



**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**REPORT OF DEBATES**

**Thursday 16 September 2021**

**REVISED EDITION**



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**Thursday 16 September 2021**

The Speaker, **Mr Shelton**, took the Chair at 10 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People, and read Prayers.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Risdon Prison - Update on Prisoner Escape**

**Ms WHITE to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS, Ms ARCHER**

[10.01 a.m.]

The *Mercury* is reporting an inmate from Risdon Prison reportedly escaped this morning leading police on a wild chase through greater Hobart. It is believed that the prisoner was armed. How is a prisoner able to escape and is it true this prisoner had a weapon?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for this question. It provides me with an opportunity to put some facts on the record, but this matter has to undergo an investigation. Members of this House well know that I cannot comment with specific or detailed information at this time. It is too early, and inappropriate, for me to provide any detailed information.

It was an evolving incident. I was immediately advised by prison management earlier this morning that a minimum-rated inmate had escaped from the Ron Barwick Prison. He was swiftly apprehended by police and is again in custody. No-one was injured during the incident.

Investigations into the incident are continuing. I sincerely thank the Tasmania Police for their urgent and swift action in apprehending the inmate.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

**Ms ARCHER** - Their swift action meant that the inmate could be taken back into custody very quickly with no danger to the public. Any escape from a prison facility is completely unacceptable.

I find it highly hypocritical that the Opposition on the one hand, come in here and feign outrage over an incident like this, but on the other hand, continue to demand that new facilities be entirely minimum security. This was a minimum-security inmate.

As minister for Corrections, I have acted decisively when incidents like this have occurred previously by directing that security, even in our minimum-security prisons, be strengthened. Following the previous escape at Ron Barwick, the director of Prisons reclassified part of Ron Barwick to a medium security facility, with security infrastructure upgrades made and staffing levels also increased to accommodate the new classification rating.

On the information at hand, the escape was from minimum security.

## **Prisons - Incorrect Release of Prisoners**

**Ms WHITE to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS, Ms ARCHER**

[10.04 a.m.]

Mr Speaker, I note the minister did not mention whether the prisoner was armed. Whether they escaped from minimum security or not, it is concerning if they are carrying a weapon.

**Ms Archer** - I said it was being investigated.

**Ms WHITE** - Minister, on your watch, serious mistakes are being made at Risdon Prison, specifically inmates are being released before they have served their full sentences, or are escaping. You have admitted that seven prisoners have been released from prison before they were supposed to be over the past two years alone, while four were kept in custody beyond the terms of their sentences.

**Ms Archer** - You hid yours, in government. You didn't even put the information out there.

**Ms WHITE** - You have been in government for seven years. Are you ever going to take responsibility for your portfolio? It does not sound like it. It sounds like you are making excuses.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. The Leader of the Opposition has the call. All interjections should cease and interchanges between members should cease.

**Ms WHITE** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, you have ultimate responsibility for the state's prisons including ensuring that the processes, for the release of prisoners, work. How much time did each of these incorrectly released prisoners have left to serve on their sentences when they were released early? Why was community safety put at risk because of these serious bungles?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. As I said, again they feign outrage at this but during their watch, while they were in government, they used to hide this information. They still to this day have never released figures as to incorrect releases.

**Ms O'Connor** - We had a corrections minister who was bringing the jail population down.

**Ms ARCHER** - As usual the Opposition comes in here with allegations -

**Ms O'Connor** - Overtime down, lockdowns down.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Clark, order.

**Ms ARCHER** - Mr Speaker, I addressed this at Estimates. They are doing this for a cheap political grab, as they usually do. The Leader of the Opposition is well known for this. She knows these are the results - or at least the shadow minister knows - of inadvertent but unfortunate human error. In doing so she is criticising our hardworking staff in the courts and the prison system.

**Ms White** - When will you take responsibility, minister?

**Ms ARCHER** - If I could just answer the question, Mr Speaker. They do not like it.

**Ms White** - You can interject on me.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms ARCHER** - Ensuring incorrect releases do not happen is taken very seriously. I can assure Tasmanians that all necessary steps are being undertaken so this does not happen again.

**Mr Winter** - Do you take responsibility though? Are you responsible?

**Ms ARCHER** - Mr Winter, if you would just listen to the answer.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, member for Franklin.

**Ms ARCHER** - Any incorrect release of a prisoner, whilst rare, is unacceptable. That is why we have put in place the new sentencing management division which is responsible for overseeing all sentence calculations and releases from custody. This is being implemented and in phases. Ms Haddad asked questions about this at Budget Estimates and I have detailed all of this. It will be fully operational by late 2021; it is already in place and doing its job. This, together with significant changes to workplace structures and processes, will ensure incorrect releases do not occur in the future.

Since the implementation of that division, incorrect releases have greatly improved. There has been only one incorrect release over the current and last financial years. We are fixing the problem.

Whilst any incorrect release is unacceptable, I reiterate that things have improved and no major offender has been incorrectly released. To reduce inadvertent human error - Ms Haddad, as the shadow knows this - we are also in the process of implementing the Justice Connect project which will introduce automated sentence calculation functions and provide for immediate information sharing across our courts, the Tasmanian Prison Service and the Department of Justice.

At budget Estimates last week, I was able to confirm that sometimes this process has to go through eight or nine people and so human error can occur. It is inadvertent and it is unfortunate. But these staff are hard working and have every intention of making the right decision. It is unfortunate that these errors sometimes occur. The Justice Connect project will eliminate the need for multiple calculations and data entry processes at different stages of the custody and parole process, reducing the possibility of any errors.

I will not be lectured by Labor who oversaw incorrect prisoner releases every full year when they were last in office and did nothing to rectify it. We are taking action. I will not be lectured by Labor who covered up incorrect prisoner releases every full year.

Our Government has been open and transparent about the extent of this challenge and taken action to investigate and fix what is clearly a longstanding and systemic issue. The Justice Connect project is a multi-million dollar system that we are implementing to fix precisely this. I will not be lectured by Labor who sat back, hid their incorrect releases, and did not put not one cent into fixing the problem.

### **Anti-Protest Laws - Classification of Protesters**

#### **Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN**

[10.10 a.m.]

We have now had a chance to take a good look at your Government's proposed amendments to the nasty anti-protest laws that were found to be unconstitutional.

Can you confirm the amendments create two classes of protesters? For example: they would continue to allow the right to protest of anti-vaxxers and anti-abortion activists while removing the rights of Tasmanian anglers and bushwalkers who will defend Halls Island from your Government's EOI development; the thousands of southern Tasmanians who will defend kunanyi from a cable car; coastal communities standing up against fish farm expansion; young Tasmanians defending forest carbon stores and striking for climate action; north-west coasters defending Robbins Island and its incredible birdlife from a misplaced and massive windfarm proposal; east coasters opposed to the Cambria Green development; and eastern shore residents opposed to the privatisation of Rosny Hill.

When your own Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council says we have to look after the environment better, why is your Government targeting civil society seeking to do just that, while giving a pass to other groups who might protest outside a hospital, day centre, charity or school?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for that question. Her continued attack on what is an attempt to ensure that we can keep Tasmanians in work - that is what this -

**Ms O'Connor** - Would you like to answer the question?

**Mr GUTWEIN** - In fact, there are about 20 questions. I will cover this at a high level.

The intent of this legislation is to enable people to go about their lawful occupations and to enable those businesses that invest in this state to continue to employ Tasmanians. That is what this legislation is about. Again -

**Ms O'Connor** - But an anti-vaxx or an anti-abortion protest is fine.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, member for Clark, order.



**Mr GUTWEIN** - The Leader of the Greens simply seeks to attack Tasmanian jobs through this. That is what is occurring.

The amendment bill that we put forward takes into account legislation approved in other jurisdictions around the country and addresses issues that were raised during the course of the debate in the 2019 amendment bill. It reflects our commitment to protect both Tasmanians' right to work and also Tasmanians' right to free speech -

**Ms O'Connor** - It actually does not. Have you read it?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, you took a substantial amount of time presenting a question to the Premier. It had, of course, opinion in it. The Premier is allowed to answer that in any way that he likes. I ask you to cease your interjections. If you interject on the Premier again - your question was put in silence; the Premier should be able to be heard in silence.

**Ms O'Connor** - He is inciting interjections, Chair.

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**Member Suspended**  
**Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, you can leave the Chamber until after question time.

**Ms O'Connor** - I asked you to pull the Premier into line because he is inciting interjections.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, if you wish to say any more, that time will be extended.

**Ms O'Connor** - Nice try.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, you will now be allowed to return at 12 o'clock.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, you were asked to leave.

**Ms O'Connor withdrew.**

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**Mr GUTWEIN** - Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The point I was making and, obviously, is one the Leader of Greens does not agree with is that Tasmanians should be allowed to go to work and businesses should be allowed to employ people. It is unfortunate that Ms O'Connor again takes the opportunity to very squarely line up Tasmanian businesses that invest in this state, that employ Tasmanians and -

**Dr Woodruff** - There will be two classes of protesters in this state.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - does not and has not throughout this debate -

**Dr Woodruff** - The ones you support and the ones you do not.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, unless you wish to join your colleague, I have asked for the Premier to be heard in silence.

**Mr GUTWEIN** - I again make the point that the opposition to the legislation that we are attempting to put through this place is about ensuring that not only can Tasmanians go to work but that Tasmanians' right to free speech is also protected.

I am still very disappointed that Labor chose not to support the legislation when it was before the House the last time. There should be no reason at all that Labor cannot support this legislation. There should be no reason at all that Labor cannot support the amended legislation. The question before this place when the bill arises is whether Labor will join with the Greens and again oppose Tasmanians being able to go work and, importantly, Tasmanian businesses being able to employ Tasmanians.

### **Government Support for Businesses and Sporting Events**

**Mr STREET question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN**

[10.15 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the majority Liberal Government is delivering our plans to secure Tasmania's future and provide more support to businesses and for top level sporting events in Tasmania?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Street for his interest in this very important matter. I am very proud this week that we have delivered a super-charged package for business, \$70 million-worth of support to ensure that those businesses that are affected by border closures are able to receive both grants. Large employers are able to receive payroll tax relief as well as other fee relief. It is all about ensuring that we maintain confidence across our community and importantly with our businesses.

The business survey that came out from NAB was a fantastic fillip for Tasmania: once again, the most confident jurisdiction in the country and with the best business conditions. I am very pleased today to be able to announce some more good news.

The Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) will now begin its seventh season in Tasmania with the first 20 matches of the world's best cricket league for women being held here. The first match of the season will be the Sydney Sixers versus the Melbourne Stars on the evening of Thursday 14 October at Blundstone Arena; and the first match featuring our own Hobart Hurricanes against the Melbourne Renegades will be played on Saturday 16 October at Blundstone Arena. In all, nine games will be played at Blundstone. There will be 11 games played in the north, eight at UTAS, and three will be played at Invermay Park. This is a massive coup for our cricket-loving state and a massive coup for women's cricket and women's sport more broadly.

The matches will present great opportunities for local businesses in Launceston and Hobart and surrounds to benefit from the increase in trade and for people to get out and about before and after these games. Half of the matches will be broadcast on Channel 7 with the others on Fox and across a range of streaming services, which will put a huge number of eyeballs onto Tasmania.

COVID-19 safe protocols will be strictly adhered to in hosting these games. Whilst we continue to seek an increase in our domestic hotel quarantine places, the quarantine facilities that will be used by the WBBL teams are separate to the current domestic quarantine hotels used by returning Tasmanians. Therefore, there will be no impact on returning Tasmanians associated with quarantining that will occur here. COVID-19 testing of players will continue whilst in quarantine, in line with existing protocols. Players from teams approved to leave quarantine to train will only be permitted to leave following the return of a negative COVID-19 test. I thank Dr Veitch and our public health officials for being able to put in place a COVID-19 safe way of these games being held.

We have now concluded negotiations for the one-year extension, the rollover of the Hawthorn and North Melbourne deals. Next year, Hawthorn will play four games in Launceston at UTAS with one pre-season game as well. North Melbourne will play four here at Blundstone Arena. The relationship between Tasmania and Hawthorn has spanned more than two decades. It is great to have the Hawks back next year. Importantly, the North Melbourne Football Club through the key sponsorship deal with the *Spirit of Tasmania* and the TT-Line has been fantastic. We welcome the return of the Kangaroos to play their eleventh season next year. I thank both the North Melbourne board and their chairman, and their CEOs, for working with us as we have worked through this.

During 2021 we had a fantastic season of AFL here. In consultation with Public Health Services we will ensure that Tasmania will host AFL matches in a COVID-safe way with appropriate safeguards in place. The two elimination finals that were played here in Tasmania were fantastic. I doubt very much whether we will see two finals played back to back at one ground in this state ever in my lifetime again, but I am certain that when we get our own Tasmanian team there will be finals played again in Tasmania. Regarding the Colin Carter task force report, he is fully behind our push for an AFL licence. Questions about the arrangements we put in place next year will be answered. That will be a positive outcome for Tasmania.

### **Glenorchy Jobs Hub Funding**

#### **Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for SKILLS, TRAINING and WORKFORCE GROWTH, Ms COURTNEY**

[10.20 a.m.]

On Monday I attended, with Ms Archer and Ms Ogilvie, the opening of the Glenorchy Jobs Hub. As the chair of the local steering committee until my election to this place, I was pleased to see it up and running and kicking goals already.

On Tuesday this week, you reiterated that the Budget includes \$10.6 million to extend the jobs hub network across the state. That is great news but it is scant on detail. In your media statement you mentioned how successful the Glenorchy Jobs Hub has already been in the first

five weeks of operation. I could not agree with you more. However, I am advised that the hub only has funding secured for the next 10 months.

Given the success of the program already and, as you have said, it is making a real difference in the lives of job seekers, will you give a guarantee the Glenorchy Jobs Hub will be funded on an ongoing basis past the end of this financial year?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I have seen the success of the jobs hub, as you have noted. We have had it funded and we will work with the community and participants to evaluate it as we reach the end of the financial year and consider further investment.

I was disappointed to hear premised in the question the statement about it being 'scant on detail'. I stood in this House only two days ago and outlined an enormous amount of detail about this particular hub, that when it recently opened they had 107 people register. This hub is doing a great job and has had a long genesis, which the member who asked the question has been involved in, to make sure we got the governance right, to make sure we got the right people embedded and to ensure we had the right partnerships with the local community. I am excited that we have achieved so much in this time by working in partnership with other organisations. I hope all members celebrate the success.

In Glenorchy, the opportunities are significant. We acknowledge that there is need in this community. This is why we are working with a variety of sectors across aged care and disability, with Glenview, Nexus, roadworks with Downer, and manufacturing at Incat, or tourism with MONA. This is about harnessing the local community. This is what it is doing. This is the strength of jobs hubs.

The \$1.35 million over two years is a significant investment. We will work with those involved to evaluate its success as we will with all the jobs hubs around Tasmania.

I am disappointed the member said it was scant on detail. In Estimates last week I provided an extensive answer to a question regarding the breadth of jobs hubs. I detailed the new jobs hubs opening and their locations. I talked about how each hub will have a workforce development coordinator and support staff, will be governed by a local board and will support coordination with government, local schools, TasTAFE, vocational training, existing community networks and non-government and local government sectors.

I also outlined that Jobs Tasmania, the new unit established within the Department of State Growth, will support these hubs by delivering common overhead supports, workforce analysis and data mapping. I also updated members last week with the news that Jobs Tasmania convened their first jobs hub network forum on 11 August, which brought together representatives from existing hubs, the community and social services sectors, employers and the training industry to help plan and roll out the remaining hubs, share ideas and find opportunities to work together.

This side of the Chamber believes in jobs hubs. This is why we have delivered funding for job hubs, and this is why we work with local communities to deliver jobs across Tasmania into the future.

## **Prisons - Incorrect Release of Prisoners**

### **Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER FOR CORRECTIONS, Ms ARCHER**

[10.25 a.m.]

Five prisoners were incorrectly released in 2019-20. One was incorrectly released the year before, and an additional prisoner has already been allowed to leave before the expiry of their sentence this year. Meanwhile, a further four prisoners were kept locked up beyond the end of their sentence, when they should have been released. This is not fair and it is not good enough. Of the incorrectly released prisoners, what were they serving sentences for, and how long were each of them at large in the community after being mistakenly released before the error was discovered?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. She obviously did not listen to the answer because I stated that there has been only one incorrect early release over the current and last financial years. I also said that no major offender has been incorrectly released. I do not comment on individual cases for the safety and security of the prison and for their benefit. I can assure members of this House that no major offender has been incorrectly released. The majority of early releases occurred within a day or two of their intended release date.

I do not shy away from the fact that incorrect releases are unacceptable. That is why our Government is taking action. We are backing that up with a fully funded Justice Connect project to make sure these things are automated, to take away the risk of inadvertent human error. The Opposition is criticising our hardworking court and corrections staff. They feel bad about these errors as it is. Ms Haddad knows: she asked these questions, quite rightly, at budget Estimates last week. We were open about what we could be. We took a question on notice in relation to the number.

I come back to this continuing disregard of the fact that when they were in government they did not do that. They tried to hide it. We had no idea. To this day there has been no confirmation from Labor about exactly how many people were incorrectly released by their government.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is this feigned concern, this absolute hypocrisy from Labor for political gains in this House when -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Clarity about interjections. Ms O'Connor was asked to leave the Chamber after one interjection. I would like to know whether the ruling applies to all members.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Thank you for the point of order. I have already called order on the Opposition for interjecting. The minister has the call.

**Ms ARCHER** - Mr Speaker, I have addressed this in my previous answer.

**Dr Broad** - You have not.

**Ms ARCHER** - I have.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Dr Broad.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is disingenuous for anyone to suggest that there are dangerous offenders being released months earlier than they should be. I have just confirmed that there have been no major offenders released. The majority of early releases occurred within a day or two of their intended release date.

### **Climate Change - Young People and Mental Health Concerns**

**Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.20 a.m.]

Young people across the planet are suffering enormous anxiety and distress over the climate crisis. A large global survey by a UK psychology alliance has found two-thirds of young people feel betrayed by their governments for not protecting them, their planet, or future generations. The author said, 'now is the time to face the truth'.

Recently the Premier joined the ranks of climate deniers - Barnaby Joyce, Matt Canavan, Craig Kelly and Eric Abetz - by accusing the Greens of scaring children when we raised the urgency of acting hard and fast to reduce carbon emissions. Instead of dealing with the issues, your Government is grotesquely doubling down, with ministers and backbenchers blaming the Greens for causing children's fear about the future.

Do you agree we have a profound moral responsibility to speak truth to young people and stop treating them as pawns in a new climate denialism game? Will you take a stand on behalf of the tens of thousands of young Tasmanians and push back against this disgusting anti-science rhetoric which is promoting mental ill-health amongst Tasmanian young people?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member, Dr Woodruff, for her question.

In the comparisons she has made with the Premier and others, I simply say that we have the most committed Premier to climate change and the environment in Tasmania's history, the first premier to have responsibility for the climate change. The Premier has clearly articulated, as I have, the importance of offering our young people hope and aspiration. Yes, there are challenges with respect to climate change. This side of the House categorically are not climate change deniers, not one iota, and firmly believe in the science.

When it comes to supporting young people and their mental health and wellbeing, it is important that we are a government committed to investing in those key resources, particularly when it comes to supporting our young people and our adolescents. We are very committed when it comes to our child and adolescent mental health reform agenda. Some \$41.5 million

investment into the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) which, with the report released last year - a warts and all report - needed much change to deliver better services -

**Dr Woodruff** - It is not what I am talking about. It is about the anti-Greens blaming, attacking everyone else instead of talking about science.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. Member for Franklin, you have put the question. Please allow the minister to answer it without interjection.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - and more holistic services, to the general community, but particularly when it comes to child and adolescent mental health reform.

**Dr Woodruff** - Are you going to call your wayward backbenchers into line? They are damaging young people.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I missed Dr Woodruff's interjection there.

**Dr Woodruff** - We have young people who want the truth: Chloe Mason, Charlotte Johnson.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. What is important, Dr Woodruff, is that we listen to our young people's voices. When it comes to our Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, which was recently released, that was clearly evident. Young people had the opportunity to express their views across a range of matters, including environment and climate change and the issues that concern young people -

**Dr Woodruff** - Number three is native forest logging. That is what they said, absolutely.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. Member for Franklin, is it impossible for you to listen to the answer? Member for Franklin, order. Please allow the minister to continue his answer.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - A young people's voice informs that strategy and it is important to listen to young people's voices.

When I was minister for Education, there were climate change rallies across the state and we embraced that, as I did as minister for Education at the time, supporting our young people to express their views when it comes to the environment and climate change. Rallies were held. The only concerns were to ensure that we knew where the young people were so they were safe. Expressing their view and their voice on such critical matters as climate change and the environment is critically important.

It is also important that we offer a range of mental health service delivery and economic policy, that we offer them hope and the opportunity to have the aspiration to be well educated but also to get a job and contribute positively and productively to their community. There is nothing better to someone's own self-esteem and self-worth than making a positive contribution to their community.

## **Salmon Industry in Tasmania**

**Mr TUCKER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT**

[10.35 a.m.]

Can you provide an update on the majority Liberal Government's strong commitment to supporting a sustainable salmon industry? Are you aware of any other policies?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his interest in this important matter. As the Tasmanian Liberal Government we have always taken action to support our sustainable salmon industry to remain world leading and we always will in the future. There is no doubt the industry has been under attack from dark forces that want to wreck and destroy the jobs in this industry. The reality is the Tasmanian salmon companies have been global pioneers and the Tasmanian Government supports the industry in continuing its journey to be world leaders in operations, environmental management, fish health, biosecurity and sustainability.

However, to maintain our position and protect our brand we know more work is required. I can advise the House that today we will be developing a new 10-year salmon plan underpinned by the following principles. One, there will be no net increase in leased farming areas in Tasmanian waters. This is an important principle, noting an immediate 12-month moratorium will be put in place to enable existing exploration permits to be considered in the context of the 10-year salmon plan.

Two, innovation. Future growth lies in land-based and off-shore salmon farming. We will develop new research and innovation programs to support salmon farming further off-shore in deep waters, including Commonwealth waters, and to increase salmon farming on-shore in land-based systems.

Three, world best practice through continuous improvement. We will ensure world's best practices through continuous improvement in regulation and transparency. We will review the fees and charges to ensure full cost recovery and an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community.

**Dr Woodruff** - Interesting. A Greens' election policy.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Dr Woodruff** - Let's just see if the devil's in the detail and you have adopted it, or are you just copying it in name only?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr BARNETT** - Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Four, strict independent regulation. The separation of the EPA from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment will further enhance its role as the independent environmental regulator. Immediate additional positions will be created to support compliance including a new director of finfish compliance.



Over the next 12 months, the plan will be developed and will allow industry and the community to identify new long-term actions that support our vision for a sustainable industry which continues to support Tasmanian jobs and businesses across the supply chain. We will continue to utilise science from -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, everyone in the Chamber. I am struggling to hear the minister and the information that he is providing so I do not know how the rest of you are going with that. Members at the other end of the Chamber could be having difficulties as well. Please, the minister has some important information he is trying to get across and there is a lot of mumbling going on in the Chamber.

**Mr BARNETT** - Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, I appreciate your guidance.

We will continue to utilise science from internationally respected institutions like IMAS, the CSIRO and the Blue Economy CRC to inform sustainability through appropriate planning and regulation. We will work with the Commonwealth Government and the Blue Economy CRC to explore new frontiers and we will continue to promote fact and science-based public discussion. The 10-year salmon plan will commence from 1 January 2023.

I was asked also about other policies and the answer is yes, and no. Regarding the 'yes' in other policies, we know the Greens have a plan and that is to close the salmon industry altogether. We can assume they simply hate salmon. They hate it like they do not like wood or cars or roads. Labor has no policies, no plans, no alternative budget. That is the position we are in - sniping and throwing stones, knock, knock, knock from the sidelines. It is not good enough. Regarding the factional brawling from the other side, left and right, it is time you got yourselves together.

There is no stronger supporter of the salmon industry than the Government. We will deliver on our 10-year plan.

### **Renewable Energy Capacity - Net Zero Status**

**Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for ENERGY and EMISSIONS REDUCTION, Mr BARNETT**

[10.41 a.m.]

In November last year you announced that Tasmania is 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable energy. It is a claim you have repeated over and over ever since. The Deputy Premier has said it; the Premier has also said it. During the Premier's address he said it was 'a key Liberal Government commitment and we have reached it through our nation-leading energy policies'.

During Estimates we discovered that while you and the Premier were making all these statements, Tasmania was in fact a net importer of electricity. In the 2020-21 financial year Tasmania exported 1043 gigawatt hours of electricity while importing 1628 gigawatt hours. How do you explain this and how have you got it so wrong? Will it affect our net zero status?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. We learnt during Budget Estimates that he still has his training wheels on when it comes to energy policy and emissions reduction.

Regarding the 100 per cent, it was November last year and I was at Granville Harbour as the wind turbine was whizzing around: it was all go. It was a wonderful day. It has been backed up independently. The department and others have acknowledged it, as have I and others across government. The installed renewable generation capacity to meet all our needs is an average. Depending on the time period, sometimes Tasmania will be a little under 100 per cent and sometimes it will be well over as we contribute to making power available to businesses and homes across Tasmania.

We have a plan to go to 150 per cent by 2030 and 200 per cent by 2040. This plan has been supported across the parliament. You are part of the solution. Come on board. You should come on board because what we are saying is a plan for more jobs, more development, lower electricity prices by keeping downward pressure on electricity prices, reliable electricity and a cleaner environment. We are delivering. We have the trifecta and we are delivering on that. I know the Minister for Racing is keen on those trifectas.

We will continue to deliver. We have locked in the 100 per cent, we will continue to do so and we are heading to 200 per cent.

### **Mental Health - Provision of Beds**

**Ms DOW question to MINISTER for MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.44 a.m.]

It has now been more than three-and-a-years since failed former Health minister, Michael Ferguson, promised 27 mental health beds in southern Tasmania. At the time, the Government said these would be completed by 2019, two years ago. Last week's Budget pushed the completion date out to 2024. They are now delayed by half a decade when Tasmanians cannot get adequate mental health services for themselves or for their loved ones right now. Why did the Budget delay this very important project even further?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. There is no Government more committed to mental health than this Government, particularly when it comes to the provision of mental health beds and staff across Tasmania.

I highlight the investment we are putting in our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). I also point to our Rethink 2020 mental health plan which puts a very strong focus on developing an integrated mental health system. Consumers of mental services, like everyone else, have multiple aspects to their lives. They require interaction with services, both inside and outside the health system.

The Tasmanian Mental Health Reform Program commenced in August 2019 with the key task of implementing the 21 recommendations from the report of the Mental Health Integration Taskforce and Government response. The 2021 Budget allocated \$8.8 million to continue the rollout of these reforms. This will allow the full operation of the acute care team and the progression of the Peacock facility and associated service components in the south. It will also support the ongoing work of the statewide Mental Health Reform Program team which is coordinating their work and a number of other initiatives.

I have spoken about the commitment of \$41.5 million into the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review. Professor Brett McDermott has recently commenced as the statewide specialty clinical director for CAMHS to lead the reforms. Planning for new community facilities is well advanced with development applications now approved by the Hobart City Council for the St Johns Park site and for the redevelopment of the Peacock Centre. Building works for the redevelopment of the Peacock Centre have commenced and estimated completion is in March next year.

A survey of the role of the Mental Health Services Helpline and related crisis assessment and triage function has been completed with over 500 responses received. This will inform the reform's program. There are many aspects to mental health reform in Tasmania. We are investing in additional beds and we are committed to that investment rolling forward. We are committed to the investment for the Peacock Centre and St Johns Park.

We are also committed to additional human resources for mental health. The complexity is well-recognised in many people's lives as a result of the pandemic. The demand for services in our mental health services was already there before the pandemic. As Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing I am acutely aware of the need for continued investment when it comes to the pandemic and the impacts of COVID-19 on our community. There can be no greater example of a government that is committed to not only beds, not only infrastructure but also people on the ground when it comes to mental health service delivery.

It was this side of the House that appointed Tasmania's first Mental Health and Wellbeing minister and I am very proud to have that role.

### **Sport and Recreation Grants Program**

#### **Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for SPORT and RECREATION, Ms HOWLETT**

[10.49 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Government is delivering our plan to secure Tasmania's future by working to ensure the sustainability of sporting clubs around Tasmania?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his interest in this very important matter. Our Government is committed to helping more Tasmanians become active, no matter where they live, what their age or their circumstances. We believe every Tasmanian deserves to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. We will do everything we can to encourage and support them to achieve this. We are working hard to ensure the sustainability and future of sporting clubs around Tasmania.

I am pleased to announce that 94 organisations around the state will share in \$870 000 under tranche 4 of our Government's COVID-19 Sport and Recreation Grants Program. Tranche 4 of the program will provide sporting clubs with grants of between \$3000 and \$25 000 to assist them with the purchase of equipment that directly benefits the organisation. Equipment considered eligible under the program must assist the organisation to deliver sport or recreation activities such as playing equipment and uniforms. It can also be used to replace or upgrade existing equipment such as timing devices and scoreboards. Importantly, equipment that improves safety for participants or increased access to participation opportunities was considered a high priority.

This important program recognises the vital role the state's sport and recreation sector is playing in the ongoing recovery from COVID-19. Some of the sporting clubs set to benefit from tranche 4 include: Riverside Olympic Football Club, \$12 000 for portable soccer goals and equipment; Brighton Football Club, \$20 000 for fitness equipment; Kingborough Gymnastics Committee, \$25 000 to replace safety matting; Hobart Wheelers Dirt Devils, \$21 000 for a new timing system for cycling race events; Orford Golf Club, \$17 000 for a greens mower; and Deloraine Bowls Club, \$15 000 for a greens mower.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government acknowledges the impact of COVID-19 and the effects it has had on sporting clubs due to spectator restrictions, loss of revenue, postponements and cancellations of games and events. That is why we are also pleased to have recently announced that applications for the 2021-22 Sport and Recreation Equipment Grants Programs are now open. That is another important program we are very proud of. The program offers financial assistance toward the purchase of additional or replacement equipment for the benefit of sporting clubs. The equipment must assist the organisation to deliver sport or recreation activities, replace or upgrade existing equipment or minor fixed infrastructure, ensure the safety of activities or improve the club's ability to conduct operations. The program will provide grants between \$2000 and \$25 000.

Sport is the lifeblood of communities across Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government's continued investment will improve more opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in sport and to lead active and healthy lifestyles. Over the next four years, our investment in sport and recreation in Tasmania will exceed \$60 million in an effort to get more Tasmanians involved in physical activity. Our Government is committed to provide safe, fair and inclusive opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in sport and recreation.

### **Homelessness - Availability of Emergency Shelter Accommodation**

**Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr FERGUSON**

[10.53 a.m.]

You have confirmed in response to questions placed on notice last week that there were more than 15 000 requests for emergency shelter by Tasmanians that were refused last year because shelters were full. Many of these shelters work specifically with young people, meaning nearly 800 of those refusals were to young Tasmanians and 40 per cent of those were young women.

When hundreds of young Tasmanians at risk cannot get a bed at a shelter on any given night, where are they going? Can you guarantee they are safe? What steps are you taking right now to increase accommodation for young people facing homelessness?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank Ms Haddad for her question. We had a good discussion about this matter at the Estimates hearing. I take it very seriously. Naturally we stand by the information she has referred to as it is the advice of the department. It is concerning to know that any person would be unable to secure accommodation through shelters that are there to support people in times of crisis and emergency needs, particularly when they are experiencing family violence or when they are unable to be accommodated with children.

That is why the Government is taking significant steps through our action plans 1 and 2 and our future election commitments, which are being delivered so that we can provide better outcomes and more capacity. My department advises me that this turnaway data is actually consistent with previous years as well. It has been an ongoing challenge for our shelters.

Unfortunately, Ms Haddad, and I will say this as gently as I can, you are one of a number of people who have been misrepresenting the data. You have incorrectly asserted that the number of people who have been occasioned with a turnaway have actually been individual requests by individual people.

**Ms Haddad** - No, I did not. I was very clear on that. That is not true.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr FERGUSON** - You have done that. It is an incorrect interpretation of the data. Any turnaway is concerning for me and for the Government.

**Ms Haddad** - I did not say that.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr FERGUSON** - You need to be more faithful in the way you present your concerns to the community.

**Ms White** - You are misleading the House.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The only person who misleads the House is you, Ms White. You have a terrible habit about it. I am correcting the record on behalf of your colleague.

**Ms HADDAD** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister is misrepresenting what I said. I was very careful to say 15 000 requests for emergency shelter. I acknowledged they are not individual people but 15 000 requests. I was very careful to phrase the question that way. It exposes a drastic problem.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms Haddad, you know the Standing Orders as well as anybody. If there is an issue you can make a personal reflection at the end of question time if you wish to

correct the record. At this point in time you have asked the question and the minister has the right to answer it.

**Mr FERGUSON** - I am referring to the public statements that Ms Haddad has been making. It is reasonable that the point be made. Thank you for at least correcting the record in the comment that has just been made by Ms Haddad.

In response to the question about what we are doing, one thing that Mr Jaensch pioneered, which I support, and the Government will continue to do, is people, whether it is their personal circumstances or the lack of capacity at the existing shelters, are able to contact Housing Connect and be given other emergency supported accommodation; for example, the brokerage service that we have been providing under this Liberal Government. We are committed to continuing to do that. It is one of the positives we have been able to deliver so that people are not left without options. This Government does not want to see people without options. We are there to support them.

We are going to continue to build more capacity. It is already the case that we have delivered 69 more units of homeless accommodation. The last of those were delivered as recently as June. That is a real positive. We have seen growth in that sector. We have been embraced by that sector with a lot of gratitude for what the Government's investments have been able to achieve.

I hope Ms Haddad will also welcome that there are a further 95 to come. We need to grow the capacity in that sector. We unfortunately have unmet demand that we want to meet. We will meet that. Those further 95 units of new homeless accommodation will be completed by 30 June - sorry?

**Ms White** - There are 15 000 requests a year.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Thank you, Ms White.

A further 95 units of new homeless accommodation are to be completed by 30 June. I hear the concern; we share the concern. What I will not tolerate is people misinterpreting and misleading the community with this data. The data will continue to be transparently provided. It is an indication of an unmet need but importantly we will continue to deliver in all regions. I hope that will be supported. We all have a shared commitment to addressing homelessness and the causes of it. If we grow the capacity and deliver on our plans, people will see a greater ability to meet that unmet demand.

### **Aquaculture Industry- Policy Consultations**

**Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT**

[10.59 a.m.]

Can you confirm that you did not consult with the aquaculture industry about adopting the Greens' aquaculture policy until late last night? What was their reaction when you told them about your new policy?

## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Of course, on the other side, there are no policies, no plans, no alternative budget. They have a record of misleading. You have a track record through your Leader of misleading. Will we start with that?

We are committed. We are delivering and we will deliver on a 10-year plan for salmon. We are part-way through a five-year plan, we are going to 10 years and it is backing it in with a sustainable plan. We are going to be working through it over the next 12 months or more in the lead-up to 1 January 2023 when we will then implement our 10-year plan. We have big plans and we will back-in the industry and the workers.

I pay tribute, not only to the workers who are involved in the salmon industry but all those workers up the supply chain. We are not talking about a few thousand but many thousands -

**Mr WINTER** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing order 45, relevance. I draw the minister's attention back to the question which was, what was the industry's reaction when you told them last night of your new policy?

**Mr SPEAKER** - That is not a point of order, as you know, and it is not an opportunity to re-ask the question. I will go back to the minister.

**Mr BARNETT** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. You asked a number of questions, including the question with respect to adopting the Greens' policy. The Greens' policy is to close down the industry and that is something we do not support. With regard to the billboards on the mainland, the Premier made it clear that is absolutely undermining the Tasmanian industry and we do not stand for it. It is spreading deliberately misleading information. We want those anti-salmon billboards pulled down and removed.

The industry is a global pioneer. I have made it clear that the Government supports the industry on its continued journey. We have a policy of continued improved -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. It makes it difficult for Hansard and other members of the Chamber to hear the minister when there is a whole lot of chatter going on. Please, stop your interjecting.

**Mr BARNETT** - We have plans for world's best practice -

**Mr Winter** - It already is best practice.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Mr Winter, order.

**Mr BARNETT** - environmental management with regard to fish health, environmental monitoring and management. In recent days, the minister for Environment has announced the independent EPA being separate from the department. That is one of the four key principles.

With regard to biosecurity, this will be applied to sustainability. We have plans and those plans will be implemented. There will be close consultation with the industry over the next 12 months in the lead-up to the 10-year plan which will start on 1 January 2023.

This is the height of hypocrisy from Labor -

**Dr Broad** - Cannot trust the Liberals.

**Mr BARNETT** - You cannot trust Labor when it comes to the productive industries. The question for Labor is, will you support our workplace protection legislation? You have a big chance.

**Dr Broad** - This is the Greens' policy, minister. What did the industry say?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. Member for Braddon, order.

**Mr BARNETT** - You have your chance. The bill is now available for public comment. Please consider forestry, mining, agriculture and the salmon industry. Get on board and support the productive industries.

### **Forestry - Reserving Future Land within TWWHA**

**Mr STREET to MINISTER for PARKS, Mrs PETRUSMA**

[11.03 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the Liberal Government's commitment to reserving future potential production forest land within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Franklin, Mr Street, for his question and for his interest in this important matter.

As part of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, areas of Crown land adjacent to and outside the then Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area boundary, were identified for reservation as a buffer between the TWWHA and areas of active public and private land use. The Australian Government subsequently determined that the TWWHA boundary would be expanded which resulted in the buffer areas being incorporated into the TWWHA, including some future potential production forest and permanent timber production zone land.

The status and potential use of both the FPPF land and the PTPZ land within the TWWHA were also identified as being at odds with the purpose of TWWHA and its outstanding universal values. Accordingly, the Tasmanian Liberal Government committed to give this land reserve status under the Nature Conservation Act. This process has involved significant public consultation, natural values assessments and a substantial body of work by the department.



The Government has now considered the consultation feedback as well as the natural values assessment of each parcel of land. It is my pleasure today to announce the Tasmanian Liberal Government's intention to expand the beautiful Mole Creek Karst National Park.

The expansion of the Mole Creek Karst National Park will occur through the reservation of an additional 2850 hectares of land currently classified as FPPF land. The area includes land known as Solomons Dome which contains the catchment of the internationally significant Kubla Khan Cave. In addition, it also includes land that sits to the south of Solomons Dome which is currently sandwiched between three parcels of land within the existing national park. The inclusion of the FPPF land will consolidate the four presently isolated blocks as a large contiguous area of national park and will also bring in key elements of the karst region.

This includes features and scenery not presently or fully represented within the current national park, such as critical catchment areas for cave-based groundwater dependent ecosystems, numerous caves and styles of surface karst terrain, premier examples of cave gypsum formations in an underground river with exceptional formations of stalactites and stalagmites and the deepest cave in northern Tasmania.

It will also resolve long-standing inconsistencies in the land tenure status above major caves where some are national park and others of equal significance are not. It will enhance security for specialised cave adopted fauna and surface-dwelling fauna, increase the reservation class of land containing two threatened native vegetation communities and improve land management consistency as well as support tourism in the region.

This is an exciting opportunity to enhance Mole Creek National Park and will deliver better protection of the area's unique limestone cave systems and a land area containing outstanding natural geological values. In addition, I am also pleased to announce that the Tasmanian Liberal Government is proposing that a further 22 550 hectares of FPPF land in TWWHA will be formally reserved as either conservation area or regional reserve in accordance with the assessment of their natural values.

As many of these areas display evidence of past land use practices -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, order in the Chamber. Order. Minister, please continue.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. As many of these areas display evidence of past land use practices, reserving the remaining areas of FPPF land as either conservation area or regional reserve is consistent with the requirements of the Nature Conservation Act 2002 and the management objectives for the TWWHA and will ensure that these areas are appropriately protected.

Importantly, this proposal does not preclude the involvement of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in land management, nor does it create additional barriers to land return in the future. The proposal will now go through the required statutory processes including the approval of both Houses of Parliament. Once reserved, the land will be managed in accordance with TWWHA management plan.

Lastly, I am pleased to advise that the public submissions received as part of the consultation period, together with the fact sheet, Q and A, and the consultant's report will be published today on the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment website. This side of the House is getting on with the job while those opposite are busy covering up their woeful Estimates' performance with sweeping statements.

Yesterday, Ms White came into this House and said twice that I was asked - and I quote directly from Ms White, which is on *Hansard* - if I could confirm current annual funding of nearly \$15 million a year would appear in the following three years. She said that twice yesterday, that apparently, I was asked that question in Estimates. A simple search of *Hansard*, if she had bothered, would have shown that that question was not asked of me at all, anywhere, upstairs, downstairs -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - All Ms White is doing is saying big, fat white lies.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. That is enough, order. That is the conclusion of question time.

## **TABLED PAPERS**

### **Estimates Committee A - Additional Information**

**Mr Street** presented additional information provided to Estimates Committee A by the Minister for State Growth, Minister for Environment, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Local Government and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Heritage.

### **Estimates Committee B - Additional Information**

**Mr Ellis** presented additional information provided to Estimates Committee B by the Minister for Parks, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, and the Minister for Children and Youth.

### **Public Works Committee - Reports**

**Mr Ellis** presented reports of the Public Works Committee on the following references: Midland Highway 10 Year Action Plan, final stage; Northern Roads Package and Lyell Highway, Queenstown and Strahan safety upgrade project, together with the evidence received and the transcripts of evidence.

**Reports received and printed.**

## **TABLED PAPER**

### **'World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency'**

[11.13 a.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table a scientific report. I have circulated the report to other members, other parties. It is in response to a conversation in Estimates with the Premier. The report is titled 'World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency' from *BioScience*, January 2020, volume 70, number 1.

It outlines the reviews of 11 258 scientists from the Alliance of World Scientists who are speaking of their moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat and to tell it like it is. On the basis of this obligation and the graphical indicators presented in the paper, they declare, with more than 11 000 scientific signatories from around the world, clearly and unequivocally that Earth is facing a climate emergency.

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, the Government will not be opposing this but this is a public document. Tabling of documents in this manner serves a formal purpose and, in the interests of procedure, we will not oppose it.

The member has done the correct thing to share a copy with the Government and the Opposition. This is not what the parliament would expect because this attaches privilege to a document that is already public which, therefore, does not have privilege.

In future I would prefer from the Greens, Opposition or the Independents, if there is a particular social, public or political reason why you want a document to be brought to the attention of the House, that is what this is for. It is usually, if not always, for documents that are not already public. I make that point not to be churlish but I ask members to be conscious of that in future.

**Leave granted.**

## **SITTING DATES**

[11.16 a.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 12 October next at 10 a.m.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **SPEAKER'S RULING**

### **Matter of Public Importance not Proceeded with Pursuant to Standing Order 70**

**Mr SPEAKER** - As members are aware, the matter of public importance which has been circulated for today was proposed to be moved by the member for Clark, Ms O'Connor. As Ms O'Connor has been directed to withdraw from the House until noon, and as I have not received written authority from Ms O'Connor pursuant to standing order 70 for other members

to take charge of the motion in her absence, the House will proceed to the next item of business which is government business and orders for the day.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Speaker, a point of clarification. Is it not possible for me to take that? I was expecting to take that on behalf of the Greens.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is only possible under standing order 70 if you have a written note from Ms O'Connor.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I have a written note from Ms O'Connor because she has been constantly talking to me about it.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Dr Woodruff, do you have written authority from Ms O'Connor in front of you now to give to the Clerks? The answer is no, so we will move on.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I did not answer, Mr Speaker. It is here on my phone, right here. It says that Ms O'Connor authorises me to move the MPI.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, can you resume your seat, please? As the Clerks have not received written authority at this moment in time, I have to move on. I am a mere servant of the standing orders. That is what the standing orders say.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Speaker, I have a written authorisation from Ms O'Connor. You said before if I had one then that was good enough. I have one here in my hand. There is clearly no sensible reason not to go ahead with this MPI.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I have not received one. I do not have it in front of me. I have to move on. I cannot hold up the House.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Why were we not informed of this?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, the ruling is that we move on. Please sit down.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I have permission. I have authority to do it. I know it is uncomfortable to talk about success for the conservation movement, because that is what the MPI was about -

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, I have made a ruling. Please sit down. We are moving on. It is orders of the day.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Speaker, this is an outrageous act that is happening here. You are trying to shut down a conversation about the successful -

**Mr SPEAKER** - No. It is a standing order. If you are dissenting on the -

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You said, if I had authorisation. I have authorisation.

**Mr SPEAKER** - No. I do not have the authorisation. The standing orders state that it has to be in writing. We are moving on. Please sit down. It is orders of the day.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It is in writing to me.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Please sit down. It is orders of the day.

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2021 (No. 36)**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2021 (No. 37)**

**Reports of Estimates Committees**

**In Committee**

**Continued from 15 September 2021 (page 117).**

**DIVISIONS 2, 5, 6, 7 AND 11 -**

(Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts)

[11.19 a.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** - Mr Chair, I am pleased to be able to speak about the Estimates process last week. On Wednesday 8 September, in Committee B, which was the Estimates output for tender for nearly all the portfolios held by the Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections and Workplace Relations. I will do my best to reflect on each of those portfolio outputs and the things that we raised as I go through my contribution today.

I began my line of questioning around the distribution of funding that was listed in the Budget: \$2.2 million a year for four years to the community legal assistance sector. It was a great relief to the sector to hear the distribution of that funding at the Estimates table. They were waiting with bated breath to know how that money was going to be distributed. They knew that the \$2.2 million was there and allocated in the Budget, but until that point they did not know how that money would be distributed across the many community legal services and others who provide support to people navigating our justice system.

The Minister confirmed that breakdown. Most of it is going to Tasmanian Legal Aid and the Law Society, each of which are receiving around about \$500 000. There is an increase in funding to the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions. The Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service is receiving an extra \$150 000 in addition to the \$50 000 emergency funding that I called for and the Government delivered to cope specifically with the added demand that they are seeing from Tasmania's Afghan population and residents who are dealing with a really stressful situation in their home country. It is heartbreaking. I was happy to advocate for that extra funding and I am glad that it was received.

The Tenants' Union are receiving \$75 000. I was very relieved to see that Community Legal Centres (CLC) Tasmania will receive an ongoing commitment of \$50 000 each year for their policy work. I want to go into that with a little more detail. Previously that \$50 000 was received by the CLCs as a network for important policy work that they do in terms of providing submissions on government bills and raising issues that they see in their work that requires legislative or policy change but it was funded out of the Solicitors Guarantee Fund (SGF), which is a bit of a volatile fund. It does not always have the requisite amount of money in it to fund the very valuable things that can be funded out of the SGF. I have previously argued in this place that the Solicitors Guarantee Fund is a very important source of funding, but should not be relied upon for things that really should be receiving recurrent permanent funding, which

I believe now, with this \$2.2 million distribution, there is a commitment for ongoing funding for that policy function amongst the CLCs. When that was not received in the previous financial year through the Solicitors Guarantee Fund I was really worried about that policy function. I am glad to know that that has now been permanently funded.

Money as well has been distributed to each of the regional CLCs, Hobart, north west and Launceston, as well as \$26 000 a year for Prisoners' Legal Service. They do an incredibly important job in representing people who are already incarcerated or facing incarceration who require legal assistance. They also do a lot of work in advocating for change and advocating for policy changes as well as systemic changes that they see as necessary across the prison system.

An extra \$50 000 was announced for the Women's Legal Service Tasmania. I will delve into that a little further. This is from that \$2.2 million. But as we talked about at Estimates last week and also in the Chamber this week, I am concerned about the extra \$1.5 million that has been provided by the federal government budget. In their women's budget statement, the Commonwealth budget stated:

The Government is providing \$129 million over four years from 2021-22 for increased legal assistance funding to help women access justice. This funding will be directed to women's legal centres, to enable these providers to respond to increasing demand for domestic violence assistance.

This is something that the Attorney-General and I probably disagree on. My reading of that is pretty clear. I feel the federal government's intention was that money would go directly to services that provide a service exclusively to women clients. Unfortunately, it was confirmed both in Estimates by officials from the minister's department and also in answers to questions in here this week that the money will unlikely be distributed directly to Tasmanian Women's Legal Service but rather will be distributed across the sector amongst other organisations.

That is not to say that those other organisations do not also require added funding and they do represent women clients. The problem has also been raised by the federal member for Bass, Bridget Archer. She feels that the policy's clear intention was centred around ensuring funding was delivered to specialised women's legal services that were trauma informed.

I have great respect and hold in high regard all of the community legal services that operate across Tasmania but I also recognise the internationally evidenced-based need for specialist women's legal services, especially when it comes to dealing with family violence.

That service has commented on that funding. They have done so by first explaining that they are grateful for the various parts of their budget derived from both state and federal governments but they also note that the amount of funding provided to them through the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) has not varied since 2015 which, in this financial year, has resulted in them having to lose a solicitor's position in their Hobart office. It has meant that they have no capacity to take on any new case work for clients who otherwise have nowhere else to turn. From April to June 2021, the service had to turn away more than 150 women seeking legal assistance.

As part of the budget submission to the Commonwealth to increase NLAP funding for women's legal services across the country, that announcement of the \$1.5 million was to be

made available to Women's Legal Services, Tasmania. That is something I want to continue to raise in here as a concern of mine.

I then went to a line of questioning in the Justice Output, section 17 of the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act. The federal government has made two previous attempts at religious discrimination laws, which amongst other things, would have overridden section 17 of the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act. I believe that our Tasmanian anti-discrimination laws are the best in the country. We have had them in place since 1998. As a direct result of having those anti-discrimination laws in place, Tasmania has become a fairer and kinder place in a lot of ways. That is not to say that people do not still experience very unfair discrimination in this state. Unfortunately that still occurs but there is a clear and tangible source of action for people who experience discrimination, including religious belief.

Our legislation could serve as a model for the nation. I have written to my federal Labor counterparts in the entire federal Labor caucus, to explain to them how our laws protect religious freedom and religious expression, while also protecting people from discrimination that is based on a religious conviction. Our laws protect freedom of speech and they protect people also from being discriminated against based on their religion. They protect people of faith and they also protect people of minority groups, such as people with disabilities, women, people of colour and the LGBTQ community from discrimination on a range of grounds, including discrimination that is justified - if you can use that word - for a faith-based reason.

I would be very disappointed if we see in the new draft of that bill, which the federal Attorney-General, Marise Payne, has announced she intends to table this year, a federal override back in there.

**Ms Archer** - Marise Payne? Don't you mean Michaelia Cash?

**Ms HADDAD** - Oh, did I say Marise Payne? Sorry. They both start with 'M' and I mixed up the two names. Michaelia Cash; apologies to both.

The federal Attorney-General has announced that she will table a bill this year. It is my hope that we will not see an override in that bill. I asked the Attorney-General questions about that in Estimates last year. I got the impression from the minister that she also does not want to see an override in that federal bill and I hope that is true. That is what I was hoping to clarify today because -

**Ms Archer** - I said that in budget Estimates, refer to *Hansard*.

**Ms HADDAD** - You did. That is what I said: I believe that is what I heard. I wanted to make sure that was the correct understanding on my part.

**Ms Archer** - How many times do I have to say it?

**Ms HADDAD** - No, I am agreeing with you here, minister, and I have re-read the *Hansard* and I wanted to make sure I was right. You said you had written to the minister -

**Ms Archer** - I have a lot to say in my 20-minute contribution, too. I cannot respond to things I have already said at budget Estimates.

**Ms HADDAD** - Okay, I was trying to be clear about it -

**Ms Archer** - Quote from *Hansard*.

**A member** - We only just got the answers back.

**Ms HADDAD** - No, we have not got the answers back. I have not.

**Ms Archer** - I have answered every question of the House and the Legislative Council.

**Ms HADDAD** - We have not received the lower House questions.

**Ms Archer** - Yes, you have, because your incorrect release is done and you obtained it from that.

**Ms HADDAD** - That was from the upper House. That was in answer to a question from the upper House.

Chair, can I be clear that the lower House questions on notice have not been received from this output. I checked that with the Clerks yesterday because I thought maybe I had missed an email. We have received the answers to questions put on notice in the other place but questions put on notice in Committee B of the House of the Assembly have not yet been received.

It sounds like we are in furious agreement. Both the Attorney-General and I do not want to see an override of section 17.

**Ms Archer** - I have no plans to change section 17.

**Ms HADDAD** - I know that there will be a lot of people around Tasmania who are relieved to have that confirmation that that is not the expectation of the Tasmanian Government. If we see an override of section 17 in the new tabled bill in the federal parliament this year, we will, in unison, fight incredibly hard against that attempted federal override.

The minister said she does not intend to amend at a state-based level, which is good in and of itself, but we all know in this place that if a Commonwealth law is passed that contravenes a state-based law, it takes precedence.

**Ms Archer** - I also said at budget Estimates I had written to the federal government with our view.

**Ms HADDAD** - We are in furious agreement then that no-one in this place wants to see an override of section 17 of the Anti-Discrimination Act. That is a very good thing.

We then moved to a very short session with three statutory officers, the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The committee had about half an hour to speak to those three statutory officers. My main questions about RTI backlogs, which is something I raised at previous estimates and in this place, was taken on notice. I am looking forward to seeing the responses to those questions when we receive them.



The other question I raised that was also taken on notice was under the Public Interest Disclosures Act. The Ombudsman is able to receive disclosures from members of the public when they suspect a public officer is likely to or has engaged in improper conduct. I took the opportunity to ask the Ombudsman and he took the question on notice; how many of those disclosures have been made under the Public Interest Disclosures Act? Specifically, how many have been made concerning issues at Ashley Youth Detention Centre? I look forward to receiving answers to those questions about the RTI backlog as well as the Public Interest Disclosures Act when we receive those.

I will move to the Corrections portfolio which has also been an important topic of discussion in today's question time. I have spoken about this multiple times both in this place and publicly. We see a worrying trend of continuing degrading situations at Risdon Prison both for inmates and for staff. The custodial inspector had not that long before Estimates released his most recent annual report where he reiterated things that we have seen now in multiple reports from him.

He did a review of lockdowns last year which demonstrated what anyone working in the system knows; that lockdowns happen far too frequently. They are dangerous for both inmates and staff. The majority of them are caused by shortages of staff, the prison having to open with not enough staff to open each unit, so rolling lockdowns happen as a result. Basic human rights are being contravened including routinely failing to meet minimum one-hour out-of-cell time and the minister did go to that in Estimates but did not acknowledge that we have the lowest out-of-hour cell time in the country.

The minister speaks a lot about her commitment to rehabilitation and reintegration but the things that we read in those reports and the things that we hear directly from both inmates and from people working in the corrections system, paint a very different picture. In his most recent annual report, the custodial inspector reiterated much of the lockdowns review, and he also did surveys of prisoners and staff. He did a very extensive report into rehabilitation and reintegration which looks specifically at issues faced by prisoners, like access to programs, access to drug and alcohol treatment, access to mental health services, access to education and training programs and access to supports leading up to the release of a finishing of a sentence and release, either on parole or at the end of a sentence.

We are hearing increasing reports from people serving time but also from staff working in the prison and through the custodial inspector that we are deficient in so many of those areas. People are being exited from Risdon into homelessness, they are being exited into unemployment and often with busted up family relationships which a period of incarceration would impose on any one of us. We know that our recidivism rate is drastically high in this state. We know that it is just below 60 per cent of people who have served time in prison and are released and are back within two years. That figure might have dropped a little bit in the most recent -

**Ms Archer** - I think it is just over 50. It is still bad. I freely admit that. That is why we are working on it.

**Ms HADDAD** - Yes, we can agree on that. We can both agree that it has dropped a little but it is still too high. I worry for those people because I know that it means increased crime rates and none of us want to see that. We all want to live in safer communities, we all want to live in communities that see fewer break-ins, fewer assaults and less crime. We need to be

equipping people with every chance that they can have to rehabilitate and get the services that they need.

Most worryingly, returning now to the most recent annual report from the custodial inspector, he said that:

For adult custodial services there have been prolonged and persistent inadequacies in the system that have not been addressed despite continued affirmation by the Department of Justice that recommendations are being acted on.

He said that he identified in his previous annual report that there were issues with accuracy of reporting progress against recommendations which resulted in his staff conducting an audit. That was reported to the department but he found that many of the recommendations had not been progressed despite advice to the contrary. He said that that situation had continued in the current reporting period.

They are not my words. They are the words of the custodial inspector who has been raising issues with increasing frustration in each of his reports into the prison system. In particular, he said that section 42, Leave, which is leave to attend jobs and employment is almost - largely worthless in terms of rehabilitative re-integrative value. He also said that the Tamar unit has reverted to an inhumane environment and that those criticisms go back to the Palmer Review and the 2010 Ombudsman report.

#### **Time expired.**

[11.40 a.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** - Mr Chair, I rise to speak on the Estimates Committee. I will start by talking about the northern prison. We are coming up to the second-year 'commiseration' of the announcement to the people of Westbury. I have a dinner to attend on Friday week. It is a get-together at the Westbury RSL to mark the two-year commiseration from when that community was pushed straight into a situation without any community consultation. They have been dealing with it for two years. There still has not been a feasibility study done as to whether it made any sense in the first place.

There was absolutely no community consultation on the first site and they then moved it to another site without any community consultation. What I think really happened there, but I would be happily proven wrong, was that it was then 'parked' in the middle of a nature conservation area. I know from RTI documents that Tim Baker suggested the site. I think they even named it the 'Baker Site'. I suppose that was to try to minimise the political damage the mishandling of the first site had provided. It was an absolute dog's breakfast; it was such a mess. We have never seen a feasibility study for the first or the second one and we are coming up to its two-year anniversary.

Earlier this week, in the House, I asked that the minister makes sure that if they are going to assess Ashley as an option that they conduct some proper community consultation and have a community meeting to get a feel for what the community is feeling. It is my understanding that some support is coming from people in Deloraine towards it but there are also some people who would not be happy. At least speak to the people; do not just throw it on them. The amount of damage that caused in the Westbury community was unnecessary; it really divided

the community. You are treating people with absolute contempt. That is never going to work very well.

Well done to the people of Westbury Region Against the Prison (WRAP); and well done to the people of CROPS who have had to put up with this absolute comedy of errors for the last two years. I really hope that you guys can get it right this time.

Moving on to other aspects that we covered, we asked a question regarding WorkSafe and the investigation into the Bob Brown Foundation. As my colleague, Ms Haddad, has just stated, we have not received answers yet to the questions that we asked, which is disappointing as it is the last day of sitting. It is well and truly over a week since we asked those questions. We asked whether the allegation was being investigated and we received advice from WorkSafe during the Estimates committee that, yes, this particular allegation is being investigated. The allegation was on 2 February 2020:

WorkSafe Tasmania inspectors were onsite investigating an incident that occurred the previous day and witnessed the incident firsthand. Inspectors were investigating an incident that occurred the previous day when a volunteer worker from the Bob Brown Foundation jumped onto the boom arm of a harvest machine that was operational.

The Bob Brown Foundation worker climbed further up onto the boom arm and attached to the machine with a locking device inside a home-made metal pipe around parts of a hydraulic hose that controls the lifting and working mechanisms of the heavy machinery. The height of the boom arm with a volunteer worker locked on is about two metres. The machine is not designed for climbing on or sitting on and the area where the volunteer was standing to lock on was covered in grease. This exposed a risk of slippage and a fall from a height as described as a dangerous incident in section 37 of the Work Health and Safety Act.

It is important that allegation is on the record.

I have always supported protests, but you have to protest in a safe way. That is clearly not safe. It is not safe for the people onsite, for the operators of that machinery. My first protest was when I was very young and on the shoulders of my father. I do support protests but this clearly was not a safe protest.

**Ms ARCHER** - Point of order, Mr Chair. Could I just get some direction? It appears the member is straying. I want to clarify that the protest legislation is not with the Department of Justice. I just draw that to your attention.

**Mr CHAIR** - I understand what you are saying, but you can continue, Ms Butler.

**Ms Archer** - She did not raise it at my output. I think we need to be relevant.

**Ms BUTLER** - Moving on, as I only have three minutes left, minister, as I am sure you are aware.

This morning I tabled a notice of motion. We would like to form an inquiry into consumer protection and building protections for Tasmania. Consumer Building and Occupational Services do have certain powers but probably not enough. We believe that it is time for us, as a parliament, to investigate, to form a committee and look into what is working and -

**Mr CHAIR** - Ms Butler, just to clarify, you do have to stick to the dot points that are in the report.

**Ms BUTLER** - It is part of it; I asked these questions last week. We did ask about disputes. We have put disputes into our notice of motion. We think that there is nothing to be scared of in relation to looking into how we can future proof our -

**Ms Archer** - I am doing it. Did you not see my media note? I am already doing it.

**Ms BUTLER** - Wonderful. When did you put that out, minister? Well done. Congratulations, that is good. That is positive news. An inquiry into what is working and what is not working is really positive. I am pleased that you have agreed to a parliamentary inquiry. I look forward to that debate when we come back in October.

**Ms ARCHER** - I have not. Point of order, Chair. I will not be verballed in this place. Ms Butler is trying to be tricky. I do not want to waste any more time. I have not agreed to a parliamentary inquiry. My media release publicly stated that I am already investigating this, therefore an inquiry is not necessary.

**Mr CHAIR** - Please do not verbal the minister, Ms Butler.

**Ms BUTLER** - Sorry, minister, I apologise. I did get quite excited because I thought you had agreed, but no, you obviously have not agreed.

I might quickly read out one of the cases that has been put forward by the ABC this morning. It is important that we are looking at how we can futureproof and better improve our building construction sector. We have some of the best quality builders in Tasmania and we need to make sure their reputations are protected. We also need to make sure that our consumers are protected. At the moment, if you look at the ABC Facebook site, where this article is posted, there are hundreds and hundreds of cases.

I am aware of quite a few cases that I have spoken to personally, but I am overwhelmed by the number of cases that have been coming in this morning, minister. I would appreciate you reconsidering, maybe not being so belligerent, and having a look at what the public is saying. There are so many cases out there. This particular case states:

Adriane and Gillian Creamer began a \$400 000 renovation and extension of their Cygnet home, south of Hobart, in November 2019. Nearly two years on it's still not finished and they have spent an extra \$150 000 fixing defects and \$50 000 on legal fees.

The couple, who are approaching retirement, described it as the most traumatic experience of their life.

Issues with their build surfaced four months in when Mr Creamer said he realised his cladding had been installed incorrectly. Other tradesmen, the tiler and the kitchen joiner, started raising concerns with the couple about new walls not being completely vertical and the floor not being level.

Minister is it important that you do take this seriously. There is a huge need in the community. Builders need to be protected and so do consumers.

**Time expired.**

[11.50 a.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Chair, I will make some comments in response to questions asked of Ms Archer in her role as Minister for Corrections, Minister for Justice and Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Protection.

It is surprising and welcome news that the Government is looking at the location of the proposed northern prison site. There is an obvious and beautiful solution that can protect the natural values of the Westbury Brushy Rivulet Forest Reserve, which have already been described in this place numerous times.

I put on record the extraordinary work of Sarah Lloyd and her contributions to the natural sciences, in particular her contributions to documenting the many threatened flora and fauna in the Brushy Rivulet Forest Reserve. She is among a group of naturalists, ecologists, botanists and others who have done important work making additions to Tasmania's Natural Values Atlas, which has been a record of the extraordinary values that have been so poorly kept by the Department of Environment. Thanks to the work of these citizen scientists, this work is being added to our natural values list.

The Brushy Rivulet Forest Reserve was to be protected in perpetuity after being gifted by the Commonwealth Government to the Tasmanian Government. We heard from Ms Archer in Estimates that the Government is trying to wheedle out of its responsibilities under the agreement that was struck in the late 1990s to protect this in perpetuity and instead is trying to negotiate on the sidelines with the Commonwealth Department of Environment to have an offset for these natural values.

In the current situation the world finds itself in, both a global biodiversity crisis and a global climate crisis, there is no longer any plausible scientific basis for considering offsets to habitat that will take tens or hundreds of years to grow. Removing those habitats provides a direct threat to already highly threatened and endangered species. The idea an offset has been sought by the state Government is concerning.

An amazing opportunity has opened up because of the extraordinary work of the Greens, of people working passionately to protect children and young people in Tasmania and the many staff and ex-employees, particularly the children who have been through the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, and brutalised, abused and terribly neglected. Thanks to the bravery of Alysha and other people who have spoken out recently, the decision has finally been made by the Liberals to close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

It gives us, in three years' time, a place which is a cleared site of 32 hectares next to the Bass Highway. It has services already in place: electricity, water, roads, parking and it has

facilities. It has 51 beds. It is a place that would be a wasted opportunity for anything other than an adult therapeutic centre. The Liberals must take up this opportunity. The people of Westbury hate the idea of having a prison on their doorstep. The people of Deloraine need to have that conversation but it is very clear from the conversations that have been reported to date that there is a very wide receptivity among the community to look at extending a therapeutic detention facility and to retain the staff who are employed there. The decision must be made immediately.

The current Brushy Rivulet site is a high-fire danger site. It is the most expensive site you could imagine on which to build a prison. I am confident that of the \$80 million or so the Government has put in the forward Estimates for this project a vast amount will be chewed up trying to deal with the inappropriate site: the terrain, the rocks and the undulating ground. There will be an enormous amount of money spent just on razing the site to put a prison on it.

We look forward to the announcement that the Government will be moving the proposed site to the Ashley Youth Detention site as soon as possible.

I want to thank the minister for commitments she has made in Estimates, following up on conversations that I had last year about problems with Victims of Crime compensation. People making applications have had difficulties with the processes. It is important that we continue to improve this situation. People are very vulnerable when they are making these applications and need to be dealt with in a very careful, thoughtful, professional and intensely personal way. The money has to also be sorted out. Minister, I hope you will take actions shortly. I understand from staff that there will be advice coming to you in the next couple of months on this matter. I look forward to hearing that on behalf of the people who I have represented on this.

Wage theft is a huge problem in Australia. I raised the issue of the Victorian Government's Wage Theft Act 2020 and its support for action on this by the Fair Work Ombudsman. Wage theft is occurring at increasingly greater rates. It is a serious crime and it must be considered a crime. It is not enough to apply the penalties that exist at the moment. Penalties, even high monetary penalties, are clearly not having the effect that they need to when people keep committing wage theft, particularly large corporations. We need to look at criminal penalties. Victoria is doing this so there is no reason why Tasmania cannot be doing it too. Finally, I want to finish my conversation about the Tasmanian Residential Rental Properties organisation. It is disgraceful that \$100 000 has been committed to that organisation and it is really galling for ratepayers in Tasmania.

### **Time expired**

[12.00 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** - Mr Chair, in the short time available - I think I get 20 minutes allocated - I will do my best. I want to make some comments about my portfolios of Attorney-General, Justice, Corrections, Workplace Safety, Consumer Affairs and the Arts, and also clarify a few things for members.

I also clarify at the outset that I did say by interjection that I had provided my answers to questions on notice earlier in the week. I signed them off and sent them in. They went to the committee Chair. I am told they were distributed amongst the committee members, of which Ms Haddad is one, so your email system may be playing up.

**Ms Haddad** - No, just now.

**Ms ARCHER** - I am not doubting that. I am saying that is what I have been advised. I wanted to state on the record that I had signed them and I had provided them on Monday. If there has been an administrative error, then my apologies. However, I wanted to say that I did my part in this in providing answers to questions on notice.

I am pleased to rise today to speak on all my portfolios and the responses I gave during this year's Estimates process. I have made some comments over the last few days about members having the opportunity to press matters further. I was quite surprised that some members did not, yet they come in here in question time and complain that they did not receive fulsome answers. It is disappointing that they tend to take that approach.

I acknowledge the contributions of members in this important scrutiny process. I believe I was able to respond on most matters to questions asked of me, apart from those that were put on notice, and I was very happy to do so.

I am increasingly concerned about the nature of some questions, simply posturing for political reasons so that pre-prepared and incorrect tiles can be put on Facebook. In reference to a specific question that was asked by the Independent member this week, it seems that things go up on Facebook that have been pre-prepared, irrespective of the fact that I provide answers to those questions. It is very disappointing. I hope that pattern of behaviour does not continue with that member because I do not think it is fair. If the minister fronts up, answers a question, either in the Estimates process or in question time, and is careful to answer those questions specifically, then I object to the misrepresentation going on Facebook.

Before addressing some of the matters in more detail I take the opportunity to thank all those people who supported this year's Estimates process. An enormous amount of work goes into the preparation for Budget Estimates which I know members appreciate. I thank the Chairs and the secretaries of the committees and the committee members as well as the Hansard staff and other parliamentary attendants. I know that a lot of time goes into the preparation for Estimates.

I also especially thank my Department of Justice, Department of State Growth for my Arts portfolio, and our statutory authorities - I have a lot within my portfolio - independent statutory officers, and their teams for the enormous amount of work and preparation that goes into Estimates week, as well as their assistance on the day in preparing advice and answering questions through me at the table on independent or operational matters.

As Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I was very pleased to inform the committee about a number of key initiatives that I am delivering as part of our Government's commitment to providing an efficient and effective criminal and civil justice system for all Tasmanians. I was able to update the committee that we are significantly investing in the state's justice system with more than \$35 million dedicated over the next four years as outlined in this year's state Budget.

In response to specific questions regarding Tasmania's vital legal assistance sector, I was pleased to announce that we are fulfilling our commitments to provide record funding to the sector and I outlined the allocation of this additional funding to each of the service providers. This funding boost will deliver our election commitment of an additional \$2.2 million each

year over the forward Estimates which is on top of the significant existing funding allocations already provided, giving the sector the certainty that they need to provide services and recruit and retain staff. I do not believe that this sort of assistance has been seen before and I am very proud to deliver this great outcome, especially for vulnerable Tasmanians who need free or low-cost legal services.

Importantly, this funding is also on top of the Commonwealth Government's funding under the National Legal Assistance Partnership, or NLAP. I am also delighted to announce that I have signed the new bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Tasmania this week. I understand work is underway to see payments flow to the sector shortly.

I have written specifically to the Women's Legal Service Tasmania to clarify that all their funding requests have been fully funded. I can confirm that I did write to them that they will receive the full amount in their most recent funding request, not just a previous request but the most recent as well. Their allocation meets our obligations under the NLAP and allows the Women's Legal Service to address present, urgent demand for their services as the service outlined in their most recent funding request.

I can confirm that their additional funding comprises \$50 000 in additional state funding each year over four years as part of our \$2.2 million commitment to the sector; \$1.28 million over four years for enhancing mental health supports through domestic violence units; \$1.32 million over four years for increasing legal assistance for vulnerable women, including those experiencing or at risk of family violence; \$680 000 over four years to provide frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment; and \$500 000 over four years for the Health Justice partnership, Just Healthy Families in Tasmania.

The NLAP also makes available additional funding, to which Ms Haddad referred, to the sector over four years. The amended bilateral schedule provides additional money to support people with mental health conditions to access the justice system and also to provide frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment.

Like other providers, the Women's Legal Service has been encouraged to submit a further expression of interest for this additional funding and this would be on top of the funding we have already committed to them, which I just outlined. In addition, we encourage the Women's Legal Service to apply for surplus funds under our \$2.2 million commitment to the sector. My intention is to allocate the surplus to innovative projects that improve Tasmanian's access to justice.

Ms Haddad said we have a difference of opinion but I want to state that the Commonwealth's clear statement, and I quote that, 'Under this bilateral schedule ...', it goes on to say:

... Tasmania will allocate and administer quarantined Commonwealth funding to Community Legal Services and/or the Legal Aid Commission and/or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service for the delivery of dedicated legal assistance services to women.

The Commonwealth encourages Tasmania to allocate this funding to legal assistance providers specialising in the delivery of dedicated legal assistance



services to women with a focus on women experiencing or at risk of family violence.

Tasmania will allocate some of this funding to a community legal centre in Tasmania that specialises in the delivery of dedicated legal assistance services to women only in each financial year of this bilateral schedule.

I have done the interpretation of the bilateral schedule. I have made it available to others that specialise but also, specifically, to the Women's Legal Service and I am very happy to do so, having clarified that.

I was also able to provide the committee with a report on how our Government is progressing actions to address delays to finalising proceedings in our criminal courts, particularly due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One important action we are taking includes my recent announcement of the appointment of current Magistrate, Tamara Jago SC, as Tasmania's seventh judge of the Supreme Court of Tasmania, who will commence on 1 November this year. Significantly, it will be the first time the Supreme Court has had a judge based permanently in the north-west and who will also sit statewide, providing flexibility to hear cases. I am excited about that announcement because I believe Ms Jago will do an incredible job. She has a reputation for being very efficient.

Burnie has some significant backlog issues due to longer closure periods due to COVID-19, so we can tackle that straight off. I am positive about that backlog figure in the next 12 months, to when we next have Estimates, or less.

In addition, what will have a huge impact is that we have committed further funding to appoint another additional permanent magistrate to hear and finalise more cases in order to significantly address existing demand pressures and reduce the criminal court backlog, bringing the total number of permanent magistrates to 17. This is funding never seen before for our courts.

I was able to confirm, as was the Magistrates Court administrator at the Estimates hearing, that the additional Magistrate Hartnett has already had an impact on backlogs. That was our previous additional magistrate. Had it not been for COVID-19, that situation would be far more improved. I thank the Chief Magistrate for her significant attention in utilising that additional magistrate. I look forward to filling the vacancy we now have and also the vacancy left by recently retired Magistrate Hay. I take the opportunity to thank him for his significant service to the administration of justice and the people of Tasmania.

Recruitment for the additional magistrate role is expected to commence shortly. We are investing \$2.6 million over the next two years to extend the appointment of our three acting judges who play a vital role in addressing backlogs. We continue to strongly fund the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions with an additional \$1.8 million in the Budget, bringing the total office budget to a little over \$13 million for this year. This significant funding will ensure that our hard-working prosecutors are well resourced across a range of areas.

It is important that we provide additional funding to the Director of Public Prosecutions, given we have provided additional funding to the community legal sector by way of the legal assistance money, to which I have referred, because as funding goes up in that sector, then

funding needs to also be commensurate with the DPP with the increased demand. The DPP is happy with that additional funding. Every year when it comes to his budget submission I work to ensure that he is properly and adequately resourced.

Moving to my Corrections portfolio, I was pleased to highlight to the committee a number of measures under the Budget that provides for our Government's continued increased focus on rehabilitation within the state's corrections system and reinforce my strong support for our hardworking staff across the TPS and Community Corrections. I take full responsibility for our corrections system, no more so than we have seen today. I am focused on my Corrections portfolio. There are a number of challenges and I do not shy away from those challenges. I am committed to addressing all of those significant challenges.

As I recently indicated in my Budget reply speech, we are significantly investing towards rehabilitation programs and staff within our prisons over a three-year period, with almost \$2.5 million allocated in this year's Budget.

I was pleased to further advise the committee that in addition to those initiatives, the Department of Justice will be implementing a wellbeing support program due to commence today, 16 September. The wellbeing support program is modelled on the successful MyPulse program developed for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. It will provide TPS staff with a range of services both online and face-to-face, including physical and wellbeing health checks, functional health checks, mental health wellness checks, incident support, case management services and education and training programs. It is a holistic program and I am excited about being able to provide that additional support to our staff. The roll-out is TPS, then Community Corrections and then my entire department staff. We are rolling that out as of today, available to TPS staff.

I was pleased to announce the expansion of electronic monitoring through the Department of Justice's Monitoring and Compliance Unit, with 335 home detention orders and 127 family violence orders with electronic monitoring already made as a sentencing option, since the initiative's commencement in 2019. Electronic monitoring of parolees has also provided the Parole Board with increased confidence about the ability to monitor compliance, ensuring that offenders are complying with the conditions of their parole order, such as curfews and restrictions about where they are allowed to be and increasing community safety.

This is another area of reform of which I am extremely proud, due to the significant impact it can have not only community safety but also on outcomes for those reintegrating and transitioning back into the community.

I will move to other portfolios because I have quite a bit to say. I am having to deal with a few issues that were raised out of Budget Estimates hearings. If I do not mention any it does not mean they are any less important.

I turn to my Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs portfolio. I was pleased to provide the committee with an update on some of the important initiatives being undertaken. This included an update on a current campaign being led by Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) calling on property owners with solar energy systems or solar panels to ensure they are regularly inspected and maintained for efficiency and safety. I am proud of the hard work undertaken by the dedicated CBOS team responsible for electrical safety to ensure that Tasmania has a robust compliance framework for identifying and addressing non-compliance

with solar energy systems, with the notification of all solar installations mandatory in Tasmania and enforced by CBOS.

I also note that members asked a number of questions relating to specific workplace safety matters and actions taken by the independent WorkSafe regulator in response to specific incidents. While all members are aware I am not able to comment on specific matters or provide updates on investigations by the independent regulator, it is important to acknowledge that, as minister for this important portfolio, I am committed to ensuring that Tasmanian workplaces are the safest in the country and that our legislative and regulatory framework is contemporary, and best practice, and adhered to. This includes continuing to support the dedicated COVID-19 response unit within WorkSafe Tasmania to assist Tasmanian businesses with COVID-19 conditions. This dedicated response unit comprises six inspectors spread across the three regions of Tasmania and is helping to ensure that the health and safety of Tasmanian workers and the broader community is protected.

The establishment of this unit followed the Government's additional funding for the recruitment of six new inspectors earlier in the year, which has enhanced WorkSafe Tasmania's capacity to play its important role in the COVID-19 response as well as continue with its broader compliance program to ensure the safety of Tasmanian workers in all industries. I thank WorkSafe Tasmania. It has done an incredible job of taking an educative approach with our Tasmanian businesses and the Tasmanian community and its role in dealing with businesses to ensure that they are compliant with the COVID-19 requirements.

I take this opportunity to thank all businesses during this very challenging time that have, in the main, worked very closely with WorkSafe Tasmania inspectors. WorkSafe Tasmania has not had to issue too many infringement notices.

Last, but by no means least, is my Arts portfolio. I was pleased to provide the committee with an update on our Government's continued focus on reviving and supporting our cultural and creative industries. We are providing sustained support to this diverse and vital sector which enriches the lives of Tasmanians, supports thousands of jobs across the state, and adds millions to our economy.

Specifically, I was delighted to announce that our Government is giving Tasmania's showcase literary awards an exciting refresh. Having listened to feedback received from stakeholders and the community, and in consultation with the Premier, we have determined to make some changes to contemporise and boost the profile of the awards. We are rebranding the Premier's Literary Prize to become the Tasmanian Literary Awards, quadrupling our biennial prize money investment from \$25 000 to \$100 000 and expanding the entry categories to better recognise excellence in this important sector in Tasmania.

These changes will support Tasmania's talented writing community and ensure that our state's unique and vibrant stories are told with the revitalised awards open for entries later in 2021. The broad range of programs offered through both Arts Tasmania and Screen Tasmania is also testament to our Government's commitment to artistic and creative endeavour in all its forms. We have always supported and advocated on behalf of Tasmania's art sector. I am deeply committed to ensuring that our cultural and creative industries have the opportunity to grow and flourish into the future.

Over the past 13 months we have committed over \$12 million in stimulus support and recovery measures across the arts and screen sectors. This year's Budget includes an additional commitment of \$6.83 million to further support and build confidence for the future. The funding includes \$933 000 for COVID-19 Response Arts and Cultural Grants Program; \$200 000 for our Creative Support Small Grants Fund Program while returning the gig economy; \$1.2 million towards Cultural and Creative Industries operational assistance; \$1.15 million for Creative and Cultural Recovery Support; and \$3 million for Tasmanian screen production.

Our Government has laid out a clear plan to secure Tasmania's future and we continue to build on this.

**Time expired.**

[12.20 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** - Mr Chair, I am pleased this morning to speak on this Estimates Committee hearing. I want to speak in particular about the Burnie Court and what we learnt about the Burnie Court in the most recent Budget papers but also during the Estimates process. I again put on the record the lack of consultation with the local community in Burnie about the relocation of the court complex to Mooreville Road. I met with residents from that area late last week and one of them even thought that it was just a joke that the court was going to move there and that it was not really going to happen.

There has been no community consultation. There has been no information to the surrounding community. There has been no master planning released for public consultation. The only words around consultation that we have heard from the minister is that it will be undertaken during the planning process. We know that offers very little opportunity for community input, particularly when it comes to concerns that are outside the local planning scheme. I want to get a commitment from the minister today -

**Ms Archer** - You were not even at the committee.

**Ms DOW** - No, I was not. I read the -

**Ms Archer** - You could have asked questions.

**Ms DOW** - I was in another hearing at the same time, minister.

**Ms Archer** - Get your questions asked.

**Ms DOW** - I was in there last year though and I asked the same questions and there has still been no action from your Government.

**Ms Archer** - No, that is not right. I answered questions at the committee.

**Mr CHAIR** - Order, the interjections need to cease.

**Ms DOW** - It is a pattern of behaviour from you as minister in that you will not consult with local communities. Residents in that local area have not received any information; no letters in their mail boxes, nothing informing them of what the changes were.

At the 2018 election we both committed to redeveloping the Burnie Court on the current site. There was \$15 million allocated by both parties to that project. Then suddenly your approach changed and now we find that there is an additional \$25 million in the budget, bringing the total cost of the project to \$40 million. The original argument for relocating the court complex was because it was too expensive to redevelop it on the current site. How much was it going to cost to redevelop it on the current site? Some information was revealed during Estimates. It just does not add up. There has been no consultation with the local community and you need to do better.

Right now, the local community in this area is also being provided - some of them, I might add, not the entire community that will be impacted - with a Housing Land Supply Order that has been issued by your minister for Planning. There has been no consultation with the local community about that either. They hold concerns about both and there was very limited time for them to provide a submission as part of that process. They are very concerned about that. Your Government needs to do better when it comes to communicating with local communities. It is a significant change for those people who live in that local community. They should be fully informed about it. They should be fully informed about the implications it will have on transport.

We have also heard from the legal profession that they do not support this change. They are concerned about having to go to West Burnie to provide their services, the impact this will put on their clients, and the increased cost to their clients in accessing justice. The public transport system is not very well developed in that area and people will need to use that to be able to access the new court site. All these things need to be given consideration outside of a planning process. To date the Government has not engaged one iota with that local community and I encourage you very strongly to do that.

**Ms Archer** - There will be a planning process. I said it in the committee. Please look at the *Hansard*.

**Ms DOW** - You had plenty of time to talk to the local community and you have not done it.

**Ms Archer** - Please look at the *Hansard*. Do not be lazy and come in here and do this.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr CHAIR** - Order, please cease the interjections. People on my left and right cease your interjections. Allow Ms Dow to continue.

**Ms DOW** - Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The second issue I want to talk about in relation to the north-west coast is about access to justice services in the Circular Head region, which has changed significantly under your Government. I have read the *Hansard* from the upper House Estimates hearings, at which my colleague, Jo Siejka, asked a number of questions on our behalf. I understand that there are negotiations being undertaken with a not-for-profit organisation to use some existing space in Smithton. I believe the Government should be upfront with that local community and inform them about where those negotiations are up to. You have not done that.

There have been a number of concerns raised by the community. I know that staff at Wyndarra have raised their concerns about the current arrangements and people having to travel to Burnie to access justice services. That was certainly reported in *The Advocate* newspaper. A number of local legal practitioners have raised their concerns as well. It is of the utmost importance that you inform the community where that is at. It is not reasonable to expect people to travel from Smithton to Burnie to access justice services, particularly when that service has been provided readily in their community prior to that time.

I understand that there were changes at Agritas, which meant that that facility could not be provided in the local community. Surely you must have been aware that those changes were going to take place, and that there would have been appropriate planning put in place to ensure that people did have access to justice services in the Circular Head community. Again, it is of the utmost importance -

**Ms Archer** - You are criticising the Chief Magistrate. It is the court administration, this one. Be really careful.

**Ms DOW** - It is of the utmost importance but it has implications for people who live locally in that community, who I represent as a local member and Mr Ellis represents as a local member. People have raised their concerns with us.

You are the minister responsible for providing justice services across the state. You should have updated the community about progress that has been made to date, and you have not. It is the same in Burnie with the relocation of the court complex. There has been no further information. There has been an announcement in line with the Budget papers and an increase in funding, but there has been no explanation as to why that increase has occurred and what is actually planned for that site. How will you address the issues that have been raised about public transport, additional costs, the loss of all of those ancillary paraprofessionals who support the court and the services that it provides in Burnie and the impact that that will have on the central business district? There has been no explanation of that.

The hypocrisy of it all is the university campus has relocated closer to the Burnie central business district to increase revitalisation of the city centre, to increase economic activity. Yet you are taking away a major service such as the court and relocating it in a residential area, taking away all that activity and business from the central business district. You have not explained why.

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### **Tabled Papers**

#### **Estimates Committee B - Additional Information**

**Mr Ellis** laid on the table of the House additional information provided to Estimates Committee B by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs.

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[12.28 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** - Mr Chair, it is a pleasure to speak on the outputs of Estimates Committee B, particularly in this minister's portfolio. A range of matters was canvassed on the day.

One of the things that was forefront in my mind - and Ms Dow has spoken about it just now - is the redevelopment of the Burnie court. It is a redevelopment that is broadly welcomed in the community and acknowledged that that site needs to be upgraded, or the court needs to be upgraded. We know that the existing facility is old, it is tired, and it is not really fit for purpose in a modern sense. The opportunity to have that investment in our community into justice services is important. This Government is also backing the construction sector. It is going to be a really big boost to commercial builders across the north-west coast and the rest of the industry. I am very proud to be supporting that and the project to get police out of courts in the north-west. This is broadly supported because there are better things for our cops to be doing. They are wonderful, professional people who serve our community well. That is why we are proud to be supporting that initiative.

I will also mention the commission of inquiry, particularly for any victims of child sexual abuse. It has been said many times in this place that we see you, we hear you, your stories are important. We will be looking to take any action this Government can take to improve things.

There was discussion on the prohibition of German National Socialists' memorabilia, swastikas and the like -

**Ms O'Connor** - You can call them Nazis, if you like. That's what they are.

**Mr ELLIS** - 'Nazi' stands for the National Socialist Workers' Party, so happy to call them National Socialists, Ms O'Connor.

**Ms O'Connor** - They're Nazis. Why won't you call them Nazis?

**Mr ELLIS** - Nazis, it is all the same. National Socialists -

**Ms O'Connor** - No, it's not.

**Mr ELLIS** - The prohibition of swastikas and the like. At a personal level, as I have said in this place, my family was displaced by German national socialism in Lithuania. I know the trauma that caused in my family. I annoy local councils by personally reporting those symbols on occasions where I see them. While free speech is an important thing in an open society, it is also worth consideration to see whether there is support amongst our community for prohibiting such symbols because they are deeply offensive to the conscience of all mankind.

I will speak broadly about some of the ranges of actions which have been put in place by the Minister for Corrections. There has been some significant positive process. During her time as Minister for Corrections we have seen significant improvements. The correctional officer recruitment processes have been occurring at an increased rate. In 2020 there were three recruit schools. A total of 79 new correctional officers were recruited through these schools. All 79 new officers have been deployed to various prison facilities. There are 15 recruits currently being trained and another recruit school will commence before the end of the year. That brings the total number of new recruits employed since 2016 to more than 215, with 79 in 2020 alone and we know the difficult year that was.

The TPS is running more recruitment processes right now and we have commenced a targeted national campaign. There has been significant investment in improved infrastructure

and more than \$365 million committed for two new major prison infrastructure projects, including a new southern remand centre and a new northern regional prison.

In addition to these two major facilities, funding has already been provided to construct a dedicated health facility and to undertake upgrades to shared central facilities within the Risdon Prison complex, including a new kitchen, upgrades to the gatehouse, prisoner processing, health and visit centre. Having new modern facilities will allow for stronger rehabilitation and a better environment for inmates and our hardworking prison staff. Purpose-built facilities provide many opportunities in the corrections space.

There is an increased focus on rehabilitation. That increased focus within the prison system is further strengthening our Corrections commitments. During the recent election, we were all clearly focused on rehabilitation and the minister is proud to be leading and shifting focus and looking forward to seeing the outcomes of our increased investment in this area.

We are investing almost \$2.5 million towards rehabilitation programs and staff within prisons over a three-year period. This includes: \$780 000 over three years to partner with the Australian Red Cross - we know how much wonderful work that organisation does - to deliver their community-based Health First Aid Program; \$610 000 over three years to partner with Connect42 to deliver the Just Time Prison Parenting Program -

**Ms O'Connor** - There are pictures of you stitching that up.

**Mr ELLIS** - I do not even know what that means.

**Ms O'Connor** - I am talking to Mr Ferguson, behind you.

**Mr ELLIS** - There is \$100 000 over three years to partner with Dress for Success Hobart to expand the Welcome Backpack initiative. There is \$500 000 per year for two years to fund five new therapeutic staff to work within the prison with a focus on delivering rehabilitation programs and drug and alcohol interventions.

There has also been significant legislative reform. The minister has led strong legislative reform in the Corrections portfolio. We have successfully passed new legislation to protect vulnerable victims, including the creation of a new offence of persistent family violence as well as other important measures to support victims and vulnerable Tasmanians. We have abolished remissions, passed dangerous criminals legislation, and passed legislation to allow the Parole Board to electronically monitor parolees.

The bill to abolish remission was considered by the Legislative Council and formally passed the Council on 12 September 2019. It took effect on proclamation, which was 1 November 2020. Remission of sentences was a longstanding practice in Tasmania, despite being phased out in other states and territories. It has been of significant concern to the Government that remissions allowed offenders to be released from prison before they had served the sentence handed down by the court. It is not in line with community expectations: that police catch criminals, the court sentences them to a period of imprisonment but then they are released ahead of time without the knowledge of the community. That is why we took the action we did to abolish remissions.



Last year, our Government introduced to this House and passed the Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Bill 2020. The bill passed the Legislative Council with minor amendments and was subsequently returned to the House of Assembly. Those amendments were passed. The Government has ensured that dangerous offenders can be detained in prison for the protection of the community even after their sentence expires. We have also implemented a high-risk offenders order, which allows for ongoing monitoring of high-risk offenders in the community beyond the end of any custodial sentence.

We have recently passed legislation impacting the Parole Board, including the ability to electronically monitor parolees, and adding another much-needed voice to the Parole Board by adding a member with policing experience, mirroring the previous membership changes when we added a victims of crime representative in 2015. Our victims of crime should never be forgotten when we talk about justice. They are the most important people to have in our thoughts.

**Time expired.**

[12.38 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** - It is very good to be back. I remind the House it will take a lot more than that to shut down the Greens.

Mr Chair, I want to talk about the consumer protection aspects of the minister's portfolio and focus on her contribution toward the Tasmanian Residential Property Owners Association, which we call 'TROPOA' for short, and lay out some of the time line and reiterate the Greens' concerns about what has taken place.

On 7 May, Ms Louise Elliot established an 'Elliot for Council' page. On 13 May this year, TROPOA applied for funding; that is, six days after Ms Elliot established her Louise Elliot for Council page. The next day, after applying for state government funding for this organisation, Ms Elliot announced on Twitter that she was running for council. As we understand it, this application was approved in June.

This organisation which, as far as we can tell from its incorporation documents at Service Tasmania, only has one public officer and one known individual in its administrative structure, and has been given \$100 000 of taxpayers' money for a person who has made it clear, prior to seeking public funding, that she is running for Hobart City Council.

This is a matter of significant public interest. I remember, as a member of Save Ralphs Bay Incorporated, that we would sell raffle tickets and tea towels and scarves in order to raise the funds we needed to protect the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area from a 500-home canal estate. This is the story of community organisations all over Tasmania that are not given a cent by government, let alone \$100 000, that are doing vital community work in the public interest often in order to protect the natural environment or the marine environment.

It is a very different standard that is applied to an advocate for the propertied class by this Government - an advocate who has made clear, before seeking \$100 000 of public money, that she will be running for council on a pro-development-at-any-cost agenda. This is the same Ms Elliot who, throughout the state election campaign, was relentlessly attacking the Greens and the independent candidate for Clark, Kristie Johnston, over our advocacy for tenants.

**Ms Archer** - She criticised me too.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Then I wonder why she has been given \$100 000 of public funding through your department in order to promote her campaign for council.

**Ms Archer** - We explained that in question time. She made a budget submission and the Premier approved it.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - It is breathtaking. When you have a look at Ms Elliot's social media she is in lockstep with Mr Simon Behrakis, an alderman on Hobart City Council. He happens to be employed by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport as a housing adviser and, as we established in Estimates last week, spends at least some of his time on the public purse posting against other councillors.

We have a person who has declared their candidacy for public office being given \$100 000 on a pro-development ticket allegedly to advocate for landlords through an organisation which, as far as we can establish, has a very flimsy incorporated structure. There are questions that must be answered in some detail here about the merits of the application for \$100 000 in funding. We are not talking about \$1000 or \$5000 to help a newly established landlords' lobby group get the message out to other landlords. We are talking about \$100 000: \$50 000 a year over two years which, coincidentally, and serendipitously for Ms Elliot, runs out not long after council elections at the end of next year.

This situation absolutely reeks. It has a very bad smell about it, where public funds are being given out with no apparent merit behind the application. I note that when Ms Elliot posted on her Facebook page, 'I want to be your friend. Please add me, you will soon see why', just before she announced her run for council, Ms Ogilvie, the Liberal member for Clark was among the first to 'like' that post. Then we have -

**Mr Ellis** - It is a vast conspiracy. Throw her out.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - No, it is not a conspiracy at all. It tells us about the alliances here and this alliance that has \$100 000 of public funds at the heart of it. During the campaign, Ms Elliot said:

Please screenshot my posts on Kristie and send them private to all your rental owner mates and Clark voters who believe in rental owner and private property rights and who thinks Kristie's hypocrisy is f\*cked. She's threatening me so I will take down until I can get legal advice on who I can spread widely the message she didn't want released.

I have had a breakdown on the interaction between Ms Elliot and Ms Johnston during the campaign and I will take Ms Johnston's version of events over any other.

I note here on Saturday 11 September this year a large colour photograph of Ms Elliot, candidate for Hobart City Council, promoting herself and her anti-green cause because the article is about targeting councillors who make decisions about developments that are not appropriate, applying the planning laws. We have a very glamourised photo of Ms Elliot. It is clearly about promotion for a council campaign.

Government members might think it is just public money and you can spray it around any way you like. Well, this stinks, and we are not going to let it go because we think that that \$100 000 of public money will be used, and is being used, in order to get another pro-development voice on Hobart City Council. It stinks. If the minister or any Government member thinks we are going to let it go, they are sadly mistaken just as any Government member who thinks that by turfing the Greens out of this place and shutting down our debates on a Supreme Court case they lost yesterday will keep us quiet, they are sadly mistaken. It just makes us stronger.

[12.46 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Chair, I will commence my contribution by saying I was not present in the scrutiny of Ms Archer's portfolios, before the interjection comes, although there was protection offered to Government members who were speaking on portfolios that they were not at. The reason I was not there for the Arts portfolio was because it was scheduled at the same time as Heritage. I appreciate that Ms White was able to take those questions for me.

**Ms Archer** - I think she was reflecting on you, Chair.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - No, I was reflecting on the fact that you were quite unpleasant to Ms Dow saying she was not even in the Estimates. I remember when a Government member was speaking yesterday they were reminded - it might have been Mr Ellis in the Chair, I may be wrong - that anyone can make a contribution on any of the Estimates. I thought I would put that -

**Ms Archer** - I agree but get your facts straight.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - My facts are straight.

**Ms Archer** - She was not going off the *Hansard*, Ms O'Byrne, that's what I had an objection to. I do not have an objection -

**Ms O'BYRNE** - We are only allowed to go off the *Hansard* from now on? That is also not a rule I believe, Ms Archer.

**Ms Archer** - No, you cannot be disingenuous about the facts put on the *Hansard*.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Yes, sure. Okay, I think you are probably a little touchy.

**Ms Archer** - I am fully expecting you to be disingenuous though.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I will go completely off *Hansard* for you then, shall I?

I wanted to raise the issue around the funding for arts organisations that Ms White raised on my behalf because I was in the Heritage portfolio at that time. This is from the committee:

**Ms WHITE** - You talked about the funding for arts organisations. There was a commitment of \$1.2 million for arts organisations that is yet to be announced. How is that going to be distributed? Are you able to provide any update on the time frame?

**Ms ARCHER** - That's because it has only just been announced as part of this Budget. I might get Ms Allen to describe the process that we go through with funding.

**Ms ALLEN** - The additional funding was announced in the Budget. We've received a range of applications from arts organisations. They are still under assessment and going through that process.

**Ms ARCHER** - And then we'll have another round.

**Ms ALLEN** - We had an annual organisations round and there'll be a discussion with Government about how that funding is applied.

**Ms WHITE** - When do you think that first round might be announced?

**Ms ALLEN** - It is imminent.

**Ms ARCHER** - It hasn't come to me for sign-off but I think that's an indication that it's very imminent.

Applications for this process closed on 5 July, so a little bit before the Budget and the announcement, they have been told, will be 4 October. That might be imminent for the Government, almost a month from Estimates and some months after applications closed, but it is a significant issue for the organisations because they are trying to make plans for staff and they do not know what their funding outcomes are going to be -

**Ms Archer** - Make an issue out of anything.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Ms Archer, you can be frustrated if you like but organisations have said to me that this makes their job very difficult. They are always grateful to receive government funding and they support government funding but this has been a delayed process. That is significantly difficult for them because they are trying to make ongoing commitments to staff.

**Ms Archer** - So you are complaining we topped up funding.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I want to point out that when you say something is imminent, they genuinely thought it was imminent. I believe that, normally, most of the arts orgs come out during the same week as Junction. You can tell who has done well and who has done badly by the happy and sad faces of people at Junction. It has had an impact, Ms Archer. If there is a way you can advise any earlier then those organisations would be appreciative of that. I am not sure why 4 October is an important date for you to make that announcement. Anything that you could do to act a little faster to swap them would be great.

We have raised the issues about the money that sits there as an insurance fund for organisations that may be impacted by a COVID-19 event and what that does -

**Ms Archer** - It is not insurance, but, yes.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I am struggling with language, I realise. It is a bit of money that is sitting there, \$2 million, of which \$750 000 -

**Ms Archer** - Like 50?

**Ms O'BYRNE** - For *Hansard* purposes it is a bit hard to do the italics, but there is an amount of money that is sitting there that can be -

**Ms Archer** - Sharing the risk we call it.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - that can be drawn down upon should there be a circumstance where an organisation is impacted financially because a COVID-19 event has impacted on their ability to provide their programming, therefore their revenue from that. There is a precommitment of \$730 000 for that funding.

I was trying to understand - and I was not there to follow up with a question - what that \$730 000 might have picked up on. Organisations have said to us that they appreciate that amount of money being there and realise how quickly the fund had to be organised and the structure supporting it, but there was some discussion around whether there might be a more finessed way of distributing it, should it need to be distributed.

Ms Allen did say that they looked at other mechanisms and at what happens in other jurisdictions. It is a great hope that we would never have to use this money. I am wondering whether there might be, given the time that we hopefully have available and never have to use, a more elegant or more targeted way of distributing the funds. There is an assumption that organisations' costs in leading up to an event are similar to that of projected ticket sales, and that is not always the case.

**Ms Archer** - I am trying to look at that. I realise that the issue has been raised. It is not an easy one.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I appreciate that the minister does not get to speak again. I am happy to pick up that the minister is aware that there may be some capacity to relook at that.

**Ms Archer** - Yes, I am trying to look at it.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Obviously, if you never spend the money I will make the case for the community. They would love the \$2 million to be spent there anyway. They are really happy if we never have to use it, we get through COVID-19 and it is left there.

**Ms Archer** - It was not money to be spent. It was money in case it was needed. It was not a grant.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I appreciate that. However, in the absence of spending that money anywhere else in the budget overall, it would be great if it could come back into the arts sector. There are elements in the arts sector that have not been able to access the range of supports that have been provided because of the nature of their business. They might be the people who do the speakers and sound for a band that might be touring at a small local venue, but that is not happening as much at the moment.

There are a number of people for whom it is difficult to demonstrate the sort of losses that the small business grants require that have been impacted, whether they are doing work for shows, larger shows, or whether they are doing works for small performances who may be

travelling within the state. I appreciate by interjection that the minister is conscious of whether or not there might be a more elegant way of distributing that share of risk funding if we need to share it.

In the very little bit of time left to me I want to flag two other issues. One, there was a debate during the Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs area on wage theft legislation. I add my voice to those calling for criminalisation of wage theft. I believe it provides a significant deterrent. The argument is always that people make errors because awards are complex. The reality is we do not see errors made in favour of workers very often. We generally see errors made in a way that disadvantages workers. Whilst Fair Work Australia does have a capacity to investigate those things, we do believe that it sits well as a deterrent to that type of behaviour.

The last thing that I want to raise is about mandatory training courses for corrections officers, which has been raised in the past. The answers to questions only came through to us today. I appreciate that the minister provided her answers in time but they only came to Opposition members today -

**Ms Archer** - I do not know why that is. I am advised it was distributed to committee members.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - They certainly did not get to us until today. That might be something you need to check.

The question was about getting to that level of providing the mandatory training as opposed to the other training courses people may do and how many were overdue. The Government gave an answer, saying that they were very confident they would get to the 80 per cent target by October. What is concerning in the answer is the number of people for whom quite significantly important training - and that is why it is mandatory - has not been provided. Breathing apparatus, fire awareness, while there have been 321 completions, there are 29 people who are overdue for their training. Some of them have been waiting for - well, 24 of them have been waiting for up to 12 months. That is quite concerning. First-aid, there are 38 overdue; control and restraint there are 52 overdue; mechanical restraint, 49 overdue; and biennial training for OC practical, 81 overdue.

I was quite concerned - and Ms Haddad and I were discussing the implications at the moment. The e-learning, the sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) training for suicide and self-harm, to have 123 of those overdue is quite concerning - that is a significant risk, and there are 45 of those who have been overdue for over 12 months.

CPR first-aid theory, there are 38 that are overdue, the small workplace emergencies and BA theory, 29. The refresher course might not sound like it is that important but a work health and safety refresher course being 96 overdue out of 195, almost half, is quite concerning.

Communicable diseases, which is biennial training, there are 90 people who are overdue; bomb threats, 102; REAP, 144; OC theory, 88; Aboriginal culture, 152; ethics, 129; social media, 118; mental health, 104; food and safety, 128; locks and keys, 85; spit hood, 87; crime scene preservation, 98; hostage siege situation, 103 and family violence, 109.

This says that there is a push to ensure the total practical percentage completed is around 83 per cent but there is still a significant amount of very important planning that is not being provided.

**Time expired.**

**Estimates of the Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts agreed to.**

## **DIVISIONS 2, 8 and 10**

(Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Parks, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence)

[12.56 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Chair, I notice that Mrs Petrusma is not here and we only have a few moments before we break for a little while.

The first thing I will do is raise the issue that was raised this morning in question time when Mrs Petrusma said that we had misrepresented her. I take that kind of allegation very seriously. I appreciate that not everyone in this House always has, but I do take that seriously.

I go to the question that was asked in the upper House by Ms Siejka and refer the minister to table 2.2 Output Group 5, which is to do with the Safe Homes, Families, Communities and Tasmania's Action Plan for Family and Sexual Assault 2019-22, which indicates in 2020-21, \$15 450 000 and in 2021-22, \$14 299 000. Hansard cannot see me waving this piece of paper around: the next three years have absolutely nothing attached to it. Mrs Petrusma was asked why there was no budget allocation. Mrs Petrusma answered by talking about - and I have the *Hansard* - the broader redevelopment of the action plan.

Ms Siejka said that:

Recognising that work is still underway and that there is still consultation happening, are you able to confirm that the funding for the next plan will at least stay at the current levels?

Mrs Petrusma said:

It stayed the same.

She talked about some additional funding in other areas, and then said:

Yes, it won't be getting less.

This was the substance of the question that she was asked in question time, that she stood in the House today and said it was not true. She stood in the House today and said that she was never asked about that \$15 million. That is not true. We have the *Hansard* from the other place. We have her answer from the other place. We have a copy of the table that indicates the amount of money. I expect when Mrs Petrusma comes in - and she will be speaking on this Output Group - she immediately corrects the record.

She has obviously received some poor advice from someone who has looked at her lower House *Hansard* and said the matter was not raised. We did not raise it because we had already raised it in the upper House and received an answer that caused us concern. There are, as we have identified a number of times throughout this Budget process, significant funds that are committed verbally, or in other ways, by this Government that do not appear in the out years of the Budget.

Unless Mrs Petrusma can point to exactly where in the Budget that money is going to be, then it is a significant issue with regard to the Budget not reflecting the actual costs that we know are going to be expended over the coming years. We want to see this money funded. I believe Mrs Petrusma wants to see this and is committed to seeing this funding. No-one wants to see that not funded.

**Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2021 (No. 36)**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2021 (No. 37)**

**Reports of Estimates Committees**

**In Committee**

**Resumed from above.**

**Ms O'BYRNE** - When I was on my feet, the minister had just arrived. I appreciate that we went into this output a little early. The point I was making was in relation to evidence that had been given at the Estimates in the upper House that were raised in question time here. Ms Petrusma stood up and said, 'That's not true, I was never asked about that'. I have the *Hansard* from the upper House when Ms Seijka asked the question. I have the table she refers to; table 2.2 that shows around \$15.540 million in 2021, \$14.299 million in 2021-22, which was a matter she was asking questions about, and nothing in the out years.

I absolutely know that the minister is committed to those things being funded. But they do not appear in that line item, which was the question that Ms Seijka asked and was not answered but did give rise to the questions, 'Where is that money? Is it sitting somewhere else in government? It is not there'. It fits in with that broader concern that we have about a number of things that have been promised either before the Budget and not included in the Budget, or since the Budget - had they all been included, they might give rise to a little more of a concerning position in the out years. That was the reason that those things were raised. I am sure the minister will act to correct the record because to say she was not asked about it is not true. We have the *Hansard* from the other place.

I want to go now to the Family Violence Support space. We have raised the issue of the statewide adult program and the demand on staff a number of times. We put a question that was partly taken and partly not taken at the time but the one question that was not answered was the amount of staff. This is to do with staffing for the Family Violence Counselling Support Service statewide adult program data. At the time we were given the referrals for 2020-21 which were 6978. We did not get the staffing numbers because the departmental official at the table pointed out that she had given us the wrong data. I had expected that the



actual staffing capacity would arrive but when you take out the team leaders, the average case allocation, which was the first data we got, is still quite concerning. It is still 546 active cases per staff person.

I would like the minister to finish answering that question for us which was the intent at the time. The official gave us a figure of 31 staff which was the total number but we had asked specifically in the adult program. As we rose from it, she said, 'That's the adult program, I will get you the individual data' but that did not come through in the answer.

**Mrs Petrusma** - It will be provided as soon as we can.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - A rough calculation says it is 12.7 but could the minister confirm how many staff are employed in the adult program? Also, I think there are a couple of temporary positions so could you make that clear? Otherwise we are dealing with 546. I do not think the official intended to mislead. She gave us an answer of 31 staff, which was not true. She wanted to correct it but Hansard had finished. I would not want that to be sitting on *Hansard* as an error.

**Mrs Petrusma** - You have been given the overall numbers.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - We discussed the broader reporting issues. One of the concerns that we have is that whenever issues around family violence are raised, we get the line that says that there has been a decrease in the serious incidents reported to police. That is not untrue. However, as we discussed at the table, and I think there is a genuine understanding around that, using that figure alone does not give a picture of what is happening in the family violence space. We know from talking to everyone in this sector that they are getting increased demand and increased complexity. There may well be reasons that they do not get reported as serious crime. When you talk to people who work in the field, they are sure that they do not reflect the levels of serious crime that are reported.

We did have a discussion, and I think it is an ongoing one that we can have, about how we might better give that information in a way that is a little more understanding of the range of ways that people do or do not report family violence. If we only use the serious crime data, it sounds like it is getting better. That is not the lived experience of the people in Tasmania and it is not the working experience of people in the sector.

The minister did a show and tell. I like this about this minister. She always brings along little goodies. This is a lovely brochure - this little piece of information around services that can help. It is an excellent idea. The problem is the let down within another portfolio. It talks about services that can help. It gives the addresses and the contact numbers for the shelters. We all know that the shelters are turning people away so it concerns me about how we get a better understanding of that data. The housing minister will say, 'These are the total amount of people who have called to get into a shelter' but you might have the same person going to multiple shelters, calling on multiple days.

At each one of those shelters - and they are generally are dealing with issues of family violence; that is a very big cohort of their group - they ask who the individual is, where they were last night, where they were last week, where they were three, six, twelve months ago. That data is being collected. It is really useful data in understanding what is happening in the family violence and the homelessness space. For some reason the department is not able to extract that data.

That moves us on two pathways. One, either extract the data and give us a genuine picture of what the demand is on shelters or, two, do not make shelters go through the process of doing that because it is a long and time-consuming process. If we are not going to use the information, which I think is valuable, then it is more work for a service that is completely over-stretched.

The other minister will talk about the additional beds that are coming and lining those places but some of the concerns are that they might have the wraparound staffing that is really crucial for people who are coming in out of a point of crisis.

That goes back again to the Family Violence Counselling Service. We have talked about that challenge of when women leave circumstances and how dangerous it is but how dangerous it is if they are forced to go back if they do not have somewhere to sleep. Those abuse responses are really concerning.

Given my time, we will move onto the police portfolio. The first questions that we asked were a bit of rigmarole because we were trying, in a number of Estimates processes, to get information on whether there were people employed in the State Service who may have been named in the royal commission. I will come to the clarification that the minister made later in the Estimates.

The Premier told us, 'That's not a matter for me, that's a matter for the Attorney-General'. When we asked the Attorney-General, the Attorney-General, 'That's not a matter for me, that's a matter for the police minister', who quite rightly referred it to the police commissioner in that statutory role. No one could tell us who might collect that data and then the minister, 'There aren't any names in that'. That concerns me as well. Whether we are talking about the Royal Commission or the redress scheme, what we really wanted to understand is whether we have any risk of people in the Public Service who have been named, who may present a risk to children.

I do not think any of us want that to be case. The shoving around of information and the, 'You're asking for the wrong information', made me feel a lot less secure about how well we might be addressing that. The response was:

The individual agencies might be able to respond to that.

We are not quite clear what individual agencies can respond so that is really concerning.

We raised the issue of safety for our regional police families, and whilst we did say that we do not want police houses in regional communities to become fortresses, we do know, particularly from the incident in Strahan, that there are increased risks, sometimes in regional communities when you live in a police house and somebody comes to that house.

The Government has committed to a process of putting in security measures in all of those. It appears that that has not happened yet. We are hoping that when we get to the next Estimates and we ask this question again, or perhaps at any stage that the minister wishes to update us, we can get a picture of what is being done to make places safer.

The police commissioner thought we were talking about storing accoutrements. I know that that is an ongoing issue that has been raised. I was particularly asking around security

cameras and the type of security we have on doors. That was an issue in someone's yard so it does go to being able to provide security in that entire space.

We look forward to that matter being updated because we do want our police officers to be safe.

The country station relief policy that the Government has identified: one of the concerns with that is how that relief policy is actually going to be staffed. It is a great idea. However, the number of people who would be required simply to cover annual leave is an issue, let alone the other planned leave that might need to be covered. We raised the issue of whether or not there would be employment and recruitment, employment specifically for it or additional staff employed for that kind of pool, a pool that actually works to relieve country police officers.

There are a number of issues with it. One, do we have enough people to do it? Two, if we do not have enough people then there is effectively no relief being provided because no-one is available that day. The third issue goes to where police might be drawn from if they are not coming from a relief pool. We know that what happens time and time again is that when there is a demand in another area, they generally come from road safety and traffic. Given the type of year we have had on our roads, I do not think any of us want to have fewer police on the roads. We know that is not the be-all and end-all of safety on roads but we do know that people monitor their behaviour when they know there are police around.

I am assuming the minister will address that but I imagine that will be another area where we will be needing to see a review quite quickly to see whether or not that country police relief process is working in the way that I genuinely think it is intended to work. That will be an important thing. I want to raise the issue of staffing. This is a difficult one because I genuinely understand when the police commissioner says, 'It is my job to assign police to where they need to go, to where the greatest need is'. I understand that.

In the 2014 and 2018 elections, letters were written to the Police Association committing to a regional distribution of staff to particular locations with the additional staffing commitment. When the Police Association members received this letter dated 27 April 2021 from the Premier committing to the Police Association and identifying the Police Association's list of requests, we would reasonably assume that any police officer reading that would have thought that that commitment was as genuine as the one that was given in 2014 and 2018.

This letter, even though it has a little 'get out of jail free card' by saying the police commissioner gets to make these calls, is in fact deceitful. Our serving police officers were deliberately misled in the lead-up to the election about what the Government intended to do. I accept the police commissioner in his role has the right to decide where police officers go. I also believe, given the past practice of this Government and the way that the last two commitments were met, that anyone reading this letter would have believed it.

I believe it was disingenuous, dishonest, and deceitful and the Premier should apologise to our serving police officers for that commitment the Government clearly has no intention of meeting. Despite all the requests for the additional 27 officers in the north, we are not seeing that commitment at all.

While I am on the subject of the north - the performance report. The Government will say - and they say very clearly - the crime statistics have reduced and they have reduced in

Launceston in the last report. That is true but they are also including a period where we were in lockdown so if crime rates had not reduced, I think we would be frightened about that. Even though they have reduced, there is still a significant difference between the crime rates that exist in the north of the state, in the district around Launceston, of the 13 districts, are significantly greater than anywhere else in the state.

Police public assaults 2021: Launceston 181; the closest of the 13 jurisdictions is Hobart on 168. Offences against the person: Launceston 1012; the closest, again, Hobart 645. Total offences: Launceston 5909; the closest, Hobart, 3045. Serious crime: Launceston 109; the closest is Clarence on 80. Robbery: Launceston 20; Hobart 10. Offences against property: Launceston - and this is a big one - 4615 compared to 2291 in Hobart, which is the closest. There is a big, big gap before we get to the other regions that are even lower than that.

Home burglary: Launceston 249; Glenorchy was the closest at 161. Business burglary: Launceston 182; Devonport is 87. Motor vehicle burglary: Launceston 282; Hobart 169. Stolen motor vehicles: Launceston 315; Glenorchy 144. Fraud: Launceston 169; Hobart 88.

This is not a reflection on the police officers in Launceston, who I think are doing a sterling job but they are dealing with - and have been for the last nine years - an exponentially greater level of crime. The response to that is not, we are just going to give you the same kind of share that we always would give; we actually need to significantly invest in our resources in Launceston to make sure that people are safe and to make sure that people feel safe.

While the satisfaction with police rates are still good, and they should be - our police do an amazing job - the reality is that Launceston is not as safe to live in as other places. One of the ways that we can deal with that is significantly investing in our police force and significantly investing in our police force in Launceston. It is what the police association is calling for. It is what the community are calling for as well. It actually is not a really safe place to be. I love Launceston. I bring my kids up there, I love living there but these stats are reflective of a significant problem in the community that does need a significant increase in resourcing for Launceston.

Minister, I urge you to work with the police commissioner. The police are given a certain amount of resources that they expend and there is a level of equity in the way that they do that but just saying that Launceston crime rates are down is not good enough. They are down because of COVID-19, but they are so much worse in the Launceston district of the 13 districts. That is simply not good enough. We need to be safer than that.

Very quickly on fire safety, I was very pleased to discover that despite the Government spending all that time sitting on a report into the fire services commission, that we are not going to be turning the State Fire Commission into a statutory authority. I must confess I read the Premier's *Hansard*. I am not sure that he knew what he was committing to, but the Police, Fire and Emergency Management minister backed it in. I am delighted to see that is the case.

However, I do believe there needs to be additional time for organisations to respond to the recommendations in the fire commission. It is dependent on work that is coming from Treasury that has not yet arrived. If everyone is supposed to make submissions and they do not have the work from Treasury yet, that makes it extremely difficult for them to provide the holistic responses that they want to provide to have a meaningful engagement within this.

The key thing when I was looking at it is that I could not see what, of any of the recommendations that were made, would actually require the State Fire Commission to change the nature outside of the statutory authority. It seemed like another one of those political decisions to me. The issue of PFAS was raised. I urge the minister again to get baseline testing of the people. I understand that they say that there is no causal link proven; however we have had cases in the ACT where a causal link has been established and compensation has been paid. I urge the minister to get PFAS testing for our fire services staff. That is crucial. We need to know - they need to know - that when they go to work that they are safe. That is an historical issue. I do welcome, however, the move away from PFAS and the minister's commitment on that.

**Time expired.**

**Progress reported; Committee to sit again.**

## **STATEMENT BY SPEAKER**

### **Conduct of Member for Clark, Ms O'Connor**

[2.48 p.m.]

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I wish to make a statement concerning the proceedings this morning and make the following points:

Having been called to order on a number of occasions during question time, and having continually interrupted the minister with the call, I directed the honourable member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, to withdraw until the end of question time.

I was mindful that the member had given notice of today's MPI and this period of withdrawal would have enabled the member to proceed with the intended MPI.

Having been directed to withdraw, the member continued her disorderly conduct in complete disregard of the authority of the Chair and I extended the period of withdrawal until noon.

It was the honourable member's conduct which brought about the consequence that she was not able to be present in the Chamber to move the MPI.

Standing Order 70, however, makes provision for the transfer of the carriage of a motion from one member to another by simply requiring written notice to be provided to either myself or the Table before the motion is moved.

The period of time between the member's suspension and time for the MPI to be moved was approximately one hour, which I believe to be sufficient time to give notice, or, if there was some uncertainty on the part of the Greens as to how to proceed, to take advice.

No such notice was received by me or the Table, and I was obliged to move to the next item of business.

The honourable member subsequently published a 'Tweet' and media release asserting that my ruling regarding the matter of public importance broke with convention, was unprecedented and was a 'co-ordinated Liberal move to shut down the debate on the matter of huge public interest'.

My ruling was consistent with the provision of the Standing Orders and I note that no motion of dissent from my ruling was moved at the time.

It is a fundamental tenet of parliamentary practice that the Speaker's conduct may only be criticised by way of a substantive motion being moved in the House. Any reflection on the character or actions of a Speaker inside or outside the House is highly disorderly as by convention a Speaker does not participate in public debate about matters that occur in the House except to clarify rulings. Therefore, a Speaker is not in a position to defend him or herself against public reflection from a member.

Were the honourable member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, to be unfamiliar with this important parliamentary practice, I would certainly be inclined to extend a degree of latitude regarding any further consequences. However, the member has been required to apologise to a previous Speaker in this place for similar conduct.

I regard the assertion made by the honourable member for Clark as a personal reflection on both my character and my ability to impartially discharge my duties as Speaker.

Accordingly, I name the honourable member.

## **MEMBER NAMED AND SUSPENDED**

### **Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor**

[2.53 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Leader of the House - Motion) - Mr Speaker, in conformity with Standing Orders, I move -

That the honourable member for Clark, Ms O'Connor be suspended from the service of the House.

**Ms O'Connor** - For how long?

**Mr FERGUSON** - It is not up to me.

**Ms O'Connor** - What are you afraid of?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, there is no debate on the question. I will put the question. The question is that the member be suspended from the service of the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Ms O'Connor** - For how long?

**Mr SPEAKER** - You have been named, so it is a 24-hour period.

**Ms O'Connor** - It will be a relief to see the back of you. You are going to do this the hard way, Mr Ferguson.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. Ms O'Connor, if I name you again, it is a week. Any further comment and I will be forced to name you again.

**Ms O'Connor withdrew.**

## **APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2021 (No. 36)**

## **APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2021 (No. 37)**

### **Reports of Estimates Committees**

#### **In Committee**

**Resumed from above.**

[2.56 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** - Mr Chair, I am delighted to speak on these portfolios that appeared before Budget Estimates Committee B. I congratulate the minister on her return to the ministry and for the fantastic job she is doing across these vital portfolio areas. Today, I am going to focus a lot of my contribution on the area of Parks, which I hold particularly dear to my heart. There is a huge amount of infrastructure investment happening in Parks.

The Government's 2021 election commitment of \$42 million builds on a significant existing capital works program in our national parks and reserves, in excess of \$85 million that includes funding of: \$25 million for the new Cradle Mountain Gateway Precinct and Dove Lake shelter; the initial \$20 million for the next iconic walk, which has now been doubled in funding to \$40 million; \$16 million for the Improved Statewide Visitor Infrastructure program; \$8.4 million towards implementing wastewater recommendations in the Freycinet Peninsula Master Plan; and \$5.9 million to future-proof and maintain infrastructure across national parks and reserves.

In delivering on our commitments to national parks and reserves and the people who use them, the Government has already delivered the following infrastructure projects as part of the ISVI program: the new Southern Gateway to the TWWHA at Cockle Creek, which is a beautiful part of the world in your electorate, Chair, and I know how deeply you feel about that; improvements to infrastructure and heritage sites on Maria Island, a place I have to admit I have not been to but I have seen a lot of beautiful photos -

**Mr Barnett** - You would enjoy it. It is a jewel of the east coast.

**Mr ELLIS** - I am glad to hear it. It certainly looks a beautiful spot and I acknowledge the Minister for Primary Industries and Water who feels very passionately about our natural and human heritage.

The program also includes construction of the Waterfall Valley Hut on the Overland Track. I spent a night eating reheated meals there after climbing Cradle Mountain and before climbing Barn Bluff; a truly wonderful spot once that work is finalised. Upgrades to Ben Lomond, including car parking facilities; improvements for east coast camping sites; a second lookout at Wineglass Bay; civil works at the Tasman National Park Gateway; restoration and

conservation of buildings, track work and interpretation signs at Sarah Island and the Strahan Bond Store, a beautiful heritage site on the bay and one where I did a bit of stormwater work in a previous life. It needed work when we started and is now being restored to its rightful place as one of the jewels in the crown of Tasmania's rich west coast heritage.

There are new visitor facilities at Cradle Mountain as well as Highfield House in Stanley, a master plan for the Nut at Stanley, which is one of the drawcards in the far north-west and one of the prettiest places you will see in the world. There is a replacement jetty at Macquarie Heads. I know a lot of shackies who fish at Macquarie Harbour will be very happy to hear that. There are upgrades to the boat ramp at Corinna, and a big shout out to all the shackies at Pieman Heads who I know have fought hard for such a boat ramp. There are also heritage building works at the Taroona Shot Tower and Richmond Gaol.

There was a lot of focus, particularly given the media at the time, on the next iconic walk that is going to be at the Tyndall Ranges. It will be a game changer for the west coast and Tasmania. This part of the world is unique. It is probably under-appreciated by many members of this place and the Tasmanian community more broadly because it is so rugged, it is so remote, but it will open some eyes.

I had a few opportunities to go hiking to the top of the Tyndall Range Plateau, climbing to the top of Mount Tyndall as well as Mount Geikie - the first time I have ever slept up high. It is a place like no other. It is eerie and staggering in its beauty. It is going to be wonderful to be able to give more people the opportunity to enjoy that without what can be quite hard-going, with very deep mud, quite steep climbs and a fair bit of trackless walking as well.

The Greens opposing any plan to allow sensitive and appropriate development in our parks and reserves is getting to be beyond a joke. The hypocrisy is breathtaking. It is a shame that the Greens are not here in many ways. It was mind-boggling to see Dr Woodruff realise that they are now even opposing a suggestion which was largely supported by the Bob Brown Foundation. For years, they kept telling us that Tasmania's future was in tourism, which simply could not co-exist with mining and forestry, and that we had to shut down those vital productive industries. Yet, whenever there is a proposal for any tourism development in our parks and reserves, all we hear is their opposition, that staggering claim that we have heard from the Bob Brown Foundation that we need to set up a national park so that people can walk around the outside of it.

We understand that to lock in growth for the future, we must protect what is special about Tasmanians and that does not include lock-ups. We do not support the Greens elitist view of locking up parks and making them accessible only to those who the opposition deem worthy.

We have a plan to make Tasmania the eco-tourism capital of the world and with sensible and, appropriate development in our parks and reserves, we are well on the way to achieving that. I have to say people are sick and tired of the Greens party's negative attitude towards anything, everything, other than their policy to lock-up Tasmania and throw away the key. We know that it seems to be all that they stand for, the deindustrialisation of Tasmania, the depopulation of Tasmania. This sort of grubby politicking only further reinforces that they have nothing to stand for.

It was quite amazing for all members who were in Committee B on that day when the minister brought in a map to show just how similar the proposal that the Greens were now opposing was to one which they previously supported, including the location and the need to



avoid certain sensitive areas. It was, in many ways, uncanny and really telling of the anti-everything lock-up attitudes they have. Even the Bob Brown Foundation once could see the potential for Tasmania's next iconic walk to be located as proposed. In putting forward the proposal, Bob Brown had advocated that it was better because it:

.... avoids the fragile unburnt alpine plateau, is far less exposed and is protected from the prevailing north-west and western Roaring Forties, the view field across Lake Huntley and up the cliffs is better, the larger lakes are visited, it provides a more natural and wilder experience. It will be easier for clientele to negotiate and it takes in the magnificent and historic Lake Margaret on the last day of the walk, a walk that I have done, myself, as well.

That was Bob Brown on 30 July 2019. Gosh, how things have changed in a couple of years. They could not tell us why, other than apparently that it was some kind of elitist project.

I know that the Greens really only represent the wealthy inner city in this place. Surely they did not get it so wrong so soon. They want to make the entire area a national park which apparently does not also include a walking track through it which, again, echoes that sentiment from Bob Brown of lock it up and make people walk around the outside. Maybe they might be able to somehow appreciate the beauty of the area.

I am aware that the Bob Brown Foundation wants the entire area made a national park. We know that this can be an example of co-existence between tourism, mining, energy through to Hydro, all on land that is protected and managed under the Nature Conservation Act. It is this co-existence that will be a major drawcard for the next iconic walk combining the history and fascination of industry with the rugged wild environment on the west coast.

One of Tasmania's largest gold mines, the Henty Gold Mine, is just up the road. We know it is an area of massive mineralisation on the west coast, one of the most mineralised areas on earth, as the Resources minister knows. This is literally just up the road. The Tyndall area has an enormous capacity for hydro. Lake Margaret is a hydro scheme and one of the oldest in the world as well Lake Plimsoll with the Tribute Power Station, which was the last major one built in Tasmania. We support energy and mining and forestry, and the coexistence with tourism.

### **Time expired.**

[3.05 p.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** - Mr Chair, I attended some of this particular output in Budget Estimates and I want to speak specifically about police family violence training, something the minister is also very passionate about. I want to put on the record some of the issues that have been raised with me in the time that I have been a local member.

Everyone here would acknowledge that our understanding of family violence continues to expand, grow and evolve over time. All of us would be well aware and very familiar with the fact that family violence goes well beyond physical forms of violence. Economic abuse, financial abuse, social abuse and isolation and coercive control are all very real and very devastating forms of family violence which must be acted on and must be taken seriously.

While it is not the case in 100 per cent of physical family violence cases, it is more often than not the case that when we hear about horrific cases of physical family violence, including fatal ones, they have in almost all cases been preceded by instances of coercive control. Quite often you see some of that media reporting when you hear of these really awful and horrific family violence-related murders; sometimes the media reporting is full of shock and surprise.

Usually the offender is a man and often the media reporting is something along the lines of, nobody saw this coming; he was a family man; he loved his wife and kids; he was the coach of soccer team; that kind of thing. Then, slowly but surely, stories come out usually from the victim's family about instances of things that constitute coercive control. He controlled her movements, he told her what she could wear, what she could not wear, he tracked her phone. Slowly but surely, we are seeing these patterns build up.

As we start to develop and understand those things more deeply, it is really important that our legislation and policy responses change accordingly. Our legislation in Tasmania actually is nation-leading in that it does allow action for coercive control and economic abuse and has done since it was introduced by Judy Jackson in 2004. Sadly, those provisions that allow charges to be laid for non-physical forms of family violence are rarely used. They exist in legislation but they are rarely used and our legislation is only as good as how well it can be implemented.

I acknowledge upfront that I know that there is a deep commitment by Tasmania Police to deal with family violence. They recognise that non-physical forms of violence are family violence and they have many people working across the police force who understand that and who take that very seriously. I acknowledge upfront that I know there is a deep commitment from many individuals working in the police force to deal with all forms of family violence, including non-physical forms of family violence.

However, because of inconsistency of knowledge across the police force, I have had constituents come into my office who have had poor experiences in reporting instances of non-physical family violence, and sometimes physical forms of family violence as well. They have gone so far as to describe it as a bit of a Russian roulette. Who happens to be the police officer you report that family violence incident to will dictate what kind of response your case receives.

The result of that is that people and survivors of family violence are sometimes not taken as seriously as they need to be. That can have devastating effects. It is the responsibility of government to make sure that there is consistent and thorough training available in all forms of family violence for police officers at all levels. I did ask about it in the previous year's Estimates, in the police estimates with then minister Shelton. At that time he took on notice the question that I asked about the family violence training that is provided. In the response that we received back, it was clear that police officers do receive family violence training when they first join the police force and they are training at the academy but after that there is very much a bit of an ad hoc on an as needs basis, that further development in their knowledge of family knowledge is provided.

That was confirmed this year in the upper House with Mrs Petrusma. Then we discussed it in the family violence output in the lower House. The minister explained that they receive training at the police academy and also again when they are promoted and at other points in their careers. There are particular courses that they might do. Family violence units are built

into those modules for things like prosecution courses, CIB courses and other modules that are taken through the University of Tasmania on victimology and offences against the person and family violence policing.

The opportunities are there, I believe, for police to continue their professional development in understanding all forms of family violence and understanding how to recognise the red flags. When they come across a member of the public who is reporting potential instances of family violence to them, they can recognise those red flags and act appropriately. However, I think that there is a need for that training to be mandatory and regular, not delivered in the way that it is; in that while it is available, it is not mandatory. It is available and completed when people take a promotion, or, as we heard in last year's Estimates, when there is a particular need. There are officers who specialise in family violence policing. Other police officers can draw on those people's experience but that is not quite the same as everybody having to do a mandatory annual training course in professional development to learn the most up-to-date evidence-based information about family violence policing.

It is a very positive step that the minister for Police also holds the portfolio for family violence. That provides enormous opportunity. I know this minister is very passionate about family violence and about family violence policing. From my perspective, as an opposition member, it is a positive thing that both those portfolios are held by the same person.

It is a passion of mine that police are equipped with further training on a mandatory basis. Then we would know that there can be the consistency expected by members of the community who call on the police because of suspected family violence. Everybody can experience the protection they need to keep those people safe. Specifically, police need to be able to recognise those early warning signs of family violence. People often call these red flags - coercive control, social, economic and financial abuse. They are family violence in and of themselves, but they are often warning signs of escalation. I wanted to put on the record today my thoughts about police family violence training. With those short comments I will conclude.

[3.14 p.m.]

**Mr TUCKER** - You are probably wondering why I am standing up here for Committee B, when I was on Committee A with you. But I read *Hansard*. I was very impressed with Mrs Petrusma and what is going on in her portfolio. I thought that I should get up and make a few comments.

**Members** interjecting.

**CHAIR** - The member will be heard in silence.

**Mr TUCKER** - Thank you, Mr Chair. I was pleased to read in *Hansard* and gain a greater understanding of the significant investment that this Government is making to our Police, Fire and Emergency Services to ensure that this Government continues to keep Tasmanians safe. This investment includes \$348 million over the forward Estimates to Tasmania Police and \$125.6 million for bushfire and flood reduction.

I read with interest the comments from the minister and the commissioner on the capability review and the need to undertake a refresh of this review for the additional 50 police officers that this Government is funding. The Government's commitment to rebuilding the police service is clear. We have a plan to recruit 308 police officers that will take Tasmania Police to the highest establishment it has ever had of 1428 police officers. This is a

30 per cent increase since 2014 and will assist Tasmania being one of the safest places to live and raise a family.

In addition, the Government's commitment to provide \$2.5 million over four years to employ eight additional State Service employees is welcome. These staff will support our policing roles to enable an effective policing response, bolstering Tasmania Police's expertise in areas such as prosecution, cybercrime and digital evidence analysis. It was pleasing to read the Government's commitment to the welfare of police in our rural and remote regions with \$10.6 million in funding for our country police station relief policy.

We know that Tasmania is one of the safest places to live and our crime rates have decreased over the past year. I was glad to read that this policy will significantly enhance response and service provisions for our remote and rural communities in the future, ensure that there is a consistent statewide approach to relieving our officers in regional and remote communities when they take leave and support the health and wellbeing of our dedicated police officers in these areas.

The minister outlined the Government's plan for infrastructure upgrades with \$103.4 million across the Budget and forward Estimates for capital works. This included the completion of a new \$5 million Longford Police Station together with the new \$1 million Northern Special Operations Group facility, which builds on the government's \$8.9 million commitment for SOG officers who will transition to a full-time SOG once they have completed their COVID-19 duties.

There was also discussion regarding drug diversions and harm minimisation. Where appropriate, Tasmania Police diverts minor drug offenders away from the criminal justice system. The Tasmania Police Illicit Drug Diversion initiative is a health-based diversion program that enables adult minor drug offenders to receive counselling and treatment for their drug use. Tasmania Police focuses its efforts on high-end drug dealers and this government investment in policing is having a real impact on crime, as recently evidenced through Operation Carnegie.

This was led by the Tasmania Police's Police Crime and Intelligence Command which was launched in 2020 to further enhance the coordination of specialist resources to investigate crime. This involved the dismantling of a drug syndicate yielding the largest volume of illicit drugs and cash seizures of over \$5.5 million. Given that it is now September and we are heading into the bushfire season, I was also particularly interested to hear discussion concerning our fire monitoring and early attack capability within the Tasmania Fire Service.

Aerial firefighting is a critical tool in the bushfire management toolbox. To assist from the skies, this year Tasmania will have access to 11 aircraft that will be pre-positioned in strategic locations across the state. The fleet consists of helicopters, intelligence-gathering, water-bombing, mapping, crew and equipment transportation, fixed-wing bombers carrying 3000 litres of suppressants and can be tasked in groups of two or more aircraft to increase overall effectiveness.

Scooping aircraft can scoop water from nearby suitable water sources, injecting retardant foam concentrate into the load of water. The use of these aircraft is in line with the chief officer's intent to use weight of attack for new-start fires to keep fires as small as possible.

The chief officer also outlined that the use of a special intelligence-gathering helicopter will provide additional capability and allow for early detection of fires with real-time intelligence and data being sent directly to regional operations centres.

This complements the Government's \$6.5 million investment for the emergency services State Operations Centre which will be in use by the end of this year. There is \$900 000 to expand the team of skilled staff with a permanent presence based out of the State Operations Centre, to provide a head-start for planning responses to all types of hazards that impact our state and activation of the centre in emergencies and minute-by-minute monitoring of hazards and rapid advice to commanders when planning incident responses.

In the context of the Prevention of Family Violence portfolio, I noted the tireless commitment of the Tasmanian Government to eliminate family and sexual violence. Since 2015, there has been an unprecedented investment in both prevention and response efforts, including over \$61 million in specific measures, in addition to \$19 million in direct funding and \$59 million in indirect funding each year, to deliver on our shared aim of eliminating family and sexual violence.

These efforts are underpinned by the Government's second action plan, Safe Homes, Families, Communities which outlines 40 actions across government departments that contribute to the Government's agenda for primary prevention and early intervention, strengthening the services system and holding perpetrators to account.

A stand-out intervention from the current action plan was the highly successful trial of electronic monitoring for family violence offenders. This trial demonstrated significant reductions in high-risk incidents, assaults, threats, stalking, property damage and allegations of emotional abuse. These results speak for themselves with regard to the success of technological intervention to prevent and reduce family violence incidents and harm.

That is why our election commitments and Budget include the provision of an additional \$2.4 million over two years to extend Tasmania's electronic monitoring of family violence perpetrators which has demonstrated its ability to provide extra safety and comfort to victims of survivors.

In addition, I noted the following comments in response to questions regarding demand for family and sexual violence support services. The minister advised that this Government has been proactive and responsive throughout the challenging times of the last 12 to 18 months. This is demonstrated through the delivery of our \$2.7 million COVID-19 support funding package to specialist family and sexual violence support services to assist in the response to an anticipated increase in family violence.

We were the first in Australia to announce dedicated funding to respond to family and sexual violence during the pandemic. This has since been reinforced through the allocation of the Australian Government funding to identify areas of high demand and further increase frontline service capacity.

It was most exciting to hear the minister announce we have now commenced the process of developing our third action plan to address family and sexual violence with consultation already under way. Through this process, the Government will continue to work

collaboratively with our stakeholders and the broader community to develop our next three-year plan.

This will be developed alongside the new national plan to reduce violence against women and their children, both of which are due for release in July 2022. This will build on our achievements to date and take a flexible approach to address emerging issues in areas of need, to continue to address the complex issues of family and sexual violence, delivering on our Government's strong plan to keep Tasmanians safe.

[3.24 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** - Mr Chair, I rise to make a contribution on this Output group. I had planned to speak only about Parks, which was the session I sat in on at the Estimates, but given the remarks made by the minister today in question time, I have to draw attention of the parliament to her misleading of the House.

This morning, in question time, when we were speaking about one of the output groups that is under examination now, which is Family Violence, the minister, even though she was talking about a Parks DD, took it upon herself to launch into an attack on me and a statement about the family violence funding and its cessation. I remind members of what Mrs Petrusma said this morning:

Yesterday, Ms White came into this House and said twice that I was asked - and I quote directly from Ms White, which is on *Hansard* - if I could confirm current annual funding of nearly \$15 million a year would appear in the following three years. She said that twice yesterday, that apparently, I was asked that question in Estimates. A simple search of *Hansard*, if she had bothered, would have shown that that question was not asked of me at all, anywhere, upstairs, downstairs -

It is unfortunate that the minister, herself, had not bothered to check. I have a copy of the *Hansard* here. If you go to Budget Paper No. 1 Volume 1 and look at page 54, you can see precisely what I am referring to, for those who might be following along at home. This is a question from Ms Siejka, Labor member in the upper House, Table 2.2, output group 5 - and for anyone following at home, that is Safe Homes, Families, Community. This is the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence's particular output group that was being scrutinised in the upper House.

Ms Siejka asked:

That output group shows the funding ceasing in line with the conclusion of the Safe Homes Plan. What is the expected funding required for the new plan that is due to be finalised in the next few months but has no Budget allocation?

That is a question specific to the minister about this line item, about the \$15 million and whether it would be recurrent. The minister gave a lengthy response, to which Ms Siejka followed up with a further question and asked:

Recognising that that work is still under way and there is consultation happening, are you able to confirm that the funding for the next plan will at least stay at the current levels?

Ms Petrusma said:

Yes, it won't be getting less.

