



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP

Thursday 20 November 2025

MEMBERS

Mr Rob Fairs (Chair)
Mr Dean Winter (Deputy Chair)
Mr Vica Bayley
Prof George Razay

OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Mr George
Ms Dow
Dr Woodruff
Ms Finlay
Mr Shelton
Ms Finlay
Mrs Greene
Mr O'Byrne
Mr Garland
Ms Rosol
Ms Haddad

IN ATTENDANCE

HON. MADELEINE OGILVIE MP

Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, Minister for the Environment, Minister for the Arts and Heritage

Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy

Department of State Growth

Mike Mogridge

Deputy Secretary

Ben Marquis

Director, Economic Strategy

Travis Boucher

Director, Finance

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Noelene Kelly

Deputy Secretary

Dr Justin Thurley

Chief Information Officer

Ministerial Office

Tristan Bick

Chief of Staff

Jeremy Grey

Senior Advisor

Environment (including Climate Change)

Jason Jacobi

Secretary

Louise Wilson

Deputy Secretary

Catherine Murdoch

CEO - Environment Protection Authority

Jo Crisp

General Manager, Environment

Holly Mackey

A/CEO - Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board

Daryl Cook

Director - Finfish Compliance - EPA

Cindy Ong

Director - Environmental Regulation - EPA

Raymond Bannister

Manager - Salmon Science and Standards - EPA

ReCFIT (Climate Change)

Vanessa Pinto

A/CEO, Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania

Dr Sarah Russell

Director, Climate Change

Ministerial Office

Tristan Bick

Chief of Staff

Alister Pearce

Senior Adviser

Kandace Giligan

Senior Adviser

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The committee met at 9 a.m.

CHAIR (Mr Fairs) - The scrutiny of the Environment portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce the people at the table and their names and positions, please, for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, I'm very happy to do that. We have quite a few. From the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, we have Jason Jacobi, who is our Secretary, and Louise Wilson, our Deputy Secretary. In the room we have more people we will bring to the table if we need to. From the Department of State Growth we have Vanessa Pinto, acting CEO, Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT); Dr Sarah Russell, Director of Climate Change; from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) we have Catherine Murdoch, Director; and Cindy Ong, Director of Environmental Regulation. As I mentioned, we have others in the room if we need to bring them forward to the table.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. The time scheduled for the Estimates for the Minister for Environment is four hours. We will take a short break for morning tea at 11.00 a.m. The resolution of the House provides for a minister to provide additional information to a committee either later that day or in writing as an answer to a question taken on notice. To submit a question on notice, the member must first ask the question to the minister and the minister must indicate they will take it on notice. The member must then put the question in writing and hand it to the committee secretary before the end of the portfolio examination so it can be included in correspondence to the minister for answer.

I remind you that the microphones are sensitive, so I ask you to be mindful of Hansard and be careful when moving your folders, documents, water glasses around et cetera. Also, it is difficult for Hansard to differentiate when people are talking over each other, so I would ask that members please speak one at a time to assist with this. Would the minister like to make a short opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, thank you, Chair. Good morning, members of the committee. Today's session will cover a number of portfolio areas within my remit, including the Environmental Protection Authority, Natural Resources and Environment and the Climate Change Office.

I begin today by stating how committed the government is to protecting Tasmania's beautiful environment and, importantly, threatened species. We take our role very seriously to support the important conservation work being undertaken inside and outside government.

We committed \$8 million over four years to establish a Tasmanian Threatened Species Fund. In its first year, the fund has enabled a range of strategic initiatives and on-ground conservation action for a wide range of threatened plants and animals. Through the Threatened Species Fund this year we have partnered with more than 15 organisations to deliver on-the-ground actions for threatened species. These partnerships have also allowed us to leverage significant in-kind support and funding from a range of stakeholders.

