorell than it is to Sandy Bay. It is much easier for people from my area, down in Kingborough, I know from being a student who lived at Kingston and studied at Sandy Bay, it is much more difficult to get to Sandy Bay than it is into the city. Also places like Glenorchy, and I've heard members talk about the accessibility of university education.

The plan from the university was fantastic. It was wrecked by politics: wrecked by local politics and wrecked by a Liberal government that gave 10 years of support for this project to move to the city and then pulled the plug with this ridiculous policy, made somewhat better by the bill. What this bill does is freeze the assets where the university doesn't want to sell any more anyway in exchange for the rezoning of land.

The second reading speech we heard today says the bill delivers on the government's commitment to prevent the University of Tasmania from disposing of land at its Sandy Bay campus without the explicit approval of both Houses of Parliament. That's simply not true. This bill rezones the land above Churchill Avenue and they are able to sell that land without the approval of this parliament.

Ms Ogilvie - What's happening now? We're discussing that in parliament.

Mr WINTER - We have been through this before. The minister uses the excuse that somehow because this is going through parliament, that constitutes the approval.

Ms Ogilvie - Correct.

Mr WINTER - That is not the policy, and the policy is pretty simple. The policy, ridiculous as it is, was fairly simple.

Ms Ogilvie - You said it was your policy so it's not ridiculous.

Mr WINTER - No, the policy the Liberals put forward at the last state election -

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable member for Franklin has the call. The honourable minister can sum up.

Ms Ogilvie - I will. Apologies.

Mr WINTER - Introduced legislation to amend the *University of Tasmania Act 1992* to require that the land at Sandy Bay currently held by the University of Tasmania and gifted the university in 1951 for education cannot be sold except with explicit support of both Houses, preventing UTAS from unilaterally disposing of it. That's not happening through this bill and I'm very pleased but they shouldn't pretend that they are adhering to their policy because that's not what this is. Thankfully, they're not, and this will potentially provide an additional 2000 new homes. potentially for young Tasmanians to live and work in the city. That is fantastic.

What's not fantastic is the position we've heard from the Greens and green Independents on this matter. It's been disappointing to see the politics that has not only been played at local government level but also in this place from people who, again, should know better.

The University of Tasmania is proposing to rezone the land, as we're doing through this bill, and then build new housing in Sandy Bay - up to 2000 new homes -

Mr Bayley - Not up to 2000 new homes.

Mr WINTER - and the Greens are about to vote against doing exactly that. What's the excuse?

Ms Johnston - Have you seen the land that we're talking about?

Mr WINTER - I certainly have and in fact, some of the buildings that are there can be repurposed for housing almost straight away, just above Churchill Avenue. I've been and had a look myself. How exciting that will be. There is new housing as a part of this. If you want to talk about housing and make it part of your political narrative, then perhaps you want to support up to 2000 new homes being built in Sandy Bay, a place that's very close to public transport, to education, obviously, access to retail, access to health facilities. This is a place that is ripe for more housing, and I think we should support it. If you want to say you support housing, then you should support exactly this, unless you want to bow down to the sort of rhetoric we have heard.

Regarding Save UTAS, I fully respect their right to run a campaign, and they've run a successful campaign because that's where we got to today. However, I don't agree with them at all. I've met with them at least twice, potentially three times. I've listened to their views, and I don't agree with it at all. The University of Tasmania has set itself a strong vision for the city and for itself but for political purposes, they're now left in the position they are in.

I have concerns about the financial situation they've been left in. The financial situation the University of Tasmania is in at the moment is not strong. A part of that has been their attempted shift, with all the political support that they had, but then the pulling of that political support, firstly by local government, secondly by the state government. That has been detrimental to the finances of our only university in the state, which has been disappointing.

We believe that the move into the city would have been a good one to its fullest extent and to where they wanted to get to. It is disappointing that hasn't happened. This bill is an enhancement on the policy the Liberals took to the election. It is not the policy the Liberals took to the election. It is a sell-out of the people they tried to appeal to but the policy is pretty close to the policy we advocated for and that's why we're supporting it today. The bill allows the university to rezone and then sell assets above Churchill Avenue, which is a good thing, allowing for housing. That cash can be used by them for their new STEM facility. It can be used by them at a time where I think those assets being able to be sold is a good thing.

As I said, I am concerned about where they've got to as an organisation, following 10 years of upheaval firstly led by their decision, secondly supported by local, state and federal governments and then let down so badly by this Liberal government. We support the bill, we support the rezoning of the land, we support more housing in Sandy Bay, and we support more housing for young people. We think it's important and the bill is a much-preferred outcome than what the Liberals had previously outlined, and we will support the bill as it's currently drafted.

[8.26 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to talk on the University of Tasmania Lands bill, and I say upfront that we supported the original bill as it was introduced. This is very much *deja vu* because we've been here before. We debated the original bill that was amended in the other place and, ultimately, we had to oppose that bill, and here we are now considering effectively, not exactly the same bill, but a bill that gives the exact effect of that amended bill from almost exactly this time last year.

Let me start with a congratulations for the community, because I acknowledge the community, whether it be Save UTAS, or the academics or whether it be UTAS students, experts, or colleague MPs and MLCS, there has been a community campaign that has pushed back strongly on UTAS's proposition to move *holus-bolus* into the city. That's not an easy feat. Having come from the campaign space where you're pushing back against large institutions with money, with access to media and with power, that's not an easy place for a community group to be in, but with tenacity and advocacy, they have shifted UTAS from that wholesale move into the city and that's a welcome thing from our perspective, and they got the university to anchor back to the Sandy Bay site.

The Sandy Bay site is a spectacular site. Any other university in the country would give their left arm for a site like the Sandy Bay site. It's a couple of kilometres out of the city, it has incredible views, it has incredible facilities, and that is why people have fought so hard to protect that site. They know it's a valuable asset. They know, despite the decision of UTAS to move, they know, or they knew, that it was a really valuable asset. It's very welcome that UTAS were finally forced into a situation of basically accepting that and accepting that they needed to anchor back to Sandy Bay, and that they would do that with a STEM facility. Facilities that we need, having just been at an ITC event downstairs, we know that we need to stimulate engagement in STEM faculties and STEM disciplines and we do need the university to focus on that.

I congratulate the community for forcing the government to act in this space as well, because they did act. To recap, in 2024, the Liberal government took a policy and an election commitment to that election that was to put a check and balance over the disposal of any and all land at the Sandy Bay site. The intent was to ensure that we, as the parliament had some oversight on public land that was gifted to the university 70 odd years ago and this was government responding to community pressure. That's really welcome, and it was a check and balance on UTAS where it was clear that people felt UTAS was not in full control of making the best decisions.

The bill as we knew it, as originally promised and introduced, has descended in many ways into perversity. It was amended by the government this time last year to fundamentally defeat the original intent. I completely agree, we disagree fundamentally on the outcome of this bill, Mr Winter, but I completely agree that the amendments made completely undermine the original intent and the pledge that was taken to that election. It means that the site is now carved up, parliamentary oversight does not apply to part of it, and there is a parliamentary rezone. Effectively, a unilateral parliamentary rezone to inner residential of segments of that land above Churchill Avenue. In doing this, the Liberals have betrayed their commitment, they've betrayed some of their fundamental supporters, and they've betrayed proper planning processes.

We do not support parliamentary rezones, that is a fundamental principle, because they simply do not work and they do not deliver good decision-making. It sets a terrible precedent that we're never going to support and it undermines the existing process or the previous process that was underway in terms of the Hobart City Council, Sandy Bay and Mount Nelson neighbourhood planning process. People had invested genuine time into that process. Experts, community members - they turned up to forums, they turned up to workshops, they were engaged in that process. It's really disappointing, I have to say, it's really disappointing to hear the minister say that this bill avoids the lengthy Hobart City Council rezoning process. I agree it does. This is a shortcut, it avoids a process, but part of that process is about bringing people along on the journey.

Part of that process is about ensuring that there is compromise made along the way, that views are heard, that the best possible community outcome is delivered. To shortcut that and simply say, 'We're going to rezone it, it's going to be residential' is a fundamentally bad decision. With an elector poll of Hobart City Council residents on this issue of delivering effectively a 75 per cent of people who don't support the wholesale move into the city, it's really clear that people have a stake in this decision. They have a stake in this decision and they want to make sure it's done right, and that proper planning process is the way to do it.

We're not going to support parliament engaging and reaching into the planning process with this rezone. We Greens have been utterly consistent on that. It's a shame. This parliament is increasingly reaching into the planning process to deliver planning outcomes for developers, whether it be the state postal policy, whether it be Stony Rise, whether it be the stadium. We can't be reaching into planning processes and making these decisions because they fundamentally cut out community and deliver bad outcomes.

It's ironic that today, in the other place, the stadium order is to be debated and it seems it's going pass because it's effectively symbolic of why we're here. The Liberal government, this government, is unwilling or unable to stump up \$100 million as a state contribution to the \$500 million STEM rebuild price tag for the STEM redevelopment; \$100 million, a fifth of the \$500 million commitment that's needed for this development, the other \$400 million coming from the federal government.

I read into the *Hansard* a statement from UTAS that was made this time last year just before we debated this bill just after UTAS announced that it was going to anchor back to Sandy Bay. UTAS said:

To achieve this plan, the next major steps for the University are to secure funding from the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to develop new STEM facilities at Sandy Bay.

They were looking for \$100 million from the Tasmanian government to match and unlock the \$400 million from the federal government. Compare this to the stadium being debated upstairs as we speak - \$1.3 billion, and progressed against all independent expert advice; Nicholas Gruen, the Tasmanian Planning Commission and others, and to secure the vote at the Legislative Council, the government's been happy to put a \$105 million commitment on the table for community sports infrastructure. We fully support community sports infrastructure, don't get me wrong, but we can't

have it delivered in a way that is not equitable. It should be done through a fair merits-based and independent assessment process. For the government to pull \$100 million of extra funding for community support out of its hat, simply to get the support of upper House members, when they can't actually find \$100 million to invest in the future of our children in this state and STEM, is another indictment on this government. It's a complete failure to invest in STEM and it clearly shows that STEM and education is not the priority of this government after all.

The government's going to be pouring 11 times more money, at least, into the stadium, an inward-facing kind of colosseum on our waterfront, than what is needed for STEM. It's shameful. So much for STEM being an anchor. The minister's response to that statement from the university was:

We intend to strongly advocate to the Commonwealth to invest in Tasmania's STEM-led future. What message does it send to Tasmanians if the Commonwealth is unwilling to invest in this vital sector?

Well, minister, what message does it send to Tasmanians if the Tasmanian government is unwilling to invest in this sector? You're more willing to spend \$100 million to buy the vote of Legislative Councillors than you are to invest in the future of our children. It's a real shame. The fact that you have not managed to stump up this kind of money for foundational tertiary education is indeed an indictment.

I want to say, and put on the record, that I've had some long and detailed and really positive engagement with UTAS over this issue over the last few years as well, and I really appreciate that. I've really got to know some of the representatives from UTAS, and I know they are genuinely trying really hard. They have been left in a really difficult position over many years. Some of the position is because of decisions of their own making. They are legacy bad decisions by past vice-chancellors and past councillors.

At the same time, we know the university sector is in really deep strife around the country, whether it be because of COVID and the impacts of COVID, whether it be because of international student caps, whether it's because of HECS fees. It's a really challenging space and I absolutely acknowledge that.

UTAS as well, it is well understood, as has been demonstrated by the Legislative Council review into the legislation that governs UTAS, that there are issues that need to be dealt with in its statutory framework as well. UTAS is Tasmania's only university and it is way too important to fail. We can disagree on many things, I'm sure, about this bill and other issues, but we all, I know, in this place and elsewhere, are united on the fact that UTAS is just simply too important to fail. This, the land sale and STEM, is only one part of the story.

The Legislative Council report made some really clear recommendations that we, as a parliament, really do need to treat seriously and really do need to get on with the job of addressing. It's 19 recommendations in total and identified that the *UTAS Act* needs to be amended, in many ways to deal with the constitution of the University Council, so that it:

- Includes a minimum of two student members, with at least one elected by the student body;
- That it includes a minimum of two members from the academic staff, elected by academic staff;
- That the act be amended to provide the constitution of the University Council to include a minimum of two members from the professional staff, elected by the professional staff;
- The act to be amended to ensure there's more balance between the number of appointed and elected members on the University Council;
- That it be amended to clarify the purpose and function of ministerial appointments to the University Council; and
- The act to be amended to ensure that when considering the best interests of the university, the University Council must explicitly include consideration of the university's obligations to the Tasmanian community.

That's just a handful of the recommendations that have been pulled out and made by the Legislative Council Select Committee a few years ago. It is really important that we do get on with that.

I will highlight, and I don't want to make a big deal of this, but I do think it needs to be put on the record while we are talking about UTAS, that I do have concerns, and we Greens do have concerns, about the recent revelations about the Vice-Chancellor taking a paid position on the board of Deloitte. This is a position that is in charge of our only university. He's paid to the tune of \$1 million-plus a year, and we, and others, think he should have a full-time focus on the university itself.

I will just read quickly into *Hansard* a comment from Dr Ruth Barton, the Tasmanian division Secretary of the National Tertiary Education Union, and it's hard to disagree with this. On 2 September, she said:

The Vice-Chancellor's role is meant to be a full-time position requiring complete dedication to the university and its students. Taking on additional paid board positions while drawing a salary of over \$1,000,000 raises fundamental questions about priorities and commitment.

When university leaders start collecting additional stipends from major consulting firms, it creates obvious conflicts of interest and questions about where their loyalties lie.

Now, I'm not casting any aspersions on the Vice-Chancellor in relation to his motivations or any actions that he has taken, but it's clearly a bad look for the VC of our university to be paid to undertake a board position for another entity.

I also fear for UTAS in the face of this decision, and I did put this on the record last time as well. I do fear that this could be a Pyrrhic victory for UTAS. It gets the planning decision that it wants, but it loses further in the social licence space, and that is a really bad outcome. It's a bad outcome being driven by bad government decisions and the inability of this government to step up and support the future of students and support STEM.

I want to finish on this point, with some words from Emeritus Distinguished Professor Jeff Malpas, who I know and respect dearly. He wrote this in *The Mercury* as recently as yesterday, and I think it highlights some of the dismay and despair at the university and some of the decisions being taken. He writes:

There are clearly larger issues here of governmental, regulatory and institutional breakdown that go well beyond the university alone. One might hope that what has happened, and is happening, with UTAS will provoke some serious reconsideration of what has occurred, how it occurred and where we are now heading.

For those of us who have spent a large part of our lives committed to UTAS and to furthering teaching and research in the humanities and social sciences, there seems little we can do but watch in grief and dismay at what is occurring.

That's tragic. It's tragic that we have such long-standing, distinguished and respected academics feeling utterly powerless and utterly despairing at the decisions of UTAS and the future they're going towards. I will leave that there.

I do want to say, on the record, that we are obviously strong supporters of housing - the need for new housing and the need for housing reforms - and with the greatest respect, Mr Winter, I'm not going to be lectured by you on housing so long as the Labor Party is standing in the way of important reforms in the housing space, like rental reforms, like reining in Airbnb, like delivering minimum standards for tenants, like making sure that no-cause evictions are ended for sure. They are the low-hanging fruit. They are the things that we can be doing today when it comes to housing and they can make a real difference.

Of course, we can bring Homes Tasmania back into the purview of government itself. We can fund it adequately to actually build public houses that are needed, and we can start to get the 5336 priority applicants on the waiting list trending downwards, as opposed to trending upwards.

When it comes to this site, yes, of course we need more density in city areas. We were disappointed with the sale of the K&D building when it went to a car yard and wasn't delivered to some kind of mixed-use development that certainly included higher-density or medium-density housing.

Federally, our colleagues are strongly prosecuting the need for reform when it comes to negative gearing reform, capital gains tax reform, and the like. We are working hard in the housing space, and we do accept that there's surplus land at UTAS. I think even many people within Save UTAS and Save UTAS itself accepts that there is surplus land at UTAS. Then there is possibly capacity for a rationalisation of that land and that there is potential for housing there, but to rezone it holus-bolus is pre-emptive and ill-informed, and it is not informed by expert advice.

A question for the minister to answer when she sums up is - exactly how did you land on the Inner Residential zoning category? How did you get there? What advice was received from whom in relation to the decision to write Inner Residential into this bill, as opposed to General Residential, or as opposed to Rural Living, for example, which is actually one of the zonings that's in very close proximity to this site?

If you do look at the current zoning map on the list, the majority of the site actually is bounded by low-density residential, and the lower part of the campus is bounded by general residential. Inner Residential certainly borders some of the northern part of this site, but it's not the majority of the site at all. The question is: how did you arrive at the Inner Residential categorisation for this in this bill, minister?

When it comes to the Sandy Bay and Mt Nelson neighbourhood planning process, the latest discussion and engagement report, which was from August last year, had the Hobart City Council explicitly addressing the UTAS campus issue. They couldn't ignore it because people from the community, the people who were being consulted, were raising this. I will read it into *Hansard*:

In developing the community plan, council will review the feedback received from the community and consider a scenarios-based planning response which will contribute to the sustainable growth and development of the city. This role involves balancing a wider range of social, economic and environmental objectives.

The process was incomplete. More work was to be done. Community was engaged and that community engagement was being considered. Minister, what scenarios-based planning response have you undertaken and considered when coming to the conclusion that this needs to be zoned as inner residential?

I'm also aware of concerns about the existing STEM facilities located above Churchill Avenue. Here stands the Life Sciences Building, the TIA glasshouses, the seismic vault and several buildings currently occupied by third parties with no intention or ability to move. There's the CSIRO and TMAG herbarium up there. It is my understanding that they were deliberately collocated with UTAS to allow research interactions to be fostered in this state. What does the rezone mean for CSIRO and TMAG facilities, minister? The past commitment from UTAS was to ensure that no facility is abandoned until suitable replacements are made.

It does raise many questions, such as: what of the equipment that cannot or should not be moved, and the recent investments in facilities like the Biological Sciences glasshouses and Molecular Biology facilities? What if, in the decades to come, UTAS realises a need to expand its

STEM capacity? Having its own cleared land ready to go gives options that are unavailable if it's sold off now. Lastly, of those third-party facilities, so TMAG and CSIRO, what are the implications of having research and other facilities now located in a residential zone? I assume they can be approved as an existing use within that zone - an existing non-compliant use that is but what do they need to do if they want to intensify their operations, if they want to get bigger? What is their flexibility in the inner residential zone to adapt and change for any future needs that might happen to those facilities?

In the past, the National Tertiary Education Union has raised strategic concerns about the potential loss of STEM facilities, the loss of integral education facilities and a hollowed-out Sandy Bay site. In correspondence I received last year prior to the debate, division secretary Ruth Barton expressed 'deep concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of the land above Churchill Ave without proper consultation'.

Dr Barton also flagged the broken election promise and democratic process; UTAS's educational mission being compromised, UTAS's poor record of planning; the housing market context, and consultation and transparency issues. These are key issues. She concluded:

We strongly urge that the rezoning process be conducted through proper planning channels with genuine community consultation, not dealt with solely by way of legislative change. The educational importance of the site and the government's pre-election commitments must be honoured to ensure transparency, accountability and the best outcomes for our staff, students and community.

They are wise and sound words from the local representative of the National Tertiary Education Union.

Ms Johnston has foreshadowed and distributed some amendments. We will be supportive of them because they remove this rezoning component. I have also distributed an amendment which speaks to the concern of the 99-year lease limit being considered a threshold for consideration of this bill, and of the need for parliamentary consideration. A period of 99 years is a long time in anyone's consideration. My amendment goes to 30 years, which brings it more in line with commercial terms. That doesn't prevent a longer lease being engaged in if it is passed by parliament, but it brings it down from 99 years to that 30-year limit.

In the lead-up to the debate last year, UTAS made a really profound commitment to return surplus land to the Aboriginal community. I acknowledge that this is not a commitment that's been rearticulated by UTAS since then, and I understand that these matters are complicated and can take some time, but the Greens strongly support such a move. The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, seeing an opportunity with the campus move and the rationalisation of the land, wrote to UTAS in 2021 and put a formal claim on the table to say, 'Well, if you are disposing of this land, you have natural bushland that is going to remain natural bushland. Why not return it to the Aboriginal community?' That was well received by UTAS.

Several years ago, UTAS made an apology to Aboriginal people, including an acknowledgement that its institution is built on lands of dispossessed people and built on colonisation. It was a profound set of words from the university, really impressive, and they action to those words. I encourage UTAS to continue to pursue conversations with the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania. I believe that is a concept that a lot of people can get behind. The government itself hasn't returned land to Aboriginal people for almost 25 years. It has been the public that has led the way in the last 20 years in returning land: there's been Tom and Jane Teniswood on the east coast, a block of land returned at Mathinna and one recently returned on the boundary of Kunanyi/Mt Wellington. This would provide incredible opportunities of interaction between Aboriginal people, Aboriginal land management and the university in its research opportunities. I urge UTAS to lead in this space because it is an incredible opportunity for all of us, not least for Aboriginal people, and an opportunity to right a profound wrong.

We Greens supported this bill in its original form, and we will support the amendments that will come forward. It's a profoundly different bill now to what was originally promised by the minister and the Liberal government in the 2024 election. I fear what may flow from this if it goes through and the community is cut out of this conversation. UTAS is already significantly diminished. I fear that this kind of overreach into the planning process that cuts out community and delivers a poorer outcome for people will further deepen that mistrust and make the challenge of rebuilding the university into the institution that we all want it to be that much harder.

[8.54 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill. I appreciate University of Tasmania's efforts over the last couple of months on the back of probably two years of briefings about this matter, their most recent briefings on this matter and their tour of the new Forestry building, which will be a landmark building for Hobart and Tasmania. The university should be very proud of what they've created there. It will be a wonderful space for Tasmanians and students who enrol in the University of Tasmania to learn, engage with other students and the faculties and it will also be a good place to work.

I also acknowledge the briefings and the relentless communication from the Save UTAS community, and their passion for this issue. It's been a complex one. This whole debate and issue has been a sorry chapter in public policy and the management of key foundation institutions in the Tasmanian community. The politicking, the distortions, the handling of this whole saga has left a sorry taste in everyone's mouth. It is left to us now to try and work through and solve that. It really has been a sorry chapter, and it has reflected poorly on this place. I say that collectively. I'm not pointing fingers. It has also left a poor reflection the University of Tasmania.

The University of Tasmania is one of our foundational institutions. It's so important, not only in terms of its role in society but its role in the Tasmanian economy, its obligation to educate young Tasmanians, to attract people for research for a whole range of classic university activities. It's been something we've been very proud of for generations. Given its historical institutional importance and fundamental importance in the Tasmanian economy, it's sad to see it in such a sorry state.

I made some key points on this in the public domain late last year. The elections distort my years these days, given we've had too many of them. One of the things I said was that the University's act of parliament establishes its public character, but it also enshrines its autonomy. This is a universally recognised cornerstone of any sort of university governance. That kind of governance ensures it remains free from political interference but the university's autonomy can never be absolute, and its decision should be the subject of informed public debate and scrutiny. I made a contribution on this matter prior to the election, and I've made my view on the state of affairs very clearly and publicly.

The last election triggered another round of lobbying about this issue, and we find ourselves here. Given the time of night and the year we've had, what I might do to inform the debate is to put on *Hansard* that I was approached by a number of organisations about my position on the University of Tasmania. I was asked in some questionnaires to do a 'yes' or 'no', or a 50-word statement. I didn't think that was appropriate for something as important as this issue. I responded to a number of stakeholders with my position leading into the election, during the election campaign period and post that. I will read a truncated part of my response into *Hansard* for the benefit of this debate:

The University of Tasmania is one of the state's most important public assets and a major contributor to Tasmania's social and economic progress. It produces skilled graduates and high-quality research, and underpins much of our cultural life. Although the university is principally funded by the Commonwealth and operates within a nationally determined policy framework, it is constituted by a state act and remains accountable to the state parliament on behalf of the Tasmanian community.

I have been a critic of the university's management and policy direction in recent times, and I am concerned that it has strayed from its core teaching and research functions and obligations. It's remarkable that in 2022, the university for the first time enrolled more students from the mainland than from Tasmania; and more than 30 per cent of Tasmanians chose to enroll at mainland universities, an increase of more than 70 per cent over the preceding decade. Our best and brightest students are leaving the state in ever increasing numbers. This disturbing trend reflects an increasing lack of confidence in the university amongst young Tasmanians at a time when the state continues to lag the nation in terms of higher education participation rates. Local enrolments are in decline and this is now driving restructuring and job losses at the university.

Instead of focusing on the core problem, the university management has embarked on an ill-considered capital development program in the CBD while neglecting the maintenance and upgrading of the Sandy Bay campus. It has relied on poorly founded arguments to support this shift in priorities, notably that an expanded CBD presence will lift participation rates for poorer students in outlying suburbs and regions by eliminating travel times to the Sandy Bay campus. The short trip from the CBD to Sandy Bay is of little consequence for potential students, and the university's own modelling suggested that there would

only be a net increase of 700 enrolments over a 25-year period arising from the CBD location.

Inadequate student financial support and low school retention rates are key contributors to the under-representation of working-class and low-income Tasmanians at the university, rather than the campus location at Sandy Bay.

There is an urgent need to upgrade STEM facilities but there is no realistic prospect that the sale of campus land above Churchill Avenue would raise anywhere near the funds required to finance a new STEM building.

It is disingenuous to suggest that residential development at this site would contribute to easing the housing affordability crisis for most Tasmanians. The likely cost and the location of this housing would benefit higher-income earners in and around the city, and it would fail to provide affordable housing for those in outer suburban and regional areas around Hobart.

The university's reputation and standing has been destabilised by the management's poor handling of the CBD expansion, and the university has fallen between two stools in terms of the balance between the CBD and now the Sandy Bay campus. This represents a failure of governance and risk management but, to date, there has not been the required accountability. The senior executive remuneration packages remain unaffected and, as I understand it, the Vice-Chancellor has been given an unlimited term contract, something which is unprecedented across the national higher education sector.

In this context, I consider the recommendations of the Legislative Council inquiry to be highly relevant. I support the broad thrust of its report, including reconstituting the University Council to include an additional elected representative from each of the academic and professional staff; to entrench obligations to the Tasmanian community; and the promotion of academic freedom in the objects of the *University Act*; to require Treasury approval of university borrowings and to place restrictions, via government approval, on the sale, disposal and leasing of any Crown land held by the university; and to widen the required scope of financial and educational outcomes in the university's annual report to the parliament.

I support the retention of STEM, Arts and Humanities, Law and Business at the Sandy Bay campus, and the disposal of some CBD assets might assist in upgrading the ageing fabric at Sandy Bay but I note that this is complex and unlikely to raise all the funds required.

I echo the sentiments of the member who just resumed his seat in terms of what - I'm unsure about the potential use and development of the K&D site. I am concerned it is being purchased again. When you put something up for sale, you can't predict who buys it. It's potentially a lost opportunity.

In this letter I sent to key stakeholders. I made a statement that what is definitely needed is agreement between all political parties and Independents represented in this parliament to make common cause with the Commonwealth to secure a major capital works package for the university. I believe that is important.

In summary, I don't think the solutions the proposed sale of land are designed to resolve will occur. But at the end of the day, we are where we are and we need to provide some certainty for the university. We need to provide a policy framework and a path forward to enable them to acknowledge that their behaviour, in part, has led to this shambles of a situation where the institution itself has been cast in a negative light in the Tasmanian community. The numbers speak for themselves. I know we're in a new environment with online learning and universities diversifying how they provide opportunities for learning but it's a touchstone of Tasmanian university life that the role of the university is important to Tasmanians, not just in and of itself as an educational institution. I understand that they've acknowledged the place they're in, and I welcome their commitments and efforts to refocus on students and refocus on outcomes for Tasmania. We will work through the amendments in the bill and hopefully, we can put this sorry state of affairs behind us, and the government can resume its role of supporting the university to reclaim its place as a valued, important institution, not only in Tasmania but in academic and higher education life across the country.

[9.06 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to make my contribution on the University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill. I do so recognising it's just after 9 o'clock at night on the second-last sitting day of the parliamentary calendar. I find the need for urgency with this bill a little bizarre, for it to come on urgently before Christmas to progress this through the House.

I have a number of concerns about this bill, and I will give a little bit of a history lesson. Other members have done likewise, but it's important to be very clear on the record. I stand before this Chamber as a UTAS graduate. I graduated in 2003 with an arts/law degree and then with a postgraduate Masters of Criminology and Corrections in 2010. I am very familiar with the university and very fond of it, and want with all my heart to see the university thrive and succeed. It's important for this state. It is the state's university. No other university is here.

It troubles me that the university is in a considerable amount of difficulty at the moment. As other speakers have articulated, there are a number of reasons for that. It has lost significant public confidence over a number of years. We've seen example after example of poor governance, of poor financial management, of poor capital development programming. These issues have been outlined and articulated in the Legislative Council inquiry report, which I believe the government is yet to respond to in full. It is really troubling to our community.

As a parent with a daughter who has just lodged her enrolment applications to study Life Sciences, I had hoped that my daughter would pick the University of Tasmania as her first preference but she didn't pick University of Tasmania at all because she saw, like many of her friends and colleagues, that the University of Tasmania was in a declining position. She's elected instead to pick universities in Queensland as her first, second, third, fourth and fifth preference.

It's sad that we're losing young Tasmanians who are bright, educated and who want to pursue further education, to the mainland because they see a university in decline; one which has a very uncertain future, particularly in the Life Sciences area, one that is deeply troubled and doesn't do Tasmanians well when it comes to being proud of what we offer.

I also note the contribution from the deputy leader of the Greens on the irony that we can find \$115 million for community sports overnight, almost. While I recognise the need for community sports, we can't find money to invest in our university to ensure that young Tasmanians can continue their tertiary education here on the island.

With the backdrop of a university in what I consider quite a dire circumstance, there is absolutely the need for a protection of land bill. I was quite pleased at the time to see the Liberal government make an announcement that that's what they intended to do. It's not very often that I welcome announcements from the Liberal government and cheer them on, but when I do, I give them credit where it's due. As the history lesson shows, on 27 February 2024, the Liberal government made an election pledge to protect the land at the university. That was widely well received. The community, in particular, breathed a sigh of relief that the government was listening and moving on community concerns about the university. On 20 June 2024, I think it was, we saw a bill tabled in the House to honour that election commitment. Again, the community breathed a sigh of relief. Sometime later, we saw the university pivot from the planned move to the city to focus on the Sandy Bay campus. This was welcomed by the community. They were pleased to see that finally the university was listening to the concerns of the community, the concerns of their students and the concerns of their staff, researchers and academics involved in the university, and were focusing on their Sandy Bay campus - in particular, what should be their strength, STEM facilities.

However, something wasn't quite right. What we saw was a change in focus and a change of lobbying to the government. The university claimed it needed \$500 million for the STEM facility redevelopment. They said \$400 million of that would need to come from the federal government and \$100 million from the state government. I suspect that the state said, 'There is absolutely no chance of \$100 million coming from us' and so, the university pivoted to another position: 'What can we do in terms of sale of land to try and achieve \$100 million?' The land they decided to target was the land above Churchill Avenue, to put that on the market. Sadly, to facilitate this, we saw the Liberal government completely change its position and amend its own bill to facilitate this.

Late last year, a bill came before us which was sound, with community support and consultation, only for it to be amended by the government to change it to a bill that lacked community support and consultation, and completely circumvented the proper planning processes and the proper consultation process.

The bill as amended, had no consultation in relation to the achievement of land sales above Churchill Avenue. It completely avoided a proper planning process, one which community members are very familiar with when it comes to rezoning. They understand the process needed for a planning scheme amendment to change zoning to inner residential development. They understand the need to have supporting documents to show that that particular kind of land can tolerate that use, has the right transport infrastructure planning around it and has a geotechnical

ability to do that. There would be a proper community consultation process to inform any good land use planning or rezoning decisions. They were very concerned that the government, without that advice - certainly not advice tabled in this place, decided to do it through the parliament without proper process.

Of course, there was no guarantee that there was anyone in the market to buy that particular land or that they could achieve the sale of that land to the value of \$100 million. We heard rhetoric about this being and the opportunity for creating more affordable housing. Again, no guarantee of who the university would sell that land to, let alone that it would be for affordable housing. That bill passed amended, with the Liberal-Labor coalition working in unison, as it does frequently.

Fast forward to July 2025 and the most recent election. The Liberal Party was silent on what their plans were for the university. No one turned up to the candidates forum, no one said anything during the whole election period. They were silent. Some in the Sandy Bay-Mt Nelson-Dynnyrne area thought, 'Well, maybe they've realised the error of their ways and they're just going to revert to the protection bill as it was originally'. We were hopeful.

However, we see before us a bill in its amended version, bizarrely, at the eleventh hour this parliamentary calendar year. It's strange for a number of reasons. There are a number of outstanding questions that haven't been answered by the university - ones you think you would want answered before you put a bill before the parliament like this. In particular, you would think the government would want to hear what the Senate report, due, I believe, on 11 December, has to say about university governance around the country. That they would want some more information: has the university done some work on whether they can actually achieve what they believe is the market value for this particular site? They would want to see some evidence that the federal government was prepared to put in its \$400 million, 80 per cent contribution into the \$500 million STEM plan but there's none of that evidence. It's very strange that we're pursuing this bill now in the amended version.

I acknowledge the tireless work of the Save UTAS group. They have been extraordinary in their concerted efforts to talk to members of this place and the other place, to talk to community groups, to raise their concerns, to ensure that the university and this government is held to account. I acknowledge the hundreds of emails I received both in the 2024 debate and in the lead-up to this particular debate. Community members love their university, they want to see it thrive and they're deeply concerned about what this bill would do for the future of the university.

I will now talk about the facilities that are at risk if we rezone and allow the disposal of the land above Churchill Avenue because it needs to be recorded in *Hansard* what we're putting at risk: the Life Sciences building; 16 Plant Science research glasshouses; the Bushfire Research Centre fire lab, which is internationally renowned. We're doing amazing research in the Bushfire Research Centre. The government has spoken about that previously and champions that. We are putting that at risk. The Horticultural Research Centre, including the glasshouses; the TMAG herbarium; the CSIRO building and glasshouses. They are all at risk. The university has a plan to dispose of the land, including these facilities.

The Save UTAS group has sent around publications outlining their concerns in a very easy format for members to understand, but I will put on record what they say:

This UTAS plan for the upper campus has major defects. UTAS has no plan for the comprehensive replacement of these facilities -

Those facilities I have just read out:

It doesn't have the money or sufficient land to do so. There is no business case, nor any assessment of the impact on UTAS staff and students of losing these facilities.

They haven't done the proper consultation with their staff and students about what the impact would be of losing these facilities. Surely, they would have learnt their lesson in trying to move to the CBD about the importance of engaging with their staff and students about their plans and about their capital development program but it appears not. Save UTAS goes on to say:

UTAS hoped the Tasmanian government might give it \$100 million for the land, but the government has offered nothing. UTAS hoped that the Commonwealth might give it \$400 million towards replacing some STEM facilities, but this is unlikely -

I note that we had a federal election this year but no request was made and no commitment was made. It's not in the Infrastructure Australia list. In fact, it's the old 2017 case that's on the Infrastructure Australia list. This is very strange.

Save UTAS goes on to say:

UTAS falsely claimed the upper campus was ripe for extensive housing development. The reality is that the steep, rocky terrain and the proliferation of existing UTAS student accommodation, and teaching and research facilities will discourage any private interest in housing development on the land.

That seems quite accurate and comes to fruition. No one's putting their hand up to develop this land, urging the government to do this. Save UTAS continues:

The UTAS plan to rezone and sell STEM facilities discourages students' enrolments and harms academic staff recruitment and retention.

We see that time and time again with the declining UTAS enrolments and numerous concerns raised by academic staff, and retention and recruitment issues continuing there.

What we have before us is a real concern. If this bill was to go through in the amended version and UTAS is able to sell above Churchill Avenue best-case scenario is they achieve, \$100 million through that sale, bearing in mind there is no proof that that's a realistic market valuation of that land. The federal government is not forthcoming with the remaining \$400 million.

What do they do then? They don't have enough money to invest in their STEM facilities below Churchill Avenue, as they wanted. They have abandoned their facilities above Churchill Avenue, the Life Sciences Building, the 16 Plant Science research glasshouses, the Bush Fire Research Centre. Where are they going to go? There is not enough money to redevelop below Churchill Avenue. They just have \$100 million, nowhere near enough. What happens to our university then? What happens to its credibility? It's meant to be a centre of excellence in learning and research, internationally renowned. It won't be. It would be the loss of internationally renowned facilities, a loss of students and a loss of opportunity for Tasmania. There is no plan in that scenario. We're left hanging and hoping that a federal government at some stage might revert to an 80:20 contribution, when we know that they're doing 50:50, and invest \$400 million at some time in the future.

A better plan would be to amend this bill back to the original version, so that it requires the parliament to decide before any land is disposed of, then follow with a proper planning process, where land is rezoned if that is appropriate, and the university can pursue that if and when it has a buyer, the federal government is on the hook for the remainder of the \$400 million and they can realistically achieve their STEM business case and plan.

However, they don't want to do that. I smell a rat, a stinking rat, so I urge members in this place to support the amendments I have circulated previously to take this bill back to its original intention, to honour the Liberal Party's commitment at the 2024 election, the one that they were muted on in the 2025 election. I urge members not to support the bill in its current form, but amend it back to its original intent, to protect our university and the future of young Tasmanians who want to be able to pursue tertiary education on-island.

[9.23 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to make a contribution on the University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2025. There's been much said already about the history of how we find ourselves here tonight by speakers across the Chamber. I will make my contributions in the context of being a northerner, my experiences at the university and my observations of what's happening in Hobart. I will speak to the actual matter before us this evening as it is in this bill.

There has been common commentary tonight about the love we have for the university and the commitment we all have to doing what we can to support the university to be its very best. This is a single institution in this state that is stretched like no other across the island, in our key and regional areas. When we have the opportunity to support the university to support opportunities for not just younger Tasmanians, but for Tasmanians of all ages interested in developing themselves, their careers and opportunities in Tasmania, we should stand ready to do that.

What we're working on tonight is to support what has been a torturous process for the university and the community. I saw it play out in the north of the state. We saw that over many years in Launceston, where there were tensions in the community about moving the university from out in the Newnham area into the city and what that might mean. As difficult as that conversation was - and as I see it play out in parallel down in the south, having supported the

university in the north and seen the buildings that were developed because of their work, it has made a profound difference to the urban landscape and the experience of the community. It has also provided the opportunity for our northern community members to engage in the campuses as public outdoor and indoor spaces. That changes the way a community feels.

With the original idea to do a similar thing in the south and move into the CBD, I felt quite excited watching on from the north, knowing what we had and the journey we had gone through in Launceston but it has played out in an awful way for the university. The change in all the plans they've had has no doubt impacted their energy for what they're doing in Tasmania. It has also, unfortunately, had a material impact on them as an institution.

What we have tonight is the opportunity to support the university in their endeavours to develop an incredible STEM facility and, as our member who spoke earlier said, to unlock the opportunity for housing close to the city in Hobart. Knowing that there's an opportunity for thousands of homes to be developed on the periphery of Launceston feels amazing in our community. In Hobart, there's the opportunity for the land above Churchill Avenue to unlock that amount of housing. To know that it's going to be done for a good purpose, to help with the development of the STEM facilities, is important.

There has been a TasICT function in this place tonight where we heard the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Rufus Black, talk about the opportunities in Tasmania, what Tasmanians are already doing in areas of innovation in STEM, AI and technology, and what Tasmanians are doing that are globally leading. If the university is given the opportunity to continue to upgrade its infrastructure and assets in Hobart, as it has done in other areas, it will give our young people the opportunity to be part of that.

There are confronting figures about the differences in the population of Tasmania. We have some extraordinary people leading innovation right across the world and we have horrific statistics about the digital divide and digital literacy in Tasmania. We have horrific statistics about the opportunities for young people to engage further, and be supported and inspired to engage with the fundamental learning that helps our state to grow. There were some statistics used at the event this evening that I'd heard in recent years: that out of the cohort of 12,000 Tasmanian students, only 233 students chose specialised maths. We need to be creating great opportunities for building capacity and for Tasmanians to stay here and apply that learning and skill set in Tasmania. This is a land bill, but it's not just about land and planning, it's not just about the potential of future bricks and mortar. It's actually about the potential of our state, the potential of research, education, innovation, science and technology, of STEM.

We stand here to support what's before us today. Yes, there's been a journey, and that journey has been difficult and tricky, and put tension in lots of different places. For the future of Tasmania, we need to back the University of Tasmania. Supporting this bill does that. It supports the education and the institution of the university, and it supports our community with the potential of housing. We support the bill and we don't entertain the amendments being proposed this evening. In tricky circumstances and in difficult times, we wish the university well in being able to achieve outcomes because it's important for Tasmania.

[9.29 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, this is an issue I came to quite late, but I have looked into the past of the debate as part of due diligence. As a result, I have concerns about the future, when members of this House have changed, when these members have gone, when there is new management in this important institution, when there's a new council in place and when everything old is new again. That's the approach I have come to this debate on.

Universities and cities come in many flavours, and it's the model that counts. Oxford and Granada are not simply urban because their buildings sit in town. They grew organically in tightly knit urban fabrics over centuries. Their colleges, research institutes and residences became interwoven with city life. Oxford's collegiate map and long continuous development demonstrate that the university's functions and daily life are inseparable from that of the city.

I see UTAS as different. It's a mid-20th century campus on land that was gifted to the people of Tasmania for education in 1951. That origin matters legally, symbolically and operationally. The Sandy Bay site was intended as a suburban, purpose-built campus with large open spaces, specialised laboratories and room for growth. Those characteristics are the opposite of what a tightly diffuse, centuries-old city university looks like.

The history and legal framing of Sandy Bay are the reason community groups and parliament have treated this site as a public asset that should not be casually marketed. I accept that people of very good come to this issue from both sides. A lot of effort has been put in both from Save UTAS and from the university itself. I recognise the support that both Labor and Liberal give the university but for me, selling the land above Churchill Avenue smacks of a Trojan horse. UTAS has signalled that proceeds from rezoning and developing land above Churchill Avenue would help fund the new STEM precinct and campus upgrades. At face value, that is a funding plan. Read more closely, it reads like a two-step strategy. One, seek rezoning approval which changes land use expectations. Then two, once rezoned, parcels are easier to sell to developers for residential and commercial use, transferring publicly gifted land into private hands.

Parliamentary debate and this legislation arose precisely because the community and advocacy groups fear that rezoning the upper Sandy Bay holding will create irreversible momentum to shrink the public campus. Those concerns are not conspiratorial. They are the predictable operation of property markets and zoning logics. Once land is rezoned, sale and conversion become much simpler and politically easier.

A Trojan horse has three features that are present here: First, the pretext: a funding imperative for a STEM precinct that sounds publicly minded. Secondly, the mechanism: rezoning pieces of the campus above Churchill Avenue that reduce contiguous campus land and reclassify its permitted uses. Third, the effect: a permanent fragmentation of campus character, loss of green buffers and the normalisation of further disposals under future fiscal or strategic pressure. Once the upper slope is rezoned and sold, it is far easier politically and financially in the future to argue that other parcels are surplus. Parliament's repeated interventions and the public fact-finding show this is an understood risk.

The public trust and legal provenance of Sandy Bay mean any change should be subject to the highest standard of scrutiny, transparent costings and binding guarantees that proceeds will be ring-fenced for educational purposes. A 'Yes, but' approach where parliament permits rezoning of a chunk while purporting to protect the rest risks a gradual but irreversible hollowing out. For Tasmanians who value the campus as a public gift, a working research precinct and a community asset, selling above Churchill Avenue looks less like prudent asset optimisation and more like the opening move of a long game to monetise a public good.

Finally, I will address the deep concerns expressed to me by academics and students alike that the current construct of the University Council and its subordination to the university management is bad for the future of this university. In eight days' time, the final report of the Senate inquiry into the quality of governance at Australian higher education institutions is due to be handed down in eight days' time. This will provide important guidance on the future governance of universities nationwide. I can only suspect that it will reveal an urgent need to reform the way UTAS is run. We should make no major changes and certainly not approve the sale of publicly gifted land until that report has been thoroughly reviewed and assessed.

[9.36 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, this is a debate we've already had in this place, so we're basically going over some old ground. Maybe there are some new voices that have come into the parliament since this bill was before us. The Liberal Party is so disorganised that they're actually bringing forth this legislation to break an election promise from two elections ago. That's how slack they are: they have their current election promises that they're breaking and they're hoping to bring back this bill to break an election promise from two elections ago. I digress.

I hear these debates, and I think, 'Wow, the university that I went to was only at Sandy Bay'. That seems like the debate. You're going to change the character of the university because it's always been at Sandy Bay, Absolutely, apart from the time that it was on the Domain, before it moved to Sandy Bay. When I went to university there, I did a science degree. I did Agricultural Science. I am very proud of that. I was, if you pardon the pun, farmed around all the other faculties for my first couple of years, so I was in with medical students; I was in with Biology, we did economics, we did business, we did physics, we did basically everything. I was all over that Sandy Bay campus. As I advanced in my degree, I was largely in that bit above Churchill Avenue, so I know that campus very well.

When I was there, the university wasn't just in Sandy Bay. There was the Hunter Street campus, there was a campus on Sandy Bay Road opposite St David's Park, which may have been for Fine Arts and there was the Menzies Centre, and all the medical research that was done near the hospital. This idea that the Sandy Bay campus has always been the heart of the university and always should be is complete nonsense. Your argument is just stupid. I understand why people don't want this -

Mr Bayley - It is the central campus, they call it the central campus. It's got an oval, it's got buildings, it's got bush.

Dr BROAD - If you just let me finish, it's because people don't like change. I can understand that. As I said, I spent the last two years of my degree largely in that bit of the campus above Churchill Avenue. It's not the whole campus that's going; it's the bit above Churchill Avenue.

Universities have changed over time, especially now. Things are largely happening online. I've talked to people who are going to universities all around Australia and I'm disappointed and almost depressed about it in a way. I believe that they won't get the campus life that I had because they basically don't go to university any more. They're doing stuff online. We used to have enormous lecture theatres. In first year, when you're in a Chemistry, Biology or Zoology lecture, you were there with probably 100 other students. You were also doing tutorials. Because I was studying Ag Science, we did a lot of pracs. You were constantly in with other people, and we got to know each other very well. I'm still very good friends with a lot of people I went to university with. As I've gotten older, those connections have risen in various places, and seeing where the careers have gone is amazing.

University students, whether we like it or not, don't get that experience nowadays. It's largely online and, as a result, universities had to change their approach. They have to have a different model. If they want to attract science students, they have to have modern facilities. It's just the nature of where the universities are going. How can we attract students? How can we retain students?

When I was growing up, going to university was something that was a bit out there. I was the first one in my family to go to university. All my three siblings have gone to university. None of us matriculated, so we all went through university through different pathways. Nowadays, when I talk to kids my own children's ages or a little bit older, they're going to the mainland. Once upon a time, going to Melbourne for university was just like, 'Gee, how much money have your parents got?' Now people are doing it.

It's about a few issues, like the cost of housing. Getting rentals in Hobart is really hard. Getting a unit in Hobart, even if you wanted to buy one - you can buy one cheaper in Melbourne. Spitting distance from Flinders Street station, you can get a brand-new unit for about \$350,000. The same one in Hobart would be needing a new kitchen, new bathroom and probably cost you \$550,000-600,000. That's the difference.

We've actually gone around the wrong way on the cost curve in Tasmania. We have a single university for the whole state. The university is doing some really good things. For example, you can do a whole medical degree in Burnie, which is fantastic. You can do your whole nursing degree in Burnie. They're also doing really good things in Launceston. Hobart has to change. If we want to attract science students from all over Australia, we have to have top-of-the range facilities. Some of the facilities I spent those two years in 25 years ago were old then.

The university has to change because the whole university funding model has changed in those 25 years, the campus life has changed in those 25 years and the business model has changed in 25 years so, the university has to change. People don't like change. I understand that but the reason a lot of people are against this move is not because they believe in the sanctity of the Sandy

Bay campus. The university is still going to be in Sandy Bay. They don't like it because they don't like change. This is not about the university; this is about the residents not wanting change.

I will now get into the detail of the bill. The reason why there's this rezoning into quite a high-density zone is because you have the buildings there already. The best thing that could happen is for those buildings to be repurposed, rather than being levelled and replaced by lower density housing. It wouldn't be that difficult to repurpose a lot of those buildings into housing, and it could be done very quickly. That is why it's astounding that the Greens, in particular, are against this move. There is a huge amount of housing that could be built relatively quickly by simply repurposing those buildings, and the Greens are against it. I find that extraordinary.

We talk about a housing crisis. How do you fix a housing crisis? The number one way you fix a housing crisis is supply. How do you fix housing in a city like Hobart? You do it with density. How do you do it with density? You have buildings sitting there ready to be repurposed, they need to be rezoned and it needs to be available for that work to happen. That's why this is a good project.

The member for Clark, Ms Johnston, talked about how the land wouldn't be suitable for development. If that's the case, nobody will buy it, so what's the problem? But it is suitable for redevelopment. You can build all sorts of things everywhere. It's not a matter of engineering normally. It's a matter of budget. The engineers will build on just about any site if you look around cities around the world.

The best way to fund the upgrades for the STEM facilities that we need is not to hang on to outdated facilities. It's to build new ones. How do you fund that? There's no fairy that's going to wave a magic wand and just hand over the money that's required. The university's going to have to come up with a chunk of that cash. One way of doing that is to repurpose, sell off the area above Churchill Avenue.

I don't drive up Churchill Avenue very often any more, being from the north-west but I drove past recently and there used to be a building that was an admin building. Lo and behold, it's a Hill Street Grocer. Where were the Greens arguing that you couldn't turn part of the university into a Hill Street? This is about people rejecting change. Were they rejecting the university turning over that block to turn it into a Hill Street? I don't reckon. They can get their chardonnay and their oysters on the way home. It's a very good IGA. I love Hill Street and it is in the right spot. When I went to university, I would have gone to that Hill Street on my way home. I would have walked across the road. I probably wouldn't have picked up a chardonnay. I probably would have got the beer that was on special and dragged it home.

I didn't hear the arguments about that piece of land being turned over by the residents of Sandy Bay who were worried about the sanctity of the university campus. I'm just trying to peel back the layers to try and point out how some of the arguments are a little bit silly.

The other thing I might add about universities in general is that, as a younger man, I did a fair bit of travelling through Europe. Some of the places in Europe I enjoyed the most were university towns like Leuven and Antwerp. I love Antwerp. The university is smack-bang in the middle of town. Despite doing my degree in Sandy Bay and living in and around Sandy Bay for

the nine years I lived in Hobart - I worked for the university too at that same building that we're talking about here. I forgot to mention that. I actually used to work as a -

Ms Ogilvie - At the Hill Street?

Dr BROAD - I would have loved it even more then. Maybe I would have been able to afford the chardonnay or the pinot gris or whatever when I actually had a real job and wasn't wasting all my time and money rowing.

The idea of moving the university into town excited me at the time because of my experience in Europe. I knew that some of my student peers found it difficult to get to Sandy Bay because the parking was always terrible. They're arguing about parking in central Hobart being terrible. It was always terrible in Sandy Bay; people all up the side streets and you had to find your favourite little hidey-holes to park and then walk. I always walked because I tried to live close by.

But the idea of it being central in the city was great. The accommodation the university has built in the centre of town has changed the town. Elizabeth Street beyond the mall, towards North Hobart, was dead. There were CWA shops and maybe second-hand books and stuff -

Ms Butler - There's nothing wrong with our CWA shop.

Dr BROAD - The CWA is probably still there. You go away for a little while, you come back and there's so much life in the middle of town because the students are there. I hope that's where they're getting those life experiences. It was one of the most rewarding things I had as part of my university degree. They're getting that in mid-town. When they repurposed the Forestry building, I was very excited about that. I was even more excited about maybe the K&D project but they've obviously been hounded out of that one, which is a real shame.

People are talking about parking. One of my friends had this ingenious way to get around parking tickets for years. He had this sign, just a rough bit of paper and a bit of cardboard, and he put it up over the wiper or something, and it said, 'This car is not moving', so that people thought his car was broken down and they didn't put a ticket on it. He always used to park in the same spot and he got away with that for two years but parking was always difficult in Sandy Bay. The idea that, 'Oh, you can't move the university into Hobart because the parking will be difficult', well, there will be better access for public transport and there's more accommodation in the CBD.

The university has decided to expand and do the STEM facilities on the Sandy Bay campus, and they need money to do it. Selling off the bit that has gone downhill, outdated and needing to be fixed is probably a good way to come up with that money.

The new glasshouses there are an issue. They will have to put glasshouses somewhere else. The Botany department's very well recognised, the herbarium and all those sorts of things. The CSIRO building that was up there, I'm not sure how many staff are there, but I had colleagues there with CSIRO. Those buildings will have to move.

There's also a great heap of land almost up to Mt Nelson - there's actually a lot of land there when you get looking, that the university had basically done nothing with. They had some vines and some ag trials that have basically gone to waste. There's a whole bunch of stuff up there. There's the university accommodation, too. It could definitely be put to a better purpose.

If we could get world-class STEM facilities, then we could get world-class students and world-class researchers, and we could get world-class research. The university has been doing world-class research, but we could take it up another notch. To do that they need funding. There's a bit of the university that can be disposed of. This legislation does that. I can't really see how this is a bad thing. I've been a student on that campus, in the area that we're talking about. I've actually worked in offices there. I can't see what the problem is, to be brutally honest. The university needs a revamp. Universities have changed. They have to change their approach. This would make the university a better place.

My kids are starting to get towards university age. My daughter is 16 and she's thinking science, health, those sorts of things. At the moment, probably the options she has in her mind are on the mainland. If word gets around that there are brand-new facilities being built, then maybe my children will have an option to go to the university here. In the north west, people are talking about mainland universities more than the University of Tasmania. It used to be completely the opposite. The mainland universities used to be the exception and now they're largely the rule.

I really can't see what all the fuss is about. The zoning, yes, it is intense, but that means you can repurpose the buildings. We can get housing. I can't believe the Greens are against that. We need to push this bill through. It will be very good for everybody and we will be looking back in a few years time and thinking: 'Look at these fantastic facilities; what was all the fuss about?'

[9.53 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy) - Deputy Speaker, I'm respectful of the different opinions we have heard this evening, and I thank everybody for their well-considered contributions. I'm also aware that there are many different perspectives on this issue.

We are debating this bill for a second time and there were a couple of questions from Mr Bayley I will seek to respond to. There is also a little bit more information I will put on the record as a reminder, even though we placed it on the record in the last debate. It might have been Ms Johnston wondering why we were debating this bill again. We're doing it again because the parliament was prorogued and the bill had to be re-tabled and brought in for debate again. That's the situation which we find ourselves.

On the upside, our university is wonderful. The people who teach there are incredible and the students are amazing. I think everybody who has spoken tonight has had an experience at our University of Tasmania that has been outstanding. I was there some 30 years ago in the 1980s. It's a long time ago and certainly times have changed. I will put this on the record because everybody has spoken of their university experience. I was a third-generation graduate of the university's law school, one graduate before the Sandy Bay move, and I have a child currently at that university who chose to go to UTAS. We all make our choices in life. When I was leaving matric, as it was

then, it was very different economic times. I went to university at Melbourne. I did my Classics degree there then I returned to Tasmania to do my Law degree. During my career, I picked up a graduate certificate of Business from the University of New South Wales and, currently, I'm a Masters of Law student at the University of Melbourne. I've done the full cycle. I love a university campus and I am really enjoying being back on the Melbourne campus, but it has changed. Most of it is online, the classes are much smaller, the big lecture theatres, even the law school has changed.

Change is okay and sometimes change drives us to make decisions that we need to make that are ultimately going to be good for our state. I want all our kids and older learners to look at the university and say, 'It's accessible, it's affordable, I can get there'. Luckily, they haven't gone down the path of some of the larger universities with the huge amount of international students, which has really changed the complexion of the learning experience that people get at universities.

We have to be practical and this bill is a practical solution to what has been a very arduous journey. We live in an imperfect world. If there were enough resources to go around for all the things we want, it would be a much easier debate to be having.

As the Minister for Arts and Heritage, and Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, I am deeply aware of the importance of our university as the centrepiece and the engine room of so much of Tasmania's culture, academic life, intellectual life and economic development capability. It's an institution that we value deeply. We value the people who work there and the people who teach there. It's a unique Tasmanian institution that contributes to the core of the way of life in Tasmania. We are proud of our wonderful university, which inspires and educates students and researchers right in our home state. This bill strikes the right balance between protecting the public interest and allowing our university to get on with its core business, which is educating and inspiring Tasmanians. We must inspire today's students to become Tasmania's future employees and employers, and, in fact, fill up our government with people who can do things. UTAS must be able to attract and retain the best academics and students to enable them to provide the best education experience possible for all Tasmanians and others who choose to study and work here. It's a good thing that interstate students are coming. We also want our local kids to choose UTAS first.

From agri-tech transforming farming practices to the growth of our emerging space sector, Tasmania is fast becoming an innovation hotspot. We heard tonight at the Tas ICT function about how the innovation we are driving in Tasmania is not just incremental; it is world-leading, it is global. The STEM sector excels at solving real-world challenges, and we have quite a few of those on our plate at the moment. We also have the AI future. In doing this, the university and our STEM sector creates jobs, drives productivity and opens new economic opportunities, including incredible jobs that can be done from here to elsewhere. Our scientists and researchers are able to collaborate globally and do incredible things from here. Our university is well known for being a leader in a number of areas.

This is why this bill is so important. It enables UTAS to position itself as a leader in attracting and training students in critical STEM fields. For the third year running, UTAS is the tertiary sector's world leader in taking climate action, with the prestigious *Times Higher Education* Impact

Rankings rating UTAS as the number one in climate action globally for 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025, so something good is happening there. Not on the facilities perhaps, but the teaching is obviously good.

We, the government, are backing the UTAS STEM precinct, a state-of-the-art facility designed to foster collaboration between academia, industry and government, to bring those three together. Through this bill, UTAS will be empowered to strengthen STEM education and build the talent pipeline needed to support Tasmania's evolving economy.

One of the issues we have spoken about tonight is the need to fund the STEM precinct. In the last debate, I did read out a paragraph, or perhaps even the entire letter, from the university on this point of the commercialisation of land above Churchill Avenue. I sought that commitment again to underscore this. I will read out the relevant paragraph from the letter I received from Prof Rufus Black on 1 December 2025:

As outlined in my previous correspondence to you, the university will commit the funds arising from future development above Churchill Avenue to reinvestment in the future STEM precinct. It is worth reiterating here that all developments on the Sandy Bay campus will follow standard planning approval processes through the Hobart City Council, including standard public exhibition and community consultation'.

I hope that alleviates some of the more strident concerns we heard put.

Mr Bayley has also asked a couple of questions. The questions related specifically - and I'm sorry if I don't answer these in the order that you asked them, but I will run through what I have - specifically in relation to assets above Churchill Avenue and a question in relation, I think, to why that particular zoning was chosen. What I can do, and it might be helpful -

Mr Bayley - Not so much why. I think that's obvious. The advice you have to substantiate it?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me see if I can answer it, and if you need more, we can do that. There are a few elements here. In relation to assets located above Churchill Avenue, there's the seismic station. It was first installed in the 1960s by the United States government - I didn't know that, and is one of six to seven across Tasmania. It is still maintained by the US through the University of California, San Diego. Been there. Great uni. This facility is part of a network of stations measuring seismic activity worldwide. The University of Tasmania does not use it for research purposes. The facility is relatively small and consists of simple infrastructure to protect the equipment from the weather and wind, and its size makes moving the facility to a more ideal location a viable option for the future. Since the seismic site was established in 1957 at the Mt Nelson site, Hobart and Mt Nelson have experienced significant commercial, residential and infrastructure development within a three-kilometre radius. It may now be possible to identify a more suitable location. The lead academic unit has consulted with internal and external stakeholders including UC San Diego, and the university will explore suitable options for the future of this facility in due course.

In relation to glasshouses: Sandy Bay currently has approximately 1600 square metres of glasshouses, and there is capacity to accommodate glasshouses as part of the future campus plans. These facilities are included in the high-level costings for the next stage of Sandy Bay's evolution. UTAS will work with academics to co-design the glasshouses in the next stage of planning.

In relation to Life Sciences, UTAS has committed to not dispose of any facilities required for university purposes until replacement facilities are available for use.

There was a question - sorry, I can't recall who asked it, about the timing of buildings moving or being sold. The amended government legislation being reintroduced to parliament would give the university the option, over time, if the legislation passes the upper House, to utilise 26 hectares of the full 105-hectare site for a range of different development purposes.

The university is also progressing discussions with the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania on a land handback for some of the land above Churchill Avenue.

The student accommodation above Churchill Avenue will be retained, as it is essential for housing future STEM students. The accommodation is included in the area proposed for rezoning to provide UTAS with greater flexibility to upgrade or relocate student housing in the future.

On to rezoning, and let's see if this gets to where we need to go, Mr Bayley: the conventional rezoning process in Tasmania typically takes 12 to 24 months, and longer if contested. If the bill passes, funding for the \$500 million STEM precinct could be unlocked earlier; construction start dates could be brought forward; UTAS's required co-contribution via sale or land uplift becomes reliable rather than speculative; and financial risk associated with delays is reduced. For a university that we've all conceded is under budgetary pressure - and don't we know what that feels like, time equals money, so a faster path would be beneficial.

Why is the land rezoned as inner residential? The advice I have is that the land abutting the site to the north is zoned inner residential, reflecting its denser development pattern, with smaller lots and historic character, and proximity to the city. The bill proposes to extend this same zoning through some of the university's landholdings above Churchill Avenue, while preserving existing planning and environmental controls for the remainder of that land.

The inner residential zone, under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, is an appropriate zone, enabling incrementally higher density and opportunity for urban renewal, while clearly retaining neighbourhood residential character. The zone and code application guidelines state, to paraphrase, that the inner residential zone is suitable for application to land with access to services and that are characterised by higher dwelling density and more non-housing uses, are close to activity centres with a range of services and facilities, or are along high-frequency public transport corridors; and is not limited in its development to higher densities by being highly constrained by hazards or natural or cultural values.

While the rezoning areas do feature community and some natural values, and some hazard mapping, government is of the view that it can be sustainably developed at higher densities while managing and, indeed, enhancing those values and mitigating those risks. That requires good

design and careful trade-offs. That is ultimately a task for the university as it pursues its STEM vision and the development of this land, which will be subject to the usual development approval process through council.

Sandy Bay is earmarked as a priority growth area in the draft Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy. We know we need more well-located infill housing as our population changes. This is important for both younger Tasmanians who might want to live near campus and near high-quality public transport, but also for older Tasmanians looking to downsize close to their home. Much of this specific land is mapped for sensitive and staged urban renewal in the Hobart City Council's 2023 Mount Nelson and Sandy Bay Neighbourhood Plan discussion paper. This land is a considerable opportunity to meet the need for new and different forms of housing. I stress that the financial benefit of this rezoning, as I have read from the letter, will be applied directly to the new teaching and research facilities for STEM. This benefits all Tasmanians.

I have taken the time to tour particularly the STEM facilities. One memory I have, in particular, was in Electrical Engineering, where they're trying to teach that and everything is from the 1950s. We can't go on like this. We have to improve the facilities, not just to attract students but for the very core reason that the people we have graduating from the university go into our GBEs, they come into government, they run our networks. We have to make sure that we are world-leading with all this.

Mr Bayley - No one's arguing that we don't need better STEM facilities.

Ms OGILVIE - We did hear a little bit about bushfire. Was that you, Mr Bayley?

Mr Bayley - It is a question I was going to ask, so please feel free.

Ms OGILVIE - Somebody did mention it.

Ms Johnston - I mentioned it.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Ms Johnston. The advice I have is it is likely that considerations would place a limit on the residential density achievable, that hazard mapping overlays would be considered as part of planning discretions for development applications, and there is capacity for scrutiny by planning officers and councillors.

I will also talk about the funding. There's been a lot of conversation about money, of course, because you can't rebuild a university and make it contemporary without money. A request has been made to Infrastructure Australia for \$400 million. The Tasmanian government sponsored the business case for the Infrastructure Australia process. We put it in our top five requests from state government. There has been a little bit of confusion about this. We have asked and the ask is still there. I implore everybody in this Chamber to write to the federal government to fulfil the request. You have friends there: \$400 million, Infrastructure Australia, please. It's time for a bit of Team Tasmania on this. Let's get the money.

Mr Bayley - Can I ask what the response has been, minister?

Ms OGILVIE - I will just finish then I will come to that. The \$50 million needed for stage 1 of the STEM development at UTAS is the preliminary ask. It is my understanding that the program of work is in three phases. The \$50 million attaches to that first phase. Sorry, Mr Bayley?

Mr Bayley - You said the ask is in and it's one of the top five. Have you had a response from the federal government? Presumably that was a year ago.

Ms OGILVIE - I haven't - Look, we've had an election in between. Let me check, if you're happy for me to do that. I don't know that we have. No, I have not had an update, but it is through the Infrastructure minister, so there may be something that I could find out for you.

In relation to the amendments, I appreciate the reason why they're being put but we're not going to support them. We understand the genuine reason for that. You've been very open about that, and Ms Johnston has been very open as well, trying to make your case for what you believe to be the right way forward but we can't support them.

Again for the record, because we've done all this once before, but we will do it again. We don't support the 30-year amendment. The issue is it goes directly to the commercial value of the project and UTAS's ability to attract the partners needed to make it viable. Through our engagement with industry, stakeholders have consistently highlighted that 99-year lease terms provide the greatest value and flexibility. The 99-year lease is a common and well-understood commercial arrangement. By contrast, a 30-year lease is less common and not widely recognised by industry as providing sufficient certainty. For these reasons, we're not going to support the 30-year amendment. We're obviously not going to support Ms Johnston's amendment either, but thank you for your contribution on that.

I hope I have covered the questions. Is there anything else? We have nine minutes left. Let me reiterate that it has been a long and arduous journey. We're at this point where we have an opportunity to move this forward, to get the university we want into good shape on the Sandy Bay campus, which will be fantastic, focusing on STEM, which is the opportunity of the future as we move into the future digital economy that we all know is coming, and to make sure that when our kids - it would be awful if your daughter has to go to Queensland. I'd much prefer she stayed here. That is why I'm doing this.

We're fixing the campus. We all agree on that. What we don't agree on is the bits and pieces and how to do it but we all agree that the Sandy Bay campus will be retained and it will be upgraded. We don't like some of the elements, we disagree on all sorts of pieces, but at the heart of this, is that our university on the Sandy Bay campus will be retained, it will be upgraded, our students will have a much better experience and there will be some campus life, I hope. I've been down there quite a lot recently and there are lots of kids around there having a good time, so that's still going on. Life has changed though, and there is a lot more online learning. As Dr Broad pointed out, we have the art school, the Menzies Centre, the Hedberg - there are assets around the city and I think they're all great.

Hopefully, we have now reached a landing where we can agree that we have the balance. I'm not saying everything is perfect and I'm not saying this hasn't been hard on this side to get us to

this point either. Here's where we're at. I implore that everybody votes for the bill. I appreciate those who don't wish to, and their very good arguments and sound reasoning in relation to that.

The next thing is we need to get the investment from the federal government. They are investing in other regional universities around the nation, but not ours and so, why not? That's my question. We need to fight for that money, and I will work with everybody who wants to put Tasmania first. If you want to help me lobby for and get the money to do this necessary upgrade, I will work with you all. Even you, Mr Winter. You could be helpful.

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Burnet) - The question is that the bill be read a second time.

The House divided -

AYES - 22

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco
Ms Dow (Teller)
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Prof Razay
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Winter

NOES - 8

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley (Teller)
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland
Mr George
Ms Johnston
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff

Bill read the second time.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (No. 58)

In Committee

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 - Commencement

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, just a quick question in this context. Noting that the act was to have commenced on 14 May 2024, why isn't it backdated to 14 May 2024? I don't understand the context in terms of today or any other kind of action that the university has taken. Minister, if you can clarify that, that would be helpful.

Ms OGILVIE - The notes I have is that this provides that the act is taken to have commenced on 14 May 2024. I know we've had to redo this bill, but the retrospective commencement ensures that any dealings with the university land since that date are subject to this act.

Mr Bayley - Are you aware of any dealings?

Ms OGILVIE - No.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3 - Interpretation

Mr BAYLEY - This is a very simple amendment. It goes to the definition of 'dispose'. In one of the definitions in this clause, to 'dispose' has a long list of descriptors: 'sell', 'barter', 'exchange', et cetera. The amendment I have is in relation to (i). The amendment is -

Page 4, clause 3, 'definition of disposed', paragraph (i) - leave out '99' and insert instead '30'.

This is in relation to the lease for a term of not less than 99 years. This is obviously setting a 99-year threshold for which land gets captured and which is, therefore, subject to parliamentary approval. This has nothing to do with the commercial terms, necessarily. Well, it's to do with the commercial terms in that it's the lease, but it doesn't preclude a 99-year lease. It's just setting the threshold that, under this amendment, if it's a lease of over 30 years, it comes to this House for ratification or approval.

This is about representing the interests of the people who own this land. A period of 99 years is obviously a long time. It's a lifetime; it's longer than many lifetimes. In most people's minds, it is effectively a sale, and that's clearly why it has been set but this is not necessarily about what the commercial sector wants. This is about what people want. This is about ensuring that this Parliament has some oversight and authority to approve a lease that would be over 30 years. As I

say, it doesn't preclude a 99-year lease. It just means that we get to approve it and the Parliament gets to have a look at the proposal, the terms, the tenant, et cetera. This is about restoring some balance and some say on behalf of the people of Tasmania, who own this site, to bring it into something that is in line with commercial terms. A period of 30 years is a long time, and it doesn't preclude longer. It just means that that is the threshold by which this House and the other place gets to have a say on whether that is a good use of that land for that period of time, whether it's 60 years or 75 years or 99 years or 31 years.

Ms OGILVIE - Clause 3 broadly provides for interpretation of key words in the act including 'commencement day', 'dispose', 'university', 'university land' and 'vested land'. The definition of 'dispose', for those who are listening in, includes sale, barter, raffle prize, gift, for long leases of 99 years or more. 'Vested land' is defined with reference to Schedule 1 and may include land prescribed by regulation.

We don't support this amendment. This issue goes directly to the commercial value of the project and UTAS's ability to attract the partners needed to make it viable. That is the advice I have. Through our engagement with industry, stakeholders have consistently highlighted that 99-year lease terms provide the greatest value and flexibility. A 99-year lease is a common and well-understood commercial arrangement. By contrast, a 30-year lease is less common and not widely recognised by industry as providing sufficient certainty. For these reasons we will not we will not support the 30-year amendment, but we appreciated the opportunity to consider it.

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, I will respond to that, if I may. Yes, a 99-year lease might be what commercial entities are looking for and that's their preference but being in this House, I'm looking after the interests of the Tasmanian people. It doesn't preclude a 99-year lease; it just sets a lower threshold by which we get to have a say on whether that lease is a good deal for the Tasmanian people and a good deal for the university. Yes, 30-year leases are less common, but it's not necessarily about the length of the lease in terms of how preferable that is for a commercial entity. It's about setting a threshold by which we can have a say. I hear your argument there, minister, but there's nothing you say there that persuades me that it should be 99 years as opposed to 30 years because we're setting the threshold by which we get to have a say.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Fairs) - The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Committee divided -

AYES - 8

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland(Teller)
Mr George
Ms Johnston
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff

NOES - 22

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco (Teller)
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis

Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Prof Razay
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Winter

Amendment negatived.

CHAIR - Are there any further speakers to the clause?

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, I have some questions about that lease and the 99-year element. It's obviously a very long time. I'm interested in the ability of that lease to be transferred, mortgaged or sold, and how that interacts with the parliament's decision if it is longer than 99 years, for example, for a particular tenant who has a proposition. Can that lease be transferred, sold itself, mortgaged, that sort of thing?

Ms OGILVIE - It's a very specific question, so just bear with me a moment. The advice I have is that the terms of the lease would apply but that it would also depend on the nature of the disposition, whether it's a lease assignment or it was a sale. If it was a sale proposition, it would come back into this process.

Mr BAYLEY - If it was a lease of longer than 99 years and it was to be sold, it would come back to the parliament for ratification?

Ms OGILVIE - Back into this process. It would trigger that clause again. That's the advice I have.

Mr BAYLEY - But if it's less than 99 years, it's a lease that doesn't have to come into this process, into this parliament?

Ms OGILVIE - If it was the assignment of a lease, it would be subject to the terms of the lease, because it would still be under the 99-year limit.

Mr BAYLEY - And it could be sold or mortgaged or anything?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 -

Minister may protect land with caveat

Mr BAYLEY - I have a question about 'the Minister' here. I assume that refers to the Minister for Education, effectively, as opposed to yourself as the relevant minister for the act?

Ms OGILVIE - Correct.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6 agreed to.

Clause 7 -

Rezoning of certain land

Ms JOHNSTON - Chair, we now have quite a few members in the Chamber, and I know there will be significant number of members of the community concerned about the future of the university watching this debate at 10.45 p.m..

Clause 7 is the rezoning of certain land, and this is where the change has really happened. When I sought the Office of Parliamentary Counsel's advice about how to amend the bill back to its original form, they found it very easy because this is the clause they initially wrote to put in the bill to amend it from the original commitment the government made back in 2024. Effectively, OPC had the easiest drafting job ever. It was simply to reverse the amendments they put there in 2024.

This really is where the issue lies for the community and where there is grave concern because it talks about the rezoning of certain land, and this talks to the land above Churchill Avenue, as will be apparent from Schedule 1.

For the benefit of Hansard, for those in the room and listening along tonight on the broadcast, I will raise a number of questions that Save UTAS have raised and provided the answers for in the information brief they have sent to members of this parliament.

The first question they raise is: should parliament approve the rezoning and sale of UTAS buildings presently used for STEM teaching and research when UTAS has neither the funds nor sufficient space to replace them? We have heard from the minister herself that UTAS doesn't have the funds, the \$500 million. The simple answer is no.

This would be highly detrimental to STEM teaching and research. UTAS has a \$500 million STEM plan that doesn't include the replacement of all the facilities targeted by the bill for rezoning

and approval for sale. There are a lot of facilities above Churchill Avenue that it doesn't have the funding to replace.

Furthermore, UTAS hasn't been able to identify enough land where replacement facilities could be built. There's not enough space on the land below Churchill Avenue to replace the facilities they would lose above Churchill Avenue if this rezoning goes ahead and the land sold for residential purposes. UTAS doesn't have the \$300 million that UTAS says it would cost to replace the lost facilities - the facilities that would be lost as a direct result of rezoning this land.

The \$500 million STEM plan is dependent on UTAS receiving \$100 million from the state government, or achieving that amount of money through the disposal of the land, plus \$400 million from the Commonwealth. Despite the minister's assurances that a request has gone into the federal government, we've heard nothing back, unless the Infrastructure minister can enlighten us otherwise at a later date. This is disappointing. There is no plan to fund replacement facilities, let alone room to do that.

Save UTAS also asked: is there a business case or assessment outlining whether the bill would actually lead to any new housing, noting the proliferation of existing UTAS buildings on land and the difficult terrain?

This question is critical to the issue of whether we should be rezoning for the purposes of housing. The simple answer is no. Neither the government nor UTAS has identified any genuine opportunity for new housing on this site. Again, we see no concrete evidence that we can actually achieve the kind of density that inner residential development or zoning requires normally or is trying to achieve. We've seen no evidence that it can support such a rezoning; that the infrastructure works and planning has been done; that the consultation has been done. These are all the usual processes you would expect through a proper planning scheme amendment process, one with proper consultation, where the issues are considered, there is public debate and opportunity for representation. I note that by doing this, we are denying members of the community opportunity to make representations on that zoning. That's a serious concern. Again, we are circumventing proper planning processes.

As Save UTAS says, much of that land to be rezoned contains dozens of essential buildings to use for teaching, research and student accommodation that is not available for housing. The terrain also suggests that a lot of it will simply be land that can't be developed.

They asked: were usual Tasmanian planning processes followed, and opinions of planning experts sought, given that substantial land is being rezoned?

The simple answer here again is no. Normal planning processes were entirely overridden. We've seen this time and time again with a number of bills that come before this parliament; whether it be Port Latta, attempts to create Development Assessment Panels (DAPs), son of DAPs, grandchild of DAPs, all those kinds of things. They're trying to circumvent proper, democratic planning processes.

Save UTAS asks: Is there a business case or report on the likely impact on university teaching and research of rezoning and approvals for sale of campus STEM facilities?

Again, no business case to support this rezoning, this critical part of this bill, a bill that has been changed contrary to the initial commitment from the Liberal government in 2024.

The Life Sciences building is home of world-class teaching and research in plant science and agriculture. There are 20 glasshouses used for research by academics, postgraduate and undergraduate students. The Bio lab houses important research on bushfire management, which is critical in a state like ours. There's been no proper consultation or investigation into the impacts on research and teaching through this rezoning.

If the university, at some later point, wanted to develop this land under the original intention of the bill, it could have made an application through the proper planning processes, through Hobart City Council, to have the land rezoned and go through a proper consultation process, but it's trying to circumvent that.

Finally, has UTAS or the government consulted with academics and students on the plan to rezone and approve STEM facilities for the sale? Again, no. The well-informed views of academic staff and students have been ignored time and time again. We've seen the university do this not just on this particular issue, but on multiple issues, and they are lacking in public confidence because of it. They're ignoring the voices of community, the voices of academics and staff, and the voices of students.

I urge members to vote against this clause and revert the bill back to its original intention, which was an honourable intention the Liberal government had: to protect the university and protect the land it is on, to be able to put a proper and fair process in place with parliamentary oversight before the university makes massive decisions to dispose of land that's for educational purposes. That was a good policy but this particular clause changes that.

The Liberal government let the community down when it changed its policy in late 2024 and inserted this amendment. I urge members now to make the Liberal Party stick to its election promise of 2024 and vote this clause down.

Mr WINTER - Chair, the Liberals' policy in 2024 was terrible policy, so we won't be helping them to go back to that policy. It was terrible, and I'm pleased to have made the contribution to force them to change the policy to what we have now.

I need to point out the bleeding obvious to those watching who might not be aware: what Ms Johnston has carefully done with OPC is to amend the government bill back to what they actually promised the people of Clark back in 2024.

Ms Johnston - Easiest job ever for OPC.

Mr WINTER - As you said, it wouldn't have taken them very long, and they're very talented at what they do.

The Liberals took a policy to the election to say they were going to keep the University of Tasmania at Sandy Bay. No mention of rezoning the land. In fact, Save UTAS, in several pieces of correspondences, said they would actually prefer no bill at all than the bill as it's currently drafted with this clause in it.

The election policy that was taken to the election to appease the Save UTAS group is now the polar opposite to what was promised, to the point where Ms Johnston is trying to amend the bill back to what it was originally. Presumably, we're about to hear that the government will oppose the amendment.

We are opposed to it because we've supported the move of the University of Tasmania into the city for a very long time. I have personally for even longer than that, as the mayor of Kingborough.

I will put a quote to the House and we will see who said it:

I'm really pleased that the university will become more accessible. For a long time, I've been talking to the uni about the psychological barriers for people in the northern suburbs accessing the campus in Sandy Bay. I know stories where there are people from the northern suburbs who have been to Melbourne but have never been to Sandy Bay.

Another part of the article, paraphrasing, says she opposes inappropriate high rises in Hobart but is in favour of the university moving into the city. You may have guessed. That was a quote directly from the Independent member for Clark on 31 May 2021 after being elected to this place. Like me, she was a signatory to the City Deal, signed by the mayors of Hobart, Glenorchy, Kingborough and Clarence. That City Deal was fundamentally all about the university moving into the city to start with, but it slowly pulled away as members, particularly in this place, pulled out from the process.

What this clause seeks to do is to stop the university from having the autonomy and having the ability to sell land and buildings they don't need. At the moment, under the current planning regime, it is unlikely that the City of Hobart will ever allow that to happen. I believe that's a huge mistake for Sandy Bay, for housing and for the University of Tasmania. We have to do what's right for the University of Tasmania.

Given where we are in the debate, this is a good opportunity for the minister to admit the bleeding obvious to everyone in this place, to Save UTAS, the community, the Independents, that this is not the policy they took to the 2024 election. They still haven't admitted it. The 2024 policy is exactly as Ms Johnston pointed out, this is a complete sell out. The amendment put by Ms Johnston simply asks the Liberals to do what they promised. They have walked away from their plan; I'm pleased they have, but they should just admit that you've broken your promise to the people of Clark. That election policy that you took to that election stunk and that's why he moved away from it. I'm pleased you have, but you should admit that you've broken your promise.

Dr BROAD - Chair, I'm probably a bit late to the party and it is late, almost 11.00 p.m., so forgive me if I get some things wrong. I'm just having a look at the Particular Purpose Zone, UTAS, Sandy Bay. This amendment actually doesn't prevent development on that site, right? It just makes it more difficult. We have to be very clear about that. What this amendment does is just be a bit of a pain in the backside. That's because if you look through the Particular Purpose Zone in Sandy Bay - permitted; things like business professional services - a lot of these things are permitted if they're primarily catering for students, staff or the needs of visitors to the campus - food services - not take away food premises with a drive-through facility - and primarily catering for students, staff and the needs of visitors to the campus. That looks like how the Hill Street got through, because they must have made the argument that it was primarily to service the students and staff and the needs of visitors to the campus. Obviously, if visitors were accessing the campus by literally walking on to go shopping in Hill Street, then maybe they would have covered that one but I do digress.

Obviously, this is actually in in the planning scheme at the moment, but what is actually discretionary are things like business and professional services, food services, general retail and hire, hotel industry, residential storage, tourist accommodation, transport depot and distribution, utilities, and visitor accommodation. They're all discretionary, so you can do residential on this site. Basically, you can do that, but it's discretionary and it would maybe be painful, because you have to go through the council and so on.

Also, the other thing that I'd just like to point out in this Particular Purpose Zone for UTAS Sandy Bay is the way, very surprisingly, that the upper campus - the bit above Churchill Avenue - is actually treated differently in this Particular Purpose Zone. It's recognised that the objective of the New Development - Upper Campus, which is under the section HOBP1.6.7, under the heading of New Development - Upper Campus is that development on the upper campus minimises adverse impact on natural values of the landscape. It says:

Development must be accommodated within existing buildings or not involve an increase in floor area of more than 50 square metres.

Basically, the planning scheme itself actually already treats that differently from the lower campus, which I found very curious.

I think the real purpose of this is to basically try and knock the whole thing in the head. The arguments put up by the member Clark, Ms Johnston, are basically along the lines of 'the university can't afford to move, their figures, the business case and all that doesn't stack up, or it can't be developed, so why are we doing this because it's not good for the university, the university won't be able to afford it, there's nowhere for the STEM facilities and basically, it can't be developed'. Well, if that's the case, what have they got to worry about, because nothing will happen? Plus, these arguments aren't planning arguments, are they? They're arguments as to why it shouldn't happen in the first place. All sorts of arguments. It's a bit like saying you can't build that house because you can't afford it. Well, that's a problem for the person building the house, not for the person saying you can't build the house. I just think this is not a particularly good argument. This amendment is trying to knock the whole thing in the head - it wouldn't even knock the whole thing

in the head; it would just make it very difficult to redevelop the site that's already recognised as being an area for redevelopment.

The reasons that the member gave were more about the bigger issue rather than this particular rezoning. There were no arguments really about rezoning, apart from 'if they rezone it, they won't be able to make enough money', and I just think that that's largely irrelevant and more than likely incorrect.

Ms JOHNSTON - I thank other members for their contribution, and I warmly welcome the opportunity. I thank the member for Franklin, Mr Winter, for reading into the *Hansard* a quote from a number of years ago, because it really does articulate and highlight the journey that I've been on with the university and my concerns, and what the community have been on. Thank you very much, Mr Winter. I freely admit that I have been deeply concerned about the access for tertiary education for people in the northern suburbs. I had hoped, when I was mayor, and I championed this when I was mayor, that the university would have a stronger presence in the City of Glenorchy, in particular. I lobbied them hard for a student hub to be located in the old Snows Dry Cleaning centre just opposite Northgate, because you can only be what you can see, and if you don't see people learning within a city, then that makes it very hard for people to aspire.

The university, of course, courted Glenorchy City Council and said, 'That's a fantastic idea. Yes, let's do that. Support our move to the city, because we're really keen to reach out to those particularly vulnerable people in the northern suburbs and encourage them to engage in tertiary education'. but, like many in the community, we were sadly let down. The university was all talk, no action. They weren't interested in actually engaging with staff, students, academics to try and encourage and build the university. They were more interested in property development. Very quickly, we realised that the dream of having a student hub in the Glenorchy area was just a dream. The university weren't interested in that. They were more interested in their city redevelopments, their capital program there, being property developers, essentially, not in good educational outcomes for students and for the university.

I engaged further with my community, and in particular with the university, and I became deeply concerned about what their genuine reasons were. Their genuine reasons were about redevelopment and becoming property developers, not a centre for academic excellence and for research. That's why I arrived at this position that I am at today and I am very proud to say that I've listened to the concerns of the community, and I also share those community concerns because I've also been bitten by the university.

I go to Mr Broad's point in relation to the issue of rezoning. Perhaps Mr Broad didn't understand: this bill facilitates the rezoning for the purposes of disposal. The university has made it very clear that it intends to dispose of this -

Dr Broad - 'Doctor' Broad. It was eight years at that university for me to get that, on that campus.

Ms JOHNSTON - 'Doctor', sorry. I apologise, Dr Broad. It is late at night.

Perhaps Dr Broad didn't hear me correctly, that the purpose of this is to rezone it for the purpose of university disposure. When they dispose of it, those facilities are lost. As a parliament, it's important that we ask: where will those facilities go? How will they be replaced? Or, are we going to accept a diminishing in our academic research, our educational opportunities in this state, yet again? I don't think anyone wants to do that. I think it's a fair and reasonable question to ask: if this rezoning goes through to allow disposal, where will those facilities go? There is not enough room below Churchill Avenue to facilitate those - fact. There is not enough money to replace those services - fact.

Unless we have assurances - and we don't have those assurances - that there's \$400 million coming from the federal government, all that the university can possibly achieve, \$100 million for the sale of that particular land, then we're going to lose something - and lose something that I think and many in the community think is particularly precious with our university. Fantastic, amazing, internationally-renowned facilities and research facilities in particular, and learning facilities will be lost.

I ask members to pause, to think before we agree to have this particular clause remain in the bill. Think about what we are potentially losing, what we're facilitating the loss of.

As I said before in my earlier contribution, if the university manages to get the agreement of the federal government for \$400 million, manages to come up with a plan of where these facilities could actually be located below Churchill Avenue, then yes, come back and go through the process outlined in the rest of the bill and through a proper planning process but don't let them get off the hook now, because they've let people down far too often. A simple promise that, yes, they will build a facility elsewhere on the southern part below Churchill Avenue, probably won't happen. Didn't happen for the Glenorchy Student Hub or the Snows Dry Cleaners place and I'm not believing them now when they say it's going to happen this time around.

A member - What is happening with that? It's such a great site. I tried to get it for my office.

Ms JOHNSTON - It's such a great site.

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, In the interest of time, it's 11.05 p.m., I won't repeat some of the arguments that Ms Johnston has repeated which are good ones, but I make the point about process and good process when it comes to planning and rezoning, because the minister mentioned that rezoning of this kind typically takes 12 to 24 months. This whole process started in 2023. The reality is, it's the intervention of government and the proposition of this fast-track and the promise of this fast-track rezone that has effectively paused the council's rezoning process and meant that it hasn't gone anywhere, it's basically being paused. Had that process continued when it started in 2023, its last discussion paper was April 2024, we would probably be there. We would probably be there already.

I will make the point again that the reason we have planning processes that engage the community and give them an option and an ability to have a say is because it helps to bring them along; it doesn't only help to bring them along, but it helps to deliver better outcomes, because outcomes can be negotiated between community, council and other interests as well. You get

compromise and you get better outcomes. I think it is an absolute crying shame that it is effectively the promise of this fast track-rezone that we are debating here tonight that has effectively stymied and stalled the community rezoning, the typical proper rezoning process. I say again, it's not parliament's role to reach into the planning process to dictate and just determine outcomes.

The minister said and talked up the fact that this land borders the inner residential zone to the north. Yes, I can agree with you on that, honourable minister, but you do know for yourself in terms of your knowledge of that area that it's not high density living as is provided in that area around Alexander Street and York Street. It's not high density living as is provided in this zone. The point I want to make is that actually the majority of the boundary and in fact the majority of the land that is undeveloped, which is adjacent to Mount Nelson, is actually already zoned low density residential. You failed to mention that in your speech, honourable minister, and further down is general residential. The reality is there's a patchwork of density zones in this neck of the woods and inner residential being stipulated by this parliament in the absence of proper process simply does nothing to engender confidence of the community and does nothing to bring them along, it does nothing to actually give a balanced result, and it delivers poor outcome all round.

I've articulated in the debate concerns for the buildings that Ms Johnston also outlined and that is a real concern. The reality is, from a Greens' perspective, the simple principle of this parliament reaching into the planning process and determining something in the absence of genuine community consultation, in the absence of expert evidence about what should and could happen there, in the absence of evidence about the fact that the level of density that this zoning provides for. Can the roads handle it? Can the services sustain it? Can the schools and can the doctor surgeries handle it? They are the sorts of things that are determined by a proper planning process that we simply don't have accessible to us at the moment. We're not a planning authority. We've been given zero evidence to actually justify this inner residential zoning and it's simply not our role to reach into the planning system and dictate that this is how it should be. You're cutting out the community and that leads to bad outcomes, and it's going to lead to bad outcomes for the university at a time when it can least afford it.

Mr WINTER - Chair, I want to speak to this, because this is part of a lot of the emails that I've had about this. We are not granting the university a planning permit here; it is a rezoning. What the deputy leader of the Greens has just indicated is that there will be no planning process for things like roads and whether they can handle it, but that's what our planning process is for, and it will go through the City of Hobart's planning process. There will be a DA that will be lodged with the council to be assessed, be publicly advertised and it will be assessed by the planning authority of Hobart.

Mr Bayley - It's a wholesale rezoning.

Mr WINTER - There's a rezoning first, and that's what we're doing here; I accept that there's a rezoning occurring. After that, it gets assessed and the application of the developer, the university or whoever wants to build there, will be assessed by the local planning authority. It's pretty simple.

It's a good opportunity to talk about that planning authority because there was a deputy lord mayor there, not so long ago in 2022, Helen Burnet, who ran on a platform of moving the

University of Tasmania into the city. It's a shame she wasn't able to speak at the debate last year and wasn't able to today either because it's not just been members on my side of politics or that side of politics. Members of the Greens have also been supportive of having a university that's more accessible, more modern and more able to look after the students and their learning needs into the 21st century.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Fairs) - The question is that clause 7 as read stand part of the bill.

The Committee divided -

AYES 21

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch (Teller)
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Prof Razay
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Winter

NOES 8

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland
Mr George
Ms Johnston
Ms Rosol (Teller)
Dr Woodruff

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clauses 8 and 10 agreed to.

Schedule 1 (Vested Land) agreed to.

Schedule 2 -
Area to be Rezoned

Mr BAYLEY - Chair, I have a couple of questions in relation to Schedule 2 and the rezoning. Minister, you spoke about the seismic bolt and the ability for it to move, and that the university in California that you've been to is comfortable with that it seems.

Ms Ogilvie - UC San Diego, yes.

Mr BAYLEY - I'm more interested in the CSIRO and TMAG. First, can you give us an update on their future? Second, what are the implications of the rezoning for those facilities, assuming they stay there? I assume they would be in a noncompliant use that has the right to exist, but what if they want to do work, they want to expand, or they need a planning permit for something that's outside the zoning prescriptions? What happens in that case?

Ms OGILVIE - The advice I have is that there is no change to their use. They can go about their business and remain in place, as you mentioned. I'm not a planner, I don't have the local government experience of so many people in this room, but if they were going to apply for any building permits, then they would go to council and do that, I assume.

Mr BAYLEY - Could you check; is that the case? I guess if they're a noncompliant use and they want to expand and go through a DA -

Ms OGILVIE - The advice I have is that there's no impact to those buildings from the rezoning, and the question of rezone impact on existing activities, i.e. UTAS, teaching, research, TMAG, CSIRO, et cetera. The advice is that there was no issue with continuing that activity in relation to planning rules or DA approval. If they were to change their use or want to build further buildings, they would have to seek approvals to do that through the standard processes.

Mr BAYLEY - The question is though, given there would be a noncompliant use, how does that sit in an inner residential zone? Can it be approved? Can a noncompliant use be approved for an expansion? For example, if the herbarium wanted to expand, say it wanted to double in size and it had access to the land, can it do that in an inner residential zoning, being a noncompliant use?

Ms OGILVIE - That's a question for the council I would assume, is it not?

Mr Bayley - I would have thought that, as you are about the rezone the land, minister -

Ms OGILVIE - It's a question for the council. The advice I have, if they want to change the size of buildings, they would have to go through the normal DA process.

Mr Bayley - The question is whether it would be approved -

Dr Broad - If you look at the inner residential zoning, business and professional services is discretionary. It's not 'not permitted,' it's discretionary.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Dr Broad, that's helpful.

CHAIR - Any further speakers? Dr Broad, please wait until you are called.

Schedule 2 agreed to.

Schedule 3 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (PROTECTION OF LAND) BILL 2025 (No. 58)

Third Reading

The SPEAKER (Mrs Petrusma) - The question is that the bill be read the third time.

The House divided -

AYES 23

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Mr Di Falco
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Prof Razay
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Mr Winter (Teller)

NOES 8

Ms Badger
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr Garland
Mr George
Ms Johnston (Teller)
Ms Rosol
Dr Woodruff

Bill read the third time.

ADJOURNMENT

[11.31 p.m.]

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

That the House does now adjourn.

Answer to Question - Wilkinsons Point - Value of Land

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, in relation to the question from Ms Haddad taken on notice by the Premier this morning, I am advised as follows.

The Department of State Growth and the proponent conducted ongoing deliberations on the valuation and associated processes between April to October 2024. Valuation advice was being circulated and shared with a proponent during this period. The value of the land to be developed was to be determined by the Valuer-General, and as such, there were no concerns with sharing the Valuer-General's valuation with a proponent. It was a required piece of information that needed to be shared to continue discussions on a development and sale agreement. In light of this, and the fact that valuations had previously been shared and discussed, the Premier's office indicated to the department that it was reasonable to share the valuation with a proponent.

It should be noted that no finalised land sale and development agreement has been reached with a proponent. It is the government's responsibility to promote business and investment in the state for continued economic growth. The opportunity to unlock private investment in a significant retail, commercial and hotel precinct at Wilkinsons Point is in the state's interest in this respect. By partnering with private enterprise in this project, hundreds of millions of dollars in investment could be realised in our state.

Tasracing - TasInsure Text Messages

[11.33 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Lyons - Minister for Racing) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to add detail to my response in the House earlier to claims I misled the House regarding Tasracing promotion of TasInsure. As members would know, I corrected the record today as soon as I was made aware that a previous Facebook post indicated I had been aware of Tasracing's social media post prior to my appearance at scrutiny committee hearings. Yes, it is my Facebook page, so I take full responsibility for the reposting of the Tasracing media release about TasInsure. I had not recalled that from during the election campaign, but as I've said, as soon as it was brought to my attention today, I corrected the record. I also want to make it clear that at no time did I direct the company to send out a text message or statements about the policy.

As for the appropriateness of the company's text or media release, as I said, that was a matter for the company, and the Chair addressed that at the scrutiny hearings. This was an operational decision made by the company, not me. It was a matter for the Tasracing board, and the Chair has already addressed it during the scrutiny committee hearing and he took action.

Bennetts Logging - Federal Forest Legislation Changes

[11.34 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, we will get to that tomorrow, I suspect. This evening I rise to make a contribution after having spoken to Tammy Price from Bennetts Logging this afternoon. Ms Price and the business are under a lot of enormous stress, and she wrote an email today to Mr Ferguson and she's given me permission to read out the email that she sent:

I listened closely to your comments in parliament today regarding the forest industry and the impact of the Albanese government's legislation. Your words were strong, and they hit hard. But I need to tell you with absolute honesty that for contractors on the ground, the danger is not coming from Canberra; the danger is coming from Sustainable Timbers Tasmania (STT).

With deep respect, minister, what is destroying Tasmania's native forest industry is not federal policy, it is STT's continued failure to support its own contractor base; its refusal to act on its ministerial charter; its internal culture that ignores operational advice, delays critical decisions and drives contractors into the ground.

Our business, five generations of it, TP Bennett and Sons, is living proof. We are the last remaining active native cable harvesting operation in Tasmania. We employ a dedicated and fully compliant crew in the state, capable of this essential work, including two forest practice officers inspecting incredibly rare and vital qualifications. Yet despite this, and despite more than 18 months of sustained underpayment, reduced volumes and operational obstruction, STT has failed to take even the basic steps needed to keep vital contractors afloat.

Minister, you were the shareholding minister who signed the Ministerial Charter at the time that set the charter that sets our clear expectations: fair, sustainable and transparent engagement with contractors; supporting contractor viability; ensuring the continuity of essential forest operations, acting in good faith and with accountability. STT is not meeting those obligations, and the consequences are catastrophic.

If their behaviour continues, there will be no viable contractor base left in southern Tasmania, no cable capacity, no steep terrain harvesting, no way to meet supply commitments, no future workforce to rebuild. We've spoken to minister Ellis, Treasurer Abetz and shadow ministries, yet despite all the evidence, including the STT-funded Hamilton Calvert review, that confirmed

major underpayment, change has not come. Operational staff within STT support the actions needed, but STT management continues to delay, deny and defer. With complete honesty, minister, STT will collapse this industry long before the Commonwealth ever gets the chance. We urgently and respectfully request that you intervene, not in speeches, but in action. The government have the authority and the responsibility to ensure STT acts within its own charter and stops destroying the contractors who hold the entire system together.

We ask that you help secure what is rightfully owed to us and the industry that built this state: fair treatment, fair rates and a fair chance to survive. Our family business is on the edge. Our employees are exhausted. Our capacity, the last remaining active cable in southern Tasmania is one decision away from disappearing forever. We need your help now.

Yours sincerely,
Tammy Price,
Business manager at TP Bennett and Sons Pty Ltd.

This is a really important issue that Ms Price has raised, not just with myself and with members on the other side of the Chamber but I know with some Independent members as well.

TP Bennett and Sons is a generational business, and they are on the brink this evening. It's a generational business full of people whose jobs are on the line due to the treatment at the hands of STT. It is really important that we maintain the capacity in native forestry, and we retain good people like Tammy Price and the Bennetts family that have been doing this for generations.

It is important that we have a strong contracting base, and there's evidence there contained within the reports referenced that we don't have the support available for contractors in this area. Tonight, we say that we support Ms Price, the Bennetts and their business, and we want to make sure they have a strong future in the state.

Paul Reynolds - Institutional Response

[11.39 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to continue my contribution from last night regarding the Paul Reynolds child sexual abuse matter. It's still the case that important questions about how matters relating to police officer Paul Reynolds were investigated or not satisfactorily investigated, and these have never been properly examined. One of the biggest issues is why and how Paul Reynolds was given a full honours police funeral.

Government ministers and police have repeatedly said they've apologised for giving Paul Reynolds, a police officer known to have sexually abused and exploited teenage boys for three decades, a funeral with honours. However, their determination to drop the matter and avoid

the critical question about how it was allowed to happen in the first place makes their apologies seem like bad faith.

To set the record straight, there was nothing in the Tasmania Police Manual at the time that said the funeral had to go ahead. The manual then simply said:

Subject to the consent of the next of kin or relatives, the commissioner may approve a police funeral for a deceased member.

'May', not 'must'. It was the commissioner's discretion. The fact is a senior police officer suicided because he was confronted with the weight of evidence of child sexual abuse he had perpetrated, and in that knowledge the commissioner decided to mobilise the full police force to celebrate him which leads me to the fundamental point: there's never been an explanation given for why former commissioner Darren Hine decided to give Paul Reynolds a full-honours funeral and glowing eulogy. The commissioner did this despite knowing the extensive evidence Tasmania Police held about Paul Reynolds in relation to his 2018 abusing, and despite the commissioner himself personally being involved in handling prior allegations made against Reynolds 10 years earlier in 2008.

Were the officers in Tasmania Police who knew about Reynolds' sexual abuse opposed to the decision to give him a police funeral? or did they give it their full blessing? It's a matter of public record that commissioner Hine's decision caused much pain and uproar among some serving police officers and betrayed victim/survivors. The honouring of a man who was objectively dishonourable also, by association, tarnished the reputation of all police officers in Tasmania and that is shameful. It was a deeply problematic decision by the commissioner. We still don't know how it could have happened, which is a significant reason for why it deserves proper examination.

There are also questions about whether the personal relationships that existed between Paul Reynolds and senior members of the Tasmanian government and senior Tasmania Police influenced their decision-making or actions on matters before his death and surrounding his funeral. Those questions also go to significant matters that were not able to be covered by the Weiss review including:

- the inappropriate way concerns about Reynolds' sexual abuse of young people were handled internally within Tasmania Police in 2008;
- the circumstances around Reynolds' so-called 'self demotion' to a lower position;
- Reynolds' connections to criminal associates and allegations he shared police information with them, which were highlighted in the coroner's report into his death; and
- why the police Professional Standards investigation into Reynolds was dropped after his death.

Both the coroner's report and the Tasmanian commission of inquiry stated they did not have the jurisdiction to fully examine these matters. That is exactly why the Greens called for an independent investigation into these matters by the Weiss review, and it's why we remain troubled today that the review was not given the scope and powers to adequately address those matters and why the government refused to refer outstanding matters from the review for further investigation. Here we are today, with a podcast seeking to answer questions because the government has refused to do it, and there's some déjà vu to that, because it was Camille Bianchi's brilliant work on *The Nurse* podcast that shone a spotlight on the James Geoffrey Griffin matter and ultimately led to the commission of inquiry.

Five years on and here we begin again. Jay Walkerden is doing a fantastic work on *Badge of Betrayal* and the people speaking to him are amazing and brave; but they've been forced to do this because the government has failed to do its job to properly investigate decisions made at the highest level of Tasmania Police and government about the Paul Reynolds matter. I can't explain why the government has been so reluctant to do this in the past, but I implore them to rethink their position now.

Tasmanian Menopause Summit

[11.44 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD - Honourable Speaker, I wanted to share with the House that recently I attended a really powerful event, the first of its kind. It was called the Tasmanian Menopause Summit. It brought together women from all different backgrounds to connect, share and learn from experts, as well as openly discuss perimenopause and menopause. The fact is that women's health in general is horribly neglected when it comes to research, funding and access. The life stages that every woman will go through as long as they live long enough, perimenopause and menopause, have long been misunderstood, downplayed and flat-out ignored.

The summit was created by Dr Zelinda Sherlock, the CEO of Sherlock and Dutta Consulting and a Hobart City councillor, and delivered in partnership with Husna Pasha from the Happychondriac Society. It aimed to raise awareness, break long-held silence and normalise conversations on these natural life stages. Their shared vision was clear: to shift the way communities and workplaces understand and communicate about these life stages; to amplify women's voices; and to empower women.

The morning started with a welcome message from Rebecca White, the federal Assistant Minister for Health and Ageing, who highlighted the significant record investment that the Albanese Labor government has already made into women's health, menopause treatments, other fertility treatments, and in women's health in general. She also shared some of the harrowing stories of women who had shared their experiences with the recent parliamentary inquiry.

Then we had two incredible keynote speakers: Christine Finnegan, the CEO of the JackJumpers, and Katy Cooper, the co-CEO of DisCo. They generously shared their personal experiences: the scary, confusing, life-altering journey that perimenopause took each of them on. They were really deeply personal stories; they were so generous to share them with the room.

I won't share them in this public forum, other than to say that they had some really clear key messages. Christine told us that a solid awareness about peri and menopause can spare women from years of confusion, misdiagnosis and silent suffering. She echoed the experience of so many women in the room, but also women right around the country and the world, of being shut down, not believed and not listened to.

Katie reminded us that we celebrate so many milestones in the lives of women: puberty, menstruation, childbirth, motherhood; but menopause remains largely invisible and in the shadows. I can tell you there was no dry eye in the room listening to both of those incredible women share their personal stories. It wasn't just the perimenopause in the room making people cry, I don't think; they were really powerful speeches.

They also just set the tone for the day that followed. A powerful panel session of personal stories from local women, international expert Dr Louise Newson, who explained the importance of education on hormone therapy and individualised care, because every woman's experience is different. We heard from clinical experts highlighting the continuing learning curve within the medical profession and the need for ongoing learning as health professionals build up their knowledge in this area, and the symptoms that can overlap with cardiovascular, mental health and other hormonal conditions, meaning peri and menopause is often missed for years.

A central theme emerged with absolute clarity: this is real, it's hard and women have for too long been shut down and ignored and misdiagnosed, but we are not alone and that we shouldn't shoulder this alone. This major life stage needs everyone's understanding and support: women ourselves, as well as partners, children, workplaces and the broader community. It was really meaningful and profound to be in a room full of people who understand and care about women's health and about perimenopause and menopause and I really commend both Zelinda and Husna for a knockout event and recognise the support that they had from many local businesses, MPs and community members to bring the day together.

They created a safe, vibrant space for us to connect, learn and strengthen our community. They tell me that the summit is just the beginning; it's a turning point and the beginning of a movement that they wish to lead. We will keep going, responding to the need for continued education, policy action and community programs and health treatment to ensure that Tasmanian women receive the compassionate support and reliable information and evidence-based care that we need.

Ven y Hiller - Contribution to Palliative Care

[11.48 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Ven y Hiller to palliative care in Tasmania. Ven y joined Palliative Care Tasmania in June 2020 as manager of communications, policy and development, and I'm confident that it was her signature vibrancy, strategic communication skills and professionalism that were among the reasons she was then appointed chief executive officer in 2023 by the board.

Over the last three years, Venéy has led the organisation to empower communities to be death and grief literate, raising the profile of palliative care in the community and in our health system in a short period of time. Venéy has acknowledged that her small, fierce team has shifted the conversation about living, dying and grieving well. In her leadership role, she has positioned Palliative Care Tasmania to make a significant impact in advocating for a place for palliative care in our health system and our communities.

Working together, Venéy has established a strong partnership between Palliative Care Tasmania and the Department of Health, notably creating a statewide advance care planning awareness campaign and developing an award-winning Learning through Loss program. This program aims to increase young people's resilience to grief and loss, including publishing a children's book, *What is Grief*, that has been well received. This book is available for purchase from the Palliative Care Tasmania website along with other resources; and I'm told that schools, health systems and community organisations in other states around Australia have also ordered copies to place in their libraries and classrooms to assist children in understanding grief and loss. Notably, every sale of the hardcover book will allow Palliative Care Tasmania to provide 10 softcover copies free of charge to Tasmanian communities.

Most recently, they've also released an adult resource: *This is Grief*. This grief resource was informed by the stories of 58 Tasmanians who have experienced profound loss, as well as hundreds of conversations the Palliative Care Tasmania team has had with the community. I'm advised that since launching in October this year, 4000 copies have already been provided. Again, this resource is free for Tasmanians. In addition, interstate health departments have also purchased copies.

Also, in partnership with the Department of Health, a statewide model for a palliative care community connector service has been researched and developed, and we've seen an updated Tasmanian palliative care charter. The updated charter was launched in May this year during National Palliative Care Week. In its development under Venéy's leadership, Palliative Care Tasmania led extensive stakeholder consultation to uphold the charter to reflect a shared commitment between service providers, carers, families and the community. Our government is proud to support the charter and is committed to ensuring all Tasmanians have access to high-quality, compassionate palliative and end-of-life care.

In addition, Venéy has also helped shape national policy and added Tasmania's voice to national discussions. I'm sure that there are many in this room who agree that Venéy has expanded the work of Palliative Care Tasmania and is leaving behind a strong organisation for the next CEO, Heather Kent, to build upon. Venéy's last day at Palliative Care Tasmania is this Friday 5 December and I ask all members of this place to join me in acknowledging Venéy Hiller's contribution to palliative care in Tasmania and more broadly, the community services industry, and wishing her all the very best for her future endeavours.

Members - Hear, hear.

HACSU Stop-Work Actions

[11.52 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the minister for her speech recognising the work of Venéy Hiller, and add in the Greens' recognition and thanks for the amazing work that Venéy did with Palliative Care Tasmania; but also, just to acknowledge that one of the things that Venéy was very strong in doing was advocating for more funding for palliative care and that that funding has not been forthcoming. There have been decreases in the budget to Palliative Care Tasmania. As well as the good words that we've heard today, I would urge the government to honour the work that Venéy did for palliative care by increasing the funding to the organisation so they can continue their great work in this space, because it's very much needed by Tasmanians.

I rise this evening to speak about HACSU stop-work actions which occurred over last week. The HACSU members conducted rolling stop work across multiple clinical roles and covering the whole state. This included a stop work action outside the Royal Hobart Hospital on Monday 24 November; in that case, it was cardiac physiologists and neurophysiology scientists who walked off the job for one hour due to a failure to provide meaningful wage offers in negotiations that they have about their enterprise agreement.

On Tuesday 25 November, HACSU members walked off the job for an hour at Launceston General Hospital; in that case, it was Tasmanian pathology and allied health professionals who stopped work, and they were also joined by other health workers at Launceston General Hospital in solidarity. On that occasion I was able to join with them and stand with them in their calls for recognition of the work that they do and their calls for meaningful wage offers in their enterprise agreement negotiations.

On Wednesday 26th November, again at the Royal Hobart Hospital, there were people who walked off the job for an hour, and in that case it was medical imaging workers who, again, have not been offered suitable wage increases in their negotiations. On top of that, they are not being paid market allowances that have been agreed to, so the government are not honouring those market allowances, and there are workers who are doing the same work as work on the mainland and earning lower wages than staff on the mainland.

On Thursday the stop-work moved to the north-west coast and there were two stop-works up there, one at Mersey Community Hospital and one at North West Regional Hospital, and again this was due to the government refusing to put forward fair and competitive wage offers. What we have at the moment is a situation where we have many healthcare workers across the state, across many professions and roles doing amazing work in our health service for Tasmanians. They are there for people in their times of ill health when they need support and when they need care. They're doing this in incredibly stressful situations and they're doing this feeling disrespected by the government because they are trying to negotiate for wage increases, but they're not being listened to and what they're being offered is insufficient.

I want to speak on behalf of the Greens tonight in support of the HACSU members and all those healthcare workers in our hospitals, who are doing great work and deserve recognition,

deserve fair pay and deserve to have their pay match those that are being paid on the mainland and acknowledge the incredible work that they're doing.

It is startling today that we have a stadium debate happening and we have a government absolutely obsessed with the stadium and committed to pouring billions of dollars into it, putting us into debt, taking out loans for more money and they can do that today, they can make it happen, they can force it through and yet we have Tasmanian healthcare workers who they cannot even offer a reasonable wage offer to in negotiations. That is shameful and it's a terrible indictment on this government, the values that they have and the priorities that they have. The values are all upside-down and all wrong. We should be supporting our healthcare workers and all workers across the public health service who do amazing work for Tasmanians and deserve that to be respected and fairly paid.

Helen Mansour AM - Tribute

[11.57 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak tonight in the honour of knowing an extraordinary woman, Helen Mansour AM: a woman of strength, integrity, humour and unwavering dedication. Helen touched countless lives with her kindness, fierce loyalty and deep love for her family and community. Helen was born on the 13 September 1958 to Charles and Helen MacPherson. She was one of seven children, sister to Kevin, Margaret, Ian, David, Kathy and Graham. The MacPherson household was close knit, filled with warmth, love, laughter and music, anything that could be used as a musical instrument was - pots, pans and even the spoons. Many a great time was had making wonderful family memories and that unmistakable sense of belonging that big families share.

The family moved to Johnson Street in Derwent Park when Helen was four years old. It was there that lifelong memories were made. Helen attended Moonah Primary School and Cosgrove High School where her strong work ethic and sense of responsibility began to show qualities that would define her life. She worked in various roles over the years at Silk and Textiles, Coles Glenorchy, the Rosebery Hotel and the Department of Defence. What really mattered was not where she worked, but how she worked. Helen was the kind of person who gave her all: dependable, hardworking and always with a touch of humour.

In 1979, after a six-year courtship, Helen married the love of her life, Peter Mansour. Together they welcomed two sons, Stephen in 1981 and Peter Junior in 1983. Helen's love for her family was fierce and unconditional. She was the centre of their world, always supportive, always nurturing, providing a love that never faltered.

In 1991, Helen returned to the workforce, this time in community-based roles that truly let her shine. She worked at the Cove Hill Coffee Shop, Bridgewater Neighbourhood House and in Harry Quick's political office. In 1993, she stepped into the role that would become her legacy: coordinator of the Gagebrook Neighbourhood House. Helen didn't just manage the Gagebrook Neighbourhood House, she transformed it. With vision, empathy and unmatched determination, she created a space where people felt safe, supported and seen. From the Pensioners Club, the

Waterbridge Pantry and the Breakfast Club to certificate courses, school holiday program dinners, bus trips and the Giving Tree, Helen's legacy is written into every part of that community an achievement, which I'm sure will never be repeated.

In 2018 she was officially recognised for that lifetime of service to the community, receiving an AM, a proud moment and one that couldn't have been more deserved.

Helen wasn't just about work and service; she was also the life of the party. Helen loved to sing, to dance, to laugh and celebrate life - she was pure joy. Helen had one major vice, one that made others suffer on a regular basis, when it came to football, Helen was a poor judge and had chosen to make Collingwood her obsession. Helen's office and home were covered in black and white.

Helen retired in 2023 due to ill health, but even as her health declined, her courage never did. She remained sharp, loving, and determined to the very end. That's who she was. Helen leaves behind more than memories; she leaves behind a legacy of friendship, leadership, love and laughter. To Peter, Stephen, Peter Junior, Tammy, and the entire family, we thank you for sharing her with us. Your loss is shared by so many. From Helen's best friend, Robin:

My dearest friend Helen, I miss you already. Thank you for everything, for your trust, your sass, your wisdom, your loyalty. Rest peacefully Helen, you were one-of-a-kind. You will be forever missed and never ever forgotten.

Vale Helen Mansour.

Parliamentary Friends of Dementia Roundtable

[12.02 a.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, it was a great honour yesterday to participate as one of the co-conveners of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia Roundtable in the Tasmanian parliament with the honourable minister Bridget Archer and the honourable Cecily Rosol, which was facilitated by Dementia Australia CEO Prof Tanya Buchanan to develop the Dementia Action Plan.

We heard testimonies from people living with dementia, dementia advocates, Dementia Alliances members and family carers who shared their living experiences caring for people with dementia. They emphasised the importance of raising the public and the MPs' awareness about the importance of supporting and promoting a dementia friendly Tasmania by giving support and hope in order to change the stigma toward dementia.

This is the urgent action needed in response to Dementia Australia's call on 16 September 2024, when Dementia Australia released a statement to say that new research showed that 68 per cent of Australians know little about dementia, which is leading to stigma and discrimination. That's disappointing after more than 25 years of dementia action plans by all states and federal government. Unfortunately, there are still widespread misconceptions of dementia as

an inevitable consequence of ageing and false views that there is not much to be done for people with dementia. All these make patients and carers feel as if there isn't much to do to help them, and therefore there is no urgency to seek early assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

However, in Launceston, northern Tasmania, I believe we have been able to change some of the stigma towards dementia, based on more than 25 years of providing assessment, diagnosis and treatment through the Memory Disorder Clinic, through research and many public presentations, which was culminated by publishing a book, *Dementia and New Hope*.

The good news is that Alzheimer's is associated with the protective factors, which means that it is preventable. The Launceston Alzheimer's disease risk factors study showed that eating healthy diets, especially rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as fish; avoiding obesity, especially abdominal obesity; not smoking; drinking in moderation; and having more years of education can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Moreover, exercise can improve cognition and physical function, even in patients with Alzheimer's disease. In addition, four-year studies of patients with memory disorders found that up to 15 per cent of patients might have a condition called normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH), a treatable condition which is often misdiagnosed. People think it's rare accounting for only 1 to 2 per cent of cases. It's important to diagnose because it can be treated by setting a shunt in the cavity of the brain with significant improvement in cognition, balance, walking and incontinence to make people independent and prevent them from going to nursing home.

If we currently have more than 400,000 Australians who are living with dementia that means 15 per cent of them which is equivalent to 60,000 people might have a condition which can be treated. I will give you an example of a 69-year-old lady who was diagnosed with the normal pressure hydrocephalus, but she was previously diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. This story is from her husband. After shunt surgery her improvement was out of sight. Before she could not remember what to do with a recipe. Now someone shows up, and she cooks up a batch of scones without any help. She also started to walk independently without a frame for several kilometres, play card games and even started to play bowls.

I would like perhaps to finish by emphasising the power of public presentation, and this is an e-mail from one of the attendees, who was from Huonville. She sent me this to read:

My take-home message was forgetfulness, incontinence and impaired balance, may be treatable underlying condition. Get it checked out sooner rather than later. NEVER label it dementia until after the brain CT scan.

That is from one talk: the power to give people awareness to prevent dementia. Thank you.

Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils

[12.07 a.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, earlier this year the Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils was made-up of eight north-east councils, produced a blueprint for

climate healthy and resilient communities in Tasmania. The World Research Document, with accompanying technical report, outlines the importance of working together, drawing on local knowledge and creating place-based solutions for communities to face climate change.

We know that climate change is a major issue impacting health, well-being, communities and environment. We often wake to news of natural disasters. This week we hear of devastating floods from Cyclone Ditwah across Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand causing the loss of thousands of lives and displacing tens of thousands of others.

Tasmania is not immune, as identified by the climate risk assessment released earlier this year, we can expect to see increased bushfires, floods, heat waves and respiratory illnesses as a result of bushfire smoke. We can expect to see more people hospitalised for heat stroke. Pregnant women, children, older people, people with disabilities and chronic illness are more susceptible to heat stroke, and some suburbs and areas are more vulnerable than others which leaves them at risk of heat wave, which is highlighted by Deputy Director of Public Health, Dr Scott McKeown in this morning's *Mercury*.

People will also lose homes to bushfires, and people in coastal communities have their properties threatened by coastal erosion and inundation. This is the reality we are living. This is the future we enter. Local councils play an essential role in readying local communities for climate change. For over 20 years, local councils have led the charge for climate resilience and often pick up the tab for climate-related costs. A report by the Australia Institute revealed that local councils were paying 12 times the amount in insurance for climate related costs than they were 20 years ago. You think of councils with high bushfire risk, with many bridges and low-lying roads such as the Huon Valley and you know that they're susceptible.

Why aren't we doing more as a state government to support them, to make them climate healthy and resilient? There is some excellent leadership happening in the local government space. The blueprint from the Northern Councils Alliance is just one example: when I was in council when minister Vincent was mayor of Sorell, the Southern Tasmanian Councils were doing a lot of this work and I thank the officers who are involved at that stage. They have the expertise; councils understand the needs of their local communities and are best placed to tailor solutions to the places they live. They already employ specialists, engineers, planners and community development officers who can adapt their professional skills to meet the needs of the community. They understand place-based change, and the need to work with where the community is at to get changes done.

I commend the Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils for their leadership on this matter, and I urge other community leaders to follow suit. I also acknowledge the work of the state government to support this initiative as did Menzies and Healthy Tas.

I finish by imploring the government ministers responsible to recognise and fund this vital work of climate resilience in local councils, in the three regions of Tasmania. Councils have the same responsibilities across the board, but it can apply local solutions that fit with the community needs and circumstances.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians

[12.12 p.m.]

Ms BROWN (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to speak about an event that I held today, here at Parliament House during the 16 days of activism as the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian (CWP) Tasmanian representative. It was an event that I held to bring together our specialist organisations in the family and sexual violence industry, as well as our policymakers, you, our members of parliament.

I want to place on the record my thanks to those organisations and I would like to name them: Emily House, Be Hers, Engender Equality, Huon Domestic Violence Services, Laurel House, Our Watch, Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance, Yemaya and Zonta.

We also had three very special speakers today: Shakira Robertson, Fiona from Huon DV Services and Bree from the Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance. These women spoke with such passion and at times there were tears in the room from hearing from victim/survivors of their stories, and it really highlighted to me and everybody in that room the importance of making sure that we, as policymakers, are keeping women and children at the forefront of our policy-making decisions, because it is our most vulnerable that are truly suffering from this violence.

I want to place on the record my thanks to those organisations for being a part of this event, and also to those members of parliament who attended, and I will be calling on future members of the CWP to continue this event in the future.

The House adjourned at 12.14 a.m.