**Mrs Petrusma** - I said a few words in between as well.

**Ms WHITE** - Yes, you did say a lot of words over the course of that time and anyone can see the *Hansard*. The point you made this morning is that if anyone had bothered to search the *Hansard*, and obviously you did not bother to search the *Hansard*, you would see that you were not asked that question. You were specifically asked that question. You were even told the table and the output group. The question from the member for Pembroke in the other place was specifically asking about the cessation of funding and whether it would stay the same or at current levels. You responded to that question, minister. That was the question put to the minister.

The fact is, there is a massive Budget black hole. Despite the minister saying there would be funding provided for across the forward Estimates, it is not in this Budget. It is another example of either the minister not telling the Premier, as the Treasurer, what is going on in her portfolio and, therefore, there is no funding allocated, or the Treasurer has deliberately left a big blank there to make his Budget bottom line look better. It is another massive black hole and it is in the area of the prevention of family violence. Could there be a worse situation than the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence leaving a massive black hole at a time we know there is extraordinary demand for a service like this, unfortunately.

I asked the minister to withdraw what she then went on to say, which was to say, 'All Ms White is doing is saying big, fat white lies'. You, Mrs Petrusma, lied. You did lie and I ask you to withdraw that and apologise. It is not true to say that you were not specifically asked that question. I have provided the *Hansard*. It is a record that shows you were specifically asked about Table 2.2 in output group 5, which has a \$15 million allocation for the specific line item of Safe Homes, Families, Communities: Tasmania's Action Plan for Family and Sexual Violence.

If we have to spell out in tiny detail for the minister, we will, but you have been caught out. You did not check the *Hansard* properly and you have come into this place and said something that is not true. I ask you to withdraw it and to apologise.

It is shameful that you were trying to get away with this, on an issue that is so important. There are clearly blanks across the forward Estimates for the prevention of family violence - zero, zero, zero in the out years - yet, you said in the Estimates hearing that '... it won't be getting any less.'. What is it? There is a black hole or you are funding it?

This is the tricky accounting of this Premier/Treasurer who claims that he is going to return the budget to surplus. We can hardly believe him because when we asked him that question again yesterday, he said it will return to surplus when he said it would. When? Before the election he said one thing and after the election he said another thing. It is very tricky from this Premier when he says that he will return the budget to surplus and the only answer he gives,

when he is asked a direct question about that, is to say he will return it to surplus when he said he would.

I ask: exactly when are we talking about? He said one thing before the election and one thing after it. There are massive budget black holes, including in this minister's output group for the prevention of family violence where there are no funding allocations across the forward Estimates beyond 2021-22 when the money runs out.

I want to talk also about Parks because, again, there is a number of stakeholders in the tourism sector who are incredibly disappointed in this Government. The promise you took to the election was to reinvest in our parks which are so iconic. They are beautiful places across Tasmania and they deserve our respect and investment. There was a package that was taken by this Government to the election that - the industry understood to be investment that would occur in this term of government. Yet the budget papers tell quite a different story.

New projects like Ben Lomond, a year-round destination, will not be complete until 2027; the Cape Bruny carpark and access upgrade will not be completed until 2027. That is not this term of government. What about the Cockle Creek camping and access upgrade? Let me guess, 2027. What about the Edge of the World Revitalisation: 2027. That will not even start until 2024. The Freycinet National Park new visitor gateway? It will not be complete until 2027. The Hastings Thermal Pool Revitalisation? That will not be done until 2024. The Maria Island Rediscovered Project; that will not be done until 2027. Mount Field National Park new arrival concourse, 2027. The Next Iconic Walk, 2026. The Tamar Island Wetlands boardwalk replacement, 2027.

There are others that will not be delivered in this term of government. These are the ones that stand out as the most shocking because these were the ones that were taken to this election and promised to the people of Tasmania as though they would be delivered within this term of government. They will not and this minister has not been able to explain why these projects have been delayed so long because there is an expectation, particularly in a visitor economy that is struggling today. We have seen unemployment data come out that shows Tasmania's unemployment rate is the worst in the country and a large part of that would be due to border closures impacting on New South Wales and Victorian visitation to our state which is affecting the Tasmanian visitor economy.

One of the reasons people come here is to visit these iconic destinations and this is the time to invest in them, to make sure that they not only meet the expectations of people who are visiting but they provide the best experience for Tasmanians and their families. This is the time they are quiet. This is the time you could be investing to upgrade them and yet we will not see these projects completed until after another election. It is a disgrace that this Government took so many promises to the most recent election that will not be delivered in this term when there were clear commitments made, promises given that simply will not be realised. This minister needs to stand up and demonstrate to the community why that is the case.

**Time expired.**



[3.34 p.m.]

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Mr Chair, I am delighted to speak today on Estimates Committee B in relation to my portfolios of Parks, the Prevention of Family Violence, and Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

First, regarding Ms White's comments on the Parks portfolio, this is the entirety of Labor's policy that they took to the election on Parks. This is our policy that we took. We have invested \$42 million in new infrastructure across the forward Estimates which all the industry has welcomed. They have embraced it. They know that our policy is powering regional economies. The hypocrisy of Labor coming in here and lecturing us when all they could come up with was a third of a page for an election policy. This is a substantive document which we will be delivering over the forward Estimates. We are working closely with the construction industry so that our infrastructure program can flex in and out.

If they come to us and they say to us to bring things forward, we will bring things forward because we want to provide the industry with capacity for increasing their work if they need the work. We are working with them with a pipeline of products that we can deliver if they come to us and say that they want to have it brought forward earlier.

Ms White is deliberately twisting words to mislead the public. It is becoming very clear. You cannot trust a word that Labor says in this place. We are seeing a pattern of behaviour from Ms White and her Labor colleagues where they come in here and they use dodgy words and deliberately mislead the parliament all for cheap political hits.

Yesterday, Ms White came into this place and stated that in Estimates I was asked if I, and I will quote again from yesterday's *Hansard*:

... could confirm current annual funding of nearly \$15 million a year would appear in the following three years.

I called a point of order after the first one. Then she insisted on saying it again the second time. I say again, she should have checked the *Hansard* because the *Hansard* from the Legislative Council does not show anywhere that I was asked a question, and I quote:

If I could confirm current annual funding of nearly \$15 million a year it would appear in the following three years.

That was not the question that I was asked.

**Ms White** - You were asked about a specific line item. That line item.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr CHAIR** - Order, members on the left.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Upstairs, the member for Pembroke, in her first question in relation to table 2.2, I gave quite a substantive answer with nothing in regard to what you have alleged was in there. In her second question she asked if the funding for the next plan will stay at the current level. The current level is \$26 million across three years.

I said, 'Well, it has stayed the same'. Our commitment is that the first action plan was \$26 million. The second action plan was \$26 million. Our commitment is again at least \$26 million will be available for the next action plan.

Ms White cannot keep on coming into this place and twisting the truth just to try to get political 'gotcha' moments and to misuse my answers and my responses to what was stated upstairs. This is not about whether I was asked a question in regard to funding or not, nor how I answered the question. It is about the misleading way that Ms White is formulating her questions all for a deliberate 'gotcha' moment. She cannot keep on doing it.

**Ms White** - You are caught out and instead of being gracious and apologising, you are doubling down.

**Mr CHAIR** - Order, Ms White.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - She did it earlier this week with Mr Ferguson. She misquoted Mr Ferguson as well. We have members come in here and try to misquote. Use the words that were said.

**Ms White** - He said 'insufficient' not 'inadequate'.

**Mr CHAIR** - Ms White, you asked for silence for your own contribution and I stopped the interjections. Please allow the minister to be heard in silence.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is like what she said in our Budget reply speech where she went on to deliberately mislead the parliament, claiming that things like car registration and power costs had, and I quote, '... sky-rocketed under this Government'. The opposite was the case. She repeated the same false claims in a media release which she slipped out under the cover of darkness at 7.30 p.m. The Premier did not use the term 'back in the black' in the Budget documents when it is right there on page 4 of the Budget speech. It is becoming clearer; you cannot and you should not rely on what Labor says in this place.

I want to go to the portfolio of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. The Tasmanian Government is very committed to supporting our outstanding police officers as they serve and protect to keep our community safe. This Budget provides \$348 million over the forward Estimates to Tasmania Police as part of our plan to keep Tasmanians safe. Our crime statistics demonstrate the impact of our plan. I was delighted to report that Tasmania Police has recorded 24 089 total offences in the 2020-21 year, which is the lowest number recorded in eight years, and a reduction of 13 per cent on 2019-20. This demonstrates the profound effect that additional police numbers are having on crime. This is due to the Government's commitment to increasing police numbers by 308 police officers, with Tasmania Police now able to bolster police numbers right across the state, and with the Commissioner responsible for determining the structure of the police service and the allocation of their duties.

In regard to more police officers for Launceston, this year alone we have had 19 new officers posted to Launceston police station. These officers are now out on the beat in the northern district, keeping this community safe. In the Launceston area alone there has been a significant reduction in crime. It is not because of COVID-19; we have not been in lockdown in Launceston. It is because of the hard work and additional police officers that we have put in Launceston.

In Launceston total offences are down 18 per cent, home burglaries are down 20 per cent, robbery offences are down 65 per cent, stolen motor vehicles are down 16 per cent, offences against property are down 21 per cent, motor vehicle burglaries are down 38 per cent. We are talking about what the people who live in Launceston think about our hardworking police force. The fact is the police satisfaction levels in Launceston provide evidence that the people of Launceston recognise the fact that police are doing an outstanding job. With an 88 per cent rating of professionalism versus the national average of 85 per cent, general satisfaction with police is 84 per cent, which is higher than the national rate of 81 per cent, night time safety at home is 90 per cent, with the national at 89 per cent. I want to congratulate the police officers who are working in Launceston. They are doing an outstanding job in bringing down the crime stats in their area.

We are providing an additional \$10.6 million in funding for the country police station relief policy and upgrading 46 police houses across the state through our investment of \$21.7 million. This policy will ensure that all planned absences at country stations will be backfilled from the very first day of the absence. Where an unplanned absence occurs, for example sick leave, a relief member will be assigned to backfill after five days. With regard to the safety measures at country police stations, a risk assessment has been undertaken in consultation with the Police Association. This has resulted in a number of minimum-security measures being identified for new country police residence' builds, including CCTV, sensor lights, deadlocks, security screens fitted to the front door, as well as window security.

Installation of security measures on current residences has already commenced at Alonnah, Richmond, Oatlands, Geeveston, Dover and Kempton. As well, all minimum security measures are anticipated to be installed by 30 June 2022. The Government, the parliament and our community wants to ensure we do everything we can to make sure that our children and young people remain safe and protected.

I noted the questions that were asked during Estimates regarding the national redress scheme. In regard to alleged abuses identified in redress applications, I reiterate that none of these are employed by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. On 23 November 2020 the Premier announced a commission of inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's responses to child sexual abuse in institutional settings in relation to the management of historical allegations of child sexual abuse. We believe that there is no higher responsibility than to protect vulnerable Tasmanians, which is why the Tasmanian Government has allocated \$1.5 million to establish a historic complaints review process. This has enabled the establishment of a joint review team. The joint review team has so far implemented protocols for the exchange of information between Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management and Justice for working with vulnerable people checks, investigation and notification of child sexual abuse guidelines and an MOU between the Department of Communities Tasmania and Tasmania Police to ensure the appropriate exchange of information and action occurs.

The Government is also committed to ensuring bushfire- and flood-safe communities across Tasmania, as well as supporting our inspiring and dedicated career and volunteer TFS, SES emergency services personnel. This is why we are investing \$125.6 million over 2021-22 Budget and forward Estimates for safety, bushfire and flood reduction. This includes extensive support to our volunteers of \$1.5 million per annum in additional funding for the health and wellbeing of emergency service personnel and volunteers, \$2 million to roll out enhanced

standard equipment for volunteer brigades and units, including for personal protective equipment and communications.

There is \$500 000 per annum to continue our successful grants program for Tasmania's Volunteer Fire Brigades and State Emergency Service units, \$250 000 in 2021-22 for new generation defibrillators for volunteer fire trucks and \$2.4 million to establish emergency service liaison roles in the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to work with local communities on recruitment and retention of fire fighters and SES volunteers.

We are also supporting the recruitment of 46 new fire fighters this year to boost our front-line career firefighters to 353. These additional staff are boosting numbers across the state, including 10 additional staff to the north west. These additional career firefighters will provide an opportunity to review crewing arrangements and planning for the additional day crew. I am advised that consultation will commence with staff at Burnie and Devonport and with volunteers from surrounding stations over the course of the next couple of months to ensure a smooth transition upon arrival of our next new firefighter graduates in mid-November.

The Government wants to ensure the future of our fire and emergency services, which is why we have commenced consultation on the development of the new contemporary Fire Service Act 1979 as part of the Government's plan to keep Tasmanians safe. This consultation includes all components of the Bushfire Mitigation Measures bill. We have listened to their feedback from this process and are now ensuring that this work is incorporated into the review of the new Fire Services Act.

If required, we will ensure that consultation is extended on the Treasury Options Papers so that members of our community can have adequate time to respond to this important piece of work to future-proof our fire and emergency services.

In relation to my portfolio as Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Tasmanian Government is committed to eliminating family and sexual violence and to strengthening the service system to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of people affected by family sexual violence, particularly women and their children.

Tasmania Police is integral to Tasmania's response to family violence. That is why, in addition to the formal training and modules taught to Tasmania Police, police officers, as part of their cadet training as well as officers, undergo on-the-job coaching in relation to family violence response. Every family violence incident is reviewed by a supervisor and feedback provided as required, meaning there is a constant training loop in this area.

Family violence is the only crime type that requires supervised validation, demonstrating the importance that Tasmania Police places on the response to family violence. I noted the comments by Ms Haddad earlier this afternoon and I assure her if she has a constituent who claims that a police officer's response is not adequate, if there is any evidence or an incident she wants to report to myself or the Commissioner, that incident will be investigated. Tasmania Police wear body cameras and there are cameras in the police stations.

The data on the body-worn cameras does not expire so they can go back if there is a specific date or time when the alleged unsatisfactory response happened. It can be checked to help clarify the situation. The Commissioner is very happy to ensure that the response by all police officers is consistent.

To assist with this, a family violence forum was held last month with representatives from the community sector coming together with police to discuss achievements to date as well as future opportunities to improve family violence prevention and response methods. To assist our efforts, the Government has a strong focus on improving data collection to better understand the prevalence of family violence in Tasmania and the nexus with clients accessing support.

This is why, since I have been minister, the department of Communities is now leading a dedicated DATA project, or Demand Assess Track and Act, to review data reporting capability across our government and non-government specialist family and sexual violence services. This work will improve our capacity for monitoring need and developing evidence-based policy and will support both government and non-government services reporting capability for Commonwealth funding initiatives. The DATA project will also contribute to our understanding of demand across funded services, many of whom have reported an increasing level of case complexity during and after the pandemic. We are regularly consulting with stakeholders to monitor this situation.

As well, in response to this, since the beginning of COVID-19 in March 2020, this Government, in conjunction with the Australian Government, has allocated nearly \$7.5 million specifically to respond to increased demand on family sexual violence services.

The Family Violence Council Support Service is an integral part of our Safe at Home system response to victim-survivors of family violence. I have had the pleasure of meeting with both the southern and northern teams to hear about the invaluable work they do in supporting women and children experiencing family violence. I gratefully thank all the staff for their outstanding commitment and passion. I am delighted that additional funding has been provided in this Budget to assist their outstanding work. I am also advised, in response to a question by Ms O'Byrne, that in the adult program, the FDE is 16.1, including team leaders, and 12.5, excluding the team leaders.

We all deserve to feel safe, respected and valued in our workplace. The Tasmanian government takes issues such as sexual harassment and other inappropriate behaviours extremely seriously and is committed to ensuring safe and harassment-free workplaces for all Tasmanians. The Government has already taken significant action under Safe Homes, Families, Communities, Tasmania's action plan for Family and Sexual Violence 2019-22 which includes strategies such as Our Watch, Workplace Equality and Respect standards being implemented across government departments.

Earlier this year, the Premier also established an independent review of parliamentary culture. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is also committed to progressing implementation of the recommendations of the national respect at work report to prevent sexual harassment in workplaces and further measures to address sexual harassment. It will also be considered as part of our next family and sexual violence action plan which is due to launch in July 2022.

To go back to my portfolio of Parks, I would like to reflect on our conversation that we had in regard to COVID-19 shutdowns. During the COVID-19 shutdown, Parks ably stepped up and worked diligently during this difficult time undertaking project works as part of funding for COVID-19 response and recovery measures. They really did a lot of work to make sure the national parks and reserves were ready for the welcome return of visitors.

I thank Mr Ellis for his contribution today on the next iconic walk. It is a fantastic walk that is being developed. That is why we will be doubling our investment to \$40 million to ensure that this exciting project becomes a reality, especially as it is going to be such a huge economic driver for the west coast. When this project delivers a benefit ratio of 12.71 for the west coast it will be a massive injection, especially because it will see so many extra jobs in the area and it will also add to the growing suite of great tourism products and experiences that are under development, including the mountain bike riding in Queenstown and Horsetail Falls.

This Government is committed to driving transparency and continuous improvement. Last week I was also pleased to announce reforms to the Parks and Wildlife Service Reserve Activity Assessment process, which will deliver a dedicated statutory environmental impact and planning assessment process within the framework of the National Parks and Reserves Management Act.

Importantly, these reforms will also deliver an independent assessment panel to assess and review proposals against the relevant management plan, a third-party appeal process and cost recovery for RAA assessments, publication of leases and licences over reserve land to increase transparency. It will remove duplication in the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act and the ability to seek administrative review under the Judicial Review Act 2000 will also remain.

Mr Chair, our commitment to protecting the Tasmanian Wilderness and World Heritage area is further evidenced by a recent release of the draft TWWHA financial plan.

**Time expired.**

[3.54 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Chair, nothing is more precious to Tasmanians who love our wild places than parks and reserves and the glorious wilderness, the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness Area. We have people in this state who are prepared to do everything peaceful that it takes to make sure that these places stay properly protected and in public hands.

On that note, I am so happy to announce the victory of the conservationists who have been vindicated by the Supreme Court's ruling on Lake Malbena, that noxious, disgraceful proposal that has privatised a whole island in the World Heritage Area, gifted it at \$80 a week to the Hacketts and is seeking to permanently damage the values of the World Heritage Area through the proposed development process the Hacketts are seeking to achieve.

The people have won and there is no doubt. This proposal was found by the Supreme Court to have errors in the granting of the permit to Wild Drake, the developers, who want to regularly fly helicopters over the wilderness area and put a permanent standing camp, so-called, on the Halls Island wilderness site. The justices have ordered the matter to be sent back to the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal. The tribunal will need to reassess the proposal again.

This is an enormous win for people who have been fighting for a long time and I want to publicly congratulate the Environmental Defenders Office and the lawyers there, particularly Claire Bookless, who took this to the court on behalf of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, the Tasmanian National Parks Association and anglers and walkers in their thousands. They have

voted, spoken and worked so hard to make sure there will be an end to the Hacketts' ownership on this island and this terrible blight on Tasmania.

That is exactly what they have done under the mismanagement of Parks, who have gifted this whole island to the Hacketts, who now describe it as 'ownership'. They have been given, under the lease and licence conditions, and exclusive licence of that island. That licence enables them to install cameras for any use without approval. They are allowed to evict anyone from visiting the island. If a person goes into our World Heritage protected area and puts a foot on the island without writing a letter and seeking the authority and permission of Daniel Hackett, they can be charged with trespass and they can be evicted. It is disgraceful. It is absolutely shameful.

This win in the full bench of the Supreme Court is a true victory for the people. It is only the start of the continuing campaign by people in Tasmania to understand what is going on, to realise that the Liberals have utterly moved the goalposts and they are doing everything possible to rewrite management plans and to find loopholes so that developers can privatise the cheapest real estate in the world.

Mr Hackett has a huge level of ownership over this island and he describes it as 'his' island. He says it is 'our' historic hut and he congratulates himself. He congratulated himself in *The Examiner*, saying that:

We have assisted with the proposed listing of the historic hut precinct and facilitated site visits for experts.

That is really nice Mr Hackett has decided he will allow experts onto a publicly owned island in the middle of the wilderness area but he has no right to do that.

The right he has been given is illegal. In the court of public opinion, you cannot give away publicly owned land that is a wilderness area of global significance. We have signed up to an international convention. This is Tasmanians' land to manage for the planet in perpetuity. You can be very sure that all those 1343 people who made their submission in the first place to the Central Highlands Council and who know that helicopters and privatisations are a noxious debasement of wilderness, who are utterly against the process that is in train and who understand that retaining public land in wilderness areas and parks and reserves around Tasmania is in the best interest of the public who own those lands and have a responsibility to keep them in perpetuity, will not be silenced. Neither will the conservationists, neither will the anglers and fishers, and neither the people who are standing up against fish farm developments despite the spin the Government is going to put all around the north and the north-west coasts of the island unless people stand up against them.

The people of Rosny Hill will not be silenced either. The anti-protest laws that are being proposed are draconian and they are morally reprehensible. They are dangerous because they are essentially an opportunity for this Government to incite hatred and violence towards peaceful protesters. They are being used as a tool to virtue signal to people in the Liberals' constituency who have a cultural antagonism to peaceful protesters who stand up for the environment. We have people who have been signalled to who think it is okay to - it is a continuation of the spin which has been used and the intention of these anti-protest laws, as proposed by the Government is to lock up people and to keep them out of publicly-owned lands, even when people are trashing them. That is why we are there in the first place.

It is clear from what is happening on the mainland in the markets campaign that you can do everything you think you can to hide the truth but the truth will always come out. The truth is coming out about fish farms and the damage they are doing to the marine environment, to the welfare of the animals that are caught up in nets or shot in their thousands by fish farm companies, to the communities who are losing the waterways and the diversity of the waterways that they have always lived with; everything that is happening in this regard is the responsibility of the Government and the failure to regulate.

Where a government fails, people will stand up and that is what is happening in Tasmania. It is sad that the Government has decided - and this is a mean task - to open wounds in the community and to keep them open. What the Liberal Party is doing is a tragedy. Where there is an opportunity to build bridges, you burn them down. Where there is an opportunity to make peace with communities, you break it up. People who peacefully protest do not want to be doing that. They do not want to have to do that.

It is the job of the Government to keep the environment protected. It is the job of the Government to give everybody a fair say in how industries are managed instead of picking winners and losers. It is the job of the Government to look after senseless and beautiful and innocent animals. That is the job of the Government. That is what people expect the Government to do and when the Government fails, the people will stand up and we have not even started yet, so get used to it.

**Estimates for Minister for Parks, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management agreed to.**

## **DIVISIONS 2, 10 and 11**

(Minister for Small Business, Minister for Women, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Racing)

[4.05 p.m.]

**Mr WINTER** - Mr Chair, I will speak mostly about my portfolio area of racing, also noting that Ms Finlay is unable to be with us today, so I will touch on a little bit of her portfolio of small business. I am sure some of my colleagues will as well.

Like the minister, Ms Howlett, I am passionate about Tasmania's racing industry. I believe in it, I have been a fan of it, I have been an attendee, a participant, and having owned racehorses for about 10 years. Like her, I am excited by the industry and I am enjoying this role. I know how much the participants love the animals and they love all the aspects of the industry.

We have a proud and rich history of racing across the state, all the codes across the regions. We have had a history of producing great athletes, great people and an industry that, at its best, is thriving. It is not thriving at the moment though; it is in a state of disarray. The industry is hurting. It is hurting because of the issues with the Office of Racing Integrity it is being brought into question. What the industry needs at this time is some very strong leadership. What we saw at Estimates for racing, I did not think, appeared to be strong leadership.

It is quite extraordinary when it seems most participants at the Estimates table had received, either during Estimates or just before, a text message telling us that Eriksson was



telling people the review will not be into the operations of Tasracing but just roles and functions. He must have missed that clarification from the minister in charge. Ms Howlett may have actually received the text as well and agreed that the text had occurred. That was happening on the day. The CEO of Tasracing was apparently at a racing function telling people that the review that the minister had announced would be into the roles and functions of Tasracing, would not actually be into the roles and functions of Tasracing. That is what the CEO was apparently saying.

This was raised by Ms O'Connor at the table and certainly it was not denied. That speaks to a real problem, I think, with the CEO of Tasracing and the Minister for Racing being at odds about what this review even is but it is also not surprising. We believe Ms Howlett pre-emptively announced this review into the Racing Regulation Act 2004 on the day she did because she was aware of the major problems within the Office of Racing Integrity. We know from Estimates that she was first broadly informed back in June that issues had been raised. This was dressed up to be a review and it was to be into the act.

Now, whether that was just dressed up to be a review only into the act, or later the minister changed her mind is unclear. What became clear later that week was that the minister was now going to review ORI, the Office of Racing Integrity and Tasracing as well as the act. That was due to pressure, I think probably predominantly from the racing clubs in Hobart. The three codes put out a statement to say that they wanted to see a review into the functioning of those bodies. I think quite rightly. They know how important integrity is; well, integrity is important to everything, but in racing it really is the lifeblood of the industry. You need to have confidence that the industry you are participating in has integrity. When it is called into question, we obviously have issues.

What was clear, again when we pressed issues in Estimates about this, was that the investigation into Mr Tony Latham which had been announced by the department, certainly is not going to investigate. It quite specifically said that the appointment of Christopher Knight would not be included after the minister originally appeared to indicate to Estimates that it would be. Then later the deputy secretary corrected her and said no, it would not be.

The scope of the investigation into the former director of racing appears at best unclear. I suppose the biggest problem is whether it is unclear to those who are doing the investigation, like the whole review into Tasracing in ORI. What is the scope? It appears the CEO of Tasracing and the minister have a very different view on what the review is. The minister is in charge of this portfolio and she needs to be in charge.

Anyone can read the *Hansard* or watch the Estimates. It was not clear in Estimates who was in charge of this. The majority of the questions were taken by the deputy secretary. The minister was unwilling to answer even questions about when she knew about the investigations. Her deputy secretary took the questions.

I have to thank Ms O'Connor who correctly pointed out to me that I was not questioning the deputy secretary. I was supposed to be questioning the minister. It felt like the only answers that were coming were from the deputy secretary at the time, which is frustrating. The minister has overall responsibility for this very important industry. It appeared as though she was leaning very heavily on the deputy secretary.

A raft of issues have been raised through the media about the state of the racing industry. In April 2018 John King was appointed to be the director of racing. He was removed in January this year, pending an outcome of the issues around the Griffin matter. That was the first departure. Then Tony Latham was appointed. He is also a former police officer. During his time at ORI he had appointed Christopher Knight. Christopher Knight was a police officer who had been suspended from duty in March 2020 following an internal investigation into his association with another person and included the continued maintenance of that association after he was directed by a senior officer to cease that association.

It is quite a tale going through what has happened in ORI. These are only the things we know. What has been reported is very serious. A question on notice asked:

When did Tony Latham cease to act in the role of director of racing?

The answer:

With the commencement of a period of leave effective on 26 August 2021.

It seemed extraordinary that he was still there on 26 August given the issues and allegations related to the Tasmania Cup, for example. We heard there were concerns being raised as early as June about the activities of management within ORI.

What does this mean? There is a big mess. It is up to the minister to clean up integrity in racing. The minister has a huge job. I hope she is up to the task. It is critical for the industry that we get these issues right.

Mr Eriksson's decision to inform participants at that event that there was not going to be a full review into Tasracing as the minister had directed is of concern. It follows concerns raised - this has been in the media, which is not ideal - at the Launceston Greyhound Club. There was a complaint made in relation to Mr Eriksson who had addressed one of the representatives in a manner that can only be described as inappropriate and unprofessional. That complaint was partially upheld.

Mr Eriksson, we understand, has been directed by his board to undertake communications training. I have seen the minutes of the meeting and I think it is fair to say that there is a relationship issue between the Launceston Greyhound Club and Tasracing following this. It is going to be difficult for that to be repaired. Again, the minister must try to resolve some of these issues.

We are on to the seventh director of Racing Integrity in five years, who has recently commenced and I truly do wish him well.

This follows the removal of two directors this year and the loss of more than 20 staff since 2018. There is no regulatory veterinarian, no permanent stewards or chief stewards for greyhounds and thoroughbreds. Race meetings in Launceston and Hobart have been cancelled in the last 12 months due to what can only be described as poor track management.

ORI staff told the ABC that the office is dysfunctional and morale has hit rock bottom. One staff member told the ABC they had been asked to work 15-hour shifts without a break

and perform duties well above their skill set. It appears that Racing Integrity is seriously under threat and the new director has a huge role but he needs the support of the minister.

We need not only a review of the functions of those two bodies but a full investigation of what has been happening within this body. When you have workers saying that morale has hit rock bottom, allegations about the handling of the Tasmania Cup, which was a national news story in racing terms and an embarrassment, we need to have a full and proper investigation into what has happened.

The scope of it is concerning. While the minister initially said that the appointment of Christopher Knight while he was suspended from Tasmania Police on a return to work program was to be included, that was corrected by the deputy secretary to say that they were not. The scope of the investigation is very unclear.

The call from the racing clubs for a broader review was extraordinary. It is not often you see clubs taking such a strong stance but they are at their wit's end. They know how important it is to get these issues right and they are not right at the moment.

I wanted to talk about Small Business but I was in the other committee during the Estimates hearing. I read the good questioning from Ms Finlay in relation to the handling of the Small Business portfolio. There has been a lot of confusion about payroll tax treatment in relation to JobKeeper last year, with 62 businesses having to pay payroll tax for that financial year because of the treatment.

The minister initially said it was exempt. It was not that it was waived, which is a big difference. There was a difference for 62 businesses. The lack of clarity both on the fact sheet which was changed to put a clear statement at the end of it, explaining that it is not exempt, which was not there on the initial fact sheet.

This issue came to us but from the financial services sector, from an accountant, who had been providing advice to clients that it was exempt. It was not only a single business. This was impacting multiple businesses. We found out that 62 businesses were impacted by that.

Recently we have raised concerns about the level of support available to small businesses that are in the tourism, tourism-impacted or related sectors. Those businesses have been telling us they have been struggling for well over a month now. We have been pointing this out that whole time. The initial response was that the \$20 million fund was enough. We spoke to businesses who told us the support was either not available to them because the criteria were incorrectly set, or it was so insignificant that it would only last them maybe a week and then they were back to square one.

The initial announcement was so undercooked it was never going to be enough. That was the point we continued to make over and over in this place and you complained that we did small business MPIs too many times - well, I make no apologies for it.

These small businesses were struggling and we were happy to stand up for and stand with them and tell their stories until the Government finally changed its tune and announced a package which is - well, certainly, lots of anything would have been superior to the first package. It is still not JobSaver which is what Labor had been arguing for the whole time. It appeared that the not-so-aggressive letter from the Deputy Premier to the Prime Minister was

arguing for JobSaver as well. It is not entirely clear after he busily congratulated the Prime Minister on a whole raft of matters.

We have seen the results today of not having adequate support for businesses during a really difficult time and it has come out through the jobs data. During August there was a massive rise in unemployment, 600 jobs were lost, 2000 full-time jobs. Tasmania now has the highest level of unemployment in the country and that is above New South Wales and Victoria who are locked down.

New South Wales, which has been locked down now for months but has JobSaver, has a package that has been federally supported along with the state government. Their jobs data is now looking better than ours because they are getting adequate support and our businesses here have been left and hung out to dry for that whole month.

Meanwhile, in here we are hearing time after time the July job stats going, 'Look how well things were going in July'. People were struggling during August; they are struggling now, and the support they were given was simply was not good enough and the numbers are in, the proof is there. This was the reality. People were being laid off; people were losing their jobs.

It is not just losing their jobs but it is the underemployment rate. Youth unemployment went to double figures for August - 10.3 per cent. The underemployment rate went up to 8.4 per cent. We are talking about underemployment: that is people losing shifts. They are losing shifts at their work because the boss is losing revenue and that starts to move down into casual workers who, we know, do not have the job security that full-time workers have.

The Government should have listened to Labor sooner on small business support. I still cannot believe the hand-wringing that we heard, the lack of support, and the lack of realisation of what was happening during that time but that is what happened. That is what happened for that month and I hope that the industry can recover. We know they are hanging on. That is what they are saying to us at the moment, that is what they are saying publicly and I am sure it is what they are saying to the Government as well.

They need to hang on now until they get to the summer season where we certainly hope it will be safe to reopen the borders and we will see a return to a closer-to-normal life for Tasmanians, Tasmanian workers and businesses so we can get back to the fantastic tourism industry that we have been telling people to invest in for 20 years. That is all that we all want, I am sure.

There are a huge number of small businesses in my electorate of Franklin that rely on the aquaculture industry and the salmon industry. It is not just the direct employment or the direct jobs from that industry, it is all of the contractors, the small businesses and people who support the industry. The announcement today was extremely poorly consulted in that we understand that companies were called late last night, in one case, about 8 p.m., to inform them of this 10-point plan. Talk about a lack of consultation and a lack of respect for the industry.

The industry will work through this because they are a talented group of people. They are an innovative industry and they will work through this, I am sure, but it would be great to see them treated with a higher level of respect than they have been in the last 24 hours.

**Time expired.**

[4.25 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Chair, I want to address the area of the Women's portfolio. Is anybody speaking on behalf of -

**Ms Archer** - I will.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Just checking that somebody will be doing it. It is difficult, with members in the upper House, to go through the scrutiny. That is great.

There are two issues I wanted to touch on. We canvassed a number of things in the Women's portfolio. One of the issues with the Women's portfolio is, historically, there are not a lot of very tangible things the Women's portfolio is responsible for. There are predominantly the women on boards and a number of initiatives toward increasing women's participation in male-dominated areas of work. We also asked about the scholarship program and who is able to access that. We received an answer that six scholarships for the company directors offered last year went to women in the private sector. One of the issues we are interested in is where women in the public sector are going to get their professional development, how that is guided and where they may be encouraged to choose.

The first issue we raised came out of a concern about an issue that was raised in the upper House. There is a strong campaign across Australia for gender budgets. Australia used to lead the world in gender budgeting. The federal Liberal Government cut that when they came in. Since then, we have had a bit of a document that lists a few things that we do for women, 'aren't we great?', as opposed to what we have been calling for, which is a full gender impact statement. That is what was originally released in Australia in 1996 and has been modelled by countries around the world. When I was doing some work in the women's sector internationally, they would commence by saying that Australia is leading the nation in gender budgeting. We had to apologetically say that was once the case but not so much any more.

The issue we have been raising recently, and members of the upper House have as well - I notice Ms Forrest has made a number of comments - is the need for a gender budget. A gender budget is different from a gender statement and it is different from a list of, 'here are things that we are doing for women', which we seem to be seeing across the nation. We raised this because, when the minister was speaking on Estimates in the upper House she was asked about gender budgeting, we were trying to get a commitment to advocacy, that there would be a gender budget within our next Tasmanian budget.

I was pleased to see that she suggested she would be advocating for a gender budget. That was very positive but then, when you read through the Estimates, the minister was also asked at that stage about men's policy in that. Her answer was, 'Well, our gender budget does include men in it'. My question to her was about trying to get an understanding of what she understood a gender budget to be. The answer we received left me a little less than satisfied. The minister said:

The Government's committed to the full participation of women and girls in all aspects of life. We are committed to creating a more inclusive Tasmania, increases in financial security, safety, health, wellbeing and gender equality.

I knew this was a brief that was well written. It goes on:

In relation to a specific gender budget statement, I am aware this has occurred in other jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth recently. During the budget speech, the Premier outlined a number of initiatives in this Budget targeted at improving opportunities for women.

I was able to elaborate on this during my budget contribution and look forward to discussing matters throughout the Estimates process here today with you here today. I was asked about that matter in the Legislative Council as well. I recognise this is not just a matter for women. The Government will continue to explore new -

I did interrupt to get some clarity, and the answer was, 'The gender budget specifies how much of a budget supports individuals, cohorts, men, women and non-binary sectors.'. I came away feeling a little less satisfied with the minister's commitment to a genuine gender budget, as opposed to a list of, 'here are some projects we do for women'. When the budget comes out and we get our regional breakup, I am assuming what they are planning is all of a one-pager that says, 'here's how women are absolutely fabulously taken care of in the budget'.

A gender budget is something different. Gender budgeting or gender proofing is the process whereby we proactively integrate gender equality into the mainstream policies, programs, projects, institutional mechanisms and budgets, and address gender inequalities through gender-specific measures for and with women, and men and other sectors as well. It is specifically about making sure that process exists. There is an assumption that policy-makers make and, unfortunately, was an assumption the minister seems to have made: that work and budgets are gender neutral. It has been proven that gender differentials are frequently not recognised, and that those assumptions made in policy-making include significant biases in favour of existing unequal gender relations.

Gender-proofing or gender budgeting is based on solid analysis of the current situation with the use of proper data and statistics to ensure the policies and practices are not based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes and does not replace specific gender equality policies.

It is a complementary strategy that enhances the accumulative effects of both policies. The aim would be to have a significant element in weighing and recommending policy options, ensuring that the recommended options contain no legal, economic, social or cultural constraints. The reason that it is important is that when we have asked how budgets impact women in the past we had the wonderful comment by the Prime Minister which followed this question: How does your budget support women? There is money for roads and women drive on roads and therefore it is a gender win for women.

It is about fundamentally understanding the way the economic structures in our budget work so that women are given that level of equality and engagement because women are particularly vulnerable and they are hit harder by government policies for a number of reasons. A big part of that is the insecurity of women's work. It is the underemployment of women. In employed work they pay less tax and they pay less superannuation because of the nature and the structure of their working environments so that is a significant challenge.

Australia led the way back in 1996. There are now gender budgeting exercises taking place in more than 40 countries around the world. A request to this Government is not that you do a little statement saying: here are a number of projects for women. It is actually a proper gender budgeting process that unpicks the structural inequities within our economy, within our budget, to ensure that women are getting a fair and understood process within that.

The reason that it matters is that when you start looking at the ways the Government is approaching women and women in work -

We raised the questions around the way that women were being supported and the government strategies. These are not bad things to do but in isolation they do not resolve the problem. It seems to be that we will fix the issue for women in work by putting women into male-dominated areas where they get paid more. That does not unpick the fact that industries that have historically been more populated by women are fundamentally underpaid, unfair and are more likely to be part time and more likely to be insecure. If you think that the only way that you can resolve the issue for women in the workforce is to say that we will get them into men's jobs and that will make it better, it does not resolve anything. We have seen that historically over work definitions in the past. One of the easiest examples to understand is that when women were first being employed in the banking sector, men used to be tellers. When women became tellers, men became financial managers in banks. You can put women into the area but then what you have to manage is the way that the industry reassesses its gender construct and changes the performance, the outcomes and the economic benefits and security of work for men.

It is one of the issues when we talk about women's representation in parliament. We have a lot more women in parliament, more so in some countries than others. I know many countries that do not have any women in parliament. The key is not just women getting elected to parliament. The key is for women becoming ministers, becoming leaders. The key is how you progress women through those ranks. We find that roles are reassigned when women go into workplaces. We need to make sure that if we are doing a genuine assessment and are genuinely trying to change the way that women are engaged in work, it is not just about saying that you can learn to be an electrician and that will make it better. It is about asking: what do we do with the childcare industry to make sure that the work women do there is recognised? Do we fundamentally agree that all we have to do is put women into men's work? Or, if men start doing childcare, will we suddenly pay childcare workers more because men deserve more pay for it?

We need to look at the nature of the workforce, the nature of the way we recompense and realise that it is gendered. When budgets are done by governments, many of the decisions that are made are gendered. A gender budget would be fantastic if the Government would do it but, given that the minister believes that a gender budget is one that just includes women, I really encourage her to take some time to understand the way a gender budget might work. We do not want a gender statement; we do not want a list of things given to women separate to a proper, cohesive understanding of the structural inequality and inequities that exist within our work, within government, within our financial and economic structures that means that when we have pandemics, when we have major impacts on life, it is women who bear the brunt because their work is not secure, their work is not safe and their work is not valued.

**Time expired.**

[4.35 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** - I am pleased to speak today on behalf of the Minister for Small Business, Sport and Recreation, Women and Racing, given she is in the other place, in response to her Budget Estimates hearings last week. These are important portfolio areas so I am very pleased to speak on her behalf.

First I thank members for their contributions. As the minister made clear, in the portfolio of Small Business, Tasmanian small businesses make up 97 per cent of businesses in Tasmania. They are a critical part of our economy and will continue to play a significant role in the state's economic recovery from COVID-19. During the peak of COVID-19, the small business unit administered the Government's \$80 million small business assistance packages, which included providing grants to over 14 000 individual businesses, equating to over 21 000 individual grants.

During the Estimates hearing the minister spoke at length about Business Tasmania, as the Tasmanian Government's first contact point for small businesses. Our Business Tasmania service continues to make it easy for business owners and operators to find the information they need, providing an exceptional service to our small business community. For example - and this was raised during Estimates - the team provides businesses and organisations with educational support and advice about the Check in TAS app. Business Tasmania is available by phone, online or face-to-face.

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 Business Tasmania handled 6022 phone calls from businesses regarding COVID-19-related queries, such as Check in TAS app, COVID-19-safe events, general business queries and how to access a range of support programs and services. We are very pleased with how businesses and the community have adopted Check in TAS. I think all members will agree that when we are attending events it is becoming very, very common to just find the Check in TAS app. It is very pleasing going into businesses to see people using it.

There has been a total of more than 40 million individual check ins across 31 088 venues until 15 September this year. I am advised that we are now seeing more than 650 000 check ins each weekday. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has continued to receive calls from Tasmanians wishing to start a new business. As part of our 2021-22 State Budget, our Government is providing an additional \$800 000 over four years to Business Tasmania, to assist it to better support small businesses more quickly. We want Business Tasmania to be a first point of contact when small businesses need help, when they are first established, or when they want to expand.

All of the support provided by the small business unit and supporting Tasmania's small businesses is underpinned by the Business Growth Strategy 2019-2023. During the Estimates hearing the Minister for Small Business announced that the Tasmanian Government's new COVID-19 small business advice and financial guidance program will open on Monday 27 September. The new COVID-19 small business advice and financial guidance program aims to provide eligible small businesses with access to specialist financial and other business advice services, to assist businesses recover, transition, grow or apply other strategies to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The development of this program has been informed by consultation with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Tasmanian Small Business Council, regional



chambers of commerce and Enterprise Centre Tasmania's business advisers. Another priority for the small business minister over the coming months, which was also discussed during Estimates, is the development of the \$2 million small business incubator and accelerator pilot program, which will support Tasmanians to create sustainable start-up and small businesses through private sector partnership, specialist advice and support.

The Government is currently investigating what programs already exist in Tasmania and the gaps that need to be filled in this space. This process will ensure that Tasmanian businesses have every opportunity to thrive.

Finally, the minister was asked about the very important mental health support that has been provided to small businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding of \$1 million has been allocated as part of a broader mental health support program contained within the \$20 million COVID-19 Small Business Sustainability and Recovery package

The \$1 million, under the Mental Health Support Program is being delivered in three parts. Firstly, Lifeline Tasmania, Minding Your Business Program: this is funding of \$280 000 allocated to Lifeline Tasmania to develop the Minding Your Business Program that commenced in mid-October 2020. The program will deliver 1000 mental health support placements to small business owners and employees.

The second, for Mental Health Council of Tasmania with funding of \$150 000 which is provided to the Department of Health for the Mental Health Council of Tasmania to encourage small business owners and employees in Tasmania to proactively consider workplace mental health and wellbeing.

Third, the industry peak bodies. The funding of \$125 000 has been provided to the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council in partnership with Rural Alive and Well for their Stay Afloat initiative. The program promotes mental health support networks through a dedicated outreach officers who takes both a reactive and proactive approach to mental health support.

Funding of \$125 000 has been allocated to the Tasmanian Hospitality Association to deliver industry specific mental health support to the hospitality sector in Tasmania and funding of \$100 000 was committed to the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania to deliver industry specific mental health support to the tourism businesses in Tasmania.

Our Government is investing in ensuring we have resilient, adaptable and healthy small businesses that can operate in this COVID-19 environment and we continue to work with our stakeholders, the TTCI and the Tasmanian Small Business Council to ensure we get it right.

Moving to the Women's portfolio. Our Government is working to ensure women and girls can fully participate in our economic, social, political and community life. As the minister made clear during Estimates, we are not only talking about improving life for women through our Government's policies and actions, we are creating real change. This has never been more important as we recover from COVID-19. The Government continues to demonstrate our strong commitment to ensuring women have equal participation across our community and equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from all aspects of Tasmanian life.

As the minister did during Estimates, I recognise that working to achieve equality for women is not the responsibility of one single person or minister, but all of us as a collective.

It is up to all of us to call out inequality when we see it and work to breakdown gender barriers faced by women.

The Tasmanian Government is actively supporting cultural change to ensure industry can harness the momentum of a strong women's workforce. Namely, we have delivered on our commitment to employ an industry liaison officer for women's workforce participation on the ground, working with industry, to identify and address barriers to women's employment.

With our Supporting Women to Succeed \$2 million grant program, we are supporting the attraction, recruitment and retention of women in the workforce, especially in non-traditional areas. We have committed \$350 000 to continue this program and to support safe workplaces, with work to commence on a modern workplace's framework suite of resources in 2022. We are investing \$75 000 for a women in building and construction and strategy, currently in development.

It was exciting to announce that Keystone Tasmania, our state's leading building and construction industry training body, has agreed to partner with us and match our funding to deliver this critical strategy. We are encouraging the next generation to ensure male-dominated industries are a thing of the past. In addition to the initiatives I have mentioned, we have invested \$25 000 in the Girls in Property pilot program. I congratulate the Property Council for their involvement in that program. These are new commitments and will be reported on as part of the annual Tasmanian Women's Strategy reports over the coming years.

The minister was also asked during Estimates about the representation of women on government boards and committees. We learned that we are on track to reach 50 per cent in 2022 because, as at 30 June this year, we were at 48.3 per cent. We reached our target of 40 per cent of senior executives to be women in 2018, two years ahead of schedule.

To recognise and promote women's visibility and the success of their achievements, we continue to back and deliver the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women every two years with the next round being in 2023. We have also increased our funding commitment to the International Women's Day Grants Program from \$7500 to \$20 000.

These initiatives were all discussed at the committee hearing, as well discussion regarding the policy framework that underpins our investments in this space. The minister reiterated that the main lever she has as Minister for Women is the Tasmanian Women's Strategy which is the Government's roadmap to achieving equality for women.

The minister also reiterated that ensuring the safety of women and breaking down gender barriers is a collective responsibility. Under the Tasmanian Women's Strategy - which is informed by the advice from the Tasmanian Women's Council - we are focusing on the following areas: financial independence, health and wellbeing, leadership and participation, and women's safety. The next strategy is currently under development and due for completion later this year. As we continue to deliver against the priorities set out in the Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2018-2021, all government departments are taking action to support, set an example and empower women in Tasmania.

Moving to Sport and Recreation, as members will frequently cite themselves - and we know this - sport is the very lifeblood of communities across Tasmania. Our Government's continued investment will provide more opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in sport

and lead active and healthy lifestyles. Budget Estimates was an opportunity for the minister to outline some of the Budget initiatives where we will invest more than \$38 million with over 140 sports organisations to deliver programs and infrastructure statewide.

In addition, we are doubling our Ticket to Play vouchers from \$100 to \$200. This important program is designed to reduce the cost of children from five years up to the age of 18 years participating in sport. It is a wonderful initiative. The response to Ticket to Play from the community and activity providers has been overwhelmingly positive.

In 2021-22 the Department of Communities Tasmania will deliver five competitive merit-based grants programs including the \$10 million Improving the Playing Field program, the \$55 000 National/International Sport Championships Program, the \$150 000 Sporting Competitions Access Fund, the \$1.15 million Sport and Recreation State Grants Program and the \$1 million Community Support Levy Grant Program.

The Improving the Playing Field Program aims to assist sporting clubs and associations improve facilities across Tasmania, helping to maintain and build participation rates across all sporting codes. Our Government has also committed to a range of large infrastructure projects including \$5 million to the Silverdome for netball facility upgrades, \$10 million to Football Tasmania for four upgrades across the state to deliver better facilities for players, and to help Tasmania's push to host base camps for international science during the Women's World Cup in 2023. There is \$2 million in funding for stage 1 of the Queenborough Oval redevelopment change rooms, which I was delighted to be involved in - with Madeleine Ogilvie, I might add. Both of us worked together on that important initiative through our election commitments backed by the minister. Also \$1 million in funding for new change rooms, extra public toilets, storage and medical rooms at the Launceston City Football Club.

Over the next four years, our investment in sport and recreation in Tasmania will exceed \$60 million in an effort to get more Tasmanians involved in physical activity. Our Government is working hard to help ensure the sustainability and future of sporting clubs around Tasmania. As the Minister for Sport and Recreation has announced, under tranche 4 of our Government's COVID-19 Sport and Recreation Grants Program, 94 organisations across the state will share in \$870 000. Tranche 4 of the program will provide sporting clubs with grants of between \$3000 and \$25 000 to assist with the purchase of equipment that directly benefits the organisation.

Our Government is committed to providing safe, fair and inclusive opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in sport and recreation. We recognise the importance of the sport and recreation sector to the Tasmanian community. We are committed to supporting all Tasmanians to access sport and recreation opportunities. As also a local member, I have had the opportunity to assist many local sporting clubs apply for funding under the Sport and Recreation Major Grants programs. I know how much it means to them, from the smaller grants right up to the larger amounts and how appreciative they are of not only that assistance but when their funding is approved the good use that they make of that funding, indeed, statewide.

I now turn to the Racing portfolio. As the former minister for Racing I know it is a critical industry for Tasmania, generating more than \$103 million a year in economic activity in the state, particularly benefiting our rural and regional areas. More than 5500 Tasmanians are either employed in the industry or are direct participants. The Government's support for

the industry gives it the confidence to continue growing. There has been some commentary in recent times that there is a lack of confidence within the racing industry.

The member for Franklin, Mr Winter, attended the Thoroughbred Awards dinner last weekend and would have seen first-hand that there is positivity and confidence among participants. The Office of Racing Integrity (ORI) was discussed during Estimates and that ORI is responsible for maintaining the probity and integrity of racing in Tasmania. As the minister said, the general manager of Racing Integrity has been appointed to the statutory role of Director of Racing and I understand that he was present during the Budget Estimates hearing.

The Office of Racing Integrity contributes to a healthy, growing and competitive racing and breeding industry by ensuring that it is safe, fair and credible. It is, therefore, critically important that the act under which the Director of Racing and ORI operates is modern and contemporary. That is why the Government will commence a review of the Racing Regulation Act 2004 which has not been substantially reviewed since its inception.

The review of the Racing Regulation Act will consider the powers and functions of Tasracing and the Director of Racing to strengthen and enhance integrity functions as well as animal welfare. As the minister indicated, the review will be undertaken by an independent expert to be announced in due course, together with the terms of reference and a discussion paper to encourage broad engagement, including extensive consultation with the industry and the community.

The department is aware there are issues within the Office of Racing Integrity and is committed to working with the staff to address them. It is time to look forward, not backwards. The department has commenced filling the current vacancies at the Office of Racing Integrity. At the 2018 state election the Government provided a strong policy to grow our vital Tasmanian racing industry.

Among other policies were several new commitments, including \$550 000 over four years to create new steward cadetship positions within the Office of Racing Integrity. I believe the minister also discussed this last week. In keeping with its workforce renewal policy, the Office of Racing Integrity will appoint a third cadet steward this year which, hopefully, will result in development of a career racing steward to benefit the whole racing industry.

The steward cadetship has been very successful, with the two placements while I was minister. This will further strengthen the integrity functions and encourages the cadets to consider stewarding as a long-term career.

The Office of Racing Integrity conducts property inspections throughout the state, making sure racing animals are properly cared for and that licensed participants are complying with animal welfare legislation and the racing rules. Inspections can be routine, random or targeted and all inspections are recorded on the national database for the relevant racing code. In 2019-20 additional inspections were undertaken with the suspension of racing under the COVID-19 racing shutdown.

In closing, the Government is investing more money than ever before into the greyhound and horse welfare part of this portfolio to ensure they are treated with dignity and care before, during and after their racing days.

[4.55 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Mr Chair, I want to speak about some of the questions Ms O'Connor asked of the minister in relation to the Office of Racing Integrity. Ms O'Connor asked about the concerning indicators of cultural problems in the Office of Racing Integrity (ORI). A large number of people - 21 working staff - have left in the past three years. The minister did not disavow Ms O'Connor of the report that many of those vacancies are still unfilled and the morale in ORI is at an all-time low.

The minister has announced that the Racing Regulation Act 2004 will be reviewed. We have raised on behalf of people who are concerned about the welfare of dogs and horses in the racing industry that this review is procedurally incapable of dealing with the real issue at hand - cultural change in the Office of Racing Integrity. ORI requires appropriate separation, independence and enforcement capability to do its work of keeping animals safe and protecting conditions for people involved in racing who want to be humane and essentially forced to whip and beat animals just to make a quick buck, which is what some people have been forced to do in the past. Gavin Kelly was fined for refusing to be cruel to an animal. That is by any reasonable measure a disgraceful way of managing the Office of Racing Integrity and the application of the law.

The minister did not give Ms O'Connor a satisfactory answer regarding the incapability of a legislative review to manage a cultural change process within the organisation. There is no satisfaction for people in the racing industry and for people with animal welfare concerns with what is being proposed. It does not appear that there is anything the minister and the Government is prepared to do to call ORI to heel and require ORI to fulfil its responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 1993.

We have not yet heard the reason why the number of swabs being proposed in the drug detection process for the coming year are fewer than the number undertaken in 2018-19, which were 4226. That dropped to just 3070 in 2019-20. The aim for the department in the 2021-22 financial year is to undertake just 3500 swabs. We do not understand on behalf of people who ask the genuine question, why are we investigating less? On the one hand, we are seeking to improve the conditions for animals and improve the reputation of the racing industry, yet we are intervening and undertaking less detection and less independent monitoring on the other hand. There is no doubt that the minister could not come up with a reason for that. That is concerning in itself. There must have been a reason for that reduced projection. We hope that she gets back to the Greens and people who are concerned about ORI's activities.

The other thing I want to mention is the mental health situation for small business owners. I spoke at some length with Ms Howlett about this. The pressures on people owning small businesses are enormous at the moment. The continued restrictions because of Delta outbreaks on the mainland we know are having a very substantial effect, particularly on people in the hospitality and events industries, but there is a flow-on impact to other areas. Mental health support is critical. The minister talked about a number of things that had been done. I pressed her to explain how the Government is gauging the need in the sector. It is very clear that for people in small businesses there is not a one-size-fits-all form of support. It needs to be tailor-made to the individual business. It needs to be personalised and often, not always, but where appropriate, face-to-face.

It is clear, and this was reinforced by the questions that were asked by Ms Finlay, that people do not want to speak in a public forum; they want to speak one-on-one when it comes

to mental health support. People do not just want to get information online. Sometimes they do and that is appropriate. There have to be the other options for people who actually want to speak human to human about the difficulties they are in. These difficulties could involve sacking employees or winding up businesses, huge changes and pressures that small businesses are operating under.

At the moment there is more that can be done. It really is incumbent on the Government to have that very close connection with small businesses to make sure that we are as up to speed as the changes in the market and the workplace are enacting on small businesses; that we are as up to speed with mental health support as the changes that are occurring. I really hope that the minister continues to put the emphasis, not just into providing mental health support in general, but into making it very specific, to making it varied and to making sure that we are asking stakeholder groups and representative bodies as often and as openly as possible for their suggestions about how things can be improved.

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### **Tabled Papers**

#### **Estimates Committee B -Additional Information**

**Mr Ellis** presented additional information provided to Estimates Committee B by the Minister for Small Business and the Minister for Racing.

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[5.04 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** - Mr Chair, I am pleased to rise to speak on the budget Estimates of Ms Howlett, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Women, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Racing.

I will start with Small Business because Tasmania is leading the nation when it comes to business confidence. The recent NAB business survey for August 2021 has confirmed once again that our plan to secure Tasmania's future is working, and we are delivering results of the Tasmanian economy. In short, the survey found that Tasmanian businesses are the most confident in the nation.

At the same time, Tasmania has the best conditions for business in the nation and the highest capacity utilisation of the states, placing us in a positive position as we continue our pathway out of the pandemic. Such confidence should come as no surprise to anyone in this place or in the community, given this Government's support for businesses throughout the pandemic and long before.

We have recently announced our expanded and super-charged Business Support Package for businesses impacted by border closures, tourism and hospitality industries as well as seafood to ensure that we get the conditions right for recovery and give businesses the best possible support and chance to recover.

Tasmanians know that when we had the Labor-Greens government of which the Greens are so very proud, two out of three Tasmanian businesses believed that the government was working against them. I almost cannot believe the last thought that they were not.

In contrast, despite enduring one of the toughest economic periods in our history, Tasmanian businesses are confident about their future under a majority Liberal Government

because they know we will always be on their side. Small business is in our DNA. Many of us come from small business, including myself. We are a government of small business and a government for small business. Our plan is clearly working, with jobs now at record levels and the highest number of Tasmanians ever employed and we will continue to deliver on our plans to secure Tasmania's future.

The Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments have worked together to deliver a significantly expanded and super-charged support program for Tasmanian businesses with a total of \$70 million now available for operators impacted by border closures.

The existing Business Support Package has been boosted from \$20 million to \$50 million, jointly funded by the Tasmanian and federal governments with grants of up to \$50 000 to be available to eligible businesses across two funding rounds. We know how much of a difference that is going to make for those businesses.

On top of that, the Tasmanian Government will provide \$20 million of financial relief for eligible businesses through the waiving of fees and charges such as payroll tax, vehicle registration and passenger transport accreditation charges and licence fees, payable to Parks and Wildlife. This massive boost in support, follows the unprecedented \$130 million package provided to Tasmanian businesses during the height of the pandemic last year. It is designed to support businesses until travel restrictions ease across the country, when vaccination rates are met in line with the national plan. We are proud of all our healthcare staff who are working so hard on that mission.

There is no doubt the current border restrictions are having a significant impact on many of our businesses that rely on interstate and overseas visitation and trade but the Government is working closely with the federal government and the industry in recent weeks, to identify further assistance. This increase in funding, combined with our payroll tax and fees and charges relief, will significantly increase the financial support available to businesses and help them through this difficult time.

The \$50 million Business Support Package will provide total grants of up to \$50 000 based on annual turnover with two funding rounds, the first in October, the second in November. Importantly, businesses that have already been deemed eligible for the support through the initial \$20 million package will automatically receive the next payment in line with the new maximum grant amounts. Small businesses and small business people are very busy people and to make things a little easier for them with regard to the application process, is the least we could do.

Our additional support also includes payroll tax relief for tourism and hospitality industry businesses where there has been a 30 per cent reduction in turnover in the September 2021 quarter, waiving vehicle registration and passenger transport accreditation fees for vehicles including taxis, luxury car hire operators, tour operator buses and rental car operators for renewal notices received between 1 July until 31 December 2021. As well, the waiving of licence fees payable to Parks and Wildlife which will remove a significant burden for tourism businesses operating within Tasmania's beautiful world-class parks that the Greens do not want anyone to ever see.

There is no greater supporter of Tasmanian businesses than the Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments. The massive support packages that have been provided in a little over 12-months, are a clear indicator of that support.

We have received a very positive response. The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce Industry CEO, Michael Bailey, called it a 'lifeline for business'. He said:

The three-pronged approach of waiving operating costs, scaling up cash grants and payroll tax relief will not only help businesses survive the next couple of months, it will help boost confidence across the economy.

The Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania CEO, Luke Martin, said:

The scale of the investment also reflects the Government's confidence in our visitor economy to bounce out of COVID quickly and strongly - this should give heart to everyone involved in the industry.

Tasmanian Small Business Council CEO, Robert Mallett, also endorsed the package, as did Destination Southern Tasmania CEO, Alex Heroys, who said:

This package is there to support the work force and to keep those people employed.

Indeed, the only people I have heard who have anything negative to say about this package are the union officials who sit in the Opposition because they do not know anything about small business. They do not really care and they are just talking about it to cover up their woeful record of disunity and the toxic workplace culture that exists on that side.

I will turn to our sport and recreation sector, which I know has bipartisan support in this place. We have had very exciting announcements today with the AFL returning to Tasmania next season following the finalisation of a new one-year agreement between the Tasmanian Government, Hawthorn Football Club, the TT-Line and the North Melbourne Football Club. We will see new home games played in the north and the south of the state. It is great news for Tasmanian AFL fans and our broader economy.

Previous economic analysis confirmed that AFL games provide a significant economic return to the state of about 5:1. We know it is a huge boost but, most importantly, we want to see our own Tasmanian team because we are all proud Tasmanians here and we cannot wait to see more finals games held in Tasmania but under our own banner.

There is also the massive coup for our cricket-loving state with the Women's Big Bash to begin right here in Tasmania, and the first 20 matches to be held at venues across the state.

We are also doing an enormous amount in support for grassroots sport. As we heard from the minister today, the Tasmanian Liberal Government wants to help ensure the sustainability and future of sporting clubs around Tasmania. Under tranche 4 of our Government's COVID-19 Sports and Recreation Grants Program, 94 organisations - including in your beautiful electorate of Franklin which, as we know, is not quite as nice as the north-west coast but it is getting there - will share in \$870 000 worth of grants to very worthy clubs.



Tranche 4 of the program will provide sporting clubs with grants of between \$3000 and \$25 000 to assist with the purchase of equipment that directly benefits the organisation. This important program recognises the vital role the state's sport and recreation sector is playing in the ongoing recovery from COVID-19.

During the Estimates hearing we also heard about the various initiatives under the Women's portfolio. As the minister made clear, the Tasmanian Women's Strategy, which is the Government's roadmap to achieving equality for women, is coming along well. She reiterated that ensuring the safety of women and breaking down gender barriers is a collective responsibility. Under the Tasmanian Women's Strategy, which is informed by the advice from the Tasmanian Women's Council, we are focusing on the following areas of financial independence, health and wellbeing, leadership and participation in women's safety.

I would like to dissociate myself from the Opposition's characterisations of Senator Claire Chandler as, 'waging a hateful crusade against transwomen and girls'. I know Ms Chandler. She is a good person and has a genuine concern for women, particularly women's sport and safety. They are not issues that I follow closely, but to see a few days ago, 65-kilogram Celine Provost choked out in an MMA bout by a former US specialist forces soldier was quite distressing for me.

**Time expired.**

**Estimates for Minister for Small Business, Minister for Women, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Racing agreed to.**

**Bills taken through the remainder of the Committee stages.**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2021 (No. 36)**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2021 (No. 37)**

**Third Reading**

**Bills read the third time.**

**TABLED PAPERS**

**Estimates Committee A - Additional Information**

**Mr Street** presented additional information provided to Estimates Committee A by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

**ADJOURNMENT**

[5.15 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** (Clark - Attorney-General) - - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House now adjourn.

## Tim Thorne - Tribute

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased that Ms Archer is here because I am sure she would join me in a reflection tonight on the very, very sad loss of one of Tasmania's and Australia's pre-eminent poets, Tim Thorne. Tim passed away after a long and valiant battle with cancer very early this morning. I am sure the broader Tasmanian arts community is grieving, as I imagine are those who have been fans of his poetry, his activism and his work for many many years.

I had known Tim for a very long time. He was omnipresent in my life; he has always been around. He has had a profound impact on the Tasmanian arts community and a profound impact on those who met him.

He was born in 1944 in Launceston and educated at the Yolla Area School and ended up going to the University of Tasmania. There was a marvellous interview in Walleah Press by Ralph Wessman with him and he said:

When I first fell in love with poetry at the age of 11 or 12, it was because I realised that poetry could deal with subjects whether human or inanimate that were otherwise marginalised. Poetry at that stage for me was about flowers, nature, heroic aspects of history but in my first year at high school my English teacher - Bob Hortle - read a poem in which was a line about a concrete mixer at an urban building site; that this could be the subject of a poem was a bit of a revelation for me. From then on, the poems that really interested me were poems that dealt with subjects - other people, or scenes or events - that were probably anti-poetic in the cliched sense of poetic. Later on, I came to appreciate Wordsworth and some of the other poets who dealt with more conventional subjects, but from the beginning I was brought up with the understanding that poetry could elevate - no, elevate is not the right word cos that would simply apply some sort of hierarchy - could transform the mundane into the wonderful. I find it easier to write a poem about a busker in the mall than I would be about some famous operatic tenor. I would find it easier to write a poem about an industrial workplace than I would about some sublime mountain scenery.

Tim Thorne began publishing his work in the 1960s. I will talk a little bit about it but I want to mention the types of jobs he had. He was a language teacher, a book reviewer, a columnist for the *Mercury* for a while, a university tutor, a community arts officer, among others. He worked as a poet in schools, in universities, in trade unions, in industry associations, in prisons and art galleries, in places as diverse as Darwin, Liverpool and Prince Edward Island.

As I said, he first began publishing in the 1960s. A writing scholarship took him to Stanford University in California in 1971-72. He was a national finalist in the Poetry Slam in 2009 and 2010. He was awarded the Stanford Writing Scholarship in 1971; the New Poetry Award in 1973; the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship for poetry, 1978; the Gleebooks Poetry Sprint, 1995; the Launceston Poetry Cup, 2006 and 2008; the William Baylebridge Memorial Prize, 2007; and the Christopher Brennan Award, 2012.

He also received support from the Australia Council, Arts Tasmania and the Eleanor Dark Foundation. He published some 11 poetry collections, which have been incredibly well-recognised and supported. He founded the Launceston Poetry Cup and established the Cornford Press and had a long career in both political activism, often felt in his poetry and usually dealt with with satire and wit.

In some of his campaigning work he had an abiding interest in creating opportunities for poets and other artists with disabilities. From 1998-20 he was the national secretary of the Disability in the Arts Disadvantage in the Arts Australia. In 1999-2000 he was the writer-coordinator for a national project for writers with cerebral palsy conducted through Arts Access.

In 2012, he was the editor of the Launceston Long Poem, a web-based community writing project funded through Regional Arts. He was at one stage a Labor member, a political activist in many ways. He was active in campaigns for peace and environmental values. He was instrumental in establishing the Vietnam moratorium protest in Launceston in 1969, the Northern Tasmania Unemployed Workers Union in 1978, Now We the People in 2000, and a campaign for a cleaner Tamar Valley in 2006. In 2014, he was elected president of TAP into a Better Tasmania and national president of Search, the Social Education, Action and Research Concerning Humanity Foundation.

Going back to the article in Walleah Press, it said that:

He defines himself as a political poet; you've only to read a line or two from a biting satirical piece, eg 'while the ATMs chew up the bush as if it was a dodgy card' - to be aware of how nuanced he was with political developments. But a mellower side is evidenced in his love of poems, in the humour of his lighter performance pieces - acts of playfulness which a merry dance - and in poems dedicated to friends.

Tim was very much a part of the Tasmanian art scene. I want to read into the *Hansard* a comment from Cameron Hindrum who took over with organising the poetry festival:

I really don't know where or how to begin. There is so much I can say. One of Australia's best contemporary poets, Tim Thorne, passed away this morning after a long and typically defiant battle with illness. His moral courage, his unique capacity to turn a perfect poetic phrase, especially to make unexpected rhymes materialise seemingly out of nowhere, his strength, his intelligence, his humour, all were a source of inspiration to generations of writers who had the benefit of his mentorship or guidance.

I will be forever grateful for having known him and I hope that that is no small thing. There will, of course, always be the infinite legacy of his work. Whenever and wherever it is read, he will be there, smiling.

Vale, Tim, it is not enough to say thank you, but thank you.

I add my voice to that. Tim was a phenomenally talented, inspiring man with a brilliant mind, an insightful political observer and participant, a very kind and loving husband to Stephanie, and father and grandfather to his beautiful granddaughters. Their house at West

Launceston will be physically a lot emptier without Tim in it, but the power of his personality and the legacy of his story-telling and language will fill that house for many, many years and the hearts of his family, his friends and the broader artistic community who grieve today at the loss of Tim. Vale, Tim.

### **Government Position on Forest Policy and Salmon Industry**

[5.23 p.m.]

**Dr BROAD** (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I rise to talk about some of the happenings today. The first one we need to point out is time and again in this place we have heard that side of the Chamber talk about no more lock-ups. I do not know how many times the Resources minister, Mr Barnett, said, 'No more lock-ups'. Today, on his watch, there are lock-ups. In the last Dorothy Dixier today in question time, the Liberal Government announced lock-ups of 25 000 hectares of the future potential production forest.

The Liberals are back-flipping on their long-term forest policy. This is only just the beginning. We know that there are problems in the industry. I asked questions during Estimates of the minister and he would not answer. He would not back the industry. There is a big back-flip today with the Government ending its no-more-lock-ups policy by locking up more forests. This is the Government's wood bank. We have heard the minister, Guy Barnett, call it 'a wood bank'. The minister made a massive withdrawal from that wood bank today. No more lock-ups. Where does the Government stand on forestry? Does it back forestry?

The Government won elections on this and is now crab-walking away, locking up future potential production forests and walking away. What else are they going to walk away from? Today Michael Bailey said, 'What's next, are they going to do a deal with the Greens on the dairy industry, maybe windfarms, maybe mining, what's next?' The Liberals are taking on the Greens policies on forestry, locking up the future potential production forests, their so-called wood bank. A massive withdrawal.

Today we saw the Resources minister, Guy Barnett, get up. He looked a bit like a flogged dog today. We now know why: he had to eat a lot of humble pie by adopting a Greens policy. He put a moratorium on the salmon industry. This is a moratorium on the salmon industry that that side of the House said would cost jobs. Deputy Premier Jeremy Rockliff said that a moratorium on the salmon industry would cost jobs. On that side there is rank hypocrisy. The Liberals have adopted the Greens' salmon policy. It is a cut and paste of the Greens' salmon policy from before the election.

The Greens are happy-ish. The Government has signed up to the Dennes Point declaration, a moratorium on the industry, and they are now talking about land-based salmon. We had the announcement talking about land-based salmon. How is that going to work? The Greens opposed a hatchery up in the Derwent Valley. There was no way they were going to let a hatchery up the Derwent Valley happen. They were saying that the industry should transition to something one thousand times bigger than that hatchery up in the Derwent Valley. There is no way the Greens are going to allow land-based. The Liberals are now on board, not only talking about a moratorium on the salmon industry but they are talking about land-based salmon.

That means that the salmon industry moves from Tasmania to the outskirts of Melbourne and Sydney where they do not have to take into account all the transport. The Liberals have signed up to the Dennes Point declaration. The minister, Guy Barnett, has signed up with it too, a moratorium on the salmon industry and talks of a land-based industry. That land-based industry will not be in Tasmania. A moratorium on the salmon industry causes job losses. It brings so much uncertainty. That is what Michael Bailey is talking about. They do not know now what the Liberal Government stands for because they have backflipped on all their previous policies and previous stances.

What is next? is a legitimate question. Is it wind farms? Is it the mining industry? Is it the dairy industry? What will the Government do? We have no idea where they stand on these issues. These are long-term policy positions that they have backflipped on by putting it out under the cover of the last couple of questions in question time after a four-week sitting.

Maybe they saw that there was a prison break today. Maybe they saw that the prisoner had got in a car, caused chaos through the streets, had to be stopped with road spikes, ran into a car, went through a fence and was arrested. Maybe they thought under the cover of that, because it will be a big news story today, they would drop these two huge backflips - a moratorium on the salmon industry and lock-ups in forestry.

They are two horrendous double backflips with a pike. You are too late for the Olympics on this. You have to do your job. You are letting prisoners out early. You are keeping some in later. You have someone driving a stolen car all the way through town, had to be stopped with road spikes, and you come into this place and pretend as though you have gone for a walk in the park. Do your job, minister. You should be ashamed.

**Ms Archer** - No, you should be ashamed of this contribution.

**Dr BROAD** - Well, you let people out early. You will not even stand up and do your job. This is your job.

**Ms Archer** - Excuse me?

**Dr BROAD** - You are responsible for the prison service. You have people scaling fences; you have people walking out stealing cars and creating havoc. That is on your watch, minister. Thank you.

**Mr SPEAKER** - The member for Lyons -

**Ms Archer** - You really are a moron.

**Dr BROAD** - What did you say? I ask the minister to withdraw that, Mr Speaker. Ask her to withdraw. She called me something.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I did not hear it, but -

**Ms Archer** - You have to know what I said.

**Dr BROAD** - You called me a moron. I ask you to withdraw.

**Ms Archer** - Well, if the member thinks I said that, I withdraw.

**Dr BROAD** - Thank you. It is unbecoming.

**Ms Archer** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, order, the member for Lyons has the call.

### **Building and Construction Standards - Request for Inquiry**

[5.30 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I rise on this adjournment to talk about the notice of motion which I tabled in the House this morning asking for the Government to agree to a select committee on consumer and building sector protections of the Tasmanian building and construction industry. I will quickly run through what some of the terms of reference are that we have placed within our notice of motion.

For the last 12 months I have been working with a group of people who have brought their issues to me and also people from the industry who really want to see the quality reputation of Tasmania's building industry protected. At the moment they do not feel that it is. Unfortunately, we have one or two shonky builders and tradespeople. There is very little recourse at the moment as far as regulation and legislation goes to protect the consumers but also to protect the industry itself. We feel that it is time as a parliament for us to investigate how we can better futureproof the industry and how we can better protect Tasmanian consumers.

In many cases people have invested huge amounts of money into building their own homes or into renovations. Then they are in a position where the only way they are able to have defects remedied is to enter into lengthy legal battles and it is causing a huge amount of damage.

Tasmania is the only state that does not have a mandatory home warranty insurance and we need to look at what other states are doing. Some states have a different structure. We know that the ACT structure is particularly good. In New South Wales they lack the ability to compel a builder to return to a site to undertake repair work for defects. This is the reason we need to have an inquiry, to sit down as leaders representing our communities and talk about how we can better protect consumers and how we can better protect the quality reputation of Tasmanian builders.

The ABC ran a story on this this morning. Annah Fromberg has done an amazing job. She is a very competent and professional journalist. She has worked with many of these people as case studies for a long period of time. They come from a place of truth. They come from a place of really wanting to make sure that the experiences they have gone through do not happen to other people. It is absolutely devastating. I am going to take a few minutes to read some of the accounts that were provided this morning. Literally hundreds and hundreds of accounts have been coming in today. I received a lot to my personal email but I know a lot have come in to the ABC as well.

This one reads:

We had a terrible experience. We realised very quickly that the consumer has no protection at all in Tasmania. So much more needs to be done immediately, even regulation and protection for builders working for a building company.

Another person stated:

Just want to say we completed some renos recently and although the time frame wasn't met, the quality of work was fantastic.

This is what I am talking about. These are the quality builders that we need to protect.

Another example was:

A builder was dissatisfied with the tiling work in our new bathroom and got his boys to rip the tiles off. He sacked the tiler and brought in a new tiler who completed the works to a much higher standard and we weren't charged for the rework.

The point is there are some good guys out there. Sadly, for many other people, they cannot access these guys because they are booked out for the next two years, not surprisingly. That is the thing. When you do come across a really good builder, you want to hold on to them and recommend them to your friends but, unfortunately, there are shonky builders out there.

This one states:

Our house was renovated in 2012. A couple of years ago we happened to crawl to a distant corner under the house and noticed it was really, really wet. Paid \$1200 for an independent plumbing and waterproof assessment which showed that the entire shower hadn't been waterproofed and if it had been, had been done so poorly that it was completely ineffective.

Contacted the builder with the report who advised that he is no longer building so it isn't his problem.

Insurance won't cover it because of a clause called 'escape of liquid'.

We were advised legal action would be lengthy and expensive and even if the builder was found to be at fault, given he is no longer trading, the chance of compensation is next to none. So, two nearly three years later, we still don't have a usable en suite, nor do we have the \$15 000-\$20 000 to rip it up and re-do it.

That is one case. Here is another one -

Our house is only a few years old. The builder failed to waterproof the bathroom floor and even cut through the joist to put the plumbing in. As the shower wasn't installed properly, the floor collapsed and took the hot water cylinder with it. We lost everything, after having mains water being pumped through the house for eight hours while we were at work.

The cladding hasn't even been painted but the council still signed it off to say it had passed.

There are so many of these cases. This really needs to be properly investigated. We need to have an inquiry. We know that there is certainly the need in the community. I asked the minister to stop being so belligerent. It is not about her. It is about protecting the industry and it is about protecting Tasmanian consumers. Why can we not sit down and have an honest conversation, learn from the experts that are out there, listen to how we can better improve and safeguard our wonderful Tasmanian building construction sector?

### **Celebrating Conservation Victories - Malbena**

[5.36 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I want to pen an ode to all those conservationists and to all those good-hearted Tasmanians who are standing up for this beautiful place. I pay tribute to their hard work and to the victories they are achieving in making change in this island, despite the best efforts of this Liberal Government to shut down anglers and fishers, the people in the communities in Norfolk Bay, in the Tasman Peninsula, on Bruny Island, on the north west and on the east coast of Tasmania and in the Huon. Despite your efforts to do everything you can to shut people up, they will not be shut up. They can see through the sham and spin of this Government.

We have an enormous win for conservationists, thanks to the hard work of the Environmental Defenders Office against the best efforts of this Government to back Daniel and Simone Hackett, who have been given disgraceful, private ownership of Halls Island in Lake Malbena in the World Heritage-listed area in Tasmania.

Despite their efforts in the Supreme Court to fight the people, the people have won. That pathetic attempt to privatise the island will have to go back into the RMPAT for another assessment.

Thank you to Claire Bookless, thank you to the Environmental Defenders Office, the Wilderness Society, the Tasmanian National Parks Association, the anglers and fishers and the 1343 people who made applications on behalf of the public interest against this disgusting, incredible, ludicrous idea that a couple should be allowed to have exclusive ownership for \$4000 a year of a World Heritage Wilderness Area.

That is what Daniel Hackett has at the moment. He struts it around. It is his own little island. He is allowed to evict anyone who goes there because they are trespassing. He is allowed to put up camera surveillance and monitor anybody's activities. That is all lawful under this Government's distorted idea about what public ownership should look like. What they mean when they say public ownership, is it is held by the Crown to be dispersed to their friends, their mates, at no cost, essentially, gifting it to them, so they can make money from developments and charge the mighty rich to come in helicopters and to spoil that beautiful wilderness and have their own fun on our public places.



The Tasmanian Aboriginal people have been looking after Halls Island for tens of thousands of years and Tasmanians who care about this place are going to keep fighting for it and they are going to keep winning.

While we are at it, we have an extraordinary group of people coming together in Cygnet on Saturday and they will be talking about the growing campaign to force this Government to have real environmental regulation.

We heard the minister make an announcement about fish farming this morning; they are going to clean up the fish farming industry. They are actually listening to people. They are really concerned about all the damage that has been done to the Tasmanian brand because of the market campaign. Well, the idea of Mr Barnett fixing the industry; everyone has seen through it straightaway. Richard Flanagan has penned a press release straightaway and he has called Mr Barnett's announcement a sham:

It is light on detail, loose in language. It is not a 10-year plan but a three-thimble con trick to cover for a rogue industry in deep crisis.

As ever, Mr Flanagan knows how to put a few words together and he says it with aplomb. What we understand from that sham plan is that the Government is pretending that there will be some sort of holding back of the industry and a moratorium for a year. What we have is a commitment to no net increase in leases, farming leases. What does that say? It says to someone like me, who has been around long enough to know, that there can be a trade-off and companies that have dead leases, zombie leases, unused leases, stored leases, inefficient leases, whatever, that are not providing them as much value as they want, can trade them off.

They can still go to the north-west, they can still go to the south, they can still intensify in Storm Bay. They can still stay in Port Arthur, they can still stay near Tinderbox in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Nothing will stop them from going to those places as long as that whole area is the same under the Liberals' plan.

The independent EPA - well, come on - let us talk about that. Unless you stop having a statement of expectations then it cannot be independent. You might like to take it aside and put it in another department and call it an independent EPA but if you are still telling them what to do, and the minister confirmed in Estimates last week that that is what will still be happening, it cannot be independent.

The talk of Mr Barnett this morning about on-land and deep offshore, sounds like he has been reading the Greens' Marine Policy from the last state election. Actually, all of this has a bit of Greens about it because it is called 'greenwash'. What is actually going to happen is not a commitment to regulate, to mandate the industry to targets to go on land; it is a commitment to doing research and development and spending some money, probably for the industry, on their behalf, gifting it to them, looking at that future. Well, it stinks and no-one believes it already and it has only been a few hours since it was announced.

**Time expired.**

## **Adrian 'Mozza' Morrisby - Tribute**

[5.43 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to say thank you and to pay tribute for the life of Adrian 'Mozza' Morrisby who died very suddenly. He was a great Tasmanian. I believe all MPs here should know about Adrian and his life. He was a larger-than-life character. He is famous in Tasmania for his advocacy for fishing and encouraging Tasmanians to get out and enjoy our waterways and catch fish with your loved ones.

He was the feature of Mozza's Friday night Hot Bite which was a lot of fun and every Friday, hundreds, if not thousands, of Tasmanians would log in and enjoy that and see what is biting and where to go. He has been a central figure in fishing in Tasmania. On his own Facebook page people are saying, 'What a legend'. 'Left a mark on everyone you met.' 'A kind, true gentleman'. 'Generous.'

He has also been known, I think, to southern Tasmanian listeners on HOFM with his regular fishing segment and he has also hosted a Facebook page, where people can upload their fish selfies. This guy just wanted to encourage people to get out and love Tasmania and enjoy it. He is also famous in the car industry as a participant in the business community as a mechanic at Moonah Auto Parts but he has also been involved in motor sport, including in Targa. I think as a youngster he was a champion go-carter. I understand that his son has followed in his footsteps.

I got to know Adrian when I was minister for Fire and we were fighting those campaigns in early 2019, which were some of the biggest fires that we have ever had in Tasmania. Adrian had the inspired idea, which did not go so well with the bureaucracy, that he wanted everybody to sponsor a carton of beer for every volunteer station in Tasmania. Some of you now remember who I am talking about. I worked with him and we helped to make it happen. His GoFundMe page raised just short of \$10 000. We helped him then to buy the beer, get it to the stations and allow people to receive that word of thanks.

We are obviously all going to really miss this great Tasmanian. If we can take anything from his life it would be something like this: go fishing, love your motor car, explore our beautiful state of Tasmania and love your family. Our thoughts and best wishes are with his loved ones tonight.

**The House adjourned at 5.46 p.m.**

## QUESTION UPON NOTICE

The following answer was given to a question upon notice:

### 2. REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES ACCOMMODATION

**Ms O'BYRNE** asked the Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing, Mr Ferguson -

Are any requests for accommodation refused by emergency services accommodation (shelters) because the shelters are at full capacity and, if so, how many each week by region, from:

- (a) 2019 to 2020, and
- (b) 2020 to date?

**Mr FERGUSON** replied -

Further to information provided at the Budget Estimates hearing of 7 September 2021, and in response to subsequent Questions on Notice, the following information provides a regional breakdown for each financial year requested.

The Department of Communities advises as follows:

- (a) 2019-20: North West 1860; North 4388; South 8973.
- (b) 2020-21: North West 2047; North 3496; South 12 878.

This data is not collected on a weekly basis and cannot be provided as a weekly breakdown.

It is important to note that the number of unassisted requests refers to instances of requesting, not individuals and does not exclude the same person seeking help multiple times or from multiple shelters.

A substantial proportion of unassisted requests are likely to be from individuals repeatedly checking for shelter vacancies daily, and across different agencies.