Government continues to invest in efforts to recover the orange-bellied parrot, building on the \$2.5 million to construct the captive breeding facility at Five Mile Beach which opened in July 2019 with an additional \$1.3 million committed in 2023-24 to further support the captive breeding program and to launch a groundbreaking tracking program which aims to

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learn more about the movement and behaviour of orange-bellied parrots during their northern migration. The first season of tracking was very successful and has already yielded new insights into the migratory behaviour of this tiny parrot.

Regarding the waste and resource recovery area, one of the success stories of 2025 has been the launch of Tasmania's container refund scheme, Recycle Rewards, that was launched on 1 May. We now have more than 50 million containers being returned. This makes Recycle Rewards the fastest-growing scheme in the country. Through the Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board, landfill levy funds have been invested into Tasmania's waste and resource recovery sector, with key investments including \$5.5 million in high-priority infrastructure grants, \$500,000 for targeted waste and recycling projects in remote councils, \$4.3 million over four years for a statewide education campaign; and \$2.36 million to the three regional waste organisations to deliver local waste and resource recovery programs.

As we are well aware, climate change is an integral part of the Environment portfolio and the Tasmanian government is committed to taking strong action in this area. The Climate Change office in ReCFIT has several key priorities this year and our Climate Change Action Plan includes 98 actions in total across government, equating to an investment of more than \$250 million. These activities are already underway. The EPA is Tasmania's independent environmental regulator. Their role is to protect Tasmania's environment and people, supporting sustainable development and maintaining community confidence in environmental regulation. This year marks a significant leadership transition with Catherine Murdoch appointed Chief Executive Officer and Director of the EPA in April 2025. I welcome Catherine at the table today.

The 2025-26 Budget allocates \$21.521 million to the EPA, with a total of \$85 million over the forward Estimates. In summary, the EPA is focused on maintaining strong environmental protections while enabling sustainable development. It's independence, technical capability and commitment to transparency underpin community confidence in Tasmania's environmental management system.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Before we get into questions, I'll just remind members and also the minister and departmental staff that I've been very lenient in regard to question times and also for answers, but please don't abuse that. There's one minute allowed for questions and three minutes for answers and I am going to be monitoring it, but I will give you some leeway like I have all week, but I will pull up and just move on to the next person.

Ms FINLAY - Minister, during the 2025 state election a letter was written to NRM organisations to say that there was no intention to reduce direct, indirect or in-kind support to Tasmania's NRM organisations, recognising the stability that they need in their core funding. We know they leverage the dollars invested in them very well across Tasmania and for every \$10 returned to Tasmania from every dollar that you invest, there's concern about ongoing funding to NRM, as indicated in the forward Estimates. Can you confirm the core funding beyond 2026-27 for the NRMs in Tasmania with their core funding at current levels indexed? Can you confirm that in the forwards, please?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm happy to answer that question. Could I just ask who wrote that letter? That's not my letter?

Ms FINLAY - You're not going to own the government's commitment to NRM?

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Ms OGILVIE - No, I'm happy to give you the response, but was that from minister Pearce?

Ms FINLAY - Does it matter who wrote to them?

Ms OGILVIE - I just want to know what document you're working from, that's all. It would be helpful to know.

Ms FINLAY - The important piece here is in the forward Estimates. Are you committed to the core funding indexed to the NRMs?

Ms OGILVIE - You don't want to tell me? That's all right, I'll ask. The advice I have is that the core funding continues and there's no plans to reduce the core funding. I'm happy to provide more information if I could understand the context a bit better.

Ms FINLAY - Would it be indexed as committed?

Ms OGILVIE - No.

Ms FINLAY - There was a commitment to the NRMs, so the core funding remains in the forward Estimates as documented to them, but not indexed?

Ms OGILVIE - I can't say if it's as documented to them because I don't have a copy of that letter.

Ms FINLAY - In your budget papers can you please confirm funding to NRMs? Is it the core funding indexed to the NRMs in Tasmania?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll ask Mr Jacobi to give you the details.

Mr JACOBI - Is it possible for me to see that correspondence?

Ms FINLAY - There's correspondence to the NRMs to the correspondence to the Premier and it has been cc'd to the minister, so the minister's in receipt of correspondence. The first correspondence went to the minister on 13 October and I understand there's been attempts to confirm this information in writing since. The NRMs are keen to confirm in writing a commitment of their core funding beyond 2026-27, that it continues core funding at current levels, which is \$544,000 per region indexed.

Mr JACOBI - My understanding is that the core funding remains and continues in the forward Estimates, but there is no indexation.

Ms OGILVIE - We will see if we can get some more information for you.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you, minister. If you're able to confirm the figures in the forwards, that would be great, thank you.

Mr JACOBI - Just give us one minute, thank you. The references in the forward Estimates refer to a 2024 funding election boost to the NRMs, but the core funding of \$250 remains in the forward Estimates.

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Ms FINLAY - There's both the boost and the core funding?

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister, I will refer to Louise Wilson.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you, it's just they're super keen to get this clarified.

Ms WILSON - Yes, we're aware of that.

Ms OGILVIE - On the same page.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. Recently, the NRMs got a funding boost, which brought their funding levels up to 544 per region, per annum. That was for, I think, two years, yes - sorry, just checking I got that right - and after the two years, which is at the end of this year, the boost ceases, and it reduces back to the core funding of \$250,000 per annum, per region. Historically, grants such as the NRM grants and the Landcare grants, for example, haven't been historic and haven't been indexed.

Ms FINLAY - When the boost ceases, that core funding remains not indexed - that's bad grammar - there's no indexation on that core funding?

Ms WILSON - No, historically it hasn't been indexed, but ongoing, it is in our forward Estimates - the core funding.

Ms FINLAY - Okay, thank you.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through you, minister, to Ms Murdoch, the EPA director. Does the EPA have the power to issue a stop-work order, or equivalent, to a finfish licence holder that would require them to destock pens in the event of a breach of an environmental licence condition?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. I will check with your team, but no, we do not regulate stocking of pens, but I will just check, if that's okay, to make sure I'm absolutely clear on that. Just so we don't waste time, I will get Darryl Cook to come to the table to explain.

Ms OGILVIE - I might just introduce Darryl Cook, Director of Finfish Compliance, EPA. Welcome.

Mr COOK - Thank you. The EPA has powers to cancel or suspend environmental licences, which are set out in the legislation. We also have what we call the powers of an authorised officer, to issue directions to achieve compliance with the act. Those powers are quite broad, but as a general rule, as the EPA director has stated, stocking densities are not a matter that is regulated by the EPA. That comes under NRE Tasmania.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. If there was a large disease outbreak, it would be the Department of Primary Industries that would be making a decision or not about the stocking; and the cancelling or suspension could come in if there were large mortalities and like we saw last summer - dead salmon were breaking up and floating into the environment. At that point, would you have the power to suspend, cancel or take any action?

Mr COOK - Are you happy for me to continue?

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Ms WILSON - Through the minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, yes.

Mr COOK - Through you, minister. In relation to matters related to disease, we primarily look to - the lead organisation would be Biosecurity Tasmania. Our powers to suspend or cancel a licence would apply to the whole farm - there's one licence per finfish farm lease - and those could be considered in circumstances of flagrant breaches of the law.

Dr WOODRUFF - Could you give me an example of what that would look like, and has that ever happened?

Mr COOK - There hasn't been a cancellation or suspension of a licence, no.

Dr WOODRUFF - Ever? Okay, so what -

Mr COOK - Environmental licences came into - late 2017, came into EMPCA (*Environment Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*), the legislation that we operate under, and the first licences were issued in 2018. Since then, no, there's been no cancellation or suspension of a licence.

Prof RAZAY - Minister, can our government confirm its support for national transition to net zero greenhouse emission by 2050? In September 2025, the Australian Government released its national climate risk assessment and adaptation plan. Within the plan, they revised their target for emissions to 62-70 per cent below 2005. What's our government's target by 2035?

Ms OGILVIE - I do have some information on that. I will note, of course, that here in Tasmania, we're doing very well in this area and have done for some time. In fact, we're a leading light, globally. