



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 9 September 2025

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 9 September 2025

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

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Respectful Debate

The SPEAKER - Before I give the call to the Leader of Government Business, I want to make a statement to the House in relation to respectful debate, particularly referring to other members by their correct parliamentary titles.

As stated in the House of Assembly Members' Guide to Procedure, page 33, other members should be referred to as 'the honourable member' for the respective electorate and their title and surname, or you can say 'the honourable the Premier' or 'the honourable minister' for the respective portfolio. More simply, 'the honourable member/minister' during any interchange.

I appreciate the House's cooperation in ensuring respectful debate in the Chamber.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Debate Motion Forthwith

[10.02 a.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent a motion concerning the Standing and Sessional Orders from being debated forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Standing and Sessional Orders

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - I thank the House. I move the motion for the Standing and Sessional Orders as circulated and commend them to the House. I move -

Standing Orders

That the House adopt the following Standing Orders:

- (1) In Standing Order 18, paragraph (d) that the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.

- (2) In Standing Order 76, paragraph (2) that the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
- (3) Standing Order 90 that '355' be deleted and '358' be inserted instead.
- (4) Standing Order 93 be reinstated as follows:

93 The same Question not to be again proposed.

Except as provided for in Standing Order No. 94, no Motion or Amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any Question or Amendment which, within the preceding twelve months, has been resolved in the Affirmative or Negative.

- (5) In Standing Order 115:
 - (a) In paragraph (1)(a) that the word 'thirty' be deleted and the word 'twenty' be inserted instead.
 - (b) In paragraph (1) that the word 'forty' be deleted and the word 'thirty' be inserted instead.
 - (c) In paragraph (2) that the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
 - (d) Inserting the following paragraph after paragraph (2) -
 - (3) Paragraph (1) notwithstanding, a Member shall be entitled to speak for thirty minutes during their inaugural speech, and shall not exceed thirty minutes unless by leave of the House.'
- (6) In Standing Order 130, the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
- (7) In Standing Order 152, paragraph (2), the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
- (8) In Standing Order 182, paragraph (3), the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
- (9) In Standing Order 219, paragraph (2), the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
- (10) Standing Order 323 be deleted and the following be inserted instead:

323 House Committee

- (1) At the commencement of every session this House shall appoint a Committee of Three Members, one of whom shall be the Speaker, to serve on a Joint Committee (to be known as the House Committee)

to control Parliament House and grounds, with power to regulate and control all matters relating to -

- (a) catering for Parliament;
 - (b) allotment of rooms, subject to the approval of the President or Speaker, as the case may be;
 - (c) repairs, renewals and alterations to the Parliament House and all fittings and furniture therein connected therewith;
 - (d) maintenance and upkeep of the gardens and roadways of Parliament Reserve;
 - (e) any other matters referred to the Committee by a Joint resolution of both Houses;
- (2) The Committee shall have power to sit during any recess of Parliament.
- (3) Three Members irrespective of the House to which they belong, shall form a Quorum of the Committee, provided that the Quorum shall not consist exclusively of Members of one House only.
- (11) In Standing Order 350 the word 'seven' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.

Sessional Orders

That for the remainder of this Session, unless otherwise ordered, the House adopts the following Sessional Orders:

- (1) In Standing Order 18, leave out paragraph (a) and insert instead:
- '(a) The time for the ordinary meeting of the House shall be at Ten o'clock a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and the adjournment of the House shall be proposed at Six o'clock p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on a Motion for the adjournment of the House moved by a Minister on Wednesdays but not before the conclusion of Private Members' Business.'
- (2) In Standing Order 40, by inserting the following words after paragraph (b):
- '(ba) Constituency Questions;'
- (3) In Standing Order 42, by leaving out all words after, 'Unless otherwise ordered:-', and inserting instead the following words:-

- (a) Private Members Business will have priority after the conclusion of the MPI on Wednesdays.
- (b) Private Members Business which has been on the Notice Paper for the period required by the Standing Orders may be called on by a Member of the group which has been allocated time pursuant to the following weekly rotations:

WEEK ONE

For 1.5 Hours	Independent Member for Franklin (Mr O'Byrne)
For 1.5 Hours	Opposition Members
For 1.5 Hours	Greens Members
For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Clark
For 1 Hour	Government Members

WEEK TWO

For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Braddon
For 1.5 Hours	Greens Members
For 1.5 Hours	Opposition Members
For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Bass
For 1 Hour	Government Members

WEEK THREE

For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Franklin (Mr George)
For 1.5 Hours	Opposition Members
For 1.5 Hours	Greens Members
For 1.5 Hour	SFF Member
For 1 Hour	Government Members

WEEK FOUR

For 1.5 Hours	Independent Member for Clark
For 1.5 Hours	Greens Members
For 1.5 Hours	Opposition Members
For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Franklin (Mr O'Byrne)
For 1 Hour	Government Members

WEEK FIVE

For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Bass
For 1.5 Hours	Opposition Members
For 1.5 Hours	Greens Members

For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Braddon
For 1 Hour	Government Members

WEEK SIX

For 1.5 Hour	SFF Member
For 1.5 Hours	Greens Members
For 1.5 Hours	Opposition Members
For 1.5 Hour	Independent Member for Franklin (Mr George)
For 1 Hour	Government Members

- (c) the Member calling on an item in Private Members' Business may, in doing so, state that at the conclusion of that time for the debate on that day, the matter be voted upon.
- (d) at the commencement of the time allocated for a group's Private Members' Business, the Whip or any other Member of that group, may indicate to the Speaker that its time be waived, in which case, the House shall immediately proceed with Government Business for that allocation of time.
- (e) In the event that the time allocated for private members business expires and the House is in Committee of the whole House on a Bill, or a Member has indicated that they wish to go into committee, the debate be adjourned until the conclusion of the allocated time for private members business that day.
- (f) At the conclusion of the allocated private member business time the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House for up to one and a half hours.
- (g) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion in accordance with paragraph (f), the Chair shall, at the conclusion of one and a half hours, put forthwith any question already proposed from the Chair and any other Question requisite to dispose of the business before the Committee, including any Amendments, New Clauses and Schedules to a Bill that have been moved. No other Amendments, New Clauses or Schedules may be proposed.
- (h) Should there be more than one Bill subject to paragraph (e) on the same day the Bills will be considered in the order they were previously dealt with during the allocated private members business time that day.
- (i) The Mover may speak up to twenty minutes and all other Members may speak for ten minutes.

- (j) Five minutes before the time for the debate having expired the Mover shall be given the call to speak in reply.'

- (4) By leaving out Standing Order 46 and inserting instead:

46 Supplementary Questions

At the discretion of the Speaker, one supplementary Question may be asked immediately by the Member who asked the original question to elucidate an answer.

- (5) Standing Order 48 be suspended.
- (6) Following Standing Order 48, the following Sessional Orders be inserted -

48A Minimum number of Questions

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 47, the Speaker shall ensure that a minimum of questions without notice to be asked shall be seven by the Opposition, four by Members of the Greens, one by each Independent Member and the Member of the SFF, if such Member seeks the call.

48B Time Limits for Questions and Answers

- (1) The Speaker shall ensure that:
 - (a) the time taken to ask a Question does not exceed one minute, and the time taken to answer a Question does not exceed three minutes.
 - (b) The time taken to ask a supplementary Question does not exceed 30 seconds, and the time taken to answer a Question does not exceed one minute.
- (2) If a Point of Order is taken during a Question or during an answer, the Speaker has discretion to order that the timing on the clock be paused.

48C Constituency Questions

- (1) At the conclusion of Questions without Notice, Members may ask questions to Ministers relating to constituency matters.
- (2) The total number of Constituency Questions each sitting day is eight, allocated as follows with the order being at the discretion of the Speaker:
 - (a) Two Government Members;

- (b) Two Opposition Members;
 - (c) One Green Member;
 - (d) Three to be allocated at the Speaker's discretion between the Independent Members and the SFF Member; and
 - (e) Any questions remaining after an allocation has been waived to be allocated to any Member seeking the call.
- (3) The time limit for each constituency question is one minute.
- (4) Replies to constituency questions must be given in writing by the relevant Minister to the Clerk within 30 days. The Clerk must provide the response to the Member who asked the question and electronically publish the response.
- (7) In Standing Order 76, after paragraph (3), by adding the following new paragraph -
- '(4) Priority shall be given pursuant to the following rotation:

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Week 1	Opposition	Greens	Independent Member for Clark
Week 2	Opposition	Greens	Independent Member for Braddon
Week 3	Opposition	Opposition	Independent Member for Franklin (Mr O'Byrne)
Week 4	Opposition	Greens	Independent Member for Bass
Week 5	Opposition	Greens	Independent Member for Franklin (Mr George)
Week 6	Opposition	Opposition	SFF Member

- (8) In Standing Order 139 by leaving out the words 'of the House or'.
- (9) In Standing Order 155:
- (1) In heading the words 'and sand-glass turned' be deleted.
 - (2) Leave out the words 'turn a five-minute sand-glass, to be kept on the Table for that purpose, and the doors shall not be closed until after the lapse of five minutes as indicated by such sand-glass' and insert instead the words 'set the timer for seven minutes, and the doors shall not be closed until after the lapse of seven minutes'.

- (10) In Standing Order 156 delete the word 'five' wherever occurring and insert instead 'seven'.
- (11) In Standing Order 165, after 'otherwise corrected', insert ', or in the case of a Member being absent from a division by reason of the malfunction of the division bells or lifts,'
- (12) After Standing Order 183, insert the following:

183A - Cognate Bills

The procedure for two or more Bills to be dealt with as cognate Bills is as follows:

- (1) The Bills shall be initiated by a Member receiving the call and presenting them to the House by stating they are cognate Bills and then reading the short title of each Bill and handing to the Clerk of the House a fair copy of each.
 - (2) One motion may be moved and one Question put in regard to, respectively the second reading, referral to the Committee of the whole stage and the third reading of the Bills together.
 - (3) The Bills may be considered in the one Committee of the whole.
- (13) In Standing Order 192 that the word 'two' be deleted wherever occurring and that the word 'six' be inserted instead.
 - (14) In Standing Order 263 the word 'two' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
 - (15) In Standing Order 324 the word 'three' be deleted and the word 'five' be inserted instead.
 - (16) Leave out Standing Order 358 and insert instead:

358 Suspension of Standing Orders

Any Standing Orders or Orders of the House, except Standing Order No. 94, may be suspended on a Motion duly made without a motion for the granting of leave, provided that such Motion has the concurrence of a majority of the Members present.

- (17) Standing Order 359 be suspended.

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, first of all, it's my first time on my feet in this parliament. I congratulate you on being elected Speaker and I'm looking forward to seeing you command authority over this Chamber. Also to thank the leader of government business, the Leader of Greens Business, and the Independents as well, for what's been a very collaborative negotiating period to agree on new Sessional and Standing Orders. I think we've

landed on something that's very fair across the parliament, reflects the numbers of each party, and will set us up, hopefully, for a very healthy parliament.

I did foreshadow with the Leader of Government Business, though, that we would move an amendment. I will circulate that now and share it with the other parties. The amendment seeks to reintroduce the vote on the adjournment. I will just read that into *Hansard* now. I move -

That under the heading 'Sessional Orders', after paragraph (1), insert the following - there will be a renumbering - in Standing Order 18:

Leave out paragraph (e) and insert instead:

- (e) After these issues have been debated for a maximum period of one hour, the Speaker shall put the question that the House do now adjourn. If the question is resolved in the affirmative, the House shall stand adjourned until the next sitting day. If the question is resolved in the negative, the House shall continue with the order of business in accordance with Standing Order 40, and
- (f) In the event that a motion for adjournment has been proposed in accordance with paragraph (a) or moved in accordance with paragraph (c) and negatived, and a subsequent motion moved, that the House do now adjourn. This question shall be put without debate.

I understand that by not including this in our negotiations on the Sessional Orders, we're reverting to the original Standing Order, which has been accepted by previous iterations of our parliament. I do want to reflect on the reasons why our last parliament did have a Sessional Order to vote on the adjournment. That was because of the really extraordinary actions of one minister, who decided to shut down the business of the day in a selfish move which was really unnecessary and showed an incredible disrespect and disregard for the parliament.

Not only did that minister shut down the business of the day, shut down the opportunity for the opposition and crossbench to ask questions and scrutinise the government, not only shut down the ability for the government to proceed with any other government business of the day, but members who were here at that time might recall that there was also a planned condolence motion for the late Fran Bladel planned for that day. Her family was ready and waiting to see the parliament pay their respects to Fran, so that was an appalling act of selfishness by one minister, Speaker, who decided, through his own motivations - who knows what they were - just to shut down the business of this parliament.

It shouldn't just be the executive that controls what happens in this place. The last election absolutely shows us that. It shows us that the Tasmanian people want to see us behaving differently in this place. One way for the government to show goodwill about that is to retain this Sessional Order. While it might sound very technical, what it in fact will do is show the Tasmanian people that it's the Chamber, it's this parliament that should have the control over when this House ceases its business for the day.

It was really hurtful that day, particularly because the parliament was dealing with some very sensitive matters, members might remember, but also, of course, that the condolence motion was planned for the lovely Fran Bladel.

I'd be interested to hear some of the arguments for why the government wants to revert to our old Standing Orders and not have the ability for the parliament to be able to keep within its control what happens in this place. I believe it would be a very important gesture and show of goodwill to the expanded crossbench and to the opposition to retain this Sessional Order. With that, I will conclude my comments on the amendment. I don't have anything else to contribute on the substantive motion. Other than this change we are very happy with the negotiated outcome on the Standing and Sessional Orders.

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, first of all, I echo the comments of the new Leader of Opposition Business and wish her well. I look forward to cooperation and thank all those who were involved in the negotiation of six-and-a-half-pages of changes to our Sessional and Standing Orders. I think it is indicative that after all those negotiations, there seems to be only one issue that we are debating. I thank everybody for their cooperation and work, and especially the staff behind us who have done a lot of work in that regard.

In relation to the Adjournment issue that the Leader of the Opposition Business has raised, as a government we are very mindful of the fact that we are in a minority. Should a minister or the government seek to do that which you raised - some old history before my time - then I think the numbers in this parliament would express a particular view on that, and therefore -

Mr Winter - No. The parliament never sat again.

Mr ABETZ - it would be on the next sitting day, former leader of the opposition, that the parliament would undoubtedly express a very dim view in relation to that.

Mr Winter - You called an early election.

Mr ABETZ - I will seek to behave myself, Speaker, but the interjections from the former leader of the opposition and my friend from Franklin - I would invite you to desist.

What happens is that if the motion for Adjournment is opposed by a majority in this place, then the parliament would need to continue sitting. I think for the orderly conduct of business, which we are seeking to do to the very best of our ability - no stunts, no surprises in relation to these matters, so that there is an orderly conduct of the parliament.

If the opposition amendment were successful, we would then have the possibility of, at the end of the day when everybody was ready to go and leave, all of a sudden being confronted with having to sit for - and the Clerk might be able to assist me - at least another 90 minutes.

A member - Thirty-five.

Mr ABETZ - Until another motion to adjourn - which would then have us sitting indefinitely. I don't think that is a good workplace practice. I would have thought that those who always talk about good workplace practices would like this motion to ensure that there

was certainty to the day for the workers in this place - not only us as members of parliament, might I add, but all the men and women behind these walls who do so much work for us and for the community, and indeed the parliamentary staff as well.

I would respectfully say to the Leader of Opposition Business: understand that there was an unfortunate incident a few years ago. Let's move on. Let's get this collaboration happening, which has occurred in six-and-a-half pages, and let's keep the six-and-a-half pages together.

[10.11 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I echo the acknowledgement of the work that has been done to come to this place with these Standing and Sessional Orders. I want to pay a particular mention to staff. Mr Street in the government's corner did a power of work with the crossbench, and I'm sure the opposition, in getting to this position. On our behalf, Ms Giblin, our chief of staff, also did a lot of work and helped get to this position. The Clerks gave great advice and I acknowledge everyone in the House who made a contribution to this.

I'm going to make a contribution to the motion as a whole and then finish in relation to Labor's amendment. I only take to my feet once in this debate. In terms of the Standing Orders, tweaking the Sessional Orders has been a bit of a work in progress for the parliament and we have gone from 25 members to 35 members. That precipitates the need for a whole raft of different changes so that we all get a fair go. It is great to see that there's an increased representation in the crossbench as well and that needs to be acknowledged and accommodated. It is time to embed some of the previous Sessional Orders, the speaking times and that sort of thing, into the Standing Orders, so we really welcome that.

One thing that has been lost in the Standing Orders that I want to put on the table and acknowledge is the library committee. There have been some concerns raised by Ms Burnet, my colleague from Clark, about the library committee. We thought that maybe its work could be picked up by the House committee, but we are advised by the Clerks that that is not possible. There has been a commitment from government to talk about this further and work out how we make sure that the library and its research functions are not forgotten because they are really important. As I understand it, we can either reinstate that committee - which I know hasn't met much - or we can find some other place for it to do its work. I put it on the table here and now that we don't want to see the library and the research of the library forgotten in the context of our oversight and input.

In terms of the Sessional Orders, we welcome the fact that there's now 90 minutes for all crossbench members. This is really welcome. There's no reason why the crossbench doesn't deserve the same as the rest of us. We think 20 minutes for the mover and 10 minutes for other contributors is a really appropriate amount of time. If we cannot make our points in 20 minutes as a mover and 10 minutes as a debater then we probably shouldn't be in here. Also, five minutes to quarantine so that we can sum up is very welcome because we did have situations in the last parliament where the time was debated out and the mover of the motion didn't have time to respond. We feel that is really important.

The provision to extend the time of the House to deal with private members' business on Wednesday evenings is also in there and we welcome that commitment by government. We don't want our bills or our business filibustered out and that provision gives us some security that we can have a full three-hour debate on a bill if it is needed and then go to a vote, so that is really welcome.

We also acknowledge an offer - I think - from the government that has been put about potentially forgoing some government business time for more substantial bills at the discretion of the Premier, as we understand it - 'write to the Premier and seek that opportunity' - so we will certainly be judicious with our assessment as to when we need to do that. We acknowledge the Premier's offer for that time and I'm sure we'll take him up on it at some point.

Regarding questions and answers, there are no Dorothy Dixers, there are constituent questions, there are supplementary questions as well and there are ministers, including from the upper House, answering. That is really welcome.

We support the move to suspend Standing Orders with a simple majority, but people want more stability in this place and having a stable parliament that works involves trust on all sides, so we believe that suspending Standing Orders is an important mechanism to have a 50 per cent majority. It holds government to account, it means we can bring forward urgent business and it shouldn't be needed if things go really well, apart from procedural issues. These Sessional Orders represent an improvement on past Sessional Orders and we welcome them.

When it comes to the Leader of Opposition Business's amendment, I will flag right now that we won't support it; we support going back to the original Standing Orders. When it was debated before, there was speculation that it was effectively a no-confidence motion in the government and we all know that's a dangerous thing. We know constitutional experts were debating the fact that if the government loses a vote in relation to the House, it is effectively a no-confidence motion.

We all know now that there are mechanisms to prosecute no confidence in the government. If someone has no confidence in the government, they are welcome to put something on the table if they are deliberate and transparent about that with the Tasmanian people. We think that's a more appropriate way to deal with those concerns and avoid potential ramifications of a vote in relation to the Adjournment. Of course, as the Leader of Government Business has said, if the spirit of this Sessional Order is not upheld, if it is abused, then 18 of us can come in here at any time and impose it in future.

In the spirit of collaboration, we're willing to give the government a go. They've made strong commitments to honouring this provision. There was a late amendment put in just this morning in relation to making sure that a government can't just end business during private members' business and it was very welcome that that was picked up and put in straight away, but we don't want a situation where we sleepwalk into a constitutional issue where there are avenues for no confidence and they're the way to actually put it on the table. We don't support the amendment.

Opposition members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, all members of the Opposition. You can make a contribution yourselves. I do ask the honourable member on his feet be heard.

Mr BAYLEY - With that, honourable Speaker, we don't support the amendment. We support the Standing Orders motion and the Sessional Orders as moved, and I remind the government about that issue in terms of the library committee.

[10.18 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, congratulations on your position. This is my first opportunity on my feet, so let's see how the operation of parliament goes in this session, but I just can't let a few things go here. The Leader of Government Business is running a 'trust us' defence - 'trust us, we won't do the wrong thing' - despite the fact we saw in previous incidents the member for Braddon, Mr Ellis, adjourn parliament when we had a whole bunch of business and a condolence motion before us. The parliament was adjourned just on a whim.

What the Leader of Government Business is saying is that the government wants to retain the ability to shut down parliament at any stage. If we lose this amendment, then the Independents are saying that the government should retain the ability to shut down this parliament at any stage, right? What we saw last time actually happened more than once, but that particular incident was the most egregious, and what happened next? We went to an early election. There was no opportunity for the parliament to get back together and actually fix the problem. That's why we inserted it in the last Sessional Orders. I say to the Independents that if this occurs, we may not get the opportunity to come back to parliament and say to the Independents and Greens we told you so, because the last time it happened we went to an early election.

There was a farcical argument from the leader of Greens business that it could create a constitutional issue, but if it did, the adjournments that the government lost last time we had this rule in didn't cause a constitutional crisis because we just kept sitting. The government actually lost adjournment votes, so there wasn't a constitutional crisis, so that argument is completely irrelevant. I think we need to retain this power because this is a parliament where the government does not have majority, but what the Independents and the Greens are saying to the rest of the world if this amendment doesn't pass is that they want the government to have the ability to shut down parliament whenever they like. I think that is a very dangerous precedent for us to be setting in this parliament.

[10.20 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I want to reflect on the goodwill that was established over the last few weeks in the negotiations. On the Standing Orders, I have been a long-time member in this House and have seen the evolution of the conduct of this place, with the removal of the Dorothy Dixers and the ability for our members and private members' time to be expanded. There has been a significant change over the last two parliaments in terms of the conduct of this House and the ability for members not of the government to have a say and to have their issues heard. I acknowledge the good work and negotiations that have been undertaken over the last couple of weeks. Particularly after the activities and events over the last few months, the tone in the discussions has noticeably changed from the government side and at some stage we do need to acknowledge that.

The incident that has been referred to regarding the last parliament was a very poor moment for this House. I think we've all reflected on that and I'm sure the government has reflected on that, but one incident should not necessarily cause a major upset in terms of the change to a Standing Order that has worked for many years. I won't reflect on the current Speaker, but I will reflect on the previous Speaker - and I'm sure I'll paraphrase her - I will get a clip around the ear, I am sure, if I get it wrong. She thought that the amendment as being proposed, and the conduct of the Adjournment debate, was a silly idea. She didn't like it either, because it interfered and interrupted the conduct of the House. If there are issues of importance to be debated, we debate them and there are forms of the House to manage those issues.

However, at the end of every day, to have the Sword of Damocles over the House and the staff and all the people here for good conduct, is problematic.

The issue that we need to acknowledge - and the fact is - that we've had a lot of discussions and this is the first time I have seen this amendment. The goodwill that has been occurring and building over the last couple of weeks around these important matters should not be ignored and should not be disrespected. Every member has a right to move an amendment, but these are the Standing Orders of the house. We've been in meetings, in discussions, and now we have an amendment from the Opposition at the last moment. I just think; read the room. People are working together. If the government behaves in a poor way, we have the forms of the House to manage that. I can't support the amendment.

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

The House divided -

AYES 10

Dr Broad
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Ms Haddad
Mr Mitchell (Teller)
Mr Willie
Mr Winter

NOES 24

Mr Abetz
Mrs Archer
Ms Badger
Mr Barnett
Mr Bayley
Ms Burnet
Mr Di Falco
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs (Teller)
Mr Ferguson
Mr Garland
Mr George
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Prof Razay
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Vermey
Dr Woodruff

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Supplementary Questions

[10.28 a.m.]

The SPEAKER - Before we move on to questions, I want to make a statement on supplementary questions in relation to how I intend to rule on supplementary questions.

In line with previous rulings in this House, supplementary questions must be actually and accurately related to the original question and/or must relate to, or arise from, the answer. The purpose of a supplementary question is to elucidate or clarify a matter raised in a primary question or a reply. It is not in order to ask a supplementary question of another minister. Any supplementary question must be directed to the minister initially answering the question.

When a minister has asked that a question be put on notice, or said that they will seek further information to inform the House, a supplementary question will not be in order, as was the practice in the last parliament.

I will endeavour to ensure consistency in my rulings in respect of supplementary questions and remind members that the Standing Orders Committee will continue to review the standing and sessional orders to address any issues arising.

STATEMENT BY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Shadow Ministry Appointments

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I will update the House on the Shadow Cabinet arrangements.

The honourable Josh Willie MP as Shadow Minister for Economic Development portfolio and Education in Early Years.

The honourable Janie Finlay MP as Shadow Minister for Energy and Renewables, Primary Industry and Aquaculture, Water, Environment, Parks and Climate Change, Innovation, Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy.

The honourable Dean Winter MP as Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Planning, Shadow Minister for Racing, and Leader of Opposition Business.

The honourable Ella Haddad MP as Shadow Attorney General, Shadow Minister for Justice and Integrity, Shadow Minister for Workplace Relations, and Shadow Minister for Equality.

The honourable Sarah Lovell MLC as Leader of Opposition Business in the Legislative Council, Shadow Minister for Health, Mental Health, and Well-being and Ageing, Shadow Minister for Disability, and Shadow Minister for Women.

The honourable Anita Dow MP as Shadow Minister for Tourism and Events, Infrastructure, Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs.

The honourable Shane Broad MP as Shadow Minister for Resources, Building and Construction, Consumer Affairs.

The honourable Jen Butler MP as Shadow Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Transport, Corrections, and Rehabilitation, and Veterans Affairs.

The honourable Luke Edmunds MLC as Shadow Minister for Stadiums and Sport, Finance, and Hospitality.

The honourable Meg Brown MP as Opposition Whip, Shadow Minister for Housing, Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, Heritage, and Arts.

The honourable Brian Mitchell MP as Shadow Minister for TAFE, Skills and Training, and Small Business.

The honourable Jess Greene MP as Shadow Minister for Children and Young People, Community Services, Multicultural Affairs.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Absence of Legislative Council Ministers at Question Time

[10.31 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I advise the House that as the Legislative Council has not been sitting, the message from the House requesting leave for Legislative Council ministers to attend Question Time in this place has not yet been considered. Therefore, Mr Duigan, Ms Palmer, and Mr Vincent will be absent from the Chamber for Question Time this week.

In their absence, the Treasurer will take questions on the portfolios of Infrastructure and Transport, Mr Ellis will take questions on the Housing and Planning portfolio, and I will take questions on the remaining portfolio areas of responsibility.

QUESTIONS

TasInsure - Business Case

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.33 a.m.]

During the election campaign, you announced that you would establish TasInsure, a state-owned insurance company. You promised Tasmanians that they would save \$250 on their insurance premiums. You even suggested that it was going to reduce grocery prices - claims that have no evidence supporting them. You made hats, jackets, stubby-holders

and stickers. You even set up a fake office in Launceston with glossy signs. We have seen the style, Premier, but we haven't seen the substance.

Tasmanians are telling me they are struggling with insurance premiums and the cost of doing business, but they're sceptical of your TasInsure policy, and question whether it is the right approach or even feasible. These Tasmanians want these answers: Do you have a business case for TasInsure, or any modelling that says that Tasmanians will save \$250 on their insurance, or that grocery prices will be cheaper because of your policy?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I congratulate the member on his elevation to the position of Leader of the Opposition. I wish you well.

When it comes to TasInsure, it was a very clear policy commitment as a result of what we were hearing in the community across a range of areas. Whether it was families, small businesses, or community organisations, they were being dramatically impacted by what I termed market failure when it comes to insurance across the country. We have \$6 billion of profit for the insurance industry across the nation and exorbitant insurance premium increases. A small business owner I met in Queenstown had some 300 per cent increase in their insurance premiums. When you extrapolate that across the state and insurance premiums going up of that magnitude, or less even, it has serious consequences in terms of the business's ability to be able to afford insurance. Some are not insuring at all, in some circumstances underinsuring, and in other circumstances, businesses closing their doors as a result of the increase in insurance premiums, so I look forward -

Members interjecting.

Mr Mitchell - You should write a letter of unwavering support.

The SPEAKER - Order. I remind the House that the only acceptable forms of interjection are 'hear, hear' or 'shame', so I encourage the honourable member for Lyons to restrict himself to those two, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I look forward to working across the parliament on further developing the commitment of TasInsure to ensure that we consult widely with key stakeholders, and that there's a recognition from the honourable member that increases in insurance premiums are indeed a real problem. We will do the work. We have a 100-day commitment. I look forward to receiving advice across departments, including Treasury, when it comes to the commitment of TasInsure, and working with other entities and stakeholders, including the RACT, of course, who have a view on these matters. This is a policy response to a real concern in the community.

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

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Does the Premier have any shred of evidence that Tasmanians will save \$250 on their insurance premiums or that grocery prices will be cheaper?

The SPEAKER - The question is in order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for the question, honourable member. There is no doubt that an intervention in the market, if you like, is needed. I congratulate the Motor Accidents Insurance Board (MAIB), who do such good work in keeping their premiums low and well below the figures that I have seen and heard from small businesses, and from mums and dads across Tasmania. Our stated commitment is very real.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Honourable Speaker. Standing Order 45, relevance. The Premier hasn't gone anywhere near answering the question, which is about evidence for his policy. Does he have any evidence that Tasmanians will save \$250 on their insurance premiums or that grocery prices will be lower, as he claimed in the election?

The SPEAKER - I call the Premier to Standing Order 45: relevance.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I was being very relevant when it comes to -

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

TasInsure - Government Commitment

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.38 a.m.]

Independent experts have called TasInsure a reckless scheme that exposes Tasmanian taxpayers to enormous financial risk. There's still no business case, no Treasury modelling, and no evidence it will deliver the savings you promised. It looks like TasInsure is nothing more than an election trick with no real plan behind it to actually help Tasmanians with their insurance costs. You've stopped wearing the jacket and Simon Wood has taken down the signs. Tasmanians want to know: are you still committed to establishing TasInsure? Will you still establish TasInsure even if it exposes Tasmanian taxpayers to enormous financial risk, like all the experts say?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I hope that, as he travels around Tasmania, he asks these key questions about insurance premiums and the impact on small businesses, the impact on community groups, and the impact on families, when it comes to their insurance premiums. If he asked these questions, he would appreciate why we have a stated policy commitment around TasInsure, which we will deliver. I look forward to working across parliament and the community to ensure our stated commitment is delivered on a range of stakeholders, including independent experts, as you say.

It has been interesting to note the 2025 results announcements for insurance companies over the past few weeks: significant profit increases for major players like Insurance Australia

Group reporting a 51 per cent net profit, an increase to \$1.36 billion; Suncorp a 52 per cent increase, a \$1.8 billion full-year profit; QBE up 21 per cent over the half-year -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you for your interjections. That's a lot of profits going to multinational insurance companies. When families and small businesses are underinsuring or not insuring at all, and the insurance companies are making billions of dollars of profit. The market is broken. I don't want to see a circumstance where we have increased exposure to floods and fire on the mainland and Tasmanians wear the brunt of that. It's about responding to community need. I welcome the input from honourable members, should they wish to contribute. The honourable member, of course, can contribute as well. I look forward to his engagement. I know the honourable member has stated some concerns about budget matters but has boycotted the Multipartisan Budget Panel. Now is the time to be constructive, recognise the challenges that Tasmanians are facing and come up with solutions. We have a solution on this side of the House.

Opposition members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have no solution to what you say is a problem that you acknowledge, so I welcome the engagement from the honourable member in a constructive way.

Supplementary Question

The SPEAKER - Before I call on the supplementary, I remind members that if we reach a certain level, I will start issuing warnings. I do not want to suspend any member on the first full day of parliament. Again, I remind all members: 'shame' and 'hear, hear', and not as loud with your interjections.

Mr WILLIE - My question to the Premier is: will he establish TasInsure even if Treasury recommends against it because of the financial exposure to the State of Tasmania?

The SPEAKER - The supplementary question is in order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for his question. We will be receiving advice from a range of sources as we consult with the community. The advice I'm getting from mums and dads, community groups and small businesses is that they've had enough. They're either under-insuring, not insuring, or closing their businesses as a result of insurance premiums. That's not sustainable. That's not good for Tasmanians.

We have a solution in TasInsure. You have acknowledged the problem - come up with a solution yourself. How about we work together to ensure that we're in the corner of mums and dads and small businesses in this community?

Salmon Industry - Potential Moratorium

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.43 a.m.]

This summer, Tasmanians witnessed a cascade of catastrophes in waterways: jellyfish blooms, paralytic shellfish toxins, and tonnes of dead salmon being hauled out of waters by the truckload and washing up on beaches. We desperately need to end the intensification of salmon production in Tasmania if we're going to avoid a natural disaster like the algal bloom still devastating South Australia's marine waters. You said the salmon industry was on notice in summer and said it again when you promised to pause spatial expansions. You said that pause starts when your review starts but that's too little, too late for our marine environment.

Will you truly put big salmon companies on notice? Will you commit to an immediate moratorium on intensifying salmon farming in Tasmania's waterways?

Opposition members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable Premier has the call.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the Greens for the question. There has been some journey when it comes to the salmon industry in Tasmania. Might I state very clearly, it has been a very proud journey, since its inception in the late 1980s through to now, employing many, many thousands of Tasmanians directly or indirectly. That's why, as minister for Primary Industries, and with other responsibilities that I've had over the last 11 years or so, I have always advocated not only for the industry, but for ensuring there are appropriate regulatory mechanisms by which the industry is monitored. There are significant changes that we've made over the course of the last decade, including the independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA), which we established, regulating the industry and keeping the industry accountable. There are also other penalty provisions for marine debris and other areas of compliance that are regulatory in nature, to ensure the sustainability of the industry.

My belief in the industry is very strong, as it contributes enormously to the Tasmanian community. The reasons why we have continued to further regulate and have oversight of the industry are to ensure the sustainability of the industry; not just for the next year but also for the next many decades, for the value that it provides not only to the economy but to local communities. That's why we have announced the pause on spatial expansion. That's why we have announced the study, on which I look forward to engaging further with members and the community and industry.

I recognise the algal bloom in South Australia and the circumstances that we found ourselves in earlier this year. The industry was on notice. I said that very clearly in an answer to a question you asked me back in March this year. I want what's best for the community and the industry because of the jobs that it creates. If that means a study and a pause on spatial expansion to ensure continuous improvement, then that is a very small price to pay to ensure that sustainability - in my view, that we've always done, in the belief of the industry to ensure

that it has the social licence of the community with which to continue. I look forward to engaging with the industry and the community to ensure its sustainability.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, honourable Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - Restating the question and clarifying precisely: Premier, will you commit to an immediate moratorium on intensifying salmon production, salmon farming in Tasmania?

The SPEAKER - The question does respond to the original question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for the question. Notwithstanding my previous answer, the intent of the pause is that there will be no increase in the total lease area subject to salmon farming operations while the independent studies are being undertaken. While the pause is in place, authorisation to farm salmon with dormant leases will not be granted unless a process was already being actively pursued or under consideration.

Authorisation to deploy pens in the North Storm Bay will not be granted. Consistent with the commitments to the Salmon Industry Plan 2023, government will commence planning processes to reclassify unoccupied marine farming zones to remove finfish as a permitted species for culturing within those zones. That is the intent of the pause -

Dr Woodruff - It doesn't cover off on intensification.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, it is important the lessons were learned from this year about the circumstances which were -

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

Metro Tasmania and Homes Tasmania - Government Management

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.48 a.m.]

In the last parliament, your government triggered a review of government business enterprises and state-owned companies with a view to assessing their most appropriate structure and ownership model. You are actively considering the options of privatisation. You sensibly walked this back during the election campaign, but the issue of poor performance has not disappeared. Two in particular, Metro Tasmania and Homes Tasmania, are failing in their duty to deliver essential services to the Tasmanian community.

Metro is no longer financially sustainable - their words not mine - and two years on from a temporary service adjustment, more than 100 services are still cancelled. The housing crisis worsens each day on Homes Tasmania's watch. Will you consider bringing public transport

and housing back into the heart of government, in government ownership and direct control, to ensure the delivery of these basic, essential public services?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. In the question he has stated policy intention and belief about Homes Tasmania and Metro. As you have acknowledged in your question, we have witnessed the consequences of the failure of government business governance and we are very determined that that's not repeated across the areas of government business enterprises, notwithstanding the fact that minister Vincent and I were at berth 3 in East Devonport just a few days ago. I commend the new TT-Line management and board for the great progress that they have made since we intervened in that project.

Ms Butler - Are you for real?

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are asking me about a policy commitment, honourable member for Franklin -

Ms Butler - Good job. Well done, well done you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, honourable Ms Butler, I appreciate that. This is a policy question which you could bring to the parliament and debate that in a more fulsome way. I am not committing to your ask at this particular time. I will need to consult with my colleagues about those stated commitments. Of course, we have the independent review into Homes Tasmania, the Crawford report and the Tasmanian Government's response were both tabled in parliament and published prior to the election.

The report made it clear that there are some elements of the original model for Homes Tasmania that have not delivered on stakeholder expectations and needed action. We will be ensuring that the Department of State Growth works with Homes Tasmania and other relevant departments to address and implement the independent reports' 20 recommendations. That will be a priority of the new Minister for Housing.

That's our policy at this stated point in time, but if the member wishes to debate further policy commitments, I welcome an opportunity for that discussion.

Breast Screening Bus *Luna* - Replacement

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

[10.52 a.m.]

Last week you told Tasmanian women that the procurement process to replace the breast screen bus *Luna* was ongoing and that a replacement will be delivered in 12 months' time. Has an order for the replacement bus actually been placed yet? If so, could you please name the supplier or suppliers, and can you tell us what evidence you're relying on when you say replacement bus will be delivered in 12 months?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. This has been a priority for me since being elected and being appointed to this role. I want to make it clear that the government is committed to breast screening for Tasmanian women. The original breast screen bus called *Luna*, covering eastern, southern and western Tasmania, has been retired following a technical assessment that was undertaken when water damage caused electrical issues.

Funding has been committed for a replacement bus which the department is in the process of procuring. The replacement bus is now expected to be back on the road in the next 12 months, due to limited availability for the fit out of the mobile screening units across the country. I am as disappointed as the member is with this and I have instructed the department to do everything possible to expedite the replacement, noting the complexities involved with procuring these specialised screening units.

I sincerely apologise to those impacted, including those on the east coast and in the north-east, where scheduled screenings have been cancelled. The department has directly communicated with affected clients to offer alternative appointments at other breast screen sites at Rosny, Hobart and Launceston to ensure that women can still access their screenings. To assist affected clients, patient travel assistance and additional transport options will be made available for those Tasmanians affected by this.

The department has been working closely with organisations on the east coast to arrange community transport for group screening bookings. I'm advised that a free charter bus for those requiring breast screening services and transportation is scheduled from the east coast to Hobart early next month, with more to be scheduled as needed. An immediate action has also been taken to identify additional interim solutions. This includes the establishment of an interim breast screen site in Devonport, which will enable the redeployment of the second breast screen bus from the Devonport region to other communities.

I urge anybody requiring a breast screen to call 132 050 to book an appointment. The Government is of course, as part of our election commitments, boosting access to life-saving breast screening services with new permanent breast screening clinics which will be located in Kingborough, Devonport, Triabunna and Glenorchy. These clinics will provide free screening for eligible Tasmanians, which will make it easier for women to access those services closer to their home, but also make those mobile units available for servicing rural and remote locations.

I'm happy to continue to work with the member and other members in this place as we finalise the procurement of that new bus and to make sure that patients are not impacted in the meantime.

Supplementary Question

Ms JOHNSTON - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms JOHNSTON - The honourable minister spoke about the procuring process and that the procuring process is ongoing. Can you actually confirm whether an order has actually been

placed and if an order hasn't been placed, then what guarantees have you got that one will be available within 12 months?

The SPEAKER - The supplementary question is in order.

Mrs ARCHER - Thanks to the honourable member for that question. I understand that procurement is underway, but I'm happy to seek further information and come back to the House with an update.

Salmon Farms - Impact on Marine Wildlife

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

[10.56 a.m.]

Thank you, honourable Speaker, for my first opportunity to contribute. I note the distressing and increasing number of deaths of marine wildlife and sea birds that have become entangled or otherwise come into contact with the industrial salmon farms in Storm Bay and other waterways in the southeast of the state. This includes seals, cormorants, and now four dolphins this year. Will the minister take urgent action by calling in the executives of the multinational salmon farms and warn them that the deaths of marine animals, including the recent four dolphins, is unacceptable, a breach of their obligations, and will not be tolerated in Tasmania? Will you also ensure that severe and vastly increased penalties will be imposed for such breaches?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I also note for the House the members' interest in previous briefings I have conducted with the remainder of the crossbench and others in this place on similar matters in the past. It's that level of transparency and openness that I want to continue. I think it was done in good vein and good faith. I thank the members of the crossbench for participating in that. I advise that if there is any specific question they want answered in relation to marine science, by all means contact me and I will avail them of that.

The member raises a very serious issue when it comes to mammal deaths in our marine environment. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tasmania) regulates wildlife interactions and the use of seal management options in the marine farming industry in Tasmania. Under the seal management framework, the data is reported monthly by NRE Tasmania's Wildlife Health and Marine Section and is co-located. That's what the member is referring to today.

The review is published on the department's website every six months. I am advised that aquaculture companies are encouraged to promptly report wildlife deaths to enable the department to collate suitable carcasses for postmortem investigation which can help confirm the cause of death and monitor for disease. The management of wildlife interactions with aquaculture activities is very complex and, like land-based farming, it is ongoing and an ongoing challenge for marine farm operators.

The four *cetacean* mortalities recorded between January and June 2025 were all short-beaked common dolphins. NRE Tasmania has requested further information from industry to assist in reviewing the circumstances surrounding those dolphin mortalities the honourable member mentioned.

In relation to the seal deaths that he also mentioned in his question, over the past four years, from 2020-21 to 2024-25, there has been a 78 per cent decrease in seal mortalities reported by salmon industries. That tells me that we are at least moving in the right direction.

In relation to those dolphin deaths of which he spoke, once that information is made available to NRE Tasmania, I am willing to share that with him and, in fact, the House.

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr GEORGE - I ask the honourable Minister for Primary Industries and Water to answer the question. Is he prepared to call in the executives of the multinational salmon farms and make it very clear to them that mortalities of native wild animals, both seabirds and marine animals, is unacceptable? Is he prepared to warn them that they will face severe penalties for continued mortalities?

The SPEAKER - That is reflecting on the original question, so I draw the minister's attention to that.

Mr PEARCE - Honourable Speaker, once that information is availed from industry back to NRE Tasmania, then we will study that. We need to make absolutely clear what is the cause of death and other scientific factors that will affect the ongoing - as you put it - warnings or statutory statements made to industry in relation to this. Might I say that the standards are very clear in relation to mammals operating and being killed adjacent to salmon farming. I intend to maintain the standards. As I have pointed out to the Independent member in previous discussions, I am here to ensure that those standards are adhered to.

TasInsure - Financial Risk

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.01 a.m.]

Tasmanians are raising issues about your TasInsure policy with me and we are asking questions on their behalf. Experts, including Saul Eslake and the Insurance Council of Australia, have warned that your flagship TasInsure policy poses an enormous financial risk to Tasmanian taxpayers and does nothing to address the real causes of rising insurance premiums. Saul Eslake said that governments have no business running insurance companies and called it 'just about the worst idea to come out of a major political party in Tasmania that I can remember'. The Insurance Council of Australia has also slammed your policy as reckless, pointing out that all other states and territories, including Tasmania, sold off their government insurance companies decades ago for good reason. Tasmanians are asking why you think your

government can succeed in running a state-owned insurer when you can barely run government businesses you already have, like TT-Line?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. The Insurance Council of Tasmania, which you mentioned, represents the industry that had \$6 billion worth of profit. That is one of the reasons where we've got market failure, when you have all those profits -

Mr Willie - You have no business case.

Ms Finlay - No evidence.

The SPEAKER - Order. The Deputy Leader and the Leader of the Opposition will allow the Premier to be heard. You can ask another question or a supplementary soon, but I ask that the Premier be heard in silence, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - all those exorbitant increases in insurance premiums I've given a number of examples of over the last number of months. We are listening to the community. Tasmanians want us to intervene in the insurance market in Tasmania and we will intervene. We will also consult with all key stakeholders and welcome the opportunity to consult with the Insurance Council of Tasmania, Mr Eslake, and other key stakeholders, but most importantly the mums and dads, the families, the community groups, and the small businesses that are seeing exorbitant increases in their insurance premiums. This is a policy challenge. We've stepped up to that policy challenge and have a policy around TasInsure.

Ms Finlay - No evidence. Shame.

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, this is your first warning because you are making constant interjections.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I recognise the honourable member in his question has cited examples of state-owned insurance companies, including the Tasmanian Government Insurance Office (TGIO) I believe it was, back in the late 1980s, early 1990s. Decisions were made across the nation around those policy decisions for that time, but we are in a different time where we have small businesses that have increased insurance premiums of some 300 per cent in regional Tasmania. We're responding to what we're hearing. We're listening and learning. There's nothing shameful about that, honourable member Ms Finlay. You would expect us to listen to the community on a range of areas.

Opposition members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Clearly, on a number of policy matters, you're not reading the room either, I must say. I would suggest that the honourable member continues to get out and about in the community, listen to the needs of mums and dads, families, small businesses and community groups and come up with a solution. I'm happy to engage with you on our solution.

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

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - How does the Premier think he can run a state-based insurance company when every other state and territory has abandoned the idea and he struggles to run companies like TT-Line as it is?

The SPEAKER - Your last question was about every other state and territory. That wasn't mentioned in your original question, so that really is a new question.

Mr WILLIE - I mentioned states and territories in my first question.

The SPEAKER - Right, okay; the question is in order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for his question, but we're not followers in Tasmania, we're leaders. I look forward to the policy positions of other states and territories - or indeed, oppositions - that replicate TasInsure, whether that be Vic-Insure or WA-Insure, Qld-Insure. I reckon there's going to be lots of state-based insurers potentially up and running. I'm not going to make light, though, of the need to intervene in the market. I recognise the honourable member is exercised about the policy because it is a good policy and responds to the need. MAIB is a very successfully run insurance company.

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

TasInsure - Impact on Insurance Premiums and Grocery Prices

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[11.07 a.m.]

I've travelled all over Tasmania in the past weeks and listened to people like Scott from Scottsdale who told me how hard and expensive it is to insure his farm, business and shop. During the election, the honourable Premier, Mr Rockliff, promised Tasmanians that TasInsure would save them \$250 on their insurance premiums and even suggested it will make groceries cheaper - claims that clearly have no supporting evidence. What evidence or analysis has Treasury provided to prove that TasInsure will save Tasmanians \$250 on their insurance premiums or that groceries will be cheaper? Don't you think Tasmanians like Scott deserve an explanation? Do you support this market intervention as Treasurer?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let there be no doubt, as a member of Cabinet, guess what? Of course I support the policy. I am sure that there would not be any doubt in this room that I support the policies of the government. It might come as a surprise to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not know how you transact business

over there. I can assure you we are a unified team over here and we are more than willing to back each other.

In relation to Scott from Scottsdale - and I look forward to meeting Scott one day if he actually exists, but I will take your word for that. In relation to premiums, there is no doubt that the people of Tasmania are suffering under higher premiums in circumstances where, in fairness, in my assessment, the risk is not commensurate with the high premiums that have been claimed and charged by insurance companies. A very good example is a government-owned insurance company, the Motor Accidents Insurance Board, where we have the lowest premiums in the country and the most generous payments, and it is providing a dividend to the government and to the budget.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I remind the members of the Opposition you have three more questions to go. I ask that the honourable Treasurer is heard in silence please.

Mr ABETZ - What a good idea, Honourable Speaker. Thank you very much.

That is a triple bottom line in relation to the Motor Accidents Insurance Board, a government-run insurance business.

I would say to colleagues that we, as a government, are agile and committed to the private sector, but when there is market failure or where there are circumstances where the government can deliver better than the private sector, then of course we will embrace that.

In relation to the premiums and the savings, it makes good sense that if premiums come down when you have examples, as the Premier indicated to us, of businesses no longer insuring or having a 300 per cent increase in their premiums. Here is a little lesson in economics for the Leader of the Opposition: when you have those extra costs imposed on business, guess what it does? It increases prices. Therefore, if you can put downward pressure on premiums, guess what? It puts downward pressure on prices. As a result, the consumers and the people of Tasmania will be better off.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Can the honourable Treasurer say whether he will direct Treasury to model whether TasInsure will save Tasmanians \$250 on their insurance premiums or that grocery prices will be lower as the Premier claimed in the election campaign? We see no evidence.

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

Mr ABETZ - Honourable Speaker, ongoing work is being done in relation to TasInsure. As the Premier indicated, there are various discussions taking place, including with the RACT. We are a collaborative government. We are willing to work with the community and with the

RACT. I have already set out the exceptionally good circumstances of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board.

Mr Mitchell - You can't make it work. You would have released it by now.

The SPEAKER - Honourable member for Lyons, the question has been asked. You need to listen to it.

Mr ABETZ - If we can collaborate with the Motor Accidents Insurance Board and the RACT, I have every confidence that the people of Tasmania can and will be better off. We will continue to work to ensure that the best possible model is delivered for the benefit of the people of Tasmania.

Salmon Industry - Florfenicol Fast-Tracking

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[11.13 a.m.]

In August, you briefed MPs on why your department made an emergency application to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) to fast-track florfenicol, which is an unregistered antibiotic that salmon companies want to dump in the hundreds of kilos in Tasmania's public waters. Despite acknowledging the presence of diseased salmon in pens during winter, senior agency staff were at pains to advise us there is no actual emergency occurring. APVMA rules state that an emergency permit can only be approved in the case of a genuine emergency. You are fast-tracking florfenicol, an untested antibiotic with high risk of resistance in native fish and the food chain. It's clear the emergency your government is focused on is maintaining the profits of multinational corporations. Will you stop the fast-tracked application of florfenicol and order companies to destock their leases to mitigate the coming marine disaster?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, in relation to the use of the drug florfenicol, the application was made from industry in a preventative measure prior to water temperatures exceeding 13 or 14 degrees and increased risks coming in the environment. I welcome that preventative measure. Any form of therapeutant that is applied to those animals in the name of animal husbandry is a good thing in my book.

We will continue to support our industry as it recovers from an unprecedented summer mortality event. No-one here wants to see another one of those. The industry doesn't want to see that either. The government and industry have been working hand in hand and hand in glove, to ensure that as we approach summer, the best possible outcomes are achieved for animal welfare and environmental perspective as we work to continue to make this happen.

I have been very open and upfront on the knowns and the unknowns when it comes to biosecurity and the welfare of farmed salmon in southern Tasmania. I facilitated a comprehensive briefing to members in parliament just a few weeks ago. Two days later, on 13 August, I received a briefing on salmon biosecurity management and the identification of

florfenicol as a potential tool to combat future disease risk. We do not want another mass death. In the interest of providing this to members of parliament with an update on information that was presented to me regarding salmon biosecurity and florfenicol use, I extended an invitation to the opposition, the Greens, Independent members and parliament for a crossbench agency, which took place on 15 August. At that briefing, noting that the caretaker conventions were in place at the time, the secretary of NRE undertook to provide the leader of the Greens with additional information, which I understand was provided the following day, Monday 18 August. It was made clear to attendees of that joint briefing that there had not been any reports of exceedance of mandated mortality reporting thresholds at that stage.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will allow the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Honourable minister, can you confirm that you've just said that this would be a preventative measure tool?

The SPEAKER - I will ask the honourable minister to take his seat, please.

Dr WOODRUFF - Will the honourable minister desist in the department's application for an emergency permit for florfenicol, and instead proceed to the proper process, which is a full permit application, so that a proper assessment of environmental impacts can occur?

Mr PEARCE - The industry has invested heavily in fish vaccine and the development of vaccine use and other biosecurity measures. If, on the advice of a veterinarian, fish and marine farms require treatment with antibiotics, farmers must advise the EPA director and the Chief Veterinary Officer before treatment is applied and comply with any requirements for EPA residue testing and reporting.

In Tasmania, all veterinarians are required to comply with the *Poisons Act*, the *Code of Practice for the Supply and the Use of Veterinary Chemical Products*, which is legally applied under the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Order 2001*, and legislated.

I'm advised that the Salmonid Biosecurity Program, which is enforced through regulation under the *Biosecurity Act 2019*, requires all antibiotic use in marine operations to comply with the regulatory requirements in the use of the marine environment and be reported.

Forensics Staff Availability for Assault Victim-Survivors

Prof RAZAY question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[11.18 a.m.]

It has been reported recently in the media that there is concern about the availability of staff trained as forensic medical examiners for victim-survivors of sexual and domestic violence. According to *Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-27* item 23, a forensic medical examiner should be available for victim/survivors in all our

hospitals: Royal Hobart, Launceston General, and North West Regional Hospital. Can the honourable minister give assurance to the House and to Tasmania that victim/survivors will have access to all these services in their local hospital and that there will be no cut in these services in the future?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Bass for his question and congratulate him on his election to this place. Our government is committed to providing trauma-informed care and treatment to anyone who experiences sexual harm and family violence. The Department of Health works closely with Tasmania Police, Laurel House and other community services. I'm advised that a member of the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination service (SAFE) is on call from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. Calls are triaged and staff attend when needed. In the north-west, appropriately trained staff also undertake an on-call arrangement to provide this service after hours.

The SAFE service is delivered by medical officers, nurses and midwives who have undertaken additional specialised training in forensic examinations. This training is highly specialised and necessary to ensure that the care provided is sensitive to the needs of the person following a sexual assault or family violence and ensures evidentiary requirements are met.

I'm further advised that the department is actively exploring all possible avenues to provide the opportunity for more staff to undertake specialised training.

Please be assured that anyone who presents to our hospitals to seek treatment will always be provided with the care and support that they need.

To be clear, we are investing in the SAFE program and are looking to increase staff trained in this highly specialised area. I can assure everyone in the community that there will be absolutely no cuts to these important services, nor will anyone be forced to travel to other hospitals to access them.

TasInsure - Impact on State's Credit Rating

Mr WILLIE question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[11.21 a.m.]

Credit rating agencies have already downgraded Tasmania's outlook to 'negative', warning that rising debt and financial exposure could trigger a full downgrade. Now the honourable Premier wants to add TasInsure, a government-run insurance company with no business case, no modelling, and no evidence that it will benefit Tasmanians. Tasmanians are asking us to raise this with you because they are worried this plan has not been thought through.

Can you guarantee that implementing this policy won't immediately trigger a credit rating downgrade that will increase borrowing costs that will hurt schools, hospitals and services that Tasmanians rely on?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The issue of credit ratings is not something on which I'm going to speculate. It seems as though the Leader of the Opposition enjoys speculating, hoping for a downgrade. That would not be within the interest of the people of Tasmania and I would -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The members of the Opposition have asked a question. I ask that the Treasurer be heard in silence. You have the chance of a supplementary question, or you still have another two questions to go. I ask that the honourable Treasurer be heard in silence.

Mr ABETZ - I invite the Leader of the Opposition to consider the approach he and the Opposition are taking to these matters because they, with respect, spectacularly failed on July 19 by being highly critical of the budget but then not providing an alternative, saying that our pathway to surplus was not acceptable, but then didn't offer their own pathway to surplus. Then they had a motion of no confidence in the Premier but did not offer themselves up as an alternate premier. Really strong on the criticism, but unable to provide a positive alternative for the people of Tasmania, and they voted accordingly.

In relation to the issue of credit ratings, I invite the Leader of the Opposition and all those in the Opposition to consider a new start and talk up Tasmania, talk about the opportunities, talk about the possibilities, and invite people, and indeed the credit rating agencies, to consider why is it that in Tasmania we have the highest business confidence of any state or territory? The Leader of the Opposition can laugh at that, but I would have thought the business community might have a bit of a hunch as to how the economy is going.

We have currently the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded in this state, I would have thought another big tick for our economy, something that I would invite the credit rating agencies to consider.

In relation to the totality of the government's approach to these matters, we are mindful of the motion of no confidence that got carried - the first one, not the second one - and we are and will be engaged in relation to the matters of budget repair. We look forward to the collaboration of everybody, because this is a Tasmanian task, a task for all of us.

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

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Does Treasury consider TasInsure a credit risk?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Treasurer, it is in line with the original question.

Mr ABETZ - I'm not going to respond specifically as to advice I may or may not be receiving in relation to these matters.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Listen to the honourable Treasurer's response.

Mr ABETZ - Let's be very clear: as a government, we can accept advice that ultimately we as a government decide. If that were not the case, there would be no need for anybody in this Chamber. We are democratically elected to make decisions, we seek advice, we consider that advice and ultimately we make the determination, and that is a fundamental lesson of democracy -

Mr Mitchell - Chairman Mao would be proud.

The SPEAKER - Honourable Member for Lyons, this is your first warning, because you are quite loud.

Mr ABETZ - which I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to contemplate, consider and accept.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Impact on State Budget

Mr BAYLEY question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.26 a.m.]

Tasmania's budget situation is in a terrible situation. Treasury had advised serious action needs to be taken to address it. We cannot just grow the economy to dig ourselves out of this budget hole. We need to cut spending and raise revenue. Services like health and housing are already struggling to meet the needs of Tasmanians and they can't face any more cuts. It's obvious to all that a debt of almost \$2 billion over a decade for the stadium is untenable in this budget mess. Support for the Tassie Devils teams continues to build. We've got teams heading out into the VFL and AFLW team competitions next year and it's happening with or without the stadium. How much is too much to spend on the stadium? Doesn't the budget situation compel you to relieve Tasmanians of the debt and division of the stadium or are you planning to make further cuts to Tasmania's essential services to meet the demands of the AFL?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and longstanding interest when it comes to stadia infrastructure. I also note his acknowledgement of the momentum of the Tasmania Devils and that the recent announcement about the VFL and AFLW was also very exciting.

Can I also say that momentum and excitement is building particularly among young people of all circumstances and backgrounds across Tasmania. There is too much to lose by not proceeding with such critical infrastructure on which we will receive the TPC report next Wednesday on 17 September. Then we will be informed about the next processes needed to ensure the parliament has its say with respect to that matter.

I welcome the bipartisanship from the former leader of the opposition and the new Leader of the Opposition when it comes to the stadium project. That has been restated in recent days, as I have read, which I welcome. There were a number of members of parliament in major parties and Independents - and I acknowledge Mr O'Byrne's passion and leadership on this matter. An overwhelming majority of Tasmanians voted for pro-stadium and pro-AFL Devils team candidates.

I recognise the fact that we've got to bring people along on the journey. Tasmanians very clearly have had their say. I noted the Greens were very clear in their election campaign with their no-stadium stickers and all sorts of matters as well. It's very pleasing that in another referendum, if you like, on the stadium, as there was back in March 2024, that overwhelmingly the majority of members in this place were elected on a pro-stadium stance, which is fantastic because of the economic and social value that project will bring to an area that's been underdeveloped for decades. We have worked in collaboration with the federal government and many members of the community to see this project come to fruition.

Supplementary Question

Mr BAYLEY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr BAYLEY - I let the Premier go there because there was a lot in the preamble, but the question was really clear. He said not proceeding is not an option. We've got the TPC report coming next week. You have not set an upper limit on this stadium. How much is too much to spend on the stadium?

The SPEAKER - Honourable Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, we need to invest to continue to grow our economy. If governments of all persuasions over the course of the last 100 years had the belief not to invest in key enabling infrastructure because it doesn't come back and benefit the community more broadly, we'd be living in paddocks and caves. We've got to continue to grow the economy and continue to invest in enabling infrastructure.

Across the forward Estimates in the Budget as presented there was a reduction in capital infrastructure spend, so this is well within our capability to deliver, both in terms of getting money out the door and creating those 4000 jobs in construction. I welcome the engagement of unions when it comes to this key project as well. Mr Abetz and I -

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

Marinus Link - Public Information

Mr GARLAND question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.32 a.m.]

In May your government received the whole-of-state business case for Marinus Link. It warned that if Marinus Link goes ahead, our major industrials will face a 50 per cent hike in

their transmission fees and are very likely to see the end of their discounted electricity prices as Hydro goes into full electricity trader mode and seeks the highest price for its product on the mainland. The whole-of-state business case warns an increase in wholesale energy prices for the major industrials may have a greater negative on their viability than the transmission price increases. The expert panel even warned your government that this could force one or more of the major industrials to close.

At a time when the future of major industrials in Tasmania is already precarious, why was this information kept from the public during the election campaign and prior to your government committing us to Marinus Link?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and long-standing interest in this matter. Our government has made a very key decision when it comes to Marinus Link, which has been progressing since about 2017. A lot of work has been done on Marinus Link, which is all about securing Tasmania's energy future, and renewable energy future in that.

Thankfully, our forebears had the foresight to build hydro industrialisation schemes from which we are benefiting enormously. We want to use that baseline to ensure we can attract further investment, in wind and solar predominantly, in terms of renewable energy opportunity - notwithstanding Tarraleah upgrades and other turbine upgrades on the West Coast and Cethana as well. This is a crucial project and a very key decision that this government made, albeit the timing, I recognise, was challenging in terms of caretaker mode and the like. You mentioned -

Mr GARLAND - Honourable Speaker, relevance. The question was: why was this information kept from the public during the election campaign and prior to your government committing us to Marinus Link?

The SPEAKER - I will remind members to call a point of order and Standing Order 45: Relevance for that one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for his question. Of course, the report was received and then we went into caretaker. During that time of caretaker, officials from the Commonwealth and the state government continued to work to secure the best deal possible for Tasmania. As a result of that, and their very good work, a better deal was secured.

When it comes to the other part of your first question around major industrials, we need more energy in Tasmania to support our major industrials but also Marinus, to attract more major industrials and businesses to Tasmania as a result of that increased energy capacity. What is also crucial about Marinus is the ability for us to generate our own state-sourced revenue. That is limited at this particular time because, I believe, more than two-thirds of our revenue comes from the federal government and then we have limited opportunities. What the business case demonstrated is that, on average, around \$400 million per year or more will benefit Tasmania's bottom line. That's on top of the existing Hydro profits.

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

Huon Aquaculture - Disease Outbreak Incident

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[11.36 a.m.]

The Independent member for Franklin, Mr George, told the media that he received a call from the Premier on 14 August 2025 informing him of a very serious event in the salmon industry that required an emergency response. The next morning, you hosted an urgent briefing for members where the Greens leader said they learned there was a disease outbreak in a Huon Aquaculture pen. Later that day, during a press conference, you said that, in fact, 'There is no outbreak' - contradicting the Premier's claims. Salmon Tasmania issued a media release and said that the event didn't even exist.

Do you intend on making a habit of contradicting the Premier? Industry workers want to know: was there a serious event or not? Which is it?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. The information that I provided you, that you quoted during your question, I stand by.

Ms Finlay - If it wasn't a serious event, then the Premier lied to Tasmanians.

The SPEAKER - Order. The word 'lie' is out of order. Withdraw the comment.

Ms Finlay - I withdraw.

Mr PEARCE - I can only inform you on the facts in front of me at the time and what I said on that particular date that you quoted. If you want me to second guess what the Premier said, I suggest the member speaks with the Premier.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A supplementary question, honourable Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary.

Ms FINLAY - Minister, was there a serious event or not? If you say there wasn't, was the Premier not telling the truth to Mr George and Tasmanians?

Mr PEARCE - Honourable Speaker, I refer to my previous answer. My previous answer was very clear. At the time that I -

Ms Finlay - The Premier's not telling the truth?

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. We cannot pre-empt what the minister is going to say. I ask that he is heard in silence please.

Mr PEARCE - At the time that I gave that briefing to crossbenchers, and by that I mean anyone who was invited to that particular briefing, there was no excess of the reportable limit in the salmon industry - and I stand by that fact.

March for Australia Demonstrations - Government Condemnation

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.39 a.m.]

On 31 August 2025 there were organised marches, including in Tasmania, at which speakers' vitriol targeted migrants and Palawa people alike. Many people were made to feel scared and unwelcome in Lutruwita/Tasmania, their home.

The West Australian Premier said similar marches in his state were 'a disgrace'. The Victorian Premier, Jacinta Allan, condemned them and the attack on the Aboriginal Camp Sovereignty. The New South Wales Premier, Chris Minns, strongly criticised the organisers afterwards, and the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, has been condemning them publicly.

The recent announcement of a ministry for multicultural affairs in your government was welcomed by the Greens. Premier, distressingly, both you and your new minister for multicultural affairs were silent about these rallies, which is a stark contrast to other government leaders. Premier, what message do you have to Palawa and multicultural communities? Will you condemn the racist sentiment of these rallies?

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

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. The nub of the question was about condemning racism, which, of course, I do, in all its forms. Irrespective of how that racism is expressed or presented, I condemn it wholeheartedly. What Tasmania has is a very proud history of multiculturalism, welcoming people to Tasmania from all walks of life and all places around the world.

We have a very dark history regarding indigenous Tasmanians, of which we have work underway, led by the honourable Speaker and now the honourable member for Aboriginal Affairs, Mrs Archer, about truth-telling and healing. When it comes to embracing all walks of life, all cultures, irrespective of where in the world people come from and arrive on Tasmanian shores, we need and must embrace Tasmanians and celebrate our migrant history. Of course I condemn any racism and always will do.

I am very proud of the fact that our Minister for Multicultural Affairs has embraced the responsibility. We have made a very clear commitment to a multicultural affairs minister, which I am proud of, and I am sure Ms Ogilvie will also lead the charge when it comes to supporting an inclusive Tasmania.

Huon Aquaculture - Disease Outbreak Incident

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[11.42 a.m.]

Whose idea was it to hold the briefing with MPs on 15 August regarding this so-called crisis in the salmon industry? Yours or the Premier's? You have said this morning that you want to be open and upfront. When you hosted the briefing and held your media conference on that day, were you aware that just two days later the Premier would be announcing a moratorium and a full review into the industry, turning the lives of workers, their families and the communities that they live within upside-down.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest in this matter and I can refer to my previous answer. The issue in relation to that briefing was a serious one. The issue of the intended use of florfenicol posed public-interest issues. The Premier and I discussed that at length. We felt mutually that the crossbench would benefit from that information in a transparent way, and the way in which that was presented was open and honest.

In relation to the member's inference that something to the contrary was said by a third person, then I would suggest, with respect, Speaker, that that member speak to the person she refers to.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms FINLAY - Minister, the question was very particular. Were you aware that just two days later the Premier was going to announce a moratorium and a full review of the industry, turning the lives of workers, their families and their communities upside-down?

The SPEAKER - Before the minister comes, I remind the member that for Hansard to accurately record questions, you either need to talk into your microphone or come to the despatch box because some of your question may not have been recorded.

Ms FINLAY - Would you like me to repeat it, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - We heard it, but just for the next time.

Mr PEARCE - Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable minister for her supplementary question. I am many things. One thing I am not is a fortune-teller. I cannot predict the future. At the time -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr PEARCE - Are you going to let me finish? At the time that the member refers to, I could not see into the future as to what the Premier would or would not say.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

West Tamar Highway Upgrades - Impact on Businesses

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

[11.46 a.m.]

Honourable Speaker, my question is from Chris of Legana. The West Tamar Highway upgrades are impacting businesses in the area. For example, Roam Coffee at Legana in the West Tamar Highway are having to consider reducing the number of staff or even closing their doors. Roam Coffee is a small, locally-owned business which employs young members of the Legana community. The proprietors have expressed concerns about the lack of engagement with local business and the lack of known timelines for completion. Minister, can you please provide an updated timeline for the project?

Peron Dunes - Buggy Race Impact on Threatened Shore Bird Breeding

Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr DUIGAN

Honourable Speaker, my question is from constituents in St Helens. Minister, Parks renewed the Peron Dunes buggy race event permit for five more years. The race is held at the exact time of year that Hooded Plovers and Fairy Terns, both threatened species, are breeding. Experts have been sounding the alarm for years. This event disrupts nesting and causes these threatened birds to abandon the site, a fact that should have been evident in the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process. Is it the case that the RAA was in fact not completed before the event permit was granted? Minister, please provide the dates that both the RAA and the event permit were completed and why allow an event in the conservation area that risks already threatened species? Will you at least take the bare minimum action to reschedule the event outside of the shore bird breeding season?

Special Interest Vehicle Registration Scheme - Review

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

Honourable Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Transport on behalf of people in my electorate who own classic cars and other special interest vehicles. Can the Minister please advise when the review of the special interest vehicle registration scheme will be finalised, and any changes announced?

Macquarie Harbour - Ban on Recreational Netting Review

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

Honourable Speaker, my question is from Gary from Penguin. Gary asked the parliament: will the new Minister for Primary Industry and Water, Gavin Pearce, review the Liberal Government's decision taken in 2024 to ban recreational netting in Macquarie Harbour for recreational fishers, allowing recreational fishers back into the harbour?

Caravan Parks - Residential Use Regulations

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, TRADE and CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Mr BARNETT

Honourable Speaker, my question comes from Cheryl, who lives in Beauty Point and is on behalf of the Beauty Point Tourist Park Residents Association. Tasmania is the only jurisdiction in Australia that does not regulate the residential use of caravan parks. The absence of legislation means residents have little to no protection. The reason they have no protection is because your government has failed to act despite being aware of the problem for a number of years. Will you now show that you care and do something constructive instead of wilfully neglecting the plight of highly vulnerable Tasmanians? Will you undertake to introduce and have debated the legislation before the end of the year?

Lyons - Fire Season Preparation

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

As Lyons is almost 50 per cent of the state, it involves the preparation for the fire season. The electorate of Lyons has a number of areas which are prone to greater fire risk. Can the minister please outline the activities undertaken by Tas Fire Service to prepare for the upcoming bushfire season and, if possible, the number of hectares of fuel-reduction burns achieved over the previous winter?

Murchison Highway - Signage and Line Markings Near Waratah

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

Honourable Speaker, my second question is from Lyndall, who lives in Waratah. Lyndall asks the parliament: will the government review and improve signage and line markings on the Murchison Highway on the entry to Waratah?

Bridgewater - Bus Transport to Schools

**Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,
Mr VINCENT**

My question is to the Transport minister on behalf of Jack, who is a teenager in Bridgewater. Jack and his schoolmates cannot attend school on Fridays because the 5.30 a.m. Cofield to Montrose route doesn't run that morning despite operating every other day of the week. This disruption not only affects those attending schools but those who rely on public transport to get to work. What will you do to reinstate the service? If the service cannot be reinstated, will you step up? What alternative measures will you put in place to ensure Jack and the other kids in Bridgewater can just get to school and not miss out on vital education?

Time expired.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Breast Screening Bus *Luna* - Replacement

[11.50 a.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I'd like to add to my previous answer in response to the question from the member for Clark in relation to the breast screening bus. I can advise that while an order has not yet been placed, the department is in the final stages of the procurement process. I commit to updating the member once this process is finalised.

The department's advice is that this will take another 12 months due to the limited availability for the fit-out of the mobile screening units across the country. However, as I said earlier, I have made it clear to the department that they must do everything possible to expedite this timeframe, and I can assure the member and Tasmanians that if it can be on the road sooner than the 12 months it will be.

DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 46)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read the first time.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 48)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Bayley and read the first time.

SPEAKER'S WARRANT

Deputy Chairs of Committees - Appointment

The SPEAKER - Pursuant to Standing Order 14, I hereby nominate -

Mr Rob Fairs MP
Mr Brian Mitchell MP
Prof George Razay MP

to act as Deputy-Chairs of Committees in the absence of, or when requested so to do by the Chair of Committees.

Dated 9 September 2025.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Debate Motion Forthwith

[11.53 a.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent a motion concerning committees from being debated forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Standing and Sessional Committees

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

Standing Committees

1. That the following Members be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works in pursuance of section 3 subsection (2) of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* (No. 32):-

Ms Burnet;
Ms Butler; and
Mr Shelton.

2. That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the *Subordinate Legislation Committee Act 1969* (No. 44):-

Ms Burnet;
Mr Fairs; and
Mrs Greene.

3. That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts in pursuance of section 2 subsection (2) of the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970* (No. 54):-

Mr Jaensch;
Mr Vermey; and
Mr Winter.

4. That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity in accordance with section 23 subsection (4) of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* (No. 67):-

Mr Garland;
Ms Haddad; and
Mr Jaensch.

5. That a Committee of Privileges and Conduct be appointed to enquire into and report upon complaints of breach of privilege which may be referred to it by the House; and that:-

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees;
The Leader of the House;
Ms Haddad;
Mr O'Byrne;
Ms Rosol; and
Mr Winter.

be of the Committee (S.O. 325)

6. That a Standing Orders Committee be appointed with power to act during recess and to confer with a similar Committee of the Legislative Council; and that:-

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees;
The Leader of the House;
Mr Bayley;
Ms Finlay;
Ms Haddad; and
Ms Johnston.

be of the Committee (S.O. 324)

Sessional Committees

7. That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses (known as the House Committee) to control Parliament House and grounds, including catering for Parliament:-

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees; and
Ms *Johnston*.

(S.O. 323)

8. That:-

- (1) A Select Committee be appointed with power to send for persons, papers and records to inquire into consider and report on reproductive, maternal and paediatric health and perinatal mental health services in Tasmania with the following terms of reference:

- (a) to assess the adequacy, accessibility and safety of the following services for Tasmanian parents and their children in relation to:-

- (i) reproductive health services;
- (ii) maternal health services;
- (iii) birth trauma;
- (iv) workforce shortages;
- (v) midwife professional Indemnity Insurance;
- (vi) perinatal mental health services;
- (vii) paediatric services for children aged 0-5 years;
- (viii) the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS).

- (b) to examine disparities in the availability of services, staffing and outcomes between:-

- (i) Tasmania and other Australian states and territories;
- (ii) Tasmanians living in rural, regional and metropolitan areas;
- (iii) Tasmanians experiencing socio-economic disadvantage; and

- (c) to make recommendations on actions that can be taken by the State Government to ensure reproductive, maternal and paediatric health and perinatal mental health services meet the needs of Tasmanian parents, families and children.
 - (2) The Committee be authorised to receive all evidence and papers received by the Select Committee on this subject in the previous Parliament.
 - (3) The following Members be appointed to serve on the Committee:
 - Ms Dow;
 - Ms Haddad;
 - Mr Fairs;
 - Ms Johnston; and
 - Ms Rosol.
 - (4) That the Committee report by 19 March 2026.
9. That the House of Assembly Standing Committees on Government Administration A and B be established as follows:-
- (1) That for the remainder of this Parliament, the Standing Committees on Government Administration A and B be established to inquire into and report upon any issues and legislative proposals arising within the scope of the committees as set out below.
 - (2) Scope of the two committees is:-
 - (a) Government Administration Committee A:-
 - (i) Treasury;
 - (ii) Macquarie Point Urban Renewal;
 - (iii) Attorney-General;
 - (iv) Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation;
 - (v) Environment;
 - (vi) Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy;
 - (vii) Community and Multicultural Affairs;
 - (viii) Arts and Heritage;
 - (ix) Education;
 - (x) Children and Youth;

- (xi) Disability Services;
 - (xii) Infrastructure and Transport;
 - (xiii) Local Government;
 - (xiv) Housing and Planning and
 - (xv) Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs; and
- (b) Government Administration Committee B:-
- (i) Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing;
 - (ii) Ageing;
 - (iii) Aboriginal Affairs;
 - (iv) Police, Fire and Emergency Management;
 - (v) Skills and Jobs;
 - (vi) Business, Industry and Resources;
 - (vii) Energy and Renewables;
 - (viii) Parks;
 - (ix) Sport;
 - (x) Tourism, Hospitality and Events;
 - (xi) Racing;
 - (xii) Women and the Prevention of Family Violence;
 - (xiii) Primary Industries and Water; and
 - (xiv) Veterans' Affairs.
- (3) Members who are not members of the committees may participate in proceedings by asking questions of witnesses at the discretion of the Chair, but may not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purposes of a quorum.
- (4) Each member of the committees shall have a deliberative vote only.
- (5) It shall be open to any member of a committee to nominate in writing to the Chair of the committee a proxy to attend any meeting of a committee on behalf of the member. A proxy member shall

exercise all the rights of an appointed member including voting rights at any meeting of a committee.

- (6) A quorum for any meeting of a committee shall be a majority of the committee and three when the committee is hearing evidence.
- (7) References can be made to the committees in the following manner:-
 - (a) by Resolution of the House;
 - (b) by a Minister of the Crown; or
 - (c) by the Committee's own motion.
- (8)
 - (a) except as provided in 8(b), the committees shall conduct all their affairs in public unless the committee by majority vote determines it is in the public interest to take evidence in private; and
 - (b) in deliberating or in taking evidence on matters which are commercial-in-confidence the Committee shall sit in private.
- (9) That the committees have the power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, with leave to adjourn from place to place and with leave to report from time to time.
- (10)
 - (a) a response by the Government to the recommendations contained in a report of a Standing Committee established in accordance with this order shall be laid upon the Table of the House within four months of the report having been brought up, provided, that should the Parliament not be sitting, the response may be lodged with the Clerk of the House for tabling on the next sitting day; and
 - (b) a response that is given to the Clerk under 10(a) is taken to have been published by order, or under the authority of, the House of Assembly.
- (11) That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Government Administration Committee A:-

Ms Badger;
Ms Dow;
Mr Ferguson;
Mr Garland;
Mr Mitchell;
Mr O'Byrne; and
Mr Shelton.

- (12) That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Government Administration Committee B:-

Ms Brown;
Mr George;
Ms Haddad;
Mr Fairs;
Mr Jaensch;
Ms Johnston; and
Ms Rosol.

- (13) That the Committees be authorised to receive all evidence and papers received by the Standing Committees on Government Administration A and B in the previous Parliament.

10.

- (1) That a Joint Sessional Workplace Culture Oversight Committee be appointed with the power to send for persons and papers and with leave to report from time to time, to oversee the implementation of any recommendations, by the relevant employer, contained in the report Motion for Respect - Report into Workplace Culture in the Tasmanian Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (August 2022).
- (2) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions and related correspondence and papers received by the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight from the Fiftieth and Fifty-First Parliament.
- (3) That the number of Members to be appointed to serve on the said Committee on the part of the House of Assembly be 4.

11. That a Joint Sessional Gender and Equality Committee be appointed with the power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon -

- (1) (a) Any Bill referred to it by either House in order to examine gender and equality impacts and any such Bill so referred shall be reported upon within 10 sitting days of its referral;
- (b) Any matter related to gender and equality referred to it by either House; and
- (c) Any matter related to gender and equality, initiated by its own motion; and
- (2) That Notice of any Motion Inquiry shall be reported to both Houses within two (2) sitting days of the Committee's Resolution; and

- (3) That the number of Members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the House of Assembly be four.

12.

- (1) That a Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, be appointed for the term of the 52nd Parliament with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon -
 - (a) Such matters as may be referred to it by either House of the Parliament or a Minister, or established by the Committee's own motion that relate to:
 - (i) the Electoral Act 2004;
 - (ii) the Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023;
 - (iii) provisions of the Constitution Act 1934 that relate to the procedures for, and conduct of, elections for members of the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council; and
 - (iv) the administration, operation and practices associated with, the aforementioned electoral laws; and
 - (b) Any Bill relating to the electoral laws referred to in paragraph 1(a) and any other law relating to electoral matters as may be referred to it by either House of Parliament or a Minister.
- (2) Any aspects of the administration, operation and conduct of the 23 March 2024 General Election of Members of the Assembly and the 2024 Legislative Council periodic elections, shall stand referred to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may wish to make;
- (3) The Committee shall report on the outcome of any such inquiry pursuant to paragraph (2) within 18 months of the date of this Resolution being agreed to by both Houses;
- (4) Notice of any own motion inquiry shall be reported to both Houses within two (2) sitting days of the Committee's Resolution;
- (5) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions and related correspondence and papers received by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters from the Fifty-First Parliament; and
- (6) That the number of Members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the House of Assembly be four.

13.

- (1) That a Joint Sessional Committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of both Houses, and with leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon matters related to the Recommendations made in the Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, including:
 - (a) the Tasmanian Government's response and plan to implement the Recommendations;
 - (b) the Tasmanian Government's progress in implementing the Recommendations;
 - (c) outcomes related to implementation of the Recommendations, both partially and fully implemented;
 - (d) monitoring progress reports provided to Parliament, as provided for by Recommendation 22.1 by the independent Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor (when appointed);
 - (e) overseeing the performance and proper execution of functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, as provided for by Recommendation 18.9;
 - (f) any other relevant matters that either House may refer to the Sessional Committee; and
 - (g) any other matters incidental thereto; and
- (2) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions and related correspondence and papers received by the Joint Sessional Committee on Recommendations of Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry from the Fifty-First Parliament.
- (3) The number of Members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the House of Assembly be four.

14. Energy Matters

- (1) That a Joint Select Committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place, to inquire into and report upon, energy prices and related matters in Tasmania with the following Terms of Reference -

- (a) Factors that impact energy prices for Tasmanian household and small and medium business customers, with particular reference to energy generation, distribution and retail costs.
- (b) The challenges related to energy supply and energy costs in Tasmania including -
 - (i) Role and participation of State-owned energy entities;
 - (ii) Energy requirements;
 - (iii) Expansion of State-owned renewable energy generation including associated community and economic benefits;
 - (iv) Private energy generators;
 - (v) Energy generation, storage and transmission capacity; and
 - (vi) Energy security considerations.
- (c) Opportunities related to energy supply and energy costs in Tasmania including -
 - (i) Role and participation of State-owned energy entities;
 - (ii) Energy requirements;
 - (iii) Expansion of State-owned renewable energy generation including associated community and economic benefits;
 - (iv) Private energy generators;
 - (v) Energy generation, storage and transmission capacity; and
 - (vi) Energy security considerations.
- (d) Tasmania's past, current and future participation in the National Electricity Market with a focus on impacts for Tasmania, including matters related to the national renewable energy transition:
 - (i) Current and future energy demand;
 - (ii) Costs, risks and benefits; and
 - (iii) Resource opportunities.

- (e) Marinus Link PTY Ltd and associated energy power developments (Battery of the Nation and North West Transmission Development) including -
 - (i) Likely beneficiaries;
 - (ii) Funding arrangements, including the potential for private sector contribution;
 - (iii) Impact on Tasmanians' energy bills and concessional pricing arrangements; and
 - (iv) Alternative options and associated costs and/or benefits to Tasmania including costs and cost of a 'do nothing approach'.
 - (f) Any other matters incidental thereto.
- (2) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions received by the Legislative Council Sessional Committee Government Administration 'A' Inquiry into Energy Prices in Tasmania from the Third Session of the Fiftieth Parliament.
 - (3) That the said Committee be authorised to receive all submissions and related correspondence and papers received by the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters from the Fiftieth and Fifty-First Parliament.
 - (4) That the number of Members to serve on the said committee on the part of the House of Assembly be four.

I simply thank everybody for their cooperation that we've come to this landing without the need for ballots.

[11.54 a.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I reiterate that thanks to everyone involved with negotiating for members of committees and acknowledge the very important work that is conducted by standing, sessional and select committees across this parliament, and thank the Leader of government business.

I omitted in my contribution on the Standing Orders debate to also thank Nic Street for the work he has done working with me as Leader of Opposition Business, as well as the Greens and the crossbench, in coming to agreements on not only the Standing Orders but also these committees.

Labor members very much look forward to participating in the work of committees. I note that this motion re-establishes Committee B, which had the responsibility for the ADHD committee. I know that members who have been appointed or reappointed to that committee are looking forward to continuing that work. On that note, I acknowledge the work of former

member for Clark, Simon Behrakis, who established the work of that committee. I know that members are looking forward to continuing that work, albeit without him here.

I wanted to pick up on a made by comment the Leader of Greens Business, Vica Bayley, in his contribution on the Standing Orders debate about the library committee. I understood that the library committee was to be disbanded and was of the understanding that the work of that committee was to be collapsed into the work of the House committee. I wasn't aware that there was advice from the Clerks that that can't happen and that the House committee is unable to take on the work that previously sat in the library committee. I know that committee didn't meet terribly regularly, but nonetheless, I think as individual members we all highly value the work of the library staff, all of the library staff who assist us in our day-to-day work, and particularly the research service that provides invaluable support to members across the Chamber. I don't know if there's capacity for the Leader of government business to speak again on this motion but it would be great to have some clarification about the work of the library committee.

[11.56 a.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I echo the sentiment and thank everybody for their collaboration and cooperation on this. It's obviously a very logical step to reinstate every single committee that we had prior to the parliament being prorogued, so it's welcome to see this motion being brought forward here. I again acknowledge Mr Street for his work in this regard.

Upfront, I acknowledge the work of the parliamentary staff as well and the secretariat support that will be provided to these committees. There's a really heavy committee load here. We have to be cognisant of that and recognise that for every one of these committees, there's a power of work done by parliamentary staff to make it function and enable us to do our work effectively and efficiently. Thank you to all of you.

There's obviously a couple of inquiries that are getting pretty close to reporting. I sit on mine in relation to bullying, there's the ADHD one that the Leader of Opposition business just mentioned and I understand they will be re-established when the administration committees are re-established, so that is very welcome. I look forward to getting back onto those committees and concluding our work.

There are a couple of important committees that we understand are going to be stood up at the end of the week in relation to the ending of greyhound racing and a really important committee about family violence. We look forward to seeing that on Thursday and debating that. It may not be a short debate but it will be a debate, so we look forward to that. We have also raised the issue of the Public Accounts Committee and the fact that it has yet to be updated to reflect the new numbers of the House, the expanded crossbench and the fact that we're now 35 members and not 25 members, so I flag again that that needs to happen. It is really important that that committee reflects the numbers that we have here. We understand there's a process to go through there but we look forward to that happening at some point.

With that, I say good luck to all of the members who are being reappointed or appointed to these committees. Some of you have some catching up to do, the rest of us have some finishing off to do and I look forward to participating in that going forward.

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, my comments will be brief so I will remain here. As other colleagues have done, I also want to reiterate my thanks to Mr Street for coordinating the collection of these committees and also note, particularly for the new members of this place, that we have quite extensive committee work and that has been made possible through the expansion of the parliament to 35 members. It is really important policy work where we can come together as members of the House and work on some very difficult issues in a collaborative way, so it is a very important part of what we do in this place.

I also want to make brief mention of those people who have been witnesses to many of these committees and have been very patient with the parliament in terms of providing their submissions. Some time ago we were getting to the report-writing stage with a number of these committees, as has been noted previously, and then we've had the parliament prorogued whilst we went to an election. I want to reassure those people, as I am sure those committees will do, that their submissions and the evidence they provide those communities are valuable and the parliament does appreciate them and we look forward to continuing our important work in these areas.

[11.59 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, I will briefly sum up and reiterate the thanks of others to Nic Street. The press gallery at the moment is empty, but in fairness - wait a minute -

Members interjecting.

Mr ABETZ - There are two. Certain people are suited to jobs and they should not be disqualified simply by the fact that they have formally served in this place. I would reflect -

Members interjecting.

Mr ABETZ - No, no, no, I am reflecting on our friends in the media in relation to that. What we have heard around the Chamber is that Nic Street has done an exceptionally good job as a staffer in his role.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr ABETZ - It's a cheap shot from time to time to talk about former members of parliament - I was one for a while. It's a matter for mature consideration by the media and others to simply ask the question: is the person qualified for the particular job and should it be a disqualification simply because they have previously served in this place? I think common sense tells us what the answer to that is.

I understand that there might be some disgruntlement in relation to the non-establishment of the library committee, which is a shameless power grab by the Greens, but what I will say to Mr Bayley and all members is that if the will of the House is that that committee be re-established, so be it.

With that said, I commend the motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Inaugural Speeches

[12.02 p.m.]

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

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent -

- (1) The Question before the Chair at 1.00 p.m. today from automatically standing adjourned; and
- (2) The following Members from making a statement to the House commencing at 2.30 p.m. for a period not exceeding 30 minutes each:
 - (a) The honourable member for Bass, Mrs Greene
 - (b) The honourable member for Franklin, Mr George
 - (c) The honourable member for Braddon, Mr Pearce
 - (d) The honourable member for Bass, Prof Razay
 - (e) The honourable member for Lyons, Mr Di Falco
 - (f) The honourable member for Bass, Mrs Archer
 - (g) The honourable member for Lyons, Mr Mitchell

Just in case people are wondering, they'll have to wait for Mr Vermey's speech.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Government for Tasmanians

[12.03 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: Government for Tasmanians

I am very keen to get to the lectern to address this matter of public importance: Government for Tasmanians. To some of the comments from the Leader of Government Business during Question Time about 'talking Tasmania down', I will say that I love Tasmania, and I will talk Tasmania up. I think what the honourable member was referring to was that he

would like me to give the government credit where credit is due. I can do that too; congratulations, honourable member. Your government is mediocre at the best of times.

I have spent the last couple of weeks travelling around Tasmania, a place that I love dearly. I've been to the north three times, a place where I grew up and a place that helped shape me. I've been to the west coast, I've been to the north-west coast, I've been to the east coast all the way up to St Helens, and I've been down south to Geeveston. I've engaged with farmers, tourism operators, transport workers, scientists, local government representatives, emergency service personnel, people who work in productive industries, childcare, the renewable energy sector and hospitality, and small business owners. They've all been very generous with their time. I've really appreciated their commitment to our great state and I value the contribution they are making to our economy. There are great Tasmanians doing wonderful things all over our state.

I will talk Tasmania up, but that's not to be confused with the government. We know that members on that side get a bit sensitive at times. Tasmanians have been telling me on these journeys that they're tired of the standard of politics in Tasmania. They're tired of members of this place being prepared to say and do anything in election campaigns or post-elections to retain power.

We've been providing scrutiny in Question Time on the TasInsure policy, the flagship policy of the Liberal Party during the election. It is a very serious issue. All those people I just mentioned, Tasmanians who I engaged with, I asked them questions around insurance premiums. I met people like Scott from Scottsdale - and he is a real person, honourable Leader of the House. Scott from Scottsdale told me his insurance premiums are increasing. The cost of everything is increasing; tractors have doubled in price and so have his premiums. Tasmanians are struggling with the cost of doing business.

I met business owners who are struggling on this issue. They are struggling with their insurance premiums, whether it be their house, their car or other personal items. They want real solutions. What I'm hearing in the community is that they are very sceptical of this policy. They are concerned that it will expose Tasmanians to financial risk and that it's not thought through, it's not feasible and it can't be delivered. They are sceptical that there will be a \$250 saving on their insurance premium, or that grocery prices will go down.

We've heard in Question Time that there is no evidence. The government has produced no evidence when it comes to this policy; no business case, no Treasury modelling, nothing. Tasmanians deserve more respect than a government that is prepared to say or do anything to retain power. They had the jackets, they had the hats in the election, they even set up a shopfront.

It tells me a lot. When I was in Launceston last Friday, I said that I would do a media conference outside the TasInsure shop to provide some scrutiny. I put out an alert to the media and what happened? We had Liberal staffers and supporters at the shop trying to rip the stickers down and clear the shop of the evidence because they were embarrassed about it. If that shop and the merchandise that they produced in the election to try to win an election can't withstand the scrutiny of a press conference, how is it going to withstand the scrutiny of this place?

Tasmanians want real solutions. They want to be treated with respect. They want the standard of politics to lift in this state. They want to be taken on the journey. They want

evidence. When the government makes claims, it needs to be able to back it up with evidence. What they need from a government is predictability and certainty so that they have confidence to invest in Tasmania and grow their businesses. Unfortunately, they're not getting that at the moment.

I will continue to provide scrutiny on this policy because I think it exposes Tasmania to too much financial risk.

[12.08 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Deputy Speaker, firstly, congratulations to you on your role as Deputy Speaker and likewise to the Leader for the Opposition for his appointment. I am looking forward to working with you and all people across this parliament and across this great state because we want to get on with the job of delivering for Tasmanians. That's what we're on about.

I also congratulate the new members in this Chamber who will be sharing their inaugural speeches today. It's a great honour and a great pleasure that we will have to listen to you as you share that first speech. It's something, obviously, that only occurs once. It helps shape our understanding of where you've come from, who you are and what you stand for. It's a great honour for us to be here to give you that credit and that honour. I am really looking forward to this afternoon's first speeches.

We've listened at the election and since. We want to work together. The Tasmanian people want us to work together and to collaborate. They want us to roll up our sleeves to do the job; put aside our differences and put aside the politics for politics' sake, to get on with the job and tackle the challenges that we face in Tasmania. No-one's denying that we have many challenges in this state and the Premier has outlined that very well in Question Time today.

I congratulate the Premier for his leadership, for reaching across the aisle - since the election - to the crossbench and others to say, 'How can we make this work?' He has demonstrated that leadership in different ways and policy positions through the Multi-partisan Budget Panel, which other members of this Chamber are on. We are a minority government, but by working with others in this Chamber, we can make a positive difference for Tasmania. I am excited about that. I know others in this Chamber are excited as well. We need to find common ground wherever we can. We won't be able to agree on everything and anything, but let's work together and, with confidence, deliver a better future for Tasmania - growing our economy, creating jobs and delivering a reputation for a world-class product and proud communities.

On Sunday, I stood with the Premier with Bitwise Agronomy, exporting intelligence and artificial intelligence to the rest of the world. It employs more than 10 people in Relbia in northern Tasmania, thanks to our accelerating trade grant. It was very encouraging to see the wonderful benefits of a government program of just short of \$500,000 delivering a \$34 million return in increased exports for Tasmania.

Exports, jobs, growth, development and opportunity, and innovation galore - you heard today about the lowest unemployment rate we've had on record. Our economy is growing and we want to invest and reinvest in those essential services like health, housing, education, and the cost of living, but we can't do that unless we have a strong and growing economy. That's why we're working so hard in that regard.

I'm really pleased and honoured to have the new role as Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs and to back in and champion the interests of the 42,000+ small businesses that are so critical to rural and regional Tasmania. We are a government for Tasmanians as per this matter of public interest. I've mentioned trade and the importance of our exports as well. I'm really looking forward to taking up those responsibilities, tackling the challenges.

Tasmanians want stability, they want certainty, they want confidence in the future, and they don't want weeks of further political disruption, they don't want further political stunts, and they don't want further political games. We're getting on with the job. That's why I congratulate the Premier for reaching across to the crossbench and to others and into the community and listening to the community, together with all of us on this side of the House. I hope and I call for everybody in this place to demonstrate that collaboration, respect, and courage, and demonstrate it in full going forward.

[12.13 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise on this first MPI for this parliament to talk about a government for all Tasmanians. It is acknowledged that that's what all Tasmanians want. They want a government that's representing their interests, that's in their corner, and that's standing up for the things that matter to them.

The challenge is that no two Tasmanians are the same. We are not cookie-cutter creatures and different Tasmanians have different sets of values and prioritise things differently. That is the challenge that we as parliamentarians have to acknowledge and have to accept and have to confront: we represent different people. We represent people with different interests and different priorities. In that context, one of the things we're really looking for is a parliament for all Tasmanians: a parliament that can actually get things done; a parliament that's not necessarily going to deliver one way for one group of people or one way for the other, but is genuinely working for everybody, that's negotiating collaborative outcomes, that's talking, and that's ultimately delivering for all Tasmanians.

That's why we Greens strongly support or prefer a power-sharing parliament such as the one we have now: a parliament where government doesn't have a majority in its own right. It can't bulldoze ahead with legislation in its own right, and it can't just simply do the things that it wants to do because a small handful of electors or a small handful of donors want them to do it.

A minority parliament, such as the one we've got at the moment, that's built on foundations of goodwill, built on elements of stability and a commitment to last a full-term, and ultimately built on a sense of collaboration is welcome. We Greens will be doing our best, as we have done already, to deliver outcomes for everyone through negotiation, through collaboration, and through debate in this Chamber, and holding ourselves to a standard of behaviour that we would expect of others. That is our commitment to this parliament and to Tasmanians.

Of course, this does present challenges. I mentioned before, donors, and we still have an outstanding issue whereby government, coming back to government, doesn't necessarily have the interests of Tasmanians at heart because it is potentially too heavily influenced by the donations of major corporate players. This has played out significantly. That's why we Greens and others in this place are committed to reforms when it comes to transparency about political

donations. We've now got, thanks to Greens legislation, transparency around political donations over \$1000. On 1 July this year it came into place and the Tasmanian Electoral Commission has now got information on its website about who donates to who, which individuals donate to individual members or individual political parties, which of the organisations and businesses. This is a real challenge for public policy development across the world, but especially in Tasmania, because we still see a situation where donations that really shouldn't be eligible are being made to political parties and that is potentially having an influence on policy outcomes that are not necessarily the best for Tasmanians.

One of those issues is short-stay accommodation. Everybody knows short-stay accommodation is a critical issue in Tasmania. It's stripping whole home rentals out of the market and delivering them into short-stay hotels. On the TEC website we see that Airbnb, one of the main providers, has given money to both the Liberal and Labor parties. The question that raises in our minds and in many Tasmanians' minds is well, is whether government governing for all Tasmanians and delivering decisions that are the best for all Tasmanians, or is government governing for Airbnb?

We could say the same thing about pokies in hotels. Both the Labor and Liberal parties have taken donations from Federal Hotels and the hoteliers association and that begs the question of the government backtracking on its commitment from a mandatory precommitment card. Why is that? Does it truly believe it's not in the interests of Tasmanians or is it because it's receiving donations from vested interests? Government for Tasmanians? Yes, that's why we need to reform our political donations laws so we are actually making decisions in the interests of Tasmanians.

Time expired.

[12.19 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today for our matter of public importance about government for Tasmanians. One of the things we have reflected on on this side of the House is that the conversations we have in this Chamber should not be about us, but they need to be focused on the people of Tasmania and Tasmanians.

We know as a party we have work to do. We are seeking to work hard to deliver the standards that Tasmanians expect of us in this place and for them across all of Tasmania, and where we see this Liberal-Greens government working together in the parliament already to seek to not provide full opportunity for this parliament to work into the future, we know that Tasmanians are already disappointed with where this Liberal-Greens government has started.

We on this side want to work hard to set the standards. When the government goes low, we are committed to going high. When the Premier manufactures crises to gain the support of the crossbench, we're not going to be a part of it. When the Premier preys on the pain points of Tasmanians to secure his position as future Premier of Tasmania, we're going to make sure that we continue to scrutinise that, and when the Premier turns the lives of Tasmanians upside down, we're going to be there to support them.

We speak of TasInsure today, with clearly no evidence, no business plan, to back up the wild statements of a \$250 reduction in premiums or that grocery prices will go down. How is it that the Premier can look himself in the face at the end of the day when he just makes this

stuff up with no evidence? How is it that he can stand here this morning and say he's proud of the success of the salmon industry, but manufactures a crisis to get the support of the crossbench and turns Tasmanian workers, their families and communities' lives upside down.

How is it that the Premier can put commitments to the greyhound industry in writing and then just weeks later rip them apart? I had the opportunity just around the corner from my home to visit three generations of families who train and love their greyhounds. I had the opportunity to meet them and to hear from them, not only their family but people who support them and their family, about the great, deep love and devotion they have for their animals and the commitment and passion they have for the sport that is embedded in their lives. There's Nana and Dad and the kids. There's support around, but not just for industries, whether it be salmon, whether it be greyhound or whoever is coming next, that the Premier will manufacture a concern for. The heart of these industries is also about the support they provide in their local communities and communities more broadly. The salmon industry has an alliance of great businesses in Tasmania that support them, and their businesses grow and support other families because of the great work they do.

Small businesses and families struggling under the increased cost of doing business right now, the cost of increased insurance premiums, have been preyed on by this Premier because of the hurt where he said there is a serious issue. We have agreed with that and our leader has said that he will be constructive in the solution of these challenges, but the Premier makes up things that will happen with no evidence and no business case to bring peoples' support on. We know that experts in the field say that this is not in Tasmania's best interests.

Interestingly, this morning when we asked if Treasury were going to advise that that's not the right thing and would he take Treasury advice, the Premier seemed to imply that others could give him better advice. We know that Tasmanians want and deserve better. They deserve a government that is acting in and focused on their best interests. They need a parliament and a Chamber that is not focused on talking about themselves, is not focused on talking about the things that need to happen better in this place that they understand, connect with, and take action on the things that will make the lives of Tasmanians better.

Whether it be the family around the corner from my home, whether it be the workers on the west coast in the salmon industry, whether it be Scott in Scottsdale who has had disturbing increases in not only his insurance premiums but also in the costs of doing business in the bundle of businesses he has, these are real Tasmanians making contributions to their communities who are under pressure and they deserve respectful and serious responses that are founded on information, data and evidence that ensure Tasmanians are being served by a government for all Tasmanians with Tasmania at the centre.

[12.24 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Environment) - Deputy Speaker, I am minister for many things, which is why I'm delighted to rise and speak on this motion, and I will add my congratulations to you, Deputy Speaker, for your elevation. I think that's a good example of how this place can work beautifully together. I've listened carefully to the contributions, and it's good to hear people willing to step up and try to work together in this new minority arrangement.

I want to give a couple of personal reflections very quickly that as Minister for Arts and Heritage; Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy; Environment; Climate Change; and

Community and Multicultural Affairs, these portfolios are naturally ones in which we can all make good progress together, working across boundaries.

I've said many times in this place, and I think I have acted upon this phrase, that I will work with anybody who genuinely wishes to put Tasmania first. That is a good place to start for a minority government and putting Tasmania first is literally what Tasmanians want us to do. It is what our constituents want us to do. We are all duly elected in this place and we're put here to work together. We will do that by making sure not only that we engage sensibly in debate, bringing forward new ideas, but also having good manners with each other in this place. I've been pleased to see that the new Speaker, and perhaps you too, Deputy Speaker, will continue to make sure that the culture of our Chamber is elevated so that that can happen.

Our government, the Tasmanian government, wants this parliament to work. Tasmanians voted for the particular make-up of the parliament we have here and rather than any political gamesmanship or rolling elections that cause disruptions, we would like to see this parliament go forward with a sense of maturity, stability and collaboration. We obviously accept the democratic vote of Tasmanians and we're going to work in good faith, not just with members of the crossbench but with everybody in this Chamber, to make sure we deliver stability and that is something we can only do collectively, together. I think we're all focused on that.

As a government we've put forward our foundations of stability, which is a working protocol to enable the government, our Independents and single member parties to work together in the best interests of all Tasmanians. It includes protocols for consultation. We've got a new crossbench liaison office, a multi-partisan budget consultation panel, and much more. It also provides for earlier engagement on important legislation and policies. I know this is really of great interest and importance to those who arrived at this place with a vision for what they would like to deliver here.

We'd like to try to work through solutions before they get to the Floor of parliament to find the areas on which we can agree, to find consensus where we can. The approach we're taking builds on the work we commenced in the last parliament. It's not intended to be a static document. We want our protocols to best serve parliament, but also the government.

We are happy to keep working on this. We will work on it together. We're listening. We will collaborate. I also believe, as I have mentioned, it is incumbent on each one of us in this House to find new ways of engaging for the best interests of Tasmania, whether that's on a one-to-one basis through our committee system, through dialogue, through processes or the media.

Stability, we know - and I've been around a while - doesn't mean each of us getting our own way. In fact, I am in a very unique position, given my personal political journey to arrive in this place, knowing a little bit about how other places and parties work. Having sat in this place as an -

Mr Mitchell - Do tell.

Ms OGILVIE - You'd be horrified. You have a bit of work to do on your culture over that side.

Deputy SPEAKER - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - Having been an Independent in this place -

Members interjecting.

Deputy SPEAKER - Order.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand what it's like to come in with a desire to deliver results. I appreciate and understand that, and so too does our government. Nobody can get everything they want, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't work together. It means give and take. It means a willingness to work differently, in partnerships, to meet community expectations, and in a minority government, it is the numbers on the floor that really matter.

I listened very carefully to the comments made by the Greens about the donations reform. I think you went a little bit too far. Some of the arguments you made may have worked under a majority parliament, but in a minority parliament, policy legislation is one for all of us to work on together.

Time expired.

[12.29 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, it is fantastic to deliver a speech in your company for the first time.

I want to say a few things about this minority government that we find ourselves in, and restate the reality of the situation that's brought us here. We are in the 52nd Parliament. Just three months ago we were in the 51st Parliament. The pathway to us getting to where we are today is that the Labor Party opposition moved no confidence in the Liberal Government, Jeremy Rockliff, and that was successful. The Greens supported that, as other members did.

At that point, we reached out to Labor and offered the opportunity to work with Labor to avoid an election and to have a conversation about what collaboration and working together could look like. However, Labor didn't take up that opportunity. Then we found ourselves, as a result of Labor's decision, in an election. We went through an election, and it was a contest of ideas. It was a debate that we all held with Tasmanians about what sort of people they wanted to represent them and what ideas they really cared about.

When we spoke to people in the community, we heard loud and strong that people were seriously concerned at the way the Liberal government's management of the budget had brought Tasmania to its knees, and we could see the impacts on the essential services in health. We could see that the lack of delivery of health services and the lack of delivery of housing - public housing, social housing - for people in need.

We could also see that the decision by the Liberals, supported by the Labor Party, to build a stadium was an appalling balancing of priorities, and very strongly in the electorate we heard people say: 'We don't want that.' Overwhelmingly they said they want protections for this beautiful environment.

The Greens, and a more progressive crossbench, were returned, and exactly the same numbers of Liberals and Labor Party members as before the election. We reached out to the Labor Party. We reached out and made every effort to negotiate, to talk about collaborating

and working together to form a stable government arrangement. They didn't take that opportunity up.

Now, we are here in a parliament and, from the Greens' point of view, we have no confidence, and we have not given confidence, in the Liberal government. Neither do we have confidence in the Labor Party today, to be able to take up that role. We are here to get outcomes for Tasmanians. Watch this space, because I am hearing Labor developing a narrative which is not, I believe, the sort of thing that Tasmanians want on day-one back in parliament. Yet the sort of divisive, negative language already that is developing a narrative, manufacturing division where there is no reason to have it, because - watch this space. The Greens' reform agenda for this term of parliament is very progressive, and we look forward to working with the Labor Party to deliver it. We look forward to working with members of the crossbench to deliver it. We look forward to persuading and getting the support of the Liberal government to deliver it. We will do everything we can.

Regardless of whether you're sitting in government or sitting in the Labor Party, from the Greens point of view, we don't really care. We just want to achieve change for the people who voted for us. We will do everything we can to make that change happen, and we will work collaboratively. We are really very excited to be in an expanded and unified and strong crossbench who are working together strategically to make the opportunities in the parliament that Tasmanians have voted for. We will come in here and work in good faith. We don't want to be part of that divisive politics. We will call out things that we are outraged by. That's our job. We will speak with the confidence of our convictions, because we're very clear about the things we want change on. Love us or hate us, people know exactly what they're standing for - what we stand for. We will hold true to that, and we will work with other people in this place in good faith.

[12.34 p.m.]

Mr MITCHELL (Lyons) - Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation to your post. It is a great pleasure to be here. I have not given my first speech yet, but I'm told this doesn't count, and people can look forward to that later on today.

I am given the great pleasure to stand here on this MPI on behalf of the opposition, because we've heard today, just this morning, so many issues which are pertinent to this debate. Metro Tasmania, for example, comes to mind. One of the members asked about Metro and how it is no longer financially sustainable. Then we heard from Jack from Bridgewater, from my colleague, the member for Lyons, Ms Badger, who wonders why a bus that runs Monday to Thursday can't run Friday.

We've heard about *Luna* the breast-screening bus being out of action for a year: a year to replace a bus that is so vital to health services on the East Coast and North-East of Tasmania. It is absolutely disgraceful that it's taken this long. I am pleased to hear that the new minister is taking action, but a year of this bus being out of action? Frankly, I don't understand why a bus that has suffered electrical problems - meaning it can't be driven - can't remain in situ somewhere. You can still use it as a breast-screening bus, use all the facilities inside that bus, all the very expensive equipment inside it; park it at St Helens, park it at Swansea. Why not use it in the year that you're waiting for the new bus to come online? Has that even been considered? I don't know. From a government that forgets to build a wharf for new ships, I doubt that that question has even been asked.

We've heard today about salmon, at length. This Premier, of course, goes before the election offering letters of comfort to the industry, saying he's right behind them. The same with the greyhound industry, right behind them. Yet after the election, while he is trying to cling to power, he throws them all under the bus - not *Luna* the bus, she's not operating - but he throws them under the bus nonetheless.

We've heard today about Marinus. Now, you would think, given the result of the election, if there's an issue where the Premier could have shown that he had changed his spots and that the government had learned its lesson of the arrogance that it showed this parliament and this state before the election, you would think it would've been Marinus. There was the great opportunity, in caretaker mode, to give this parliament the respect that it deserved to go to the crossbench, to go to the opposition, and say, look, Marinus is up for a decision. How about some transparency? How about we fully brief you on what's going on? We bring you inside the tent, but no. Now that the election's done, we get more secrecy, no transparency, a decision just foisted on the parliament with very little consultation. Same old tricks as before. No lesson learned from this government. Then we come to the issue that we have been spending so much time on today, and with good reason - TasInsure. This is such an important issue, because Tasmanians lose either way. If TasInsure goes ahead, then we have an insurance burden on the MAIB that is frankly unsustainable. We are going to have Tasmanians taking on the risk of insurance that the private sector says is too risky-

Time expired.

Matter noted.

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY AMENDMENT (PRIVATE SESSIONS INFORMATION) BILL 2025 (No. 37)

Second Reading

[12.39 p.m.]

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

That the bill be now read the second time.

The Tasmanian government has committed to implementing reforms to assist victim/survivors of child sexual abuse, including by removing or reducing legal or administrative barriers where possible. The Commissions of Inquiry Amendment (Private Sessions Information) Bill 2025 has been developed to support this commitment, the purpose of which is to remove barriers to individuals accessing the information they want or for a private session with the Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, or the commission.

Private sessions are confidential meetings where people can share their experiences with the commission of inquiry. These sessions are not evidence for a commission, but a protected way that a commission can learn about a matter. The commission held more than 120 private sessions across 2021 - 2023, where Marcia Neave AO, Professor Leah Bromfield and the

honourable Robert Benjamin AM KC described in their first report as 'sessions with commissioners'.

Private sessions were first introduced by the Commonwealth for the purposes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in 2013. This was to allow people to share some of their most confidential experiences. The strict confidentiality and protections around private sessions are designed to encourage people to engage with the commission and to provide a forum that is less formal or intimidating.

Tasmania introduced private sessions via the *Justice Miscellaneous Commissions of Inquiry Act 2021*, which were largely modelled on the relevant provisions of the *Commonwealth Royal Commission Act 1902*. These amendments were introduced 1 March 2021 for the purposes of the most recent commission that was established 15 March 2021 and concluded its work 31 August 2023. The 2021 reforms included protections which make it a criminal offence to disclose private sessions information except in particular circumstances. This offence is provided for in section 19C of the *Commission of Inquiry Act 1995*.

An unanticipated consequence arising from the 2021 amendments to the *Commission of Inquiry Act 1995* is that, currently, the records of a private session cannot be provided back to the participant of a private session with the commission unless they and any person they spoke or wrote about consent to that information being disclosed. While these provisions were designed to protect the privacy of individuals, they pose a significant barrier for people who are trying to access their own information that they provided to the commission for the purposes of a private session. This is because people could have mentioned the names or actions of a number of different people over many years when sharing their experiences.

The bill proposes to address this records issue by making a minor amendment to the *Commission of Inquiry Act 1995*. The bill introduces the new clause 19C(2)(da), which provides for an additional exception to the criminal offence of disclosing private sessions information.

The new exception enables a participant of a private session to record, use or have disclosed to them their own private sessions information. When the former commission concluded in 2023, the commission's records were transferred to the State Archives for safekeeping.

The new exception means that, upon application from a participant, the State Archives will be able to provide a participant's private session information back to them without an offence being committed. The new exception will allow a participant of a private session to be able to use their own private sessions information as they see fit in accordance with Tasmanian law and any applicable restricted publication orders made by the former commission.

This reform is critical, as it is their own information that they shared with the commission. It should be their choice what they do with their own information and experiences, just as they are free to retail their experiences as they wish.

The new subsection in the final bill provides further protections than what was originally contained in the consultation draft. My department identified that the consultation version of the bill did not provide adequate protection for people who may have taken part in a private

session with a co-participant, for example, a victim/survivor with a family member or another victim/survivor.

This issue would be most acute in the instance of an audio recording or transcript of the proceedings, where redactions may have had to be made to someone's own information, which is very much against the policy intent of these critical reforms.

The new exception in 19C(2)(da) allows a participant to receive their private session information as long as it does not disclose the identity or lead to the identification of any other co-participant in the private session.

However, the bill provides for a full record of the private session to be disclosed to a participant if the co-participant consents to that occurring. If the co-participant does not consent, their identity will be redacted.

These amendments further empower people to receive a full record of their engagement with the commission in a private session, but also protects the identity of any co-participant in a private session.

I note that my department and the Office of the State Archives are currently collaborating to develop supporting materials for applicants who wish to receive a copy of their own private session's information. It is important to note that this pathway will be independent to the RTI process. The supporting materials will be made available following the passage of the bill.

The other key clause contained within the bill relates to its retrospective effect. Clause 2 stipulates that the bill is taken to have commenced 1 March 2021. As I've previously stated, this was the date of the introduction of private sessions into Tasmanian law through the *Justice Miscellaneous Commissions of Inquiry Act 2021*. This means that these critical reforms will be backdated to apply to the private sessions of the 2021 commission, as well as any future Tasmanian commission of inquiry.

I thank the stakeholder groups and members of the public who contributed to the development of this bill in the consultation process. I note that several amendments to the bill were made as a result of stakeholder recommendations. I would also like to thank the statutory officers who engaged with my department during the consultation period.

The *Commission of Inquiry Act 1995* is used widely across the statute books to support proceedings in relation to, for example, the Tasmanian Industrial Commission, the Lands Titles office, the Ombudsman Tasmania and the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Thank you for assisting my department in developing this critical reform. The community rightly expects that people who have engaged in a private session with a commission should be able to have their own record of that information. I am pleased to present this bill as a way to address this issue and to remove a legal and administrative barrier for victim/survivors of abuse.

Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[12.47 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to make a contribution on behalf of the opposition on the Commissions of Inquiry Amendment (Private Sessions Information) Bill 2025. I want to note that this is acting on some of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry and as procedural as the changes in this bill may seem, it's a very important step to protect the rights of victim/survivors.

At the outset, I want to again put on the record my respect and admiration for people who provided evidence to the commission of inquiry. I feel it's a particularly generous thing for people to do to share with a process like the commission of inquiry their own personal experience, which no doubt by sharing their experience of significant trauma, in many cases can exacerbate that trauma. Nonetheless, hundreds of Tasmanians did so and participated in that commission of inquiry process, generously giving of themselves to not only no doubt partially heal their own trauma by being able to share what happened to them to an important investigative process like the commission, but also to do their part in ensuring that the wrongs that were done to them can't be repeated to other people in the future.

Of course, it is very much a shared aim across the parliament that the work of the commission of inquiry will be implemented swiftly to ensure that all of us who have the responsibility of being in this parliament in this era can learn from the mistakes of past governments and past parliaments that covered up that wrongdoing and didn't put in place the kinds of safeguards that eventually led to widespread systemic abuse of young people.

I reiterate my respect for those people who participated, as well as all of the people who supported the work of the inquiry, the incredible work not only of the commissioners themselves, but also of the staff who supported them and the staff across the State Service, the commission working group that was stood up during that process, and staff here in the parliament who were also involved with that work, which didn't come without its own challenges and trauma for those people involved with that very important work.

Coming to the content of this bill, it makes a change, as we've heard from the Attorney-General, to allow people who participated in that commission of inquiry, but also in future commissions of inquiry when they occur, to have access to their own information. It sounds a little circular because obviously it's their own information, but because of the drafting of the original 2021 bill, there was an anomaly which meant that the archives or the commission themselves couldn't share people's own information that they had shared with the inquiry by way of transcripts or other information if they provided that information in a private session.

I don't recall verbatim the debate we had at the time in 2021, but I would hazard a guess that this was potentially an unintended effect of that legislation at the time. Not to reflect on a vote of the House, but I imagine it wasn't the intention for it to operate in this way. The recent commission has really demonstrated that and the government is right to be acting on that by the way of the changes in this bill.

As we heard from the Attorney-General and from the commission, the commission held more than 120 private sessions from 2021 to 2023. They did that to protect the confidentiality and the rights of the victim/survivors who were providing that information. I thought I might share one of the comments made by the commissioners who, in their personal capacity as former commissioners, made a contribution to the community consultation that the government

conducted. Former commissioners Neave, Bromfield and Benjamin made a submission to that inquiry and in that they said:

In conducting its work, the Child Sexual Abuse Commission of Inquiry sought to be guided by and respect the preferences of victim-survivors in relation to the disclosure and use of their information. In doing so, the Child Sexual Abuse Commission of Inquiry adopted a trauma-informed approach, including seeking to minimise the need for victim/survivors to share their experiences multiple times and to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation. To the extent the proposed section 19C(2)(da) seeks to clarify that victim/survivors can access information they provide at a private session, we welcome this amendment.

They go on to make further comments.

What this change will do is address the significant barrier that currently exists for people who are trying to access their own information that they provided to the commission in one of these private sessions. People could have done that and provided names or actions of a number of different people or over a number of years when sharing their experiences.

The new provisions in this bill will expand on the current list of exceptions provided for in the act to the offence relating to a person recording, using or disclosing private sessions information provided in section 19C(1). The new subsection inserted by the bill will operate to ensure that private sessions information can be disclosed back to the person who gave the information without needing to obtain the consent of each person referred to in the information.

I thank the Attorney-General through his office for the briefing I received on this bill as well from his department, who also explained that private sessions could also have been held with more than one participant taking part. The bill provides protections in that scenario as well to make sure that if there was more than one participant, that participant needs to provide consent for that information to be shared back to another participant and in the event they don't, that that information will be redacted.

It's important to note that the bill does have a retrospective operation. That's vitally important for the recent commission of inquiry. I recognise that it's sometimes unusual for legislation to come here to have retrospective application, but without that, this bill couldn't have the effect intended, which is, of course, to allow that information to be shared back to people who participated in that recent commission of inquiry. As the Attorney-General said, it is their own information and they should have the right to use it within the limits of the law to use it in any way they feel they need to. That's an important autonomy for those people who shared those experiences themselves.

I did want to ask a few questions of the Attorney-General about what the next steps are for this legislation. I note that it's Archives who will have the role of providing that information back to participants. The Attorney-General mentioned in his second reading that there are materials being produced by the Archives office and his department. I just wondered how this new facility will be communicated to people who participated in the commission of inquiry, whether they will receive a personal notification by way of letter or email to advise them that if they gave evidence in a private session that this option is now available to them to seek that information back through the Archives office, or if it would just be information, for example,

on a website or in public notices in the paper which might be missed by people who participated.

I want to go to a few of the questions that were submitted by people in the community consultation. I note that they were commenting on a consultation draft, so some of these issues may already have been dealt with, but one person who submitted I haven't contacted directly, so I won't quote her name because I think she submitted as an individual. She asked whether or not there are continuing conversations for a national database. I wonder if that's something that the minister might be able to let us know is happening at ministerial council level: conversations with the Commonwealth and other states, and about whether or not a national database is within the thinking of that group to record information that might come out of these kinds of disclosures or work that state governments do to prevent perpetrators from continuing to work in state-based systems.

Another contributor also asked whether or not this information will now be available to government departments. He did so with a concern that some participants might be alarmed if material previously not available to a government department was now, through this change, potentially accessible. He raised that in the context of how the information is going to be shared. He wondered if it's being shared, for example, through an RTI process through the Department of Justice. Then that information would, by natural course of sharing the information, be now available to the department where it may not previously have been available. I wondered what thinking went into that concern in the final drafting of the bill.

I've already raised some of the questions that were raised by the sexual assault support services. I want to acknowledge the work of Shirleyann Varney and her team in contributing to the public consultation on this bill.

I think I have raised all of the questions. Just let me double-check so that I don't need to take up more of the parliament's time than necessary later. I think that is all of the questions I wanted to raise.

I thank the people who went to the trouble of making a contribution to the government through their community consultation process. That is an important part of legislative reform, that we hear from the people who will be affected by a change of law or legislation. When legislation in its draft form is looked at by members of the public who will later be operating under that legislation, this is a process whereby unintended consequences can be picked up. Again, I put on the record my thanks to all those people who contributed to the commission itself.

Deputy Speaker, I am just trying to make sure I don't give somebody the unenviable task of speaking for 30 seconds before the lunch bell goes. Again, thanks to the government for progressing this bill.

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

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The SPEAKER - Before calling on the honourable member for Bass, Mrs Greene, for her inaugural speech, I remind members that the inaugural speech is for members today, and

I ask everyone in the Chamber to extend the usual courtesies to members as they give their speeches. The convention in this House is that an inaugural speech is heard without interjection and without interruption.

As I appreciate that we might be here for up to 3.5 hours, I will pause between each speech, just for a couple of minutes, to allow members to congratulate the honourable member and for families to interchange in and out. I do ask that we make that as quickly as possible. After about close to two hours, depending on how long the honourable members speak for, I will suspend the House for five minutes to allow everyone to have a quick break and then to come back in again.

Member for Bass, Mrs Greene

Mrs GREENE (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, congratulations on your election as Speaker to this place. I rise today with pride and a deep sense of responsibility as I deliver my first speech in this place. Thank you for indulging me as I share a little about myself, why I am here and what I believe in.

I begin by acknowledging the Palawa people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. I pay my respects to elders past and present, and I recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. I commit to walking alongside Aboriginal Tasmanians in the fight for truth, justice, and treaty.

To the people of Bass, thank you. You have placed your trust in me, and I intend to honour it every single day.

My story begins with family. My grandfather migrated to Tasmania in the 1950s from Segusino in Italy and worked on the Hydro Dam project at Trevallyn. He was part of the generation that quite literally helped build this state. He came here chasing opportunity, seeking something better, and worked hard to make a life. His story is one of sacrifice and quiet contribution. He was one of the thousands of migrants who left behind familiar landscapes, language, and family.

The Hydro schemes they built did not just generate electricity, they generated opportunity - powering industries, jobs, and communities for decades to come. They built the assets that belong to every Tasmanian. Migrants to this state brought with them not only their skills and their labour, but also cultures, traditions, and the values that enrich our community and make it vibrant. My grandfather's legacy, and the legacy of so many other migrants, is that our state is at its best when we welcome people, when we are inclusive, when we value their contribution, and when we commit to building a future together.

I did not grow up imagining a life in politics. I grew up in Carrick, a small country town in Meander Valley, attending Hagley Farm Primary School and then later St Patrick's College in Launceston. My first job was behind the counter at Birchalls in Launceston. Birchalls was the oldest bookshop in Tasmania, and they started trading in 1844. Birchalls closed its doors a few years ago, but I know that many people in Launceston have very fond memories of that shop, and I certainly made some lifelong friends there.

I later had the opportunity to work for Senator Helen Polley and Geoff Lyons in the federal parliament, where I learned about parliamentary process and the responsibility of serving the community. I have also worked in banking and the early childhood education and care sector. Each of these roles taught me something different, but all of them grounded me in service and community.

Like many of you in this room, before I entered this place, I had the opportunity to serve in local government, serving on West Tamar Council for the last five years and the last three as Deputy Mayor. That role taught me a lot about collaboration, accountability, and the importance of being accessible to the people that you serve. It also grounded me in the practical realities of what our communities need, how to manage a budget and how to get things done. I am very proud of my time on West Tamar Council, particularly in improving governance, in encouraging tourism to our region, and contributing to the expansion of Legana and the new Industrial Tech Hub - which we have recently seen FermenTas HQ open, which is very exciting. I am sure that that new precinct there will generate lots of jobs for northern Tasmania.

It was not until I found my place in the union movement that all these experiences came together - a place where I could fight for fairness and where I found my voice. Over the last decade, I have worked as an organiser for the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), supporting public sector workers across this state and advocating for the services that Tasmanians rely on. I am a unionist to my core and that will never change.

The Tasmanian public sector is under immense pressure at the moment, and I will be bringing their stories to this Chamber. I have seen the lengths that workers go to and what it takes to hold a broken system together. I have seen the effects of understaffing and under-resourcing, the tough decisions that are made under pressure and the broken complaint system that has a real impact on workplaces. However, I've seen the love that people pour into their work, and I've also seen innovation and excellence, despite all those pressures.

It's been a privilege to work alongside thousands of public sector workers and learn from what they do. Organising and representing workers has taught me the importance of consultation, negotiation, and persistence, skills that are just as vital in the parliament as they are in the workplace.

Experience has shown me that progress doesn't come from shouting the loudest, but from building relationships, finding common ground, and never losing sight of the people you are fighting for. That's the approach that I bring to this parliament: collaborative, grounded in real stories, and focused on outcomes that make life better for Tasmanians.

Looking back on my time at CPSU, I was fortunate to work with three very different but equally remarkable leaders. Tom Lynch was the person you wanted in the room when things were falling apart. Calm, steady and smart, he has that rare ability to take the heat out of a crisis, cut through the noise and bring everything back to what matters.

Thirza White, by contrast, brought a different kind of energy. Dynamic and brilliant, with an instinct for knowing the right move at the right moment, working with her meant momentum, and she has this amazing ability to inspire those around her.

My friend, Natalie Jones, more recently has taken a leadership role at the CPSU. She's clever and insightful, very quick on her feet, and she has a way of making complex challenges

seem much more manageable. Natalie's strength is seeing the angles that others have missed and knuckling down and getting a job done.

Together, Tom's steadiness, Thirza's drive, and Natalie's insight showed me the many faces of leadership.

I also acknowledge my former colleagues at CPSU, some of whom are in the gallery today: Gabrielle Robertson, Kylie Farrell, Gareth Davies, Trina Meurant, Jo Roberts, Craig Greer, Debra Bradley, Phil Gath, Lilli Midgley, and John Retallick. I can't thank that team enough for their support of me over the last few years, but particularly in the lead-up to this state election.

I have spent my union career backing in the people who hold this state together - the workers who are the backbone of this state. They're the ones who answer the call when things go wrong, who carry whole communities through disasters, and who show up quietly every day and make things work. They are essential. Workers in hospitals and schools, librarians, dispatchers, youth workers, social workers, park rangers, ICT workers, biosecurity officers, Homes Tasmania employees, child safety officers, administrative staff, emergency services workers, court staff, lab techs, people practitioners. I've advocated for them, sat in their break rooms, organised through their hardships, cultural changes, budget cuts, program changes, and restructures, negotiated with them and elevated their voices. That advocacy will continue in this place, because our communities rely on those services.

I also wish to acknowledge the other unions that I've worked closely with over the last decade, particularly HACSU, including my northern comrades Laura Binns, Ben Vigers, Meghan Thomas, Geoff Blyth, Mashuka Khan, Danny McCormick, Lucas Digney, Vivek Foot, and Kristen Swain - those are my children, sorry. He almost made it through.

I also thank and acknowledge SDA, AWU, TWU, AMWU, ANMF, ASU, and the AEU. I've stood with their members and they have backed in mine - that is solidarity. I also acknowledge the work of Unions Tasmania in advocating for the some 50,000-strong union members in this state in their fight for safer workplaces and better wages and conditions.

My advocacy has not just been about workplaces, it's also been about families, children, and communities, because they are the reason that strong services matter. There is nothing more important to me than the health and wellbeing of children and young people. For more than 15 years, I've chosen to support and volunteer my time in organisations dedicated to this cause, because that's where our collective future begins.

For five years, I served as the board chair of Laurel House, the sexual assault counselling and support service in the North and North-West of Tasmania. That experience left me with no doubt that the fight against sexual violence is not won with empty words or hollow promises. It begins with proper political will, resources, and the courage to face uncomfortable truths in our society. Survivors deserve nothing less.

I've also had the opportunity to serve as a long-time board member of Playgroup Tasmania. I believe that every family deserves connection and support in those early years, and Playgroup Tasmania has been providing those services for generations of Tasmanians.

As a life member of the Child Health Association of Tasmania, later known as Families Tasmania, I know the difference that support can make for a family. For over 100 years, this organisation delivered services offering maternal health advice and family support. Its closure was more than the end of an organisation, it was the loss of a trusted voice for families.

We know that too many children in Tasmania are growing up in poverty. Too many families are facing impossible choices between rent and food, between medication and fuel. Children and young people are falling through the cracks, and we can and we must do better. I believe deeply that every child deserves to grow up safe, supported, and protected from harm, because too often it's women and children who pay the price for society's failure to act. Every person deserves to feel safe in their own home, in their relationships, and in community.

At this point, I acknowledge the honourable Michelle O'Byrne, former Speaker of the House, for her lifelong contribution to the Labor movement, but particularly for her advocacy for children, family and sexual violence, and women. Together, we advocated for stronger family violence supports and legislation alongside our friend and advocate Ali Butcher, whose loss is deeply felt. I am so pleased to see that Michelle has recently been appointed as the Ambassador for Gender Equality, a role that reflects her dedication and leadership.

We have a lot to do in this term of parliament, and you probably have a fair idea about the things that are important to me from what I have spoken about today, but before I move on to my thank-yous and close, I also want to speak very briefly about the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

The commission of inquiry laid bare harrowing truths, not just from decades ago but from the present day. It was a reckoning and it must be a turning point. One of the clearest recommendations was to close Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Deloraine, and that must happen. We owe it to survivors and we owe it to everybody who bravely shared their story. I believe that commitments and promises matter. Closing Ashley Youth Detention Centre is especially important to me, because someone very close to me was mistreated there, and I can tell you that that harm doesn't just disappear. It lingers and it hurts generations to come.

I hope to use my time in parliament to genuinely advance the causes that I care deeply about and for the benefit of my community. I thank the incredible people who helped me get here today, people who believed in me - Labor members, friends, family and volunteers. Campaigning is never a solo act, and mine certainly wasn't. To EMILY's List, thank you for backing in women like me. To Pamela Anderson, your fierce resolve helps more women make it into these halls. To my campaign team, thank you to every volunteer who knocked on the door, handed out a flyer, made a call. I really appreciate it.

Hunter Meaney, your drive and your leadership carried us through even when we had nothing else left in the tank. I also acknowledge Young Labor and my broader campaign volunteers - and there's a lot of them. Tom Snow, Princess Delaney, Vadan Radulovic, Gavin Howorth, Tamnay Kabir, Michael Campbell, Vincent Chen, Corey Perkins, Seamus Donellan, Isobel Grizelj, Robert Gemmell, Alec Hayes, Jack Hodson, Craig Horwood, Mia Jankulovska, Dylan Kumar, Callum Rees, Reggie Michelson, Sammy Sastradipradja, Skye Wilson, Sam Goss, Kerry Sun, Lucy Fawcett, Oliver Shepherd-Bayly, Elliott Bell, Alice Phair, Sue Robinson, Brae Caplin, Rob and Sue Griffin, Rose Walker and Jack Budgeon, I would not be here without you.

Now, I have spoken a lot today about where I have come from, and now I would like to talk about who I come home to. My husband, Nathan, and our two boys, Archie and Ted, are my everything. My husband is never short on frank advice, and I really value that. If we cannot justify our decisions, then we probably should not be making them. Thank you, boys, for your patience, although little Ted hasn't been so patient today. For understanding the times when I have missed dinner or school pick-up, thank you. Every decision that I make in this place will be guided by them and the future of every Tasmanian child.

I also acknowledge my mum, Anita. She has worked incredibly hard to provide opportunities for me. I also acknowledge Nathan's parents, Michael and Deb, and his family. My brother-in-law, Zach and his wife, Rhee, and my niece, Lucy were also here in the Chamber today to support me.

Big thanks also to the honourable member for Franklin, Dean Winter, for encouraging me to stand, and to member for Bass, Janie Finlay, for her energy and support, and also the PLP, who have so warmly welcomed me since being elected.

I have been a Labor Party member for 20 years this year and volunteering in community organisations for a long time. Through this involvement I have a wide circle of people that I rely on for their guidance and to have the occasional argument with. I particularly acknowledge Ben Dudman, Lara von Stieglitz, Amanda Diprose, Jennifer Houston, Andrea Port, Kaitlin Roach, Adam Gore, Justine Brooks, Becca Griffiths and David Price - sounding boards for me who are not afraid to give an alternate view or suggestion.

Honourable Speaker, we are living in a time of deep uncertainty but also enormous possibility. My electorate of Bass is filled with success stories and potential. I look forward to getting out in the community and meeting and connecting with people. In this Chamber, I will fight for decent jobs and the services and infrastructure that Tasmanians need, for integrity in our parliament where big decisions are made, and for systems that support people, and I will be guided by the values that brought me here. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

Member for Franklin, Mr George

[2.50 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Thank you, honourable Speaker and members. May I just say that humble is not an adjective often associated with me, I'm afraid to say, so I hope you'll forgive me if I'm honest and forthright instead.

If I may briefly introduce myself, I'm the son of a British sailor and an Australian mum. I have not, as some people on social media seem to think, come from another planet. I was schooled around the world and my accent is, of course, a dead giveaway. I am not Tasmanian by birth, but I think I'm Tasmanian by choice.

I will start by paying my respects to this island's First Nations people and may I say I will try hard to be of service in any way that you may ask me. Your resilience in the face of so many past and present tragedies and your fight for recognition and rights deserves respect and our full attention.

Fear not, this is 11 pages, but I will run through them. I would like to speak off the cuff, but notes keep me much shorter.

A short history of my political schooling. My first contact with politics in the raw was in 1968 or 1969, when *The Sydney Morning Herald* sent me to interview Liberal prime minister John Gorton. I was a teenager of either 17 or 18 years old, never having been to university. He was the prime minister with a gnarled face scarred from a fighter plane accident. I was so intimidated I could hardly stutter out a question. The prime minister took pity on me. 'Would you like me to ask the questions?', he asked. 'Yes, please', said I. He said, 'So, Prime Minister, what did you achieve on your trip?', and then he answered, 'Well, thank you for asking that question, Peter'.

Leap forward to 11 November 1975, 50 years ago this year. I was standing close to Gough Whitlam's right shoulder on the steps of the old wedding cake Parliament House. He was intoning:

'God save the Queen, because nothing will save the Governor-General.'

This was, of course, our great constitutional crisis. As the afternoon wore on into evening, thousands gathered on the lawns. There was rebellion in the air. There were calls to 'take the bloody doors off' Parliament House, but Australians are pragmatic if nothing else, and they understand their priorities. At around 9.00 p.m., the word went around, 'Jesus, the pubs will be closed in an hour', and the crowd and the aggression subsequently diminished.

In the years since, I have reported politics around the world. When the people's representatives get it right, then everyone does prosper. When they get it wrong, everyone suffers. I watched Margaret Thatcher's government send in mounted police as whole communities of miners were ripped apart. I will say she ripped me apart in an interview I did with her too. I sat with Thai villagers explaining why no-one should be allowed to buy their votes. In Kurdistan, I witnessed the day when the Kurdish people, brutally repressed and gas-bombed by Saddam Hussein, went to the polls for the first time in their 5000-year-old civilisation. In the streets of Manila, I reported Cory Aquino's 'people power revolution' as it peacefully overthrew the dictator, Ferdinand Marcos.

As a correspondent, I may have witnessed more hate or famine, death and bloodshed than is good for anyone to see. Where others were fleeing from oppression and war, I found myself travelling in the opposite direction to witness tragedy in Rwanda, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Gaza, Lebanon, Iran and Iraq. I've witnessed what happens when civilised behaviour and the rule of law collapses.

Now, when I walk into this parliament, I expect to witness something different. There are 34 other MPs in this House and 15 in the other place, working through their differences - philosophical, ideological, political. Each of us, along with our staff, the parliamentary staff and the whole public service, are performing a democratic duty to make this island a better, stronger and more equal place for today's Tasmanians and for generations to come. It is a privilege and it's a burden and it occupies my waking thoughts much of the time.

As a reporter, politics is and has always been a wonderful Shakespearean-style story. It's the story of the rise and fall of great men and women and of fools and scoundrels, of political

moments and movements. It's also the story of the fall of prime ministers, autocrats, dictators, and, dare I say it, even of premiers and opposition leaders. A reporter by trade, I've witnessed it all, yet here I am, standing with you, rolling up my sleeves in the hope that we can say we did a good job for four years. However, I was forewarned that it will be four difficult, long years.

Credit for my presence in this House goes, of course, to my campaign team, my supporters, my constituents, my friends here today, and my wife. Also credit to the honourable federal Minister for Fisheries, Julie Collins, federal MP for my electorate of Franklin. Had she once in 10 years accepted my community's invitation to meet and explore our concerns about industrial salmon, I'd never have thought of standing in a federal or a state election.

Credit too, unfortunately, to members of this House who didn't bother to visit distressed communities over summer as rotting flesh from salmon and fat washed up on our foreshores. Yet they did find time to spruik for the multinationals, whose disastrous practices led to disease, billions of dead salmon and antibiotic dumps in our waterways. The salmon packs that some of you held up for the cameras were probably diseased.

I had no notion when I first stood of the wellspring of frustration that I tapped, not just at the destruction of marine life and waterways, but over two parties who seemed to be serving corporate interests and masters rather than their constituents. Tasmanians had a right to expect better of you. Their verdict was delivered through the ballot box.

The threat to Brand Tasmania is real. The salmon industry's reputation is now so toxic, that even advertising agencies - no angels themselves - are wary of working with them. Common sense tells us the multinationals' owners will soon be gone, conquered by warming waters, rampant disease, uncontrolled mortalities, the collapse of social licence and, of course, vanishing profits.

If we really care about regional workers and regional communities, we should be acting now to ease the transition that is inevitable. Together we can end the destruction of an island's marine heritage and look after the impacted communities. That is common sense. That's where our duty lies. Sure, it will take wisdom and will and collaboration, but that's what minority government is all about. That's what makes minority government successful.

I fear that Tasmanians increasingly agree with Aristophanes that under every stone lurks a politician. They have reason for cynicism. Tasmania is the home of backroom deals; of revolving doors between government lobbyists, corporate multinationals, parliamentarians; of public consultations that amount to no consultation at all; of reviews stitched up before they're launched or ignored when they are completed; of decent people tasked with upholding public integrity and accountability stymied by the lack of resources and personnel; of Liberals behaving as if they are the state's natural rulers, dispensing favours to corporate mates while their constituents perceive them as ever more remote; of Labor equally as guilty and now on some sort of listening exercise around the state as if 11 years in the political wilderness wasn't a long enough time to hear the voice of Tasmanians. If my election doesn't send that message to Labor and Liberal as a clear, clear message, their decline will be guaranteed, and their relevance minimal.

There was a frog in a flood who offered to carry a scorpion across the river if the scorpion promised not to sting. Halfway across, the scorpion struck. 'Why?' asked the dying frog.

'Because I'm a scorpion.' I set out on these next four years with that story in mind. Like the frog, I believe that collaboration between Tasmania's different political species would deliver the most optimal outcome. I believe the Independents in this House think the same way.

However, we are not as incautious or naive as that frog. We recognise the Machiavellian nature of Tasmanian politics, where political cunning is too often mistaken for political wisdom. Trust takes a long time to build and can be destroyed in moments. We will absolutely hold this government to account. Should our goodwill be abused, we will be ever more diligent, ever more forthright in our opposition. It's what Tasmanians expect and it's what they need.

The task of the next four years is, I confess, daunting. We appear on the brink of financial collapse from which only federal intervention may save us. I can't think of anything more irresponsible than a government and opposition collaborating to squander \$1 billion or \$2 billion on a vanity project like the Macquarie Point stadium - when 5000 people are waiting up to 97 weeks for a proper roof over their heads; when our health system is failing the sick and the elderly; when the budget is in meltdown; and when by taking a leaf out of the Scandinavian experience of community development, Macquarie Point could so easily become not just the pride of Tasmania but the envy of Australia.

I've heard the delusion in this House today that the majority of Tasmanians voted for you to show support for the stadium. That is seriously deluded. Everyone knows we can get a team with or without a stadium.

We all know the pressing problems: health, education, housing, cost of living. Common sense tells us that we can't go on logging native forests, ignoring the social and economic impact of global warming, the destruction of waterways, the threat of uncontrollable bushfires. It calls for a laser-like focus on the challenges and determination to tackle the issues from across the political divide. That's what minority government is all about. If it works globally, why the hell can't it work here? Tasmanians will watch and judge us.

I believe we can at least start down the road of a new way of doing politics in Tasmania by addressing some of the issues that may more easily find consensus. With a fit-for-purpose Integrity Commission properly resourced and funded, we could implement excellent new lobbying rules. Right to information, frankly in this state, is oxymoronic. Let's agree the McCormack-Snell review is fully implemented by the government. With greater accountability and transparency across all aspects of public life and decision-making, we begin to rebuild public trust in the system, and in us.

I know there have been willing hands in both Chambers of parliament, who have been toiling away with this end in focus and it's time they were rewarded. I also believe that by the end of this parliament, Tasmania should have brought a human rights act into law, long overdue and essential to the political life of Tasmania and the freedoms we too often take for granted.

When I look around the Chamber of all you young folk, I realise I'm the one in a hurry. I've got much less time than you have. That's why I'm so eager to get things done. Friar Laurence warned us to act: 'Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast,' but I do want to run fast. As you will have noticed last week, I have also stumbled. I want to help sow the seeds of a better future for my adopted island. If we don't, the next four years will be purgatory for me.

I sincerely believe that each one of us actually wants this parliament to survive four years and that our constituents, all Tasmanians, will understand when they look back that not only did we strive to make our island a more prosperous, happy, liveable state, but that we have set a course for achieving just that outcome.

There are no true friends in politics, says Cicero, and it's hard to argue with that but we don't have to be friends. It may make some of you choke on your morning Coco Pops, but that would make you and me allies. Hard to believe, perhaps, but allies in a worthwhile cause. We have to decide to work together for the common good.

Norm Kirk was an engine driver who became Prime Minister of New Zealand, another country from which I reported. He said, 'Most people can be happy with a roof over their heads, something to do, someone to love, something to hope for'. We could do a lot worse than starting with that in mind and then building on it. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

Member for Braddon, Mr Pearce

[3.08 p.m.]

Mr PEARCE (Braddon - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Honourable Speaker, I will start by congratulating you in your position as Speaker. You will do it justice. We all have faith in you. I know that you will be providing the fulcrum of justice when it comes to a fair-go across the Chamber. Congratulations, and I look forward to working under your direction.

I'd also like to congratulate our leader first up, Premier Jeremy Rockliff. I want to say right from the outset, that I've got a hell of a lot of respect for that bloke. I've known him all my life. I knew his father and I had the same respect for him. I can tell you what; up our way in the electorate of Braddon, there are a lot who feel exactly the same way. Those results were indicative of that respect. I thank you for the work that you've done so far and the work that you will continue to do. I am proud to serve under your leadership.

I want to thank my colleagues across the board. We have a great team, an excellent Cabinet, a great parliament. We have the makings of something very special when it comes to changing the focus, which has already been alluded to, for the strategic future of Tasmania.

I'm very proud of the fact that I represent the greatest electorate in the greatest state of the greatest country in the world. Braddon is the engine room of the Tasmanian economy. Tasmania is shaped like a funnel, where all the money's earned at the top, and we won't talk about the other bit. I joke. I am making the point that Braddon is precious to me. Braddon is an electorate like no other. They're honest, hard working, mission-focused, community-centric, regional people. They bind tightly when threatened. They tell you exactly what they think straight to your face. There's no stabbing in the back there. They'll stab you in the front. I like that. I love that honesty. I'm very proud to represent them in this place.

It doesn't seem that long ago I was standing in a very different Chamber - probably a little larger in the federal parliament - giving my valedictory speech, my last speech to that parliament. I can tell you now, right from the heart, that this place, although smaller and a lot

more intimate, is no less significant. I've probably found my home. You see, I'm a fixer. I'm an outcome-driven person. I'm a farmer, I'm a soldier, I'm a person who wants to get on with business. Being here probably allows me to do that more effectively than the federal parliament allowed. I've got a great team around me. We've got a great parliament around us. Our prospects are absolutely fine. I look forward to that.

When I spoke at my valedictory speech, I referred to our flag. The Australian national flag is very important to me. I've worn it on my uniform as a defence member for more than two decades. I served overseas under it. I've buried soldiers under the draped national flag of our country. It's very precious. It's a symbol. I spoke of the Southern Cross on the flight quadrant of the flag. It's been our navigation tool for tens of thousands of years. It reminds me of our Indigenous culture. That's what it means to me. There is a small star in the Southern Cross. It's called Epsilon. It's smaller than the others, but it's the brightest star. That reminds me of my state, my state of Tasmania. The smallest state, less than 2 per cent of Australia's land mass, but we receive 13 per cent of Australia's rainfall captured in 54 hydro dams. We have 30 power stations churning away. They've been like that for more than 100 years. We hold 26.5 per cent of Australia's fresh water in storage.

We really are the jewel in the crown when it comes to renewable energy. We don't realise what we have. I think back to Eric Reece's time and pay tribute to him. He had his naysayers at that time, he had protests in front of him. They didn't want this bill, they didn't want a Hydro scheme, they didn't want it in Tasmania, but he persevered, and so it was that our great Hydro scheme was built. I am proud of that. The moral of that story is that sometimes you have to work through the naysayers and the negativity and push through and then you end up with the wonderful Hydro scheme that we have.

Out of the 10,500 gigawatt hours of energy that we consume each year, about 80 per cent is produced by Hydro. It is incredible. The thing I want everybody here today to remember - take your mind back 24 months - is that with the advent of ChatGPT, with the advent of AI, the amount of energy consumed for those algorithms is more than times by 10. It is 10 times the amount of a normal algorithm. So out of that 10,500 gigawatt hours that we use, when I can't see us getting a new hydroelectric scheme through parliament, where is that energy going to come from and how are we going to provide those electrons?

Obviously, the answer is our renewables, and we transition through to a renewable future - wind and solar. However, put yourselves in the marketplace and in the position of our providers when it comes to wind and solar. How are they going to grow enough electrons to reach sufficient scale to produce those electrons at sufficient cost so that we can keep the cost down in Tasmania and at the same time provide that reliability? The answer is we need to make more electrons. It's economy of scale - Economics 101. How can you do that when they do not have access to market? That is why I believe so strongly in Marinus. It provides that access to market. It provides that resilience and provides another means of survivability in our system in Tasmania. Our focus needs to be reliable, cheap, environmentally friendly energy for Tasmanians first. Then we can use that market power to accelerate that process and return confidence.

In my electorate, at a place called Cape Grim, is the Kennaook atmospheric research station. Scientists there today are measuring the cleanest air on the planet, as it blows in from the Southern Ocean and Antarctica. It has been there since the 1970s. Adjacent to that at Cape Grim Water they are extracting out of a spring the purest water in the country. Between those

two facilities is a farm of a couple of thousand acres. It is owned by a bloke called Jamie Oliver. Jamie produces the very best beef cattle in Australia. He has proven that many times at National Beef Week. In fact, Jamie has much of my Angus genetics in his herd. I am not saying that is the reason, but what I am saying is that he has spent a lot on genetics and he has a focus on the very highest of production.

He supplies HW Greenham & Sons. They are a sixth-generation abattoir privately owned in Smithton producing the very best beef in the world for international markets and high-end restaurants up and down the eastern seaboard. They produce the very best beef in the country and they do so from the very ethical perspective: our never-ever means no antibiotics ever. Peter Greenham invented that; he branded that. The GAP program, the Global Animal Partnership, relies on animal husbandry being the centre of beef production, genetics, looking after those animals, ensuring they have a grass-fed model. Peter Greenham understands that he cannot or should not, given the size and the scale of Tasmania, operate on that bulk commodity market like they would in South America, in South Africa or corn-fed beef from the US. He doesn't want to play there. If you want to eat a burger, eat that stuff, but what he has is the very best grass-fed beef in the country and that's how he's marketed it. I think he's on the right track. I think he understands Tasmanian agriculture and he wants to unlock that. I commend the Greenhams for the work they have done for our beef industry. I think there are many industries within our agricultural sector that could probably learn from the way Greenham & Sons have gone about their business.

The other point I want to make is that here is a farmer between an atmospheric research station and we're measuring the cleanest air in the world. What does that tell me? It tells me that nature and agribusiness can coincide, they can work together, as long as we get the balance right, as long as we get the science right, as long as we look after the environment, as long as we look after our animals, we can achieve that balance. Nature believes in balance and so do I.

I am very proud of the fact that I have been given probably the two portfolios that suit me the best. I have an enormous passion for agriculture. My family has been farming in Sisters Creek since the mid-1800s - my father, his father and all the way back. Farming is in my DNA and I love it. On my farm we breed Angus cattle, and we grow potatoes, peas, beans, broccoli, carrots, onions and opium poppies. In fact, we grew opium poppies with the Premier's father, Rick. The diversity we have in our farm allows us to move through market fluctuations so that when one market drops we have another foot on the ground with another market. That diversity stands us in good stead as we move forward.

That band of soil that we have on the north-west coast of volcanic derivative soil is absolutely precious. We don't realise how small that is comparatively. My aim for the agricultural sector, as minister, is to maximise the profitability and the science around that small parcel of land so that we can maximise the effects of our great irrigation projects. Tasmania Irrigation is doing a fantastic job. In my first term in federal parliament I was able to put \$1.4 billion back into that electorate. A lot of that went into irrigation because I believe so strongly in it. I believe it unlocks potential and mitigates risk for agriculture. I want to see more money spent on irrigation. I want to see more money spent on research and development. I want Tasmania to be the agricultural science capital of the country. We've got a lot of work to do there but I think the potential is there. We have the very best farmers in the country. They're early adopters of research and development and science.

At the moment, there are many inhibitors to that. One of them is education. We don't have the bandwidth necessary in our particular part of the woods to transmit all those ones and zeroes to drive a tractor with two-centimetre accuracy and seasonal repeatability. We need more work around communications and data transfer.

My electorate includes a beautiful place called King Island. I love it. It is 110,000 acres. There are 15,181 people on King Island and around 960,000 cattle. They all come live into the port of Stanley. They go to either Greenham or they go left to JBS Swift in Longford. They grow almost 20 per cent of Tasmania's beef on that island. They've also got a thriving cheese factory. I'm pleased that our government has been able to lend a hand and support them as they move forward through difficult times. King Island is indeed a great community.

I want to touch on communities for a moment. The other day, as I worked through my electorate, I visited farming communities that are affected by the recent mop-top outbreak. I went to a place called Sprent. As soon as I walked into the Sprent community hall, I could feel the culture. They didn't have to say anything. You could just feel it. It was a special night. They were playing a film that was called *Just A Farmer*. It was about a farmer taking his own life and the effects that had on the community. They discussed the issue of suicide in agricultural communities. It was pointed out to me that night that every 10 days an Australian farmer takes their own life. It's awful. We need to think about that.

I made the point to those beautiful people at Sprent that communities in our regions are so important because they're the first touch points; they're the ones that notice the signs. I congratulated them on having such a wonderful community. The farther we get away from the big capital cities, the stronger the communities are. I see it on King Island, I see it at Smithton, I see it down our west coast.

Our communities are important. I want to support and push forward our communities and their importance as we move forward in generations.

Today is the one-year anniversary of the handing down of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. That's why I wore my medals today. It's important. I take my mind back - and I'd ask everyone to do the same - to a point in time when Scott Morrison was the prime minister, when he and that government didn't necessarily want a full-blown royal commission. They wanted a standing royal commissioner. I want you to picture what it's like to walk into a federal party room when you're looking at a sitting prime minister. It's a very daunting place when you're a first-term politician.

I stood up that day and, as a veteran, I couldn't not stand up. I stood up and I told him that I disagreed with him. I told him that we needed to draw a line under this. I told him that I'd buried too many soldiers in my time, and I wasn't going to bury any more. I told him I'd had enough and if we didn't have this royal commission that this thing would just go on and on and on, and it wouldn't resolve. I'll tell you what - my hand shook that day, it really did. I mean that. I've been in some very precarious situations, but my hand shook that day.

As I spoke, I told them what it was like when you find one of your Diggers. I told them exactly what that was like. Out of the corner of my eye, Phillip Thompson stood up. Out of the corner of my other eye, Garth Hamilton stood up. Before I knew it, half the party room was on their feet. The Prime Minister got the message, and he changed his opinion. It was discussed

briefly, and we brought that royal commission in on the voices. I had two minutes to speak for 20 minutes. I didn't have time to prepare, so I just told them what I felt from the heart.

I think that's why I'm so connected to today and the findings of that royal commission. It hasn't fixed things - I understand that - but it's ruled a line on it. We've shone a light on it. We've put the focus back on our veterans. We can handle the bullets and the bombs. You've got to think about the change that a young person goes through. When a young Australian gets the gumption to go into a recruiting office, they're going to join the army, navy or air force. That decision that they make that day is the first step. I call it the first step to service. They've made the decision to go into recruiting. They raise their right hand and they swear an oath or affirmation to the King, the country and its people. It's another step. Then we take them to the recruit training establishments, to Kapooka, to Cerberus or to Edinburgh, to the Royal Military College and they take another step.

We teach them there that the rights of the individual have gone. You don't matter as an individual. The only thing that matters now is the team and the mission. We teach them that the person on their right or left is the most important person in the world, and you would do anything for that person. The reason that you would is because that person on your right or left would literally give their life for you. It's a mutual trust and respect that's established very early.

We then put those kids in the very most dangerous places on Earth. We put them in harm's way. Then the funerals start. That's where people like me, as a sergeant major, come in, dealing with that, helping that unit through that, helping that family through that. It's almost expected sometimes. When one of your Diggers takes their life by suicide, it's almost different. It's almost as if it was - to me it seems almost preventable, as if I should have done more.

I take you back to the example I gave you earlier. I can remember being in that morgue that day talking to that young bloke. I was supposed to be the expert on human resource management. I was supposed to be the leader. I missed all that. I didn't see it. I should have seen the signs. I should have recognised that. You know better than that, Gav. Yet I didn't. Every single young bloke that I buried through suicide - I guess you could call it guilt - I don't know what. I don't have the words to describe it. I think about it every day. I think about it every night. Suicide, for me, from our veterans in our defence communities, is incredibly important.

I am very proud of the fact that we were able to get that royal commission, but the work is not done. The work is not over. We need to continue with our fight. Not only did I fund the \$5 million for wellness centres in Tasmania during my first term, I also funded a \$2.5 million north-west veterans' hub. A friend of mine who used to be an ammunition technician, a bloke called Andrew Clarke, who is now a GP, runs that for me. He works in conjunction with Open Arms and Soldier On and many other agencies. We have a family centre there. The soldier, sailor or air person leaving the military and moving into the civilian world leaves a big family, a military family.

Sometimes the only thing they will still have is their real family, and I believe that that is the key for them making the transition from the military into civilian life. That's what we do there at the north-west veterans' hub. Andrew has a no-fuss, quite stern mentality: 'You get off the couch, you stand up. There will always be someone there to help you, but you need to take the first step yourself. You need to start looking after yourself.' It's working fantastically. The kids understand why mum or dad feels the way that they do. The kids understand what mum

or dad goes through - and that intergenerational trauma is somehow alleviated by somebody putting a label on it or explaining it to those children. I want to see more of that.

At the moment, when we have an acutely affected PTSD veteran, they are sent towards Greensborough Hospital for a six-week program where we fill them full of benzodiazepines so they can sleep. Then, they're kicked out at the end of that six-week program back into Tasmania with no continuum of care. That's not on. That is almost un-Tasmanian. I want to see our soldiers looked after. I want to see a place almost like - I describe it sometimes like a Ronald McDonald House, where the kids can go. I want to see the kids and the veterans transition through that. I want to see the kids help that veteran through their treatment because at the end of the day, when that family goes back to their community, that family is all that they've got. I want to see families connected back to veterans again. I want to see that treatment surrounding that family. I want to see that focus put back into caring for our veterans. I want to see that mentality that we have of the veteran taking that first step. I want to see that pursued more.

I suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. I've been diagnosed with that as a result of my active service. I don't say that for pity. I say that to let veterans out there know that, yes, you may have this thing, but there is help available. It's almost like a tennis elbow or a dry rash for me. That's how I view it. You can work through this. I'm operating at a reasonably high level here and you can do the same. That's what I tell my veterans. I want to tell the good stories.

I had a young bloke who came to my office in federal parliament. I hadn't seen him for 15 years. I asked him what he was doing and he said, 'Well, you know how you used to tell us, sir.' He still called me sir, not because I was a parliamentarian, but because I was his sergeant major. He said, 'You used to tell us to use the last year of our service to set ourselves up for civilian life.' I said, 'Yes, what are you doing?' He said, 'I've got 72 of my mates working for me. I design, build, and install electromagnetic pulse countermeasure technology for geo-orbital defence satellites.' He's a smart guy, he's got all his mates together, he's got a plan and he's got a beautiful future.

I had another young girl who has written a book on leadership and what it's like to break the glass ceiling as a female in a male-dominated active service unit. I was so proud that she asked me to open a book launch in Canberra.

These are the stories we need to tell. I'm here to tell all employers out there today that employing a veteran is good for your business. They bring a set of skills and a set of values that - second to none - you won't find anywhere else. Give them a go. Employing a veteran is good for your business. That's my message today. They need purpose, they need a job and they need to keep those families together. I feel strongly about this and I will continue my fight.

I'm passionate about agriculture, I'm passionate about our veteran community and I'm passionate about my electorate in Tasmania. I have looked forward for many years to getting my teeth right into the guts of things. I believe that this allows me to do more than what I ever could do in federal politics.

I look forward to working with all of you. I want to remind everybody today that the strategic future of Tasmania is more important than anything else. We're all leaders in this place. I listened to the stories from our crossbenchers and our newly elected members.

I congratulate you all. I remind everybody that we're all leaders in our own way. Sometimes you just have to stand up, even if your hand shakes like mine did on that day.

I'm an open and honest person. Anyone who has ever worked for me or with me will attest to that. I won't change that. I will continue that. I will continue my focus to look after the best electorate in the best state in the best country in the world. I hope that Tasmania will always be the land of the fair go. We all owe it to ourselves to keep it that way.

So that's me. I look forward to working with you. I look forward to the wonderful outcomes that we can have not only for this parliament, but for the future of our great state. Thanks everyone.

Members - Hear, hear.

Member for Bass, Prof Razay

[3.40 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to give my inaugural speech today. Three weeks ago, I stood here and I gave a speech outlining why Tasmania was behind the rest of Australia on health, education, the growing housing crisis, and budget deficit but today my speech is about reflecting on my life journey.

I am privileged in that, throughout my life, I have lived in three countries. I started in Syria, followed by England, and now in Tasmania, Australia. In each country, I met so many people who have given me not just support, encouragement and motivation, but love, care, affection, and made me feel like part of their family. I would like to talk about how each country and the people have shaped my life and led me to where I am standing now.

It started in 1956. I was born in a place called Derik or Al-Malikiyah, in the north-east of Syria. I was a second of eight children: three brothers and four sisters. My family belonged to the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, one of the oldest churches in the world, which goes back to early days of Christianity as it was recorded in the Book of Acts. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. The church is still using the Aramaic language, the mother tongue of Jesus.

My parents were full of faith but organised religious ritual was not part of our daily routine. It was mainly going to church on Sunday, and children were allowed to decide if they want to go or not. My father was very funny, very loving and caring, and always tried to help people. He was passionate about the power of education and although he only studied to grade five, but he was full of wisdom and knowledge about any topic you could imagine. My mother was illiterate but she was quite happy and content looking after a big family.

As a working class family - my father was a clerk in the parapolice force - it was amazing how we managed to survive on a small budget. As children we used to complain, 'How come we can't buy what we want?' and he used to say, 'Why don't you look after the budget?' I looked after the budget sometimes, and the salary would disappear by the fourth week - so it was amazing how we survived. It was also amazing - we only bought a television when I was at university. We used to visit our neighbours or friends so we could watch soccer games. We

dressed really well because my dad used to take us to second-hand clothes shops. They were European designs and we loved them.

My earliest vivid memory was that I failed my first year, so I had to repeat grade one. It was the best thing that happened in my life, because it has impacted the rest of my life. After that, I excelled at school. In high school I used to get excellent reports from the teachers. My other highlight was in grade nine. It was an important exam. I came second in the state, and in grade 12 I came seventh in the state.

Then I studied medicine for six years at the University of Aleppo in Syria. After graduation, I decided to go to study in England. I looked at the British Medical Journal and I chose to write to Professor Martin Tiffany, who was a surgeon at Birmingham General Hospital. I was excited. He wrote back to me to say, 'You're welcome to do clinical training,' but it was unpaid.

I was very sad to leave home because I could have stayed and worked and helped my father to look after a big family but my father never tried to dissuade me or put obstacles. The opposite - he was supportive. He was even so generous that he gave me all his savings - which was equivalent to £1000 - to embark on one of the most challenging things in my adventure, my journey to England. I was 24 when I arrived in England, where I worked at the Birmingham General Hospital. I was under Professor Keighley in his surgical department, who was the leading researcher in the management of inflammatory bowel disease.

My first challenge, one of the things when I arrived, was that my English wasn't great. I had difficulty understanding people, especially the Brummie accent of the Black Country in Birmingham. I could understand my professor because he was loud. I never actually went to English language school and that's why my accent is so funny. One of the best things I took with me, a precious thing, was the New Testament. I used to read it because it improved my English, because it's written in a simple language.

My first challenge when I arrived in Birmingham was I found out that the accommodation wasn't free so I thought my money was not going to last me long. I decided to work at night in a takeaway place. After a few months I thought I might move from Birmingham to Bristol because my sister Hayat was studying a PhD in chemistry there. I met Dr Heaton and Professor Alan Reed from Bristol Royal Infirmary and I talked to them about my dilemma. They were very sympathetic. The problem when I arrived in England was that to register and work in England, you have to do a medical and language exam, but I couldn't do it because I didn't do a one-year internship training before I went to England. What that meant was that I had to leave England before I could do the exam. The only way that I could stay in England was to work as a laboratory technician, which was disappointing and devastating.

I felt sad when I left Birmingham and I moved to Bristol where I worked in the Department of Medicine. I got excellent training from a renowned specialist. At the same time I managed to do research, and I passed the Canadian and American examinations.

After two years, Professor Reed called me to say that he had contacted one of his friends and managed to get me an exemption that allowed me to do the examination and into an internship afterward. I couldn't believe it. I was over the moon. It was like a miracle but more importantly, the question was: why did these wonderful people help me? I did not even ask them.

After that, I did the medical examination. I passed the medical test, but I failed the language test. The next day, people would stop and chat to me and ask, 'What is the latest in the news?' and then they would stop me and correct my mistakes. Apparently, they had a meeting in the Department of Medicine and Professor Reed said to everyone, 'Talk to George and improve his language.' What better language school could you get? As you could imagine, I passed my language test and started to dream. At last, after two-and-a-half years I am going to get a paid job.

I enjoyed my work for the first few years. At the end of the first year, before I left, I went to Doctor Heaton and asked, 'What advice would you give me?' He said, 'Keep smiling.' I am sure that after all these years, he will be there smiling at me.

My main challenge was to pass the Royal College of Physicians exam, which is essentially an exam to study internal medicine in England, and you are allowed six attempts. As you could imagine, I failed four times. My fifth attempt was in Glasgow, Scotland. I left Birmingham on the train. I got to Glasgow, got on the bus to go somewhere so remote, and there was a hospital where I did my exam. It was my lucky place because I did pass my exam. I thought, 'At last, I can pursue my career in medicine here'. Afterward, I worked as a registrar at Torbay Hospital, which is in Torquay.

After three years working there, I decided to apply for specialist training in medicine and geriatrics. I had five interviews, and they were all unsuccessful. Someone said to me, 'You have no hope of getting into specialist training here, and you might have a better chance if you go to Australia.' Can you believe how life has panned out. Somebody must have mentioned it to him. Anyway, I was at the crossroad. I said, 'Well, I might not be able to do specialist training. I might have to change my career.' After long contemplation I decided to do a reset.

I went to my old friend and mentor Dr Heaton. I said, 'Can I join your research team without being paid?' He was delighted. One of his friends allowed me to stay in his attic for free. In those days, my main interest was looking at risk factors for heart disease in men and women. In the 1990s, all the reports were advising that if you drank in moderation, it would reduce the risk of heart disease, but nobody understood the mechanism behind that. What I did then was to look at the relation between alcohol consumption and the hormone called insulin, which is secreted from your pancreas and regulates blood sugar. My study was the first to show that drinking in moderation will lower your insulin, which improves insulin function, but drinking heavily is harmful and causes insulin resistance.

I wanted to send my paper to the prestigious journal, *The British Medical Journal*, but they warned me: 'The editor is anti-alcohol reports.' I said okay. They were surprised when the paper was accepted. In those days, it attracted so much attention from the media, and also led to so many reports afterward on the benefit of alcohol consumption.

After my first year of unpaid research, I met Professor Gordon Wilcock from Bristol Frenchay Hospital. He said to me 'Why don't you come and work with me in Alzheimer's disease and you will be paid?' Of course, I could not believe it, and so I did the first study in which also I linked Alzheimer's disease with insulin and that if you have insulin resistance then it will greatly increase the risk of Alzheimer's. After two years, the University of Bristol then awarded me the degree of Doctor of Medicine, which is equivalent to PhD.

Are you surprised, after my two years of research, I was successful in the first interview for senior registrar training and that was in Truro in Cornwall. I spent two-and-a-half years there and that led me to life in the land down under. After two-and-a-half years, I had the opportunity to work at Concord Hospital in Sydney as a lecturer. I could not believe it because, for me, it was like a holiday, going to Sydney. After six months, there was a job advertised for a Chair in gerontology at Launceston General Hospital.

I rang my colleague, Dr Andrew MacLaine-Cross. I asked for advice. He said, 'Well, what can I say to you? The only thing I would say is that if people go off and work somewhere, after five years they pack their bags and leave, but people who come to Launceston General Hospital, come and stay.' Well, Dr MacLaine-Cross, I am proof that your advice was correct.

It has been a privilege to work for the last 28 years as physician geriatrician at Launceston General Hospital. One of my first priorities was establishing a Launceston Memory Disorders Clinic without a budget, and also the Dementia Research and Education Centre. I was fortunate that the Clifford Craig Foundation gave me funding. One of our first research projects was the Launceston Alzheimer's disease risk factor study, in which we first reported that Alzheimer's disease is linked with obesity and the metabolic syndrome. Afterward, we published a work to show that exercise actually improved not just cognitive function but also physical function in people with Alzheimer's.

After 10 years doing research in a busy hospital, I was thinking to myself, 'I cannot keep doing research,' until the honourable Michael Ferguson turned up. He was the CEO of the Clifford Craig Foundation. He came to me, I remember, and he said 'George, can you come up with a big research project so we can fund it?' I said 'Well, what's retirement George going to do here?' We then embarked on one of the largest studies looking at the incidence, diagnosis and treatment of a condition called normal pressure hydrocephalus.

It is a condition which results from built up fluid in the brain, which leads to enlargement of the cavities inside the brain. That can lead to memory problems, dementia, balance and walking difficulty, and incontinence. It can be diagnosed by scanning the brain to show large packages. The importance of the diagnosis is that you can treat the condition by inserting a fine tube called a shunt into the cavity of the brain and the rest of the shunt under the skin into the stomach, so if there is a build-up of fluid in the brain there is a track to drain away the excess fluid.

So, we did the study. People think it's rare and only accounts for 1 per cent to 2 per cent of cases of dementia. In the longitudinal study we found that up to 15 per cent of cases have it and we showed that the shunt improves their memory, balance and walking, their incontinence, and prevents them from going to nursing homes, which has a major impact on health expenditure.

At the same time, over the years I have given public talks to raise people's awareness of the importance of early diagnostic treatment, and in the last four years I went around giving what I call the 'Tassie dementia talk' around Tasmania, where we give people hope that this form of dementia can be prevented and treated. I believe that through talks and research, we have changed the stigma toward dementia. The impact of all our talks led me to publish a book called *Dementia A New Hope*, which we did last year, which is a guidebook for ordinary people about diagnosis and treatment of dementia, Alzheimer's disease and hydrocephalus.

I will now take you to July 2008. I was in Oxford on sabbatical leave looking at blood pressure and cognition. I loved going to Church of Christ evening services. I enjoyed listening to the boys' choir singing. Then one day I was listening to the dean of the college, and he was saying the most important teaching of Jesus was faith, love and hope. My immediate reaction was surprise. I said how come, because I used to say to people that the most important teaching of Jesus was faith, love and happiness, so I couldn't believe how I changed hope into happiness, and I really believed that's what it was.

Then I went to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which is the oldest one, and I sat there writing my reflection on the topics. After I finished, I found out that I spelled 'happiness' wrong. I used the letter 'y' instead of 'i'. I looked at it, thought it was funny, but after contemplation I said, 'I like my spelling', because it revealed the secret of happiness. 'I' means me, but 'y' means you.

This leads me to how my faith has evolved throughout my life. I mentioned to you some incidents which had impact on me. My earliest memory about my parents' deep faith was when I was probably five years old. My younger brother was very sick with childhood illness and they had already lost a boy to childhood infection. My parents called the priest urgently because they were worried they might lose another boy. They called him to pray and christen the baby and then they needed a godfather. I was the only one standing there so I became his godfather. It was a miracle that my brother survived.

My second thing was in grade 9 at the final exam, which is the essential exam before you go to grade 10-12. I developed a habit of going for a long walk a month before the exam, basically go round after a long day studying, reflecting, dreaming, praying that you will do well during the exam. Then, the day before the exam, I had a dream with the number 253. The next day the result was exactly 253. I didn't take much notice, like a lot of things in life, but then in grade 12, which is an important year, the pre-university exam would determine what subject you study and therefore determine your career. I did the same thing for a month, going for walks. Then, a month before the result, I went to visit my grandparents and had a dream with the number 232, so I wrote it in the calendar. A month later when the results came I rang my grandfather and said, 'Look at the calendar, you will get the exact result'.

My other thing was I was great for studying medicine but I had acute tonsillitis before my surgical exam so I didn't actually have much time to study. I had a few notes on topics and concentrated on those. You wouldn't believe it, but four out of five questions came from the topics I studied and I ended up having the highest mark in my class.

We have to mention also what happened in Australia. A lot of things happened, but one of them was that the Australian Medical Council ruled that if you come as a specialist to Australia you have to do an exam to be registered and recognised. I was absolutely surprised and shocked in 2000 when I received a letter from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians to say, 'We have accepted your training and you are a fellow', without doing the exam. I thought, 'Wow, this is another miracle for me'.

I feel that probably it's time to acknowledge people throughout my life. Of course I have to mention thanks to my parents, who sacrificed themselves for their children. Dr Andrew MacLaine-Cross, who I have known for 28 years, thank you for all the support and encouragement. My wife, Melissa, my soulmate, you gave me so much love and support over the years and you made me the person I am standing here today. My daughter Emily is here.

You have endured many years of conversation and encouraged me in my political career. I remember four years ago her saying, 'Dad, we've heard this for years. Why don't you do something about it?'. Well, that's the reason why I am standing here today.

Of course, I have to thank the Clifford Craig Foundation for funding my research. Most importantly, I thank my patients and my carers who gave me so much motivation. They used to say, 'George, why do you keep doing the research?'. My answer was because of my patients, my carers, and their community. It's amazing. The best thing is to give when you don't expect anything in return.

I would like also to thank the City of Launceston Council which taught me so much about issues related to Launceston. The staff at Launceston General Hospital have given me so much joy over the years.

Finally, I thank the people of Bass, who supported me and encouraged me to continue on my political journey and reminded me, 'George, keep going. Don't give up.' I would like to thank them for putting their trust in me.

Throughout my career I have faced many challenges and obstacles. I always stayed positive and hopeful, even when I failed in my exams or job. However, I have enjoyed every day in my life. I am very blessed to have known so many people. They were like father figures or brothers. They made me feel at home and gave me a lot of support and encouragement. I used to remind myself through the years, don't worry about what you eat or what you drink or what you wear, because you will always find people who will look after you. My faith is characterised by simplicity that has given me a deeper connection to who I am, but I've always kept it to myself. I only talked about it lately with my family.

In closing, perhaps I will mention what I think about the main factors that contribute to happiness. Have a little faith. Do not worry about the future. Celebrate little things. Do not hate anything because it might be good for you. Do your best and keep knocking at doors. Be patient and pray all the time. Always give, give, and if you do not expect a return, that will be rewarded. Do not react to people if they are angry with you and show love even toward those who hurt you. Live in moderation. Get involved in music, singing and dancing. Yes, it is possible to achieve genuine happiness. Forget about yourself and think about others.

I still have two minutes, honourable Speaker. I will finish by reciting the 'Lord's Prayer' in Aramaic. Which is what Jesus taught 2000 years ago. It is called Aboon d-bashmayo:

Aboon d-bashmayo
Neth-qadash shmok
Teethe malkuthok
Nehwe sebyonok
Aykano d-bashmayo off bar'o
Hab lan lahmo d-sunqonan yawmono
Washbuq lan howbayn wahtohayn
Aykano d-of hnan shbaqen l-hayobayn
wlo tha'lan l-nesyuono
elo faso lan men beesho
metul d-deelok hee malkutho
w-haylo w-tehbotho
loalam olmeen Amin

Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear

Sitting suspended from 4.10 p.m. to 4.16 p.m.

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

Member for Lyons, Mr Di Falco

Mr Di FALCO (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, fellow members of parliament, it is with great honour and humility that I stand here today to deliver my maiden speech. Representing my community and the great state of Tasmania is a privilege I do not take lightly. As I reflect on my journey to this Chamber, I'm reminded of my history, family, and values that have shaped who I am. My story, like many, begins with the sacrifices of those who came before me.

My father was a POW during the Second World War. Originally from Italy, he found himself in Australia as a result of that conflict. He spent three months in basic training and only saw battle for one month before being ordered by his captain to surrender. He was captured in northern Africa by the British and while being held there he learnt Arabic. Just enough to be understood, or so he says. He was repatriated to Australia where he spent time at the Cowra POW Camp. As a POW, he undertook farm duties in Bellingen. After his release, he worked in Urunga. While doing so, he made many lifelong friends. He enjoyed playing social table tennis and we later found a photo of him with the local team. He looked more like a front-row rugby player with his brawny forearms folded across his chest, holding a small paddle in his big mitt. After the war he remained in Australia working in forestry before briefly returning to Italy carrying with him the promises of a better life in Australia.

In his mid-40s, while still in Italy, my father reconnected with a girl he knew in childhood, which resulted in making a decision to be married and returning to Australia for a better life. Post-war Italy was devastated and lacked any opportunity for him. It was in this new land that my family laid down roots.

From a young age, I was influenced by the lessons my parents taught me. This was grounded in our Catholic faith. My family's values centred on hard work, compassion, and social justice. My father worked as a builder's labourer for most of his working life before joining the Hobart City Council as a gardener.

His role involved planning out embankments, which regrettably is no longer carried out. He was very popular with the retired members of the community who kept him hydrated with tea and biscuits. I witnessed my father's commitment first-hand in retirement years through his volunteer work with St Vincent de Paul where he dedicated countless hours to supporting those in need.

He often helped out with gardening and chores for his neighbours. My father always saw Australia as a land of opportunity - a place where putting in a hard day's work could build a better life. Hopefully my work here will enable that to continue.

After the sudden loss of my mother, my father raised three boys by himself - aged 9 and twins aged 6. As my father worked full time, we spent week-days and nights after school at Aikenhead House, which was later called St Joseph's Orphanage. This was in Harrington Street, which is now the home of a number of government departments. This orphanage became an extended family as we were never short of playmates. During our time there, we were taught the importance of boundaries, as some of the nuns were fairly formidable. On the other hand, one of the most amenable was a young nun called Sister Anna Maria who was a standout.

As they were a charitable organisation, they received donations from the public. Some of these were in the form of toys. To incentivise good behaviour, the kids would nominate a toy and to claim the toy a system was created to accumulate enough gold stars for good behaviour. I achieved a full card. However, I left the orphanage before I could claim my Batman suit. The lesson learned is life isn't always fair.

My father, a blue-collar worker with very little education here, sought the best education for his sons that he could afford. He saw education as a passport to prosperity and even though he learnt to drive, he chose not to buy a car as he feared that in the case of an accident he wouldn't be around to look after his children. My father was the finest man I have ever known. My brothers Mario, John and I are so fortunate to call him Dad.

I started my primary school during the flavoured milk era at St Peter's. We practised making necklaces using the foil bottle-top caps. I was fortunate to attend St Virgil's College at Barrack Street and later Austins Ferry campus, an institution that further cemented my understanding of service, critical reasoning skills and leadership.

My time in the school cadets was particularly formative, where I learnt not just camping, bushcraft and marksmanship but also the importance of discipline, teamwork and perseverance. During this time I was awarded the rank of sergeant and cook. Some of my crew were critical of my cooking skills, but in my defence, it's not easy to cook with survival rations, is it?

In conjunction with my father and neighbours, my first attempt at trying to make a difference was questioning the usefulness of learning Latin at school. The attempt did not move the principal; on this occasion I was unsuccessful. Hopefully, in this Chamber I can make a difference in other fields.

My first job out of school was as a stonemason's assistant working on the Supreme Court building just across the road from this very Parliament House. I must admit, back then I never imagined that 45 years later I would be sitting inside this air-conditioned Chamber delivering my maiden speech. Life, it seems, has a wonderful way of surprising us.

I was moving sandstone so often that I had shiny finger pads where my fingerprints should have been. Because it was sandstone, we had to use lime mortar, which resulted in cracked skin on my fingers which took over 12 months to heal up after I left that job. On chilly winter mornings before work, a coworker and I would climb up on the scaffold and skate along the frosted rooftops.

I spent 43 years employed by the Hobart City Council working across various departments, including Environmental Services, Parks, Mountain Park and the Arborist Unit. It was fulfilling and enjoyable. While working, I maintained the natural heritage of Mt Wellington Park and contributed to making Hobart a liveable city.

We used to enjoy playing practical jokes on each other. One day, while brush cutting and raking grass, we spotted a nearby residence that had a glassed-in verandah. When our service driver arrived, I thought I'd gee him up, so I told him that someone was walking around and appeared to have slumped against the window. I told him to check to see if they were all right. He started walking up the hill calling out if this lady was okay. Meanwhile, the whole crew was stifling laughter behind the scenes. He advanced until he realised it was a dressmaker's dummy.

During most of my time at the council I loved my job and enjoyed the camaraderie of the blue-collar workers and some of the standout supervisors and managers I had the pleasure of working with.

Nine years ago, I became a founding member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. This idea originated after our secretary had a conversation at a mainland gun show with New South Wales upper House member, Robert Borzak. My passion for advocating on behalf of rural and regional communities, as well as those who work closely with our land and waterways, has always been a driving force.

When we started out, due to budgetary constraints, we could not afford corflutes, so the mainland gave us generic campaign posters. When we first displayed our signs, my workmates who lived in the area asked where the signs were. I pointed out where they were situated and they claimed they looked like 'no smoking' signs, so even before being elected we were kicking goals in the public health space.

Politics, however, is not an easy road, as you well know. I stood for election eight times before finally achieving success. People would always ask me why I continued to stand and I would reply, 'I guess I don't know when to stop'. That determination to keep going, to keep fighting for what I believe in, is something that I carry with me to this day. I stand here proud to be a Tasmanian, proud of our history, our resilience and our potential. Tasmania is a place of opportunity. I encourage all Tasmanians to embrace that spirit and to create wealth, and to build futures for themselves and their families.

I believe a famous ad from 1980s demonstrates what Tasmanians are capable of, given a chance to succeed. Since this is a jingle, I will spare the ordeal of attempting to sing:

Eric stood above the rest
Roger stood up to the test
Downie made computer sheep
Murphy made a giant leap
You can make it, you can make it, you can make it in Tasmania

Patsy makes our children dream
Sargison his craft supreme
Ayling shot up to the top
Trinder won the Melbourne Cup
You can make it, you can make it, you can make it in Tasmania

I urge this government to stand with industries that are vital to our state's prosperity: racing, salmon, forestry, farming, mining, manufacturing, primary and secondary industries - oh, and I forgot, greyhound racing. We have let opportunities slip before, such as

the Wesley Vale Paper Mill, the Franklin Dam, and the unfortunate vandalism of the Triabunna pulp mill. I could name a few others, but let's not make that happen again. These sectors provide jobs, support communities, and sustain our economy, particularly in Lyons. It is through collaboration and respect for these industries that we can secure a strong future for Tasmania.

I stand for commonsense reform and minimisation of bureaucratic regulation for its own sake. I stand for responsible and lawful firearm ownership. There are 38,000 licensed firearm owners in this state. Hunting and responsible firearm ownership is deeply rooted in our rural communities. It is about tradition, wildlife management and respect for the land. I continue to stand up for law-abiding firearm owners and will ensure that their voices are not lost in city-driven debates.

At a time of food insecurity, places like New Zealand and America promote donation of harvested game meat which goes to disadvantaged families. If they can do it, so can we. Many people turn their noses up at eating wallaby. At one stage, wallaby was a staple of Tasmania's dinner tables. If the cost of living becomes more precarious, it may be again.

I recently met a father with two sons who talked to me about the importance of teaching his kids the value of responsible hunting and how it is ingrained in his heritage. This shows how families can bond out in the countryside. These kids get out of their bedrooms, off their computers and out into the beautiful Tasmanian bush. This is reflected in a couple Shooters, Fishers and Farmers bumper stickers:

Casting memories, fishing with mum and dad

Kids that hunt and fish don't deal and steal

Tasmanian waterways are a part of our history and our future. I stand for protecting the rights of Tasmanians to fish, whether it's for recreation, putting food on the table, or supporting local businesses. Fishing is a part of the Tasmanian story.

Irrigation is important for high-value crops such as stone fruits, berries and broadacre crops. Water is vitally important for our future development of AI, which requires huge amounts of water for cooling.

I don't support the Marinus Link. The better option would have been to increase hydro water storage, and even look at putting in new dams, which would have been a better use of public money. There is nothing more sustainable than hydro. Hydro power is a better option than temporary wind towers and solar panels producing intermittent power. This would make Tasmania the battery for its own prosperity instead of the battery for the mainland.

While visiting my son, Daniel, in Gippsland, we passed Hazelwood Power Station which was in the process of being decommissioned. I thought to myself that this was nuts. Where is the power coming from to run Victoria? Obviously it is from Tasmania. We simply don't have the excess power capacity, as demonstrated by Boyer's inability to access electrical power in order to retire its coal-fired boilers. You can't have a prosperous economy without cheap, plentiful, reliable power.

I stand for Tasmanian farmers. Our farmers are the backbone of Tasmania's economy. They feed us, they employ us, they keep regional communities alive. I stand for ensuring that

they are supported with fair policy, not burdened with unnecessary red tape. Whether you are on a family farm, a fishing boat or in the country town, your voice deserves to be heard here in parliament. Preventative health is key for healthy Tasmanians. I thought loneliness was an issue mainly for older people; I now realise it affects younger people as well. A key priority during my time in parliament will be to support initiatives such as the Men's Shed, community houses and youth hubs.

Many people don't have the confidence to join clubs or groups. A community house gives them the opportunity to meet like-minded people and talk over a cuppa. This, in turn, improves mental health in the community. A problem shared is a problem halved. One of the things that struck me, while visiting my aunt in Italy, was the sense of community. This is clearly demonstrated in the hours after dinner. The whole community would take a leisurely stroll around the town square in groups, talking about their day and connecting with each other. This was known as *passeggiata*.

Because of the geographical size of Lyons, minor health conditions that could have been dealt with by nurse practitioners or pharmacists if they were given appropriate approvals, currently require hours of driving to see a GP or emergency department. This puts strain on our constituents and our health services. I see the value of preventative health and education in dealing with health crises for rural-regional Tasmanians. They have a much lower life expectancy than metro areas and this needs to be addressed.

In closing, I express my gratitude to the people who have supported me on this journey: my family, friends, and the people of Lyons who have put their trust in me. I want to acknowledge all the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers support crew who helped me all along the way. Without them I wouldn't be here. As I take my place in this parliament, I am committed to working hard, listening intently and representing the values my family and Tasmania have instilled in me. Thank you.

Member for Bass, Mrs Archer

[4.35 p.m.]

Mrs ARCHER (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, it is with deep humility, gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility that I rise today to deliver my first speech in this parliament. I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land, the Palawa people, who have cared for and nurtured this island, Lutruwita, for tens of thousands of years. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and I acknowledge that their connection to land, sea and sky endures.

I also acknowledge the continuing impact of our shared history and the importance of reconciliation in our journey forward as Tasmanians. I stand here today because of the trust placed in me by the people of my community of Bass. To them, I say thank you. Your faith in me is not taken lightly and I will work every day to honour it.

To my family, my husband Winston and my children Luke, Lauren, Edith, Molly, and James, you've been my foundation and my anchor. Public life demands a great deal of those we love, often more than it asks of us directly. Without your love, your patience, your encouragement, and your sacrifices, I would not be here.

To my colleagues, those who have mentored me and believed in me, but also the ones who have challenged me: thank you.

From the George Town Council to the federal parliament and now here in the Tasmanian House of Assembly, every step has been a lesson. It is a bit strange to be delivering this speech today, as I have previously delivered a first speech in another place. I feel that much has been previously said or is on the public record. I will give you the abridged and updated version of the journey so far and some of the lessons learned along the way.

I've spoken before of my early life, of experiences that have forever changed me and the way I see the world. These experiences are not easy to talk about. I have shared them because I know that there are too many others, including, I'm sure, people here today, who carry those invisible scars. Our experiences shape who we are. For me, they have inspired a resolve to stand with the vulnerable, to speak for those who are unheard, and to challenge injustice wherever it arises.

I never imagined I would find myself here. It was almost by accident I found myself standing for local government in George Town. Winston suggested it as a way to meet new people in a new community. What started as a way of putting down roots grew into a passion for community service. I was proud to serve as a councillor, deputy mayor, and then mayor. Those years taught me lessons I have never forgotten. Local government is as close to the people as it gets. You're accountable every time you walk down the street, do the shopping, or go to the footy. It showed me that politics should never be about power for its own sake. It should be about service: service to community, service to country, service to the values that make us stronger together. People should always be at the heart of what we do. That lesson has guided me through every role since.

Later, I had the privilege of serving the people of Bass in the federal parliament. I'm proud of my time as the federal member for Bass and the things I achieved in that role. There are many to mention, but I'm particularly proud of securing funding for New Horizons so that they could continue the outstanding work that they have done in our community; for securing funding to move the Family Court in Launceston to a safer location in Henty House. I fought hard to secure much-needed funding to upgrade the Launceston RSL to support our veteran community.

I'm also proud of the day-to-day work of a local member: listening to our community, advocating on their behalf and assisting to solve problems. This was especially true as we navigated the complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm also exceptionally proud of some of the parliamentary work I undertook during that time, particularly working with my friend, the member for Indi Helen Haines, on integrity reforms. I also worked with the member for Mackellar, Sophie Scamps on the introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill 2025. Whilst that has not progressed, it remains an area of high interest for me and I know it is one that is shared with other members in this place.

I remain proud of the position I took in relation to the Religious Discrimination Bill. While I, of course, believe that people of faith must be protected from discrimination, it cannot be at the expense of eroding the rights of other groups, including some of our most vulnerable citizens. Those years taught me much about integrity, resilience, hope, fear, and courage; about standing up for what you believe in, even when it's difficult. Now, standing here in the Tasmanian parliament, in some ways I feel I've come full circle. I am still the same person who

first put her hand up in George Town to serve her community but somehow changed, grown, and strengthened, with broader experience and, I hope, deeper wisdom.

Northern Tasmania is my home and I'll never stop singing its praises: George Town, Launceston, the Tamar Valley, the north-east, Flinders and the Furneaux Islands. These are places of resilience, industry, and beauty, and they are places of deep history. Our history reminds us that Tasmania has always been a place of discovery, of innovation, of connection. Today, our island still shines brightly: the vineyards of the Tamar Valley, the mountain bike trails, the arts and writer's festivals, the food and wine that bring visitor from across the world, the farmlands and the industries that sustain us. Northern Tasmania is truly remarkable. While I will always speak with pride about my home region, today I remember that I also stand as a representative for all Tasmanians. From the Huon to the north-west, from the west coast to the east coast, we share challenges and opportunities that unite us.

My vision for Tasmania is one of opportunity and fairness. I want us to be a place where our children can dream big without being held back by where they were born or what their parents earn; where every family has a secure home and a chance to thrive; where every Tasmanian has access to healthcare no matter their post code; where our environment is protected, because looking after it is not only an environmental imperative, but an economic one and where our economy grows sustainably, powered by technology, innovation, small business, industry, tourism and agriculture.

Tasmania can lead the way. We have the natural resources, the human capital and the creativity and innovation to be a model of what a fair and prosperous society can look like, but that requires leadership and courage; the courage to confront entrenched disadvantage, to challenge short-term thinking and to make decisions that may not deliver immediate results, but will shape a stronger future for the next generation. It also requires a robust democracy.

Some of the greatest risks to our democracy are cynicism and apathy. Too many people have lost faith in politics and in politicians. They see self-interest, short-term thinking and the corrosive effect of partisanship. Strengthening and defending democracy and democratic institutions has become a priority for me over the past few years, a priority that was enhanced by the opportunity to participate in the McKinnon Institute's Advanced Political Leadership program. It was an incredible professional development opportunity that has given me a new perspective and determination.

I share the commitment of co-founders Grant Rule and Sophie Oh. Their vision states, 'To empower better governments for a stronger Australia', believing that real change is possible, but only if we take a long-term view in facilitating the development of political leadership, increasing public-sector productivity, creating a thriving democracy and accelerating policy innovation. These are not separate goals. They are deeply connected and mutually reinforce trust: trust in our leaders, institutions and democracy, which can help build the conditions for lasting positive change.

Restoring trust must be our collective task. That means conducting ourselves with transparency and honesty. It means remembering why we are here, and that is to serve the people who sent us here. It requires us to work together and sometimes to compromise. I often say, you should have a hill or two that you're prepared to die on, but you can't die on every one.

My promise to this parliament and to the people of Tasmania is simple. I will do my best. I will tell you what I believe. I will listen with respect even when we disagree. I will try to find the common ground and seek to act in the best interests of our community. I will choose pragmatism over ideology. I will not be afraid to show up, even when it is hard, and I will never forget that this seat, this privilege, does not belong to me. It belongs to the people of Bass.

I acknowledge those who have come before me, predecessors who worked hard for their communities, whether in government or in opposition. Public service is demanding, and I respect anyone who puts themselves forward. Today I'd particularly like to acknowledge Simon Wood, Nic Street and Simon Behrakis for their contributions in this place. There are a great many people to thank. I won't be able to name everyone, but I thank all of the friends, volunteers and branch members and supporters who gave their time in not just one, but the two elections I contested this year.

2025 has been quite a wild year and without their encouragement, I certainly would not be here today. The federal election campaign and result was challenging, painful and exhausting, and I wasn't really excited to do it all again, especially so soon but I am so glad that I took the chance, not just because it means that I'm standing here today, but because it was an overwhelmingly positive experience.

I saw the very best of my party working together, united by our shared goals and values, not divided by our occasionally different opinions: a dedicated and hard-working team of candidates with a positive, energetic and engaging campaign and a support team working day and night to support them. Some special thanks to Jo and Andrew Palmer, Dorothy Dehayes, Tim Robertson, Ben Newman, Sam McQuestin, Richard Trethewey and Michael McKenna. Thanks to Jorden Gunton, Liz Baumann, Lucy Mercier and Ben Jacobson, Tarlia Jordan, Tristan Bick, Josh Gudja, Sarah Aquilina, James Whiteley, Pat Tilley and Charles Headlam.

Thank you to my fellow Bass candidates Rob Fairs, Michael Ferguson, Simon Wood, Julie Sladden, Sarah Quaile and Chris Gatenby, for the camaraderie, the coffee, the wobble-boarding and the laughs. From the friends who letterboxed in all weather, especially Jodie and Mel, and Hans who once again found himself wobble-boarding. To the local community clubs and community groups, to the Tasmanians who stopped me in the street to share their stories. You have all shaped the person that I am and the representative I strive to be.

My most heartfelt thank you is for our Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, for his compassion, courage and perseverance, which have been inspiring, and for his friendship, support and for believing in me although he has very questionable taste in music and confusing coffee preferences.

I entered politics by chance, but I have continued by choice, because I believe we can make a difference in serving our community in this way. From the council chambers of George Town to the halls of the federal parliament and now here in the Tasmanian Parliament, my commitment has not wavered: to be genuine, to be authentic, to be compassionate and collaborative.

Tasmania has immense challenges, but even greater opportunities. We can build a state that is fairer, healthier, more sustainable, more prosperous. That is my hope for Tasmania, and I know it is a shared vision. That is the work we can do in this parliament. May we together

build a future that honours our past, embraces our present and secures a brighter future for all Tasmanians. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

Sitting Times

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, pursuant to Sessional Order 18A, I move -

That for this day sitting, the House shall not stand adjourned at 6.00 p.m. and that the House continues to sit past 6.00 p.m.

By way of quick explanation, Orders of the Day No.1 and No. 2 are the bills that we seek to have passed. We believe that they are not controversial, and it will then allow those bills to be transmitted to the upper House to ensure they have something to do when they resume.

Motion agreed to.

Member for Lyons, Mr Mitchell

[4. 51 p.m.]

Mr MITCHELL (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, before I start, I congratulate you on your elevation to the chair. Congratulations.

I acknowledge that we stand on Palawa land and I express my respect to Aboriginal elders past and present.

Before I begin, I want to remark, seeing as I am the last new member to be speaking today - I know Mr Vermey will be speaking later when his family and friends arrive - on the remarkable speeches from those who preceded me today: Ms Greene, Mr George, Mr Pearce, Prof Razay, Mr Di Falco and Mrs Archer have all given wonderful insights into why they're here. There is a common thread that unites us as we care about Tasmania. We may not care about it in the same way. We may not have the same journey in how we got here, or even have the same beliefs about how we think we can make the state a better place, but we have the same care and deep compassion for the state. I don't think anybody should question that.

First of all, I thank the people of Lyons for affording me the great privilege and the great responsibility of representing them in the House of Assembly. This follows the great honour that they bestowed upon me in 2016, 2019 and 2022 by electing me to the House of Representatives. I will endeavour to repay that trust with dedication and integrity.

I also wish to thank the volunteers who helped my campaign, especially those who hosted posters in their yards and paddocks. If nothing else, they frightened the crows for a few weeks. I won't name them all because that would take us too long. I do thank Rebecca White and Casey Farrell for their service to the people of Lyons as the Labor representatives in this state parliament.

Rebecca, of course, was first elected to this place in 2010. That was a campaign I was part of and that I remember very fondly. Rebecca resigned from state parliament earlier this year so she could contest the federal seat for Labor, which she did, and won. Rebecca is already an assistant minister in the Albanese Government, and we are all very confident she will go on to play a very senior role in federal Labor governments, which is a terrific outcome for Lyons and for Tasmania more generally.

Casey Farrell was elected on a re-count following Rebecca's resignation, but he had just a few short months in the job before the unexpected 19 July state election occurred. Unfortunately, Casey was not re-elected, but he has the respect and the admiration of many across this Chamber for his diligence, his contribution and his energy, and I am sure that we will see him return to this caucus.

I also thank the other Labor candidates who were unsuccessful: Edwin Batt, Richard Goss, Saxon O'Donnell and Shannon Campbell. I look forward to seeing them contest their seat again, and hope to see some of them join Jen Butler and me as Labor member for Lyons in a Labor government led by the member for Clark, Josh Willie.

Of course, I also thank my family for their unwavering support in allowing me this opportunity to re-enter public life after I thought I'd left it. This is not what I had planned to be doing following my departure from the Commonwealth Parliament, but timing is everything, and I am delighted to once again be afforded this opportunity to contribute to public policy that benefits Tasmanians.

I am humbled to have been appointed shadow minister for TAFE, Skills and Training and shadow minister for Small Business. They are both portfolios I care deeply about. I owned my own small business for about nine years before entering politics, and I can tell you quarterly BAS (business activity statements) are not something to look forward to. Anything I can do to ease the burden for small business in getting ahead - I recognise they are the engine room of the economy - then I will do that. I look forward to working collaboratively with the minister in the best interest of small business in this state.

Of course, I look forward to prosecuting both the portfolios, holding the government to account for its commitments, and progressing Labor policy in those areas to take to the next election.

Tasmanians made it clear at the election that they want leadership and maturity from this parliament. Leadership and maturity are not inconsistent with accountability and transparency, and our Labor opposition under Josh Willie will deliver and seek both.

I happen to have the great privilege of working with a wonderful, talented group of people in the Labor caucus and I look forward to them being cabinet ministers in a Labor government in four years. I don't think it's going to be any time sooner than that, Speaker, but certainly four years is a long time to get our feet under the table, and as the Leader of the Opposition has said, there are no shortcuts to government. The people of Tasmania have made their views clear. They expect responsibility and stability and a mature approach, and that's what we will deliver.

In crafting this speech, I had occasion to revisit my first speech in the House of Representatives, which I delivered on 14 September 2016. The words are as relevant today as they were then, so rather than unnecessarily detain the House, I invite those listening to google

'Brian Mitchell MP, Hansard first speech 2016' and the entire thing should pop up at the top of your list. I know you will be avid readers, right now. You can read all about me, my history, my hopes, my motivations, and my deep commitment to my incredible electorate and its many communities. However, I will, with your indulgence, read into *Hansard* this small section of the speech:

I decided to run for parliament for many reasons, but if I had to give just one, it is that I do not want Australia to end up like America, where, for 40 years, trickledown economics has made a wasteland of the once-great American middle class, with wages flattened, jobs casualised and contracted out or sent overseas, and working conditions stripped bare.

We live in a fantastic country, envied the world over for its standard of living, its natural beauty and its welcoming, laid-back culture, but we did not get here by accident. We got here by design, by former members of this parliament, the national parliament, taking deliberate action to create a fairer, more inclusive society and past parliaments created a robust social security system and they legislated for universal health and affordable education.

They had the foresight to invest heavily in public infrastructure, giving us telecommunications, highways, rail, dams and ports, and they created a progressive taxation system and universal superannuation.

I digress from the speech. In Tasmania, of course, Labor governments deliver the Hydro. Back to the speech:

They recognised that women's suffrage, indigenous rights and embraced multiculturalism and the rights of LGBTIQ Australians. Each of these elements was hard-won in the face of substantial, sometimes vitriolic, opposition, but woven together they now form the egalitarian tapestry that defines our national identity, which has been central to 25 years of uninterrupted, as it was then, economic growth.

That passage is as relevant to this state parliament as it was to the national parliament. It is the responsibility of the members of this Chamber to craft legislation that fosters economic and cultural security in order to improve Tasmanians' lives. We should take pride in delivering outcomes as seemingly mundane as delivering sound budgets, buses that run on time, hospitals that treat the sick, schools that educate our children, and building a lot more public housing.

Lofty and abstract ideals are all well and good. I like them just like the next socialist, but it is practical solutions that improve lives that matter most. It is practical solutions that the people of Lyons want from this parliament. Practical, hardworking people have no time for navel-gazing. I am proud to have delivered practical outcomes in Lyons. As a federal member of parliament, the Services Australia building in Sorell, for which I had advocated, was built. There was a jobs and training hub in Sorell, sports funding across the electorate and the very many individual outcomes for constituents who did not make headlines but changed lives at the individual level.

In what seemed a few blinks of an eye, after delivering my first speech, I was delivering my farewell on 25 November 2024. Eight years went by very quickly. I remember when the

member for Franklin, Mr Abetz, retired from the Senate after, I think, 20-odd years. People say, 'Oh, 20 years is a long time.' I thought, 'You know, it goes pretty fast.' You're still learning on the job, so member for Franklin, you have a few more years in you yet, I am sure.

Mr Abetz - Hope so.

Mr MITCHELL - Not if we have anything to do with it, of course, but we will see. Now, if you google 'Brian Mitchell valedictory 2024' and the speech should come up and you can read that one as well, as well as the generous words of the Prime Minister in response. In that speech, I outline my reflections on my time in the Commonwealth parliament and the issues that I wished I would have been able to progress further.

Despite my deep-seated concerns, which I expressed in that speech about the rapid rise and mainstreaming of fascism in Australia, which we saw play out again tragically less than two weeks ago across the country, I also said I was genuinely optimistic. I am.

We do live in a wonderful country. It is not perfect, and it has dark elements in its history and its genesis, but that is true of all nations. No country has been forged without blood being shed or injustice being meted out. It is important, vital, that we acknowledge the truth of our history in all its facets, both the dark and the light. I reject the proposition that it is a black-armband-view of history to acknowledge the darkness, but I equally reject the proposition that we cannot or should not be proud of the nation that has been forged and which continues to be tempered; the values that this nation stands for, even if it does not always live up to them; and the bright promise that it holds. There is so much to be proud of, but there is an unceasing duty to keep striving towards the light, towards humanity's better nature and ideals.

Members, each and every one of us has a duty to keep striving towards that light and to making sure buses run on time. There is much to be done. Let's get to it. Thank you.

Members - Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER - I will get members to resume their seats, please. I, too, offer my congratulations to all our new members today and for your inaugural speeches. I, too, look forward to working with each and everyone of you as well. Now we're on orders of the day.

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY AMENDMENT (PRIVATE SESSIONS INFORMATION) BILL 2025 (No. 37)

Second Reading

Resumed from above (page 69).

[5.05 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I will say at the outset that the Greens will be supporting this bill. We're very pleased to see it come to this place.

As a person who closely followed the progress of the commission of inquiry from 2021 and over the two years when, in various hearings and in other times, victim/survivors gave their testimony, I heard personally the distress of a number of victim/survivors who were not able to access their personal records because of the situation of the act as it stands - the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995* - for which we've got an amendment bill in front of us today to deal with. It is welcome to see that the government has progressed this reform.

Clearly it has been supported by all the people who made submissions to this bill from the Sexual Assault Support Service and Laurel House. There was one from a private citizen, Jack Davenport, another woman, Deborah Thomson, and from the commissioners themselves, who made a statement in April 2025, and from Kathryn Fordyce from Laurel House. The commissioners were, of course, the honourable Marcia Neave, Professor Leah Bromfield and the honourable Robert Benjamin, who is now the implementation monitor in Tasmania. They're all of the view that this is an important and welcome development.

What it will do is permit a person to access their own personal record of testimony that they have provided with some conditions to protect the confidentiality of other people who are referred to or who appear and present with that person. I will just make a few comments about that.

In relation to the comments made by the commissioners of the commission of inquiry into institutional child sexual abuse in Tasmania that was conducted here and wrapped up in, I think it was 2023 -

Mr Barnett - 31 August.

Dr WOODRUFF - That's right, yes.

Their point was that there should be an exception to the offence that would allow a person to access their own records. We also need to ensure that people's information is not released unless it has been approved by that person - people who are otherwise mentioned in that session.

I note that comments were made by people in their submission that have been adopted by the minister and the minister's department in the drafting of this amendment bill, and that's welcome. I have a couple of questions.

The question that is raised by Jack Davenport in the submission he made is about the royal commission into child sexual abuse, which was conducted and completed its work in 2013. He says that the act doesn't outline specific exceptions for the royal commission in terms of other relevant legislation. I would like the minister to explain the relationship between, as I understand it, the legislation, section 7A of the act - it does mention the royal commission into child sexual abuse. It's not clear to me and to the person who made this submission how the change to section 19C(2) that we're making in this amendment bill would relate, if at all, to section 7A in the act, which references the royal commission into child sexual abuse. Is there already another mechanism to allow people to access their private sessions and the record of their testimony that they made in the royal commission? If you could bring your mind to this question, it would be helpful. Thank you.

There was also the question made by Deborah Thomson in her submission. She signs herself as domestic violence advocate for change. In her submission she asked whether

information disclosed of abuse and the naming of a perpetrator that is made in the commission of inquiry that was wrapped up in August 2023, whether that should be or could be made available in a national database for legal and judicial systems that were involved with the victim's case - if the victim made, for example, a civil or criminal case, so that the victims aren't compelled to repeat their story as they move between various organisations. I assume what she means is whether the person who makes the testimony could ask that their information is released to be used in the context of a civil or a criminal case. I assume she doesn't mean that it should just be freely available on a national database, but that it could be available to support services, police, legal, other judicial entities in that situation as someone wanting to take a case so they don't have to re-deliver re-prosecute their experience to another group of people.

Shirleyann Varney's submission on behalf of the Sexual Assault Support Service asked whether - and I as I read it, I don't see that it allows this - there would be the potential for an authorised representative of a victim/survivor who'd made testimony to access records on behalf of a participant with the participant's active and informed consent. I don't see that written here, and I would like to understand and whether minister, you and your office considered that, what your views were about that, whether you had any correspondence with the Sexual Assault Support Service about that question, and where you landed with that issue of authorised access for another person who's acting on behalf of a victim/survivor.

A question that has been raised by Meg Webb MLC, and it's an excellent one. I'm sure she will do it herself and speak to it when this bill comes to her place, but I'll ask it here as well: what's the process for the transcript of a private session interview to be released to the person who's provided that information while a commission of inquiry is underway? Or is it only when the commission of inquiry has been concluded? In which case, if it's one or the other, I don't see that referred to here. It doesn't talk about the time of that, and I don't know whether the commission of inquiry - I mean, I can see strong arguments for not releasing it during the period of the work that's done, but also maybe arguments for doing so.

I don't know whether that would be established within the commission of inquiry, when a commission of inquiry was set up, whether there would be guidelines about that in the scope or the establishment of that commission of inquiry as a case by case, if you like. Could you please also just make some comments about that?

They're all the questions that I have. Noting that these amendments will apply retrospectively to the records of this commission of inquiry and from then on because the amendment bill section 2, 'This act will be taken to have commenced on the 1st of March 2021,' and I presume it was from that point. You've mentioned in your second reading speech that evidence was provided to the commission after that point. What about the previous commissions of inquiry in Tasmania?

My question is what about the previous commissions of inquiry prior to 1 March 2021? What's the situation with them and people being able to access their testimony? I look forward to the minister's comments in response.

On behalf of the Greens, I thank the staff who have done the work preparing this. It's one of the tens of pieces of legislation that I know the government has in train and is working on. It's really important work.

The Greens will continue to follow the progress of the government's response to the commission of inquiry through the commission of inquiry committee, which is the Joint House Committee, and also by our correspondents who work with the implementation monitor, the honourable Robert Benjamin. It's fantastic to have a person who was himself one of the commissioners of inquiry in that position following the government and what they're doing along the way.

[5.17 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Honourable Speaker, I thank my shadow, the honourable Ella Haddad, and Greens Leader, Dr Rosalie Woodruff for their contributions. It's greatly appreciated.

I will respond to the questions that have been put, but first, I indicate, like the contributions that have been made, that the bill was tabled in the House of Assembly previously, but it wasn't actually debated. I thought I would put that on record. I might have put that differently in some earlier remarks, but I just put that now.

I likewise acknowledge the commission of inquiry. We have just hit the two-year anniversary: 31 August 2025, two years since it was concluded. I thank the commissioners upfront: Marcia Neave AO, Professor Leah Bromfield, and of course the honourable Robert Benjamin AM KC, who many of us here know quite well. He is the Independent Monitor here, very active and forthright and committed in his role. He does a wonderful job and is available, I'm sure, for other members of parliament from time to time to talk to or be briefed by. We really appreciate his contribution as well, which is now ongoing in this state of Tasmania.

I want to put on the record, like my colleagues have, to thank those courageous and other victim/survivors - I call them all courageous - for their contributions to the commission of inquiry. I want to put that on the record; sincere thanks on behalf of the government, and, I think, on behalf of the parliament. Through the consultation process, it is never easy at times. I acknowledge those who have made submissions and provided that feedback for the government, for which it is very grateful.

We have had 191 recommendations from the commission of inquiry. We have a commitment to implement all those 191 recommendations over a good long period of time in accordance with the timeframes set out in that report and recommendation.

First, I will go through the honourable shadow attorney-general, Ella Haddad. There's a little bit of a crossover with Dr Woodruff on one of those. In terms of the next steps for the bill and how participants will be notified once those materials for applicants are complete, and the bill is passed - my department and the Office of the State Archivist have been collaborating on producing supporting materials for applicants to access their own private sessions information. This will include an application form and a fact sheet for applicants that will be publicly available on the website of the State Archivist once the bill has received royal assent.

Our personal notification to all participants of private sessions will not occur. This is for two main reasons: firstly, in the context of a commission about child sexual abuse, cold-contacting participants of private sessions would not be trauma-informed and could result in harm; secondly, the state is not permitted to examine private session records without an

application. Even if it were able to do so, it would not be appropriate for the purpose of identifying and contacting participants.

However, those people who have already asked for their records will be notified by the State Archives that those records are now available. We understand the principle behind the question and the need for people to know what their rights and options are. I acknowledge that 100 per cent. However, in this particular circumstance, the information will be publicly available on the State Archives' website.

If the participants of private sessions decide in the future to request a copy of the records, I hope they will find that process easy to identify and navigate accordingly. The final process itself is anticipated to include the completion of an application form attaching verification of identification and submitting it to the Archives website to get that information. Let me just check. Yes, on the commission's website, there is a public commitment not to change the website in any way, shape or form, but certainly on behalf of the department, we would certainly be more than happy to put it on the department's website with a link to the Archives website. I hope that helps answer that question.

To conclude, it is important that the process that I was referring to will only apply where a commission of inquiry has ceased and its records are held within the State Archives. The commission of inquiry is still active. Any application for records or information should be made to that commission as the custodian of its records. I think that touched on an earlier question.

In terms of the second question, which crossed over with Dr Woodruff and Ms Haddad, in terms of national databases and the question on consultation regarding the potential for a national database containing information relating to disclosures of abuse and perpetrators of abuse: has any progress been made on this or are discussions ongoing?

The advice I have is that, first, I would like to thank the stakeholder who provided this feedback in relation to the bill. The stakeholder wished to see information relating to abuse and the identity of perpetrators to be available in a national database that would be available to legal and judicial systems, so that victims aren't compelled to repeat their story as they move between various organisations, services, police, legal and judicial entities.

It is important to note that this particular feedback is outside the scope of this bill. However, information regarding child sexual abuse matters is shared across jurisdictions for several purposes. For example, all Australian police services have access to criminal records from all jurisdictions under a national database. However, the terrible events that were recently uncovered in the Victorian childcare sector, in addition to the Tasmanian commission of inquiry, have clearly demonstrated that all Australian governments can do more to protect children and young people.

The question of national databases and related matters is a priority both for this government and the Australian Government. As some of you know - this is on the public record - on 15 August 2025 the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG), which I attended, delivered the following:

1. It would agree to ensure that any refusal of a working with children check, or in Tasmania, working with vulnerable people check, results in a refusal in every part of Australia; and

2. ensures that any information-sharing barriers are removed.

I note that our legislation already permits the sharing of this type of information with other jurisdictions. I was pleased to be able to note Tasmania's leading approach in that regard at the SCAG meeting some weeks ago.

I am also pleased to note that the Australian Government has agreed to lead the establishment of a national continuous check capability. This is a secure system that will continuously monitor registration for working with vulnerable people holders to ensure that matters do not slip through the cracks.

There's a question about private sessions being available to government departments. Will this information be shared through RTI? The answer is no. The bill will not allow government departments to have access to private-sessions information. The bill creates an additional administrative pathway for the specific purposes of providing participants with access to their own private-sessions information, one that will be facilitated by the Office of the State Archivist, not government departments. This will be a separate pathway, independent of RTI, and there will be no fees. A participant of a private session has a right to access their own information without financial cost. I wanted to note that.

In terms of a couple more questions from Dr Woodruff: I believe you made mention of the royal commission in 2013 and made reference to Jack Davenport. I wanted to cover that off. Is there a different mechanism for private-sessions participants from the 2013 royal commission to apply for their own information? The advice I have is that private-sessions information from a Commonwealth royal commission can be disclosed to a participant under the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Commonwealth Legislation) if an exception applies under section 60H(c). These exceptions include if the person makes a record of, uses or discloses the information with the consent of the person who gave the information at the private session, or who gave the information to the member, or member of the staff, of the Commission.

Section 60K of the Commonwealth act also includes a defence to the offence of disclosing private sessions information, if the disclosure is to the person who gave the information at or for the purposes of the private session. I am also advised that people who participated in the Commonwealth royal commission can receive their information from the National Archives under Commonwealth law. I hope that assists the honourable member.

Dr Woodruff - There's not like an FOI process? It's just that?

Mr BARNETT - That's my advice. It is through the National Archives direct.

Dr Woodruff - Thanks.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for that. I think Dr Woodruff also asked about the person being able to request a copy of their private-sessions information when a commission of inquiry is underway, or only once the commission has concluded. I touched on it a little bit before and I think you made mention of the honourable Meg Webb having an interest in this area as well.

The advice is that in the event of a commission of inquiry still being underway, all requests for private-sessions information can and should be made to the commission as the custodians of those records. It is important to note that the bill does not affect a commission's

power, or fetter its discretion, to manage its inquiry as it sees fit. A commission will retain the final decision-making power in relation to its own records while it is still active. It is only once a commission has concluded that its records are transferred to the state archives. At this time, requests for private sessions information should be made to the State Archives.

Dr Woodruff, I have listed another question relating to SASS, so I will touch on that as well. Does the bill allow for authorised representatives to access records from private sessions on behalf of a participant? Before I answer this, I acknowledge SASS and their excellent work in Tasmania and really want to put that on the record as well. I am sure we would all agree. The application form for private-sessions information held by the State Archives provides for both authorised representatives and agents, such as authorised family members, to apply for the information on behalf of a participant. 'Authorised representative' refers to a person who is legally or officially permitted to act on behalf of another person, such as a legal practitioner, a power of attorney or an agent.

The pre-existing legal relationships are well-established in the law and do not need to be specifically provided for in legislation to permit their function. The bill will not affect pre-existing legal arrangements for participants with an authorised representative. These authorised representatives will be able to apply for records on behalf of the participant with proof of identification. To be clear, if a private session participant would like a family member or support person to apply for their information on their behalf, this will be permitted as that person is acting as an agent for the applicant.

Dr Woodruff - Thank you for confirming that.

Mr BARNETT - That's a pleasure. I hope that responds to the honourable members' queries and questions. I'm very pleased to be able to note that. I think along the way, both honourable members who've shared remarks and support the bill indicated their acknowledgement of the department. I want to likewise acknowledge the department for the support to me and my office. Oliver Hinss and Julian Vittorio, thank you very much for that support together with the rest of your team and the department.

In conclusion, I do commend this bill to the House. This is more of the work that we're doing from the commission of inquiry, the 191 recommendations. A lot of time and effort has already been put into that. That's a two-year anniversary since 31 August 2023. There's a lot more work to do. There're many parts of government working on the commission of inquiry and the implementation thereof, but this is just one part, a very important part, but just one part for colleagues in this Chamber to understand and comprehend the significance and comprehensive nature of that report and its recommendations to make Tasmania a better place. I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY AMENDMENT (PRIVATE SESSIONS INFORMATION) BILL 2025 (No. 37)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (SALE REFORMS) BILL 2025 (No. 42)

Second Reading

[5.34 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Treasurer) - Deputy Speaker, I'm not sure I've had the opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment. I wish you well both for your sake and the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Thank you.

Mr ABETZ - I move -

That the bill be read the second time.

The Government Business Sales Reform Bill 2025 implements the government's pre-election commitment to introduce legislation that requires approval of at least two-thirds of the parliament to sell a Tasmanian government business enterprise or state-owned company. As outlined in our draft plan for review of the government's business governance arrangements that we released on 3 November 2024, our review is spanning the entire government business portfolio and was designed to consider, amongst other things, whether public ownership of each business remains appropriate and identify any businesses which potentially would better serve the people of Tasmania if divested or restructured. We asked whether government ownership is in the interests of the people of Tasmania. Can I stress we did not foreshadow the divestment of any of our government businesses. We foreshadowed a review to determine whether certain government-owned businesses could deliver a better benefit for the state and better outcomes for our fellow Tasmanians overall under potential different ownership models.

The Tasmanian government business portfolio is a significant and valuable asset base. We recognise the important economic and social benefits that these assets provide and are willing to explore how we can leverage those assets to extract the maximum benefit for our fellow Tasmanians. Having done so, we will not be divesting any of the government businesses and this bill provides that a government business can only be sold if it receives two-thirds majority support in the parliament. I point out that the powers that currently exist in relation to the sale of Aurora Energy's retail business were enacted by a former Labor government in this place. Under the *Electricity Reform Act 2012*, the Labor treasurer was vested with a broad authority, one that is in fact unusually powerful.

As the law now stands, courtesy of Labor, the Treasurer may sell all or part of Aurora's Energy retail business or that of a subsidiary entirely on terms that the Treasurer considers fit. This is not a limited or conditional power. It allows the Treasurer to enter into contracts, to transfer or novate agreements, to move shares in subsidiaries, and to take any other action considered necessary to affect such a sale.

That was a Labor policy, but let's be clear, under the current framework, the parliament itself has no role in approving such a sale. The Treasurer can act alone, without the need for the scrutiny or consent of this House or the Legislative Council.

That is why the reforms now before us are so significant. The Government Business Sales Reform Bill 2025 proposes to fundamentally change this arrangement. It would require

a two-thirds majority of both Houses of parliament before the retail business of Aurora could be sold and it would lock in that safeguard.

This is about accountability. It's about ensuring that any future decision to privatise or part-privatise one of Tasmania's energy businesses is subject to parliamentary oversight and cannot be made at the stroke of a Treasurer's pen, as Labor had legislated. Any decision about its future must be made openly and with the endorsement of the parliament that represents the people of this state.

That is why these reforms matter. They restore the role of parliament in decisions that should never be left to a single individual, however well-intentioned. To implement the reforms for our government business enterprises, an amendment is proposed to the *Government Business Enterprises Act 1995* to require that any proposed sale of the government business enterprise can only be progressed in accordance with the existing *Government Business Enterprise (Sale) Act 2003*.

The provisions in the *Government Business Enterprises (Sale) Act 2003* have then been strengthened to require that at least a two-thirds majority approval of each House of parliament is required for a government business enterprise to be sold under that act.

In this bill, the reforms have been implemented for our state-owned companies through the strengthening of the provisions in relation to the sale of shares of each company. The amendments have also taken into consideration the existing provisions for each state-owned company. For those companies where there was already a limitation on the sale of shares or a restriction on who could own the shares, these amendments will provide further clarity and additional protection.

The legislation will be clear that a member of the company cannot sell their shares and there will also be a new requirement that at least a two-thirds majority approval of each House of parliament will be required before the section providing this protection can be repealed or amended. There are two state-owned companies, Tasmanian Rail and Tasmanian Ports Corporation where the current legislation contemplates the sale of shares in these entities.

For these companies, the amendment strengthened the approval process and will require approval from at least a two-thirds majority of each House of parliament before the shares can be sold. This bill takes into consideration the existing provisions in relation to Aurora Energy's retail business and the amendments provide that at least two-thirds majority approval of each House of parliament is required before the Treasurer can sell the retail business of Aurora Energy.

The amendments, reaffirm our commitment that the government will not be selling any Tasmanian government business enterprise or state-owned company.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation to the role.

I rise to speak on the bill. Labor will be supporting the bill, but I seek to go through the ridiculousness of how we got to this particular position, thanks to six months of chopping and changing of Liberal government policy since the Premier's state of the state speech that he

delivered on 4 March this year. In that speech he outlined very clearly, at that stage, a number of things, particularly stemming from the debacle with the *Spirits of Tasmania*. He said:

The challenge we faced with the *Spirits* raises the important question about what businesses the government should own. I believe that to answer that, we need to return to first principles. This is an administration founded on a belief that, wherever possible, government should not compete with an efficient private sector. Why should the government own businesses when there is not an overwhelming public benefit in doing so?

That was the Premier of Tasmania, Jeremy Rockliff, back in March. Today, we now have the new Treasurer of Tasmania standing here and telling us the exact opposite. In fact, in his contribution in the second reading speech, he says:

We did not foreshadow the divestment of any of our government businesses.

Did the words really come out of the Treasurer's mouth when he said that? The entire state of the state speech was about foreshadowing the divestment of government businesses. Because they wrecked the budget, they said they needed to sell down Tasmania's assets. The assets that we built together for 100 years went up for sale on that day.

It was only when political pressure came on that they stood and decided to do the exact opposite, and that's where this bill comes from. This is a bill that will require two-thirds of parliament to successfully sell a government asset because no-one believes that they won't sell them unless they pass this bill.

Now, I argue that people still won't believe that this government won't sell assets, because how could you believe anything that they say? This is a government that said they wanted to sell assets, that they believed, and I will quote again from Premier Rockliff:

I will not be dropping it ...

he was talking about asset sales -

... because I believe in it.

He said he believed in the privatisation, he believed in this process to which they dropped three months later. Here we are six months after the announcement doing the exact opposite to what they said. How could you actually believe that this government won't sell assets?

What this bill does is require a two-thirds majority. It is also true that a simple majority, if this bill is successfully passed, then a simple majority of this parliament or a future parliament could simply seek to repeal the changes that we make here today. It doesn't actually solve any problems and it doesn't actually deliver any certainty, because people know that when pressure comes on, this government sells out. It sells out salmon industry workers, it sells out racing industry people, and it sells out, I believe, its own beliefs.

It is hard to believe that Treasurer Eric Abetz just stood and gave that speech about the importance of government ownership. I mean, this is a political party, and a member of this place who, for more than 20 years, has been synonymous with being a private sector advocate

advancing the cause of selling assets. He is now here to tell us that he's here to protect them. How could you really believe this minister or this Premier when it comes to asset sales? You couldn't.

The Premier said on 4 March 2025 that he has reflected on the nature of public ownership. He says:

Is government ownership really in the interests of the Tasmanian community? It is a good question and it deserves consideration.

He says:

We will consider whether the Motor Accidents Insurance Board (MAIB) will do a better job freed from the shackles of government ownership.

In March, it is important that we can see whether MAIB should be freed from the shackles of public ownership. Then, by July, we are starting TasInsure.

This government doesn't know whether it's coming or going. Does it believe in public ownership or not? Today, it believes in public ownership. Tomorrow, it might not. This bill is designed to provide some level of certainty, but it's certainty that no-one will believe, because this government believes in nothing. This is a Premier who believes in nothing and a Treasurer who just sold out his beliefs with his second reading speech. I don't know what they believe anymore, and I don't think they know what they believe in anymore.

On this side of the House, we have been consistent in our position on this since it was announced. We fought hard against the privatisation agenda of this government because we know the simple facts of this. We know that when you sell assets, you offshore the jobs. When you sell assets, the dividends that help pay for schools and hospitals disappear, and we know that prices go up. That is something that we know; something we have continued to advocate for consistently over the last six months while this Government chops and changes its position.

After this process started in March, which the now-Treasurer says did not foreshadow the divestment of any of our government businesses - except it did, it absolutely did - they went through with the Eslake report, on which they spent considerable sums of Tasmanian money to try and fix the budget, then did absolutely nothing with it.

In that interim report delivered by Mr Eslake, he considered the status of public ownership of Aurora Energy, Metro Tasmania, Tasmanian Irrigation, TasNetworks, TasPorts, TasRail, Tasracing, TT-Line, Forestry Tasmania, Entura, Momentum Energy, MAIB, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation, the Tasmanian Public Trustee and the Land Titles Office. In that report he only ruled out six of them not to be sold: TasRail, Tasracing, Entura, Port Arthur Historic Site, the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation and the Public Trustee. All the rest of them were still very much on the chopping block and being prepared for sale, so the comment in the second reading speech, 'We did not foreshadow that divestment of any of our government businesses' is not right. It is fundamentally and factually untrue to say that they were preparing these businesses for sale, and the reason that we are here debating this bill is because they were because, as the Premier said, he believes in it. So does this Treasurer.

Yet here we are in this parliament debating a motion, a bill brought by this government to do the exact opposite thing to what they believe in. We have a government that believes in nothing, philosophically stands for nothing, believes in nothing, and will chop and change and do anything to stay on that side of the Chamber. It doesn't matter what commitments they've made to the people of Tasmania. When it comes to staying on that Chamber, no job is more important than the Premier of Tasmania, Jeremy Rockliff's, when it comes to his position on things, and the Treasurer of Tasmania, who has just introduced this bill.

This is a bill that might solve, or have solved, a political problem for the government of the day, but fundamentally undermines their values and their principles. It does not have any real, tangible influence on people's confidence that they will keep to their word, because we know that the Premier's word means nothing.

These asset sales were bad for a number of reasons. Prices go up, and we've seen that through the sale of public ownership of network operators on the mainland, particularly New South Wales and Victoria. We've seen jobs go offshore with the sale of public assets and no certainty that you can actually keep them in Tasmania.

You can see that the dividends that help pay for schools and hospitals do disappear when these happen. This was the fundamental argument. You have government businesses that were delivering hundreds of millions of dollars back into Tasmania's ailing budget being potentially sold for a one-off sugar hit where we would no longer see the assets delivering dividends back into Tasmania's budget: a purely selfish, short-term move that would erode public confidence in those assets, erode the quality of those assets, destroy jobs and increase prices, particularly for Tasmanian households and small businesses, but also our major industrials, who were seriously struggling at the time.

You have a situation where the government said it believed in privatisation back in March, backflipped in June, and here we are today moving a bill that does the complete polar opposite to what they said they wanted to do in March, and a government that can't be trusted.

This follows the backflips that we've seen, privatisation, which we're talking about today. They were keen for no tax increases, and now they're open-minded to tax increases. The *Spirit* leasing, where they were going to lease the *Spirits*: it hasn't been mentioned yet in parliament since that ABC RTI came out about the complete shemozzle with TT.Line and the attempted leasing to Scotland.

There are questions that need to be answered by this government about what actually happened with that leasing arrangement, because we heard at the time that the Scottish Government had no interest in the leasing. Now it turns out, according to that RTI, that perhaps they did, and perhaps there were offers from the United States for those ships. What did happen with those positions? Yet again, this is a government that can't be trusted, that doesn't have consistent positions and continues to chop and change on its policies. The fire tax, local government reform, the salmon moratorium. Twice now, this government has proposed a salmon moratorium after having promised not to. I stood in this place in 2021 and argued against the moratorium that was put on by the then Gutwein government on the salmon industry, before they dropped it.

Then I saw the commitments made by Premier Rockliff to the industry not so long ago when it said it will not trade away the salmon industry in any way, shape or form in order to

form or retain government. It said it would not introduce moratoriums, a ban or arbitrary caps on industry growth and will consider the science and sustainability of any proposal. Again, this is a government that does the complete opposite to what it promises. How could you actually believe anything that they say? The Premier's word is not worth the paper that it's written on.

They promised forestry expansion. They said they were going to add an extra 40,000 hectares of forestry into the mix for the Tasmanian forest sector and then abandoned that plan as well.

Of course, when it comes to racing, this is a Minister for Racing and a Premier who are on the record in this place repeatedly saying they will not shut down greyhound racing. Yet, when the pressure came on and it became a choice between their jobs or the jobs of those people in the racing industry, they chose their jobs every single time.

Tasmanian Labor won't be selling out workers. We wouldn't sell out to the Greens like this Premier and this Liberal government did to stay on that side of the Chamber. We support those industries, and we continue to outline and to support those industries. There are serious concerns now coming from this chopping and changing of policy regarding business confidence. I heard, again, the government talking up business confidence today. I certainly hope that business confidence can stay positive, but I have my doubts. I have my doubts, not because I have read ABS stats or whatever report the government may choose to cherry-pick from, but because I read the statement from the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. On 17 August, 2025, it said:

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has expressed deep concern about today's salmon announcement by the Liberals. Business and industry require policy certainty in order to invest and create jobs. We just had an election where both major parties expressed strong support for the salmon industry, which resulted in a parliament where two-thirds of elected members nominally support that sector. Yet now, as a result of the post-election political machinations, we have a completely different policy announcement which has turned that upside-down.

Here's the really concerning quote:

Today's decision sends the message that Tasmania is not a safe place to do business.

Tasmania is not a safe place to do business is the message sent by the CEO of the TCCI to every Tasmanian business. Not just every Tasmanian business, though, every Australian business; any business worldwide that now seeks to invest in this place is looking at the decisions of this government, whether it comes to privatisation and their belief in privatisation six months ago and their backflip here today. They can't be trusted on that. They can't be trusted on salmon because how could you trust what this government is going to get up to next?

They will sell out any industry at any moment if asked to by the crossbench and we've seen that. Look, Mr George is here and congratulations on your inaugural speech today. You've achieved more than the Greens have before you even sat in parliament, Mr George. Congratulations on that, but I have to say, it's deeply, deeply concerning to me, and I know the business community and the workers that rely on industry that this sort of capitulation can

happen. This sort of dirty deal can be done behind closed doors, where 80 per cent of Peter George's salmon policy can be implemented by this government because they want to stay on that side of the Chamber. Will they put at risk 5000 jobs because this Premier wants to save his job?

Where does that leave the state? That quote leaves us in one position. Today's decision sends the message that Tasmania is not a safe place to do business, and they have the gall to turn up here today and talk about business confidence being strong. It doesn't get much worse than that, although it does get a little bit worse when the business community said this time last year that it will be hard to ever trust this government again because they keep chopping and changing because they can't be trusted to own these assets and they can't be trusted to run these assets.

I will go back right to the start. The reason that the Premier gave for wanting to sell these assets in the first place in that speech was that the TT-Line fiasco has caused this government to reflect on the nature of public ownership and whether it was in the best interest of this state. They cannot run businesses. They're the first government, I think, in Tasmanian history that has such a record of being unable to run a government business. Their response wasn't to say, 'Well, let's fix it.' Their response was to say, 'Well let's sell it. We can't run it, so we'll sell it.' That's the only message you can garner from the Premier's statement.

This goes to business confidence, and this goes to the ability to trust this government at all. I would argue that no one can trust this government anymore after the actions of the last four to six weeks. Further than that, this is a government that can't run government businesses, that still hasn't implemented the important government business reforms that were following on from Labor's policy, that's now implementing this bill in part to support Labor's policy on stopping the sale of Aurora.

Again, I'll go back to Labor's policy on this, which was announced on 15 May earlier this year, where we outlined a bill to stop the sale of Aurora, which as quite rightly put in the second reading speech, could have been sold at any point in time. The government's response was effectively to mock it. The Premier said he would be, 'Disappointed if selling Aurora was dismissed purely for political reasons.' Hang on a second. The second reading speech says that they never plan to sell these assets at all, and yet the Premier said he would be disappointed if selling Aurora was dismissed purely for political reasons. Now, the only person who dismissed selling Aurora purely for political reasons was the Premier of Tasmania, the honourable Jeremy Rockliff. For purely political reasons. Not because he doesn't believe in it, not because he doesn't think it's a good idea, because it kept him in the job, and there is no one that he won't sell out. He won't sell out his own beliefs and he won't sell out Tasmanian workers to stay in that job.

We support the bill because we don't support selling assets, but we don't have any trust that this government won't try to sell assets again. This is a government that promised to sell the Public Trustee. This is a government that wanted to lease out TasNetworks for 99 years. This is a government that has a history of wanting to tear up, rip up Tasmanian-owned businesses and wanting to sell them.

We won't allow that to happen. We stood firmly in this place in the last parliament against asset sales and we will stand firmly against asset sales in this parliament as well. We know that when you sell assets, prices go up, jobs go offshore, and the dividends that help pay for schools

and hospitals disappear. We know that in our hearts we stand firmly by our position, unlike this government that chops and changes at any moment to save its own political skin.

[5.59 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the Government Business (Sale Reforms) Act 2025. I do so with pleasure because this is a welcome bill and I will flag upfront that we Greens will be supporting it. The broad point here is that it is welcome and it should never have gotten to this point in the first place.

Our GBEs, or at least most of our GBEs, are critical to many people in Tasmania, whether it's because they provide employment or services or products, they are critically important to many Tasmanians. Of course there are some we are dubious about in terms of the decisions they are making. Some of our energy companies at the moment - TasNetworks and Hydro - are sending us over a cliff with their absolute infatuation with Marinus and the lack of transparency when it comes to the amount of information and data they're putting on the public record about the inputs that they're putting into their models. Others, like Tasracing and Forestry Tasmania, we don't support at all and we absolutely want see them shut down or changed radically. The overwhelming majority provide really good services to Tasmanians and we should not be selling them. We should not be selling them to fund budget black holes.

The reality is our budget is in a pretty dire situation, and we've had expert after expert, whether it be in Treasury or whether it be Saul Eslake or others, identify that we need to make some really significant and hard decisions. We need to be changing policy. Saul Eslake is clear that our budget black hole is largely due to government policy, be that pork-barrelling decisions in election campaigns, or bad investments when it comes to infrastructure. Of course, I can't let this debate go by without flagging one of the biggest and one of the worst investments in infrastructure that we have on the table at the moment, which is the Macquarie Point Stadium: the fact that to pay for a stadium, almost \$2 billion worth of debt over 10 years, where the government has been trying to scrape together the dollars. One of the things that they put on the table a year ago, or earlier this year at least, was the sale of government businesses, and that's a really disappointing situation.

Not only sales have been put on the table, but the government floated the notion of merging some of the government businesses, which has now been pulled off the table. We acknowledge that this bill responds to community concerns, we acknowledge that this bill responds to indeed concerns that have been raised in this House, and we stand in solidarity with many workers and, in fact, union representatives who have collectively pushed back on the government's agenda to privatise these government businesses.

We know from evidence that when you privatise government businesses, the services they deliver become more expensive, they become of a lesser quality and, in many cases, the security for workers becomes less and less. I read from Unions Tasmania's letter to us as members of parliament, 2 July 2025, in the election context, Marta Lenton writes:

Time and time again, privatisation has led to higher costs, longer wait-times and reduced services, especially in regional areas.

Of course, they also made a submission to the GBE process saying privatisation does not work. The community knows that privatisation is a failed ideology and a failed policy.

Australia's history is littered with examples of failed privatisations at the state and the federal level.

We know that this policy was a desperate attempt to flag a solution to a budget black hole that is getting deeper and darker with every single investment. We watch and wait with some level of trepidation for the November mini-budget to see what's in that. Then, of course, May next year will be even more telling.

I come back to some of these massive infrastructure decisions that this government is making, be it Marinus Link, be it the North-West Transmission Developments, be it the Macquarie Point Stadium. These are investments that are made with very little, very rubbery analysis, and we have very little trust in them. Next week's assessment from the Tasmanian Planning Commission will be really telling when it comes to the stadium.

The government in its comments regarding privatisation didn't just flag the sale of government businesses or state-owned companies. Somehow the Land Titles Office was put on the table at some point in this debate, as has public land. We make the point here and I ask the Treasurer to address this in summing up is, what is the policy when it comes to the Land Titles Office? Is it still on the table for some kind of carving out of the department that it sits in? It isn't a government business and yet it has been explicitly named up by the Premier as an entity that could be sold, and, of course, public land.

We have a lot of publicly owned land here in the state, many of them reserves. Some of them are unallocated Crown land. It would be good for the government to be utterly clear that it's not going to, in exchange for this bill, in exchange for taking our GBEs off the table, go down a pathway of privatising and selling off tracts of public land. Now, I don't mean the little snippets of land here and there that are quite often rationalised. I mean sales of land that generate significant amounts of income that could help with the budget. That's something I ask the minister to address in summing up because they're public assets that belong to the Tasmanian people and they're not the government's. They, too, should remain in public hands. If the government is going to move to sell them, they should be moving to have this kind of check and balances, a parliamentary check and balances on that as well.

We've seen the government happily lease public land to tourism companies for absolute peppercorn rents. Giving away World Heritage-listed islands in the middle of Lake Malbena for absolutely next to nothing. It is a shameful saga. Despite the fact that the company's bankrupted, despite the fact that the company is not delivering on its commitments, despite the fact that the company's breached the terms of its lease, it seems to continue to get those leases renewed. We know this government has a propensity to sell or at least cash in on public land. We'd like to see that ruled out.

I have a really specific question for the Treasurer in relation to the mechanics of the bill. I acknowledge the staff in the Chamber and I thank you for your briefing the other day. I asked this question, but it's coming back to me again now. I want some clarification on the record as part of the second reading speech. The establishment of a two-thirds majority to sell a GBE is really clear. Each of the parts of this act go through that process:

- (a) at least two-thirds of the members of the House pass a motion approving the sale;

We can understand that.

- (b) at the end of 5 sitting-days after notice of the sale was laid before the House, no notice of a motion to disapprove the sale is before the House;

I can understand that. It's a disallowable instrument, so if no one moves to disallow it then it's taken as passed.

However, the last one:

- (c) if notice of a motion to disapprove the sale is before the House at the end of the period referred to in paragraph (b), when the first of the following occurs:
 - (i) the notice is withdrawn;
 - (ii) the motion is negated;
 - (iii) a further period of 5 sitting-days ends.

Mr Abetz - Excuse me, Vica, what clause?

Mr BAYLEY - This is on page 8, for example, but it's a consistent clause through the whole bill, Treasurer. It's about negating a disallowable motion. A disallowable motion is tabled in this parliament and under normal circumstances that would either pass or not by a simple majority. This clause is ambiguous as to how that motion is negated or passed, indeed. To be negated, I would assume it would need a two-thirds majority of this House, but it's actually not clear. If you could seek some advice and see whether, for example, 1(b) or (c) talks to 1(a), and that 1(a) establishes the two-thirds majority needed to sell something, and therefore that translates to the disallowable instrument, that would be greatly appreciated. At best it's ambiguous. I think the intent is clear that a disallowable instrument should be treated in the same way as a positive motion to sell. I think in this instance it's ambiguous. Could we have some clarity on that?

With that, I don't think I need to speak anymore. This was a policy that was tabled to cash in on government businesses to try to plug the hole that's coming - or that's here and is getting bigger. It's welcome that we're together with unions, workers, people in this Chamber, and that the government has rethought its approach and is now putting this check and balance on the table and making sure that this parliament has proper oversight when it comes to the sale of government businesses. Really, it shouldn't have come to this point in the first place, because our government businesses are important and we know that they deliver better services when they are in public hands.

[6.10 p.m.]

Mr GEORGE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I will speak very briefly. I will support this bill. Tasmania has no reason and no need, and it's not good practice to sell government businesses. We're a small state. We need government businesses that are not driven just by private profit. We need them to be driven for their ability to improve social circumstances in this state.

I cannot allow the bloviation of the honourable shadow spokesperson for the Treasury in this debate over his claims of 5000 salmon jobs. We know that only two years ago the salmon industry was claiming 12,000 jobs. That was diminished to 7000 jobs, then to 5000 jobs. It's quite clear there are about 1780 jobs in this industry. The idea that somehow salmon jobs can be expanded to 5000 is ludicrous. It's a bit like saying when I write a piece for a newspaper article, I'm actually providing jobs for an entire journalistic industry.

If the industry is so clean, green and sustainable, then the opposition has no reason to oppose an inquiry into the salmon industry. Obviously, if they are correct, an inquiry will find that clearly it is an industry which is good for Tasmania, so there is nothing to fear and there is clearly a sense of 'he doth protest too much'.

Ms Butler - Are you pre-empting?

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, we will hear the member, unless you have a point of order.

Mr GEORGE - This is the subject that was raised by the honourable shadow treasurer. I don't see why I should not be able to respond to it. I don't defend the Premier. I don't defend the government for calling this inquiry, but I do congratulate them. That is an important thing to do. If this inquiry is well established, has the right terms of reference and the right chair is chosen, then Tasmanians will get a very clear idea of the impact of this salmon industry.

If Salmon Tasmania wants to complain about that then it's obvious they have something to hide. This Opposition is so captured by the industry that it's employed a salmon industry lobbyist in its party as a chief of staff for one of its members.

Let me just say that whilst I support this bill, I congratulate the government. We will hold it to account whether it be salmon or anything else.

[6.13 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Treasurer) - Deputy Speaker, for the three Independents, let me play a game. Guess who said this?

Mr Winter - Oh, here we go.

Mr ABETZ - You've got it in one. The former leader of the opposition, the shadow treasurer, knows exactly what is coming. What I say to the crossbench, to all members in this place and to those listening in, if you want to come to a debate and throw stones or cast aspersions or make assertions, it's very helpful to come with relatively clean hands. So, guess who said this:

Research shows Victoria, where electricity assets are privatised, they pay less for electricity and that means every single mum and dad, business and home pays less.

Who do you think may have said that? None other than Mr Winter.

Mr Winter - When?

Mr ABETZ - None other than Mr Winter, and he interjects and says what date? I think it was in 2015.

Mr Winter - Ten years ago?

Mr ABETZ - No, no, no. What it shows is that - and I'm willing to give you this, Mr Winter - men and women of good faith can, in fact, change their minds or as circumstances change, they adapt - and it is very clear from that quote and I have a host of other quotes. In 2015, the shadow treasurer was still channelling his political mentor and hero, Mr Keating, in relation to privatisation and all those sorts of matters. As time has progressed and I'm willing to accept him at face value, things have changed for him. He's changed his mind. If I'm willing to accept that from the former leader, the shadow treasurer, I encourage him to accept it from our side as well. These sorts of things are a two-way street.

In what I was hoping would be a more collaborative and understanding parliament, I have to say the first foray by the shadow treasurer in debates of this nature shows that he has not yet cast the mantle of wanting to re-prosecute his no confidence motions. I simply say to him that he can cast all sorts of criticisms about all sorts of matters but they were prosecuted very much at the last election.

If we talk about the *Spirits of Tasmania* or other issues, the people of Tasmania listened to your criticism. In fairness, a fair degree of that criticism was justified, but the failure of the Labor Party at the last election was they were unable to provide a genuine alternative, or say what would they be doing different from what we were doing with the *Spirits* now, and with the building of the berth in Devonport. The big-ticket item was that they have *Spirit IV* to Tasmania before Christmas 2025. Guess what? She is already here. She was already on her way and that was always going to occur. Hardly a policy for the opposition to proceed with.

Can I also remind those on the crossbench that the Hobart airport may or may not have been sold by the Tasmanian government? I am sure somebody can remind me whether that was a Labor government or not. Yes, it was. If I might say, I don't think anybody is actually critical of the sale of the Hobart airport. The private investment that we are now seeing in the Hobart airport is a \$200 million to 300 million redevelopment. That is being privately funded. With these things, you've got to ask yourself and be mature enough and ask yourself the tough questions: ask from time to time whether or not it might be a better idea to privatise or hold in public ownership.

We, as a government, looking at the failure especially of the TT-Line outfit at the time, are asking what we can do to ensure that governance across all our GBEs, government business enterprises and state-owned corporations could be improved. We now have quarterly reporting CEO performance considerations. Those things are already in place and we are continuing on with an agenda of improvement to ensure that our GBEs and state-owned corporations - or SOCs as they're known as - are as well run as possible.

Coming back to this bill, can I say thank you to the House. I think we have the agreement in relation to support for the bill. I could get distracted and talk about the salmon industry, fellow members for Franklin, Mr Winter and Mr George, but I'm not sure how it exactly relates to this particular bill, but it was a nice little foray. People can be assured of my full support for the sector, for the government's full support for the sector. Yet again, can things be done better? We are not unwilling to ask some of those tough questions.

In relation to the Deputy Leader of the Greens, I can confirm the Land Titles Office (LTO) is not for privatisation. In relation to the sale of large allotments of public land - as I understand it, and if I need to advise otherwise, I will - there is no intention to sell any large allotments of public land. As you quite rightly acknowledge, sale and reinvestment of blocks of land, old police houses, old teachers houses, continues on a regular basis. Usually, those departments receive the funds and then reinvest that in a new police house or teachers house or whatever. I don't want to be disparaging, but the churn of sale and purchase is continuing and will continue. I can assure you that there is no intention in relation to the sale of large tracts of land.

I sought some advice in relation to the matter that Mr Bayley, the member for Clark, also mentioned where a motion is negatived. The idea of those three segments as I understand it, is that something has to happen in relation to the motion. It's either withdrawn, it is negatived, or nothing happens to it for a five-day sitting period, after which the motion would be deemed to have lapsed.

Mr Bayley - By way of interjection, is it negatived by a simple majority or a two-thirds majority?

Mr ABETZ - As I understand it, the procedure of the House is that it will be an ordinary majority; the intention is, of course - and we cannot legislate to bind or pre-empt what future government and parliaments might decide to do in relation to that. What this legislation will do is to say that if a Treasurer or another shareholder minister wants to pursue a certain situation in relation to sales, it would require a two-thirds majority in both Houses, not just in the one House. However, should the parliament ever wish to repeal this legislation, it is a matter of fact that it can be done with a majority of just one. That is how the parliament works.

However, we are seeking to send a strong message as to where this government stands, and in particular about the importance of the involvement of the total parliament, not only of this House but also the other House as well, in relation to matters of this nature.

We've already gone overtime, Deputy Speaker, I believe.

Mr Bayley - May I just clarify, Deputy Speaker: you can pass by two-thirds majority a positive motion approving the proposed amendment or sale, or you can table that motion as a disallowable instrument and one of us, if we oppose, needs to move to disallow it but you are saying that disallowance can be rejected by a simple majority. There is a mechanism there to sell without a two-thirds majority.

Mr ABETZ - That's a bit of a sneaky thought. I believe I was right in what I indicated to you, just seeking advice from the advisers. The intent is that the motion should actually be debated and considered and that is why that extra clause was put in there: that the motion is negatived, but at the end of the day, 50 per cent plus one can and will determine the matter.

However, from our perspective, if this legislation is passed, the ministers will be constrained in pursuing those matters in the absence of a two-thirds majority. If a matter is put before the House for disallowance of anything, then that would have to be negatived. A minister would be bound by law, as I understand it, not to be able to pursue a sale or divestment without the approval of a two-thirds majority of both Houses.

Mr Bayley - I accept that.

Mr ABETZ - I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (SALE REFORMS) BILL 2025 (No. 42)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the House do now adjourn.

***Percy Jackson: the Lightning Thief* - Claremont College Production**

[6.27 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I want to share with the House what a fun night I had last month when I went along to the opening night of the Claremont College musical, *Percy Jackson: the Lightning Thief*. It was at the Playhouse Theatre in Hobart. The theatre just buzzed that night. Families, friends, staff and members of the local community filled the auditorium. You could feel the pride in the room, not just from the students on stage, but from everyone: everyone who was there supporting them in the audience. You could see that the students had poured their hearts into every moment and their dedication shone through the whole night.

For anyone who doesn't know the story of *Percy Jackson: the Lightning Thief* - I didn't until I saw this performance - it's got a bit of everything. It's got love, battles, sacrifice, laughs, rock'n'roll and, no spoilers, just a handful of Greek gods and goddesses. I won't spoil it any further than that, but if you don't know it, do look it up. You will really love it. I did, and so did my two companions for the night, my daughter Lucy and our Italian exchange student Giulia. They're both year 11 students, although at Hobart College.

Productions like this are about so much more than what happens on opening night. They are a testament to the weeks and months of hard work that go into building confidence, learning to express yourself, pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone, and learning the importance of working as a team and pulling together to pull off an amazing project, which they certainly did. In this case it was led by the amazing director, Natalie Venettacci. She's the drama teacher at Claremont College. I really want to commend her passion and her dedication. Her enthusiasm was just infectious on the night from everyone who got to chat to her.

I also want to commend all the other members of the Claremont College team who directed the music, the choreography, the costumes, the set design and all the work that was

put in by the school community. This great group of year 11 and 12 students threw everything into it: their song, their dance, their music, their acting. Many of them had come to college from high schools that don't offer a drama program, which in itself just shows how dedicated and resilient those young people were. I was really impressed with their passion and what a great show they put on. I hope that the students stay engaged with drama and open themselves up to all the amazing opportunities offered by the local theatre community in Hobart.

Men's Shed Week 2025

[6.30 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and celebrate Men's Shed Week 2025, an annual event that falls the week after Father's Day, which was on Sunday. I must wish my father a happy Father's Day as well, and all the amazing dads out there.

The amazing Men's Shed movement started in Australia in the 1990s and is now spreading around the planet with associations in New Zealand, Ireland, the UK, Canada, the USA and South Africa. They say you can't keep a good idea a secret for too long, and Men's Sheds are a great Aussie idea.

Imagine a space where men can hang out with other men, talk about important men's stuff or maybe just a yarn about the footy while doing something fun and creative like wood and metal work. Many men struggle entering their retirement years and miss the camaraderie that had been a feature of their everyday working lives for decades. Men's Sheds, and there are 71 of them across Tasmania, with more than 3000 members, provide a vital role in supporting the health, mental health, and wellbeing of men in the community by reducing social isolation, encouraging participation, and sharing experience and expertise gained over a lifetime but sometimes all you need is a cuppa and a chat with someone who gets it. Men's Sheds provide that supportive space to their members, a safe place to knock around with the boys and get your hands dirty again.

Some members in this place might think I am just talking the talk about Men's Shed. Let me assure you, I walk the talk. Just yesterday, I popped into the men's and community shed at Ravenswood in Launceston to help them celebrate Men's Shed Week. It would be fair to say that I have spent way too much time and plenty of money at the Exeter Men's Shed again, in my seat of Bass, hanging out with Bear and the boys.

While I can talk for some time about all the benefits of being a member of your local Men's Shed, we should also acknowledge the amazing work they turn out. For example, my electorate office in Launceston features many beautiful and functional items produced at the Exeter Men's Shed, including two awesome timber tables, a restored century-old rocking chair - which will come in handy later in life I am sure, a wooden wall clock in the shape of Tasmania and an ornamental wooden lighthouse, just to name a few. The quality of the work is astonishing when you compare the care and craftsmanship that went into them with mass-produced products from a store where there just isn't any comparison. Many of these quality custom-made items end up in homes and businesses in towns and suburbs across Tassie. It is another way that Men Sheds give back to the community.

However, the real pleasure and quality time in a Men's Shed is listening to the stories of the men who use them: stories of extraordinary lives and adventures and successes alongside

stories of pain and loss and loneliness. That's the great thing about Tasmania's Men's Sheds. It doesn't matter who you are or what you did in your life, you are valued at a Men's Shed.

Everyone who joins a Men's Shed has something to give and everyone who joins a Men's Shed takes something valuable away from it. Maybe it's a new skill or technique learned; you're never too old to learn. Maybe it's the satisfaction of making beautiful things from your own imagination, making your vision real. Maybe it's witnessing the joy on the faces of community members who dropped in a valuable but broken item, maybe a family heirloom where the talented blokes at Men's Sheds, and they are, perform a seemingly miraculous repair or restoration job. Maybe, it's just that good feeling of hanging out with the boys, having a cuppa and a yarn in a place that smells just like your grandad's old workshop where you spent too much time as a kid.

I'm proud to be a member of this government. This government wholeheartedly supports Tasmanian Men's Sheds Association, and its members shared all over the state. I wish all those associated with the movement a very happy Men's Shed Week, a celebration of what local communities can achieve to help each other.

Launceston Chamber of Commerce - Tribute

[6.34 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs) - Honourable Speaker, tonight, I am pleased to pay a tribute to the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, the oldest Chamber of Commerce in Australia, this year, celebrating 175 years.

On Saturday 30 August 2025, together with my wife Kate and 300 others, it was packed out at the 2025 Care Super Business Excellence Awards at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Launceston. It was a wonderful celebration of innovation and best practice in our northern business community.

It was good to be there as the new Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs. We were inspired by the menu by Peter Twitchett, some fantastic Josef Chromy wines, James Boag beer, and gift bags with Tasmanian products. It was supported by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra with a wonderful performance. Promoting the Tasmanian brand: pure, fresh and natural in every way. Just so Tasmanian. The camaraderie there was palpable. The business community was positive and confident. Innovators and community leaders alike were celebrating that true spirit of enterprise, a spirit of entrepreneurial flair that was so evident.

I pay a tribute to the CEO, Alina Bain, of the chamber. She reminded us that this was more than an awards night. It was a reminder of what happens when business comes together. She spoke about the northern Tasmanian community being a unique way of doing business: One that is collaborative, connected and proud of its people. That's what makes these awards so special. That was evident on the night.

Life membership was granted to John Kirwan - I know Professor George Razay and many others in this place would remember him very well. Congratulations to him with the highest award on the night for his leadership, including guiding the Launceston General Hospital through the major reforms and of course, more recently, the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Tasmania and the Statewide Health Service.

The Hall of Fame award went to Donna Bain, who's done so much for the self-help community, people with disabilities in the north, and now in the community legal services in northern Tasmania. Congratulations to Donna.

The Young Professional of the Year is Dr Prashanth Reddy. We know him as Dr Reddy. He is a shining example of the next generation. It was fantastic to see Dr Reddy and catch up with him. I had the privilege of giving him the RACGP Rural Practice of the Year award for his Beaconsfield medical practice. He's done so much for improving health services in northern Tasmania. Congratulations.

The top honour, Business of the Year, went to Timbre. Located in the Tamar Valley, Timbre has gained recognition for its regenerative approach to hospitality, consistent excellence in service and innovation, and its ability to showcase Tasmanian produce to the world.

Other winners included Excellence in Education and Training, Health Nest; Excellence in Innovation and Technology, Enginuity Power Solutions; Environmental Excellence, SM Building. Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality, Timbre. Excellence in Customer Service, Hire a Building Inspector; Excellence in Design, SM Building; Exceptional Event, Tasmanian Craft Fair - absolutely the best. I encourage all to get along to it.

A member - Hear, hear.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the 'hear, hear'.

Retail Excellence, AdoreU; Chambers Choice Award, Du Cane Brewery; Marketing Excellence, Multicap Tasmania; Professional Services Excellence, AMC Search; Excellence in Equity, Self Help Workplace; Excellence in Health and Wellness, Tasmanian Vaccine Solutions; Building Exceptional Communities, Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania; Exceptional Workplaces, ReadyTech; Excellence in Community Service, Citizen Advocacy Launceston Region.

In total, 17 awards were presented. As the CEO Alina Bain said, excellence is not about size or scale, but about vision, leadership and impact, and these winners are role models for all of us. It was capped off at the winners' brunch a few days later at Alida Restaurant in Launceston. I was asked to share a few remarks and to pass on congratulations to those very worthy award winners, and of course, all the nominees.

It was great to be there with colleagues Jo Palmer, Michael Ferguson, Janie Finlay and many others, local and state members of parliament as well. To Alicia Perry, president, sponsors, partners and supporters, congratulations. Well done. It was a night to celebrate awards for excellence and best practice.

Bendigo Bank, Queenstown - Closure

[6.39 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I want the Chamber tonight to think about a region of our state that is very isolated, especially during our winter months, where we can

experience four seasons in one day, where, in the depths of winter, travel between town centres can be really difficult and dangerous, and quite often isn't possible.

That region is the majestic West Coast of Tasmania. It is home to industrious, salt-of-the-earth Tasmanians, many of whom have lived on the West Coast their entire life, or have been drawn to the region for its beauty, or to work in our world-class industries which bring enormous wealth to Tasmania.

Much has changed on the West Coast over the years, with services being taken away and downgraded, but in my view and the view of our community, the pending closure of the Bendigo Bank in Queenstown is one service the community will fight for till the death knoll to retain.

The Bendigo Bank is the last bank on the West Coast. Its closure will see locals travelling up to two-and-a-half hours one-way to Burnie to be able to access a bank, get a loan or speak to someone from Bendigo Bank about their savings or their accounts. This is elderly people, elderly West Coasters on bad roads in winter. In my view, it's bloody unacceptable. I stand with the Queenstown community in their fight to keep their only bank open.

The post office has been put up as an option but, to me, that doesn't cut it. The West Coast deserves its own bank, and Bendigo haven't even committed to keeping the ATM in place for locals to access.

I have attended a number of very well-attended community meetings. Dean Winter and I met with representatives of the Bendigo Bank and personally invited them to the community meeting which was held quite a few weeks ago now. The honourable member for Braddon, Mr Pearce, was there, as well as Anne Urquhart, the federal member for Braddon. They declined that meeting. They declined to attend and they declined to front the community. The thing about this that makes me the angriest is that those representatives from the bank who are responsible for making this decision haven't even been to Queenstown, or the West Coast. They haven't even made the effort to hear directly from locals about how this decision will affect their lives. I find that shocking.

Honourable Speaker, there is always one community member who stands up and stands out when their community is under threat. I want to introduce to the parliament Janet Lay, from Queenstown. Janet is a passionate Queenstown local who has been instrumental in organising a petition campaigning against the closure of the bank and organising community forums and representations to politicians and to the bank itself.

I strongly encourage members of this place to sign the petition, which you can find on my Facebook page. I want to thank Janet for her work and her passion for our community, and for standing up for what's right.

Honourable Speaker, the West Coast community won't give up, and if the branch doesn't stay open, no stone will be left unturned to identify a solution for the community. I will work alongside the community every step of the way.

I know the council and community have been exploring other options, such as the reestablishment of a community bank model or the establishment of other banking institutions

or banking customer services in Queenstown. Despite this, though, Honourable Speaker, Bendigo Bank *must* reverse its decision and keep the Bendigo bank open in Queenstown.

The West Coast deserves nothing less. I encourage the members of the House to sign the petition. Let's get behind our West Coast community and do the right thing.

Planning Institute of Australia - Tasmania Conference

[6.43 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I realise that there are others who want to speak, so I will make my contribution short. Last week, last Thursday and Friday, I attended the Planning Institute of Australia Tasmania's (PIA TAS) conference at Hobart Town Hall. It was the biggest conference that PIA TAS had held, with over 200 delegates, and I commend the organisers.

The conference theme was 'Stronger together: Shaping Tasmania's next chapter'. It is not the first time that I have been to planning conferences. It is good to see how planning thinking is evolving, and it is really important for my professional development to get a handle on what the thoughts of planners in Tasmania are, the community. The minister, Mr Vincent, who was there, didn't stick to his script but he did talk about his portfolios of planning, housing, infrastructure and transport, which is a good mix in relation to this. It is good to hear a minister with significant interest in regional land use and strategic planning.

For me, it was very good to hear how the planning profession is addressing the myriad challenges. Currently, it is the number of planners; it is very difficult to fill planning positions across many local governments and even state planning positions. There was a lack of action on strategic planning previously so that commitment by minister Vincent was very welcome to delegates as well as me.

I went on one of the field trips and it took me across the river to the beautiful Clarence City Council area. We caught ferries across and had a look at the City Heart project, which is 10 years in the making with its stops and starts. There is so much potential along that Kangaroo Bay foreshore. There is still the controversial Chambroad proposal, which is still in the courts, and arguably on what should be public land and used for public good and, of course, the high-performance centre back-and-forth, when that was considered for the area. There is potential for consolidation of car parks for better use of public space and daylighting the rivulet that goes through the main area which City Heart proposes. I am looking forward to hearing the good discussions and what good planning, meaningful consultation and local champions could bring forth.

We then visited the Takara Limuna walk, which is a coastal walk at Geilston Bay. It won one of the national awards from the Planning Institute. It was a collaboration between Theresa Sainty and staff, including Tracks and Trails, Heritage and Planning. It is a Palawa interpretation and connection to land country, sky country and water, and of course, the connection to Kunanyi. Working with community is all very important. It strengthens planning outcomes, particularly that knowledge and connection to how Palawa look at the land as well.

There was also a conference panel which explored what makes small cities work. Among the panel members was Jade Li, who is the chair of the Multicultural Council of Tasmania.

Apart from things like a great mix of activities and connections with transport, there is the issue about cities being friendly but not welcoming. That was delved into in greater detail, and how we can break that down. For multicultural communities, sometimes being in a new city or in a city for many years, you can feel that it's friendly, but it's not welcoming. There was talk about how safer public spaces, meaningful public structures, and public spaces such as libraries can be really informed by multicultural communities.

The message that came through for me was that we are stronger together to shape Tasmania. Planning can help find solutions and it is better to work together where possible, to value community expert input. There are solutions for housing, for urban design, for inclusivity, and for protection of environmental values. That's what we should all strive for.

John Watson AM - Tribute

[6.48 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to the late John Watson AM - Launceston born and bred, a true Liberal, a man of integrity, faith, and tireless service to Tasmania and our nation.

John's public life spanned a remarkable three decades representing Tasmania in the Australian Senate, followed by five more years on the West Tamar Council. John never sought fanfare but real outcomes. Before politics, he had learned leadership in the world of commerce, especially at the Kelsall and Kemp Woollen Mill, treating people - his workers - with dignity even in the hardest moments, those of a large factory closing down and families hurting.

That experience shaped the senator that he became - to be a practical, compassionate and financially meticulous individual representing our state. He entered federal politics in 1978 in unusual circumstances: a last minute call to put his hand up from Don Wing, and then he simply got on with the job. He took what was considered an unwinnable position on the Senate ticket, but he was elected. He became unparalleled in the nation on matters of finance, tax and superannuation. Yet, interestingly - and perhaps, as life can be, unfairly - he never held a ministry. He perfectly had the capability of being a great minister.

As one insider observed, he had no parliamentary peer in tax legislation. He could unravel complexity and improve laws on the Senate Floor. Australia's superannuation system today is stronger because John Watson applied his clever mind and moral compass to its design. His daughter Rosemary said of her dad in *The Examiner*, 'He had two speeds, stop and go. It was mostly go.' That was John Watson: a man very focused, energetic and driven by duty.

People always came first for him. I can speak personally to that. In 2004, as a young first-time candidate for the federal seat of Bass, I found in John a steadfast supporter. He was good to me, my family, and my campaign team, constantly supportive and encouraging when I needed it most. When I was elected, he actually stayed just that way: sharing resources, offering moral support. You know, that sort of older-man guidance in a younger man's life - so valuable. He gave lobbying assistance on local projects when I needed it. He did all of that very quietly, never seeking thanks. A very rare thing in politics, would we agree?

John's courage was also principled on a number of occasions when his conscience was conflicting with his party's policy position, he crossed the Floor. It was said at his funeral that

he did it in a correct way, a way with integrity, conviction and loyalty all in one, because he would gently argue the point. If unsuccessful, on those rare occasions, he let his leader know, he told all of his colleagues, and then he did cross the Floor on a small number of occasions. He did it quietly, but he did it to maintain his personal integrity.

At the heart of John's life was his faith in Jesus as saviour. He didn't just wear Christianity as a label. He lived it - in the way that he listened, the way he worked, and the way that he treated other people. His was the steady, generous faith of a Christian family man. I really admired that about him, and I always will.

John's longest and happiest partnership, of course, was with Jocelyn, his beloved wife of 62 years. Together they built a family marked by love and mutual encouragement. They have four children and 12 grandchildren. To Jocelyn and the whole Watson family, I believe I can say that our community is deeply grateful that you shared John with Tasmania and with our country. I attended the funeral along with a large number of people in the northern community, and time after time we heard instances and stories about people who had interacted with John, and the great faith that he'd earned from them. They placed their faith in him.

I will close by saying I pay a deep respect to John. I believe that all Tasmanians - and all Australians, actually, certainly every Australian with a superannuation account thinking of their future retirement - owe a great debt of gratitude to the late John Watson. On behalf of the people of northern Tasmania and in this parliament, I say thank you, John; senator, councillor, mentor, friend. Thank you for showing that politics can be decent, careful and courageous.

Vale John Watson.

Members - Hear, hear.

Book Week 2025

[6.53 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I will reflect on the previous members contribution - I recall as a young student at East Launceston Primary School when senator Watson came along and talked us through the voting and electoral systems. He was organising us to stand and trying to explain preferences in the Senate, and he said, 'What's your name, young fellow?' I said, 'O'Byrne,' and he paused, he said, 'Right,' and he moved on. One of my cousins was the Father of the Senate during the Whitlam years, and was a contemporary of senator Watson. I echo your sentiments; he was a decent man who applied his values and his hard work to public life with dignity and respect. I would like to honour that as well.

Honourable Speaker, tonight I rise to talk about - as local members, we all get opportunities to help out our community in various ways. We help out community houses, we help out our local schools. For the last four or five years, my office and a number of my volunteers, or community volunteers, have come together to prepare students in primary and high school for the school year. We do a back-to-school stationery drive, where, around a number of the working class suburbs of Franklin, we receive donations to get new bags, drink bottles, sand shoes, all the new gear, all the pads and pens and papers so that students who may not really engage with the education system will have something on their first day. They may

have a new bag for the first time in their school experience. We have done that for the last four or five years.

I have a number of volunteers who always look for ways where I as a local member can help people out and help our families engage with the education system. One of my great volunteers, Ange Bryant, who is a former educator and a senior educator and literacy expert across Australia, came up with an idea of, 'How about we help out Book Week, David. We can help with that.' We know Book Week - for every parent who's gone through it - it's a really stressful time. That is not just in terms of trying to meet the needs of your child in matching the costume to the book, but for many families it's financially very difficult and it is a very stressful time.

A couple of years ago, Ange came up with this idea of a Book Week costume library, where she and we would collect and receive donations of second-hand costumes to create a library so that students and families in a number of schools who were not engaging with Book Week or literacy programs would be able to borrow a costume for the day so that they would engage in education and so they would, instead of sitting on the sidelines and not engaging in literacy programs, engage in the week. We have been doing it now for three years and this year was probably our most successful.

We work with six schools across the seat of Franklin: Kingston Primary, Clarendon Vale Primary, Rokeby Primary, Warrane Primary, Risdon Vale Primary, and St. Cuthbert's. In this year's week, we loaned out close to 300 costumes, so 300 families having costumes so that they could engage in book week. Also, it is important that when you engage in Book Week, you get a book, so we made sure that we purchased a book for that student to take home to their families to read. Some of the feedback we have had has been amazing. From a teacher:

To say that this activity was a hit would be an understatement. I wasn't able to be present throughout the morning as our younger grades chose theirs, but went on duty at recess to see so many bringing their books out to read. Not sure I have seen reading during break time since I began here in 2020. The grade 2-3 teacher took a video of her class who did not want to finish their silent reading time. 'I never knew my class could be this quiet.' They kept asking her if they could read their books instead of doing other jobs as well. Every teacher relayed how wonderful it was and how much the students loved getting their choice and feeling ownership of a book.

From a year 5 girl to her friend:

I am going to read this when I get home. I am not going to be able to sleep tonight.

From a year 4 boy:

I am into books now. I read to chapter three last night.

This is just something small and practical that volunteers such as Ange Bryant and her family and other volunteers do. Thank you to all the people who have donated costumes and have helped us purchase books so that students can engage in Book Week, engage in literacy,

and engage in reading. It is such an important thing for our students. I want to put on the record: thank you to the schools, the educational leaders, and the students who played a role.

Time expired.

Marine Environment - Mass Mortality Crisis

[6.58 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, the bad news stories about the salmon industry unfortunately keep rolling in. We heard this week that four dolphins and five further fur seals died in salmon pens this year, and we know scores of cormorants have also died. It comes on the back of a summer of death in the marine environment.

In Tasmania, we saw salmon chunks washing up on southern beaches. In South Australia, the algal bloom has killed tens of thousands of animals from over 400 species so far. It is a natural disaster by any measure. *Piscirickettsia salmonis* disease was reported by the government to be in salmon pens last month, unprecedented in winter, and people are understandably anxious about what's going to happen in this coming summer. Today, the Minister for Primary Industries and Water confirmed that multinational salmon companies have applied for an emergency use permit to use the unregulated antibiotic Florfenicol as a 'preventative measure' ahead of warming summer ocean temperatures, and they are supported hand in glove by the government staff in caretaker mode. However, like everything that the government is saying about salmon, the truth is murky.

We know that federal regulations managed by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) only allow emergency permits to be issued for a new antibiotic if there is a genuine emergency underway. Crossbenchers, myself included, received a briefing on 15 August and we were told there's no emergency outbreak occurring. Today we heard that salmon mortality rates in pens have not crossed reporting thresholds. We also know salmon corporations have been in discussions with the government to get their hands on florfenicol since at least March this year.

Is there an emergency? Not according to government staff. Or is, in fact, the so-called emergency application for a Florfenicol permit about dodging the normal assessment processes for unregulated antibiotics? What should happen is an approximately eight-month long assessment of the risk to native fish and other aquatic life. On 13 August this year, the Acting Chief Veterinary Officer wrote a letter to the APVMA, supporting the salmon company's emergency permit application for florfenicol, noting it as 'the antibiotic of choice' for Chilean salmon companies treating *Piscirickettsia salmonis*.

How concerning it is for people who have been following the salmon industry in Tasmania to hear the government looking to Chile as a model for how Tasmania should respond to this disease. They are so far from world's best practice. Chilean salmon farms use more than 400 tonnes of antibiotics a year to treat *Piscirickettsia salmonis* and other diseases. It's an annual consumption of just under half a kilogram of antibiotics for every single tonne of salmon harvested. Even after dumping hundreds of tonnes a year, between half and 90 per cent of farmed salmon mortalities in Chile are caused still by *Piscirickettsia salmonis*. The science shows that there is a range of detrimental impacts from florfenicol, including increasing

antibiotic resistance in bacteria, the spread of antimicrobial resistant genes, the effect on intestinal structures, gut microbiota, homeostasis, xenobiotic metabolism, antioxidant systems, and immune cell activity in crustaceans, tissue damage, metabolic disorders, and DNA damage to fish, damage to the mitochondria of cells and the protein synthesis and mitochondrial swelling, damage to embryonic development and liver toxicity in birds. We've got no idea about Tasmanian native species. That's the point. They need to be assessed.

We've been told florfenicol is essential to prevent another salmon mortality event this summer but that is obviously false. The journal *Frontiers in Immunology* reports that the farming prevention that is required for *Piscirickettsia salmonis* is:

Reduced stress in fish, lower stocking densities, avoiding transport and contact between farms, restricting the movement of well-boats, fish and people, screening brood stock and vaccinating the fish.

Without evidence otherwise, we can only assume that salmon companies have jumped straight to the use of an unregulated antibiotic so that they can continue to harvest diseased fish for sale and human consumption rather than risk any impact on their profits. We've long known that the salmon industry's days in Tasmania are numbered. Their time is now, and the government must make sure there is a moratorium on intensification of the salmon industry, not just the spatial expansion they've talked about. We need to cease operations immediately in sheltered and sensitive areas.

Time expired.

Breast Screening Bus - *Luna*

Maydena Rail Track Riders

Ouse - Ash Cottage

Youth Parliament 2025

[7.04 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to speak on several matters impacting the communities across the vast electorate of Lyons. During the election campaign, it became clear that the 30-year-old breast screening bus, *Luna*, would be off the road. We now understand that it will be at least a year before a new vehicle procurement and fit-out process happens. More people reached out to my office about this when this announcement came through than on any other topic during the election campaign. I have heard stories from several women who have said that their lives were saved by attending the visiting *Luna* bus and having that early detection come to them.

These women were otherwise not able to travel to Launceston or Hobart for screening. I would like to acknowledge the health minister's response to the questions from the member for Clark, Ms Johnston, this morning. Yes, while there are free transport options available for women in these rural and regional areas, it's not actually the solution on the ground that it appears to be. These women still have to take time off work to travel long distances. They still have to find child care that often isn't available in these regions.

Just in the past few days, I have had women along the east coast who have reached out to my office who have endeavoured to book scans on their days off or whenever it's been logistically possible for them to travel, and they simply can't get an appointment at the major centres because they're booked out.

Some forms of this disease are highly aggressive and that means that a six-month wait or delay between medical appointments can be the difference between early stage 1 diagnosis and a life-threatening stage 4. These women can't wait another 12 months for a replacement bus, and they need this government to step up and overcome the interim challenges facing regional women in accessing the healthcare that they vitally need.

In positive news, the Maydena Rail Track Riders have recently received a Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Award for consistently receiving high ratings and outstanding reviews. This is an exceptional reward for the locals in Maydena who are the folk who operate Rail Track Riders. It's entirely community run. They do everything from the day-to-day business operations to the rail and cart maintenance, right through to the guiding. I congratulate them on that award that reflects their commitment to this unique experience.

Also in Maydena, after years of community advocacy, an air quality meter has finally been installed. We look forward to that being live on the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) website. This is absolutely vital for community health in Maydena, where they are frequently impacted by forestry burns in autumn. The air quality monitor is absolutely welcome, but even better would be an ending to native forest logging and enforcing better standards and harmful regeneration burns in the plantation coops.

Over at Ouse, at Ash Cottage, there has been a dire financial situation. That is a community hub that not only provides services for the town of Ouse but for a huge portion of the Central Highlands. It is a critical service. I am going to speak more about it during this week. That is a community that also deserves a formal neighbourhood house and a doctor. Where is their GP they were promised over a year ago?

Finally, on our Youth Parliament: it was an absolute privilege to chair a session this year, and it was appropriately debating and then passing the native forest protection bill of 2025. What I enjoyed most was observing the personal growth of the members who had participated last year, compared to this year. They were considerably more confident in public speaking, they were fiercer in their debating points, and they were incredibly agile on their feet.

After the session, some participants also reminded me that while I am not the Lorax, I do speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues. I, indeed, everybody in this place has an obligation to speak for and consider all without a voice, be it a swift parrot or a Huon Pine, or indeed future Tasmanians who will inherit the outcomes of our decisions in this place today.

I thank and encourage all the participants of the Youth Parliament to continue with their work. If there are young people out there considering participating next year, do. Tasmania is lucky to have such emerging talent as our state's future leaders. In the words of the Lorax:

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better, it's not.

Threatened Species Day

[7.08 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about threatened species and particularly Threatened Species Day. Last Sunday, 7 September, was National Threatened Species Day. This is a very Tasmanian day, not least because it marks the 1936 passing of the last thylacine in the Beaumaris Zoo, just a couple of kilometres from here. It's a reminder that policy drives extinction. It was active policy by the Tasmanian government of the day that drove the thylacine to extinction. As a result, we now have a day, 7 September every year, to remember threatened species and advocate for additional work to protect them. It is critically important because species have never been under greater pressure.

A little personal reflection: I was also absolutely stoked on the weekend to witness the arrival of the first swift parrots in my neck of the woods. I saw a couple of pairs of swift parrots in the flowering blue gums of Tarooma. There are only 500 of these left on the planet. It is a real privilege to see and hear these birds. You don't often see them; you more often hear them. I did get a good look at a few of them, and it's great to see them arriving back here. Of course, swift parrots are one of 600 threatened species in Tasmania. There are 400-odd plants and almost 200 animals. It's really important that we take action to protect them.

Our migratory parrot species are under particular risk. We all know about the orange bellied parrot, the millions of dollars we now spend on the recovery plan for the orange bellied parrot, largely around captive breeding and release, and also nurturing the wild pairs that do make it back here. Recently, tragically, the blue winged parrot has been listed as an endangered species in Tasmania. Habitat loss is a driver of that. Habitat loss is a driver of the decline of both those species, less so in Tasmania, but certainly on the mainland where they over-winter.

When it comes to the swift parrot, it is absolutely central to our responsibility to protect this species, because without Tasmanian forests, native forests, flowering blue gums, black gums and others, and nesting habitat, this species literally has nowhere to go in the summer. It is absolutely critical we protect their habitat. It is utterly unconscionable that Forestry Tasmania still has 8000-odd hectares of swift parrot habitat in its logging area. That needs to change.

There are other policy decisions that are driving species to extinction, plant species included. It's sometimes government decisions and even the Parks agency. The Parks agency, for example, has wanted to build a car park and visitor centre on the outskirts of Coles Bay, on really important habitat for threatened plant species, really important spaces for plant species and critically important. It is an absolute perversity for our Parks service to be proposing these kinds of developments on those kinds of properties.

In the marine environment, whether it is the Maugean skate or the red handfish, they are threatened by not only climate change, warming waters and the climate catastrophe that we've seen happen in South Australia over the last year, but, of course, salmon expansion and farming itself. We know the impacts. The science is clear around the Maugean skate. The experts have identified that getting fish farms out of Macquarie Harbour is one of the first and best things we can do to deal with saving the Maugean skate.

Of course, I wanted to use this moment to talk about the State of the Environment Report in this first Adjournment of the 52nd Parliament, because we've had the first one in 15 years. 2009 was the last one we had, and the government was dragged kicking and screaming to

deliver this one, nine years overdue. It missed two legislated deadlines. The Tasmanian Planning Commission ran the process, and it was a really welcome input from experts, but it is really worrying. It is really disturbing that of the 29 indicators, 55 per cent are deteriorating, 21 per cent are stable, 27 per cent are improving, and 17 per cent are unknown.

It's a really shocking indictment on the policy of government over successive governments, not only policy, but also funding. The report makes a number of different recommendations, including developing a long-term vision for protecting Tasmania's environment, but when it comes to species, a couple of really specific recommendations around increasing marine protected areas and increasing the terrestrial reserve estate. These are utterly critical for a species. Sadly, the government's response to both of those issues has only noted the marine issue, and flagged that it's really only interested in private land conservation on land.

The House adjourned at 7.13 p.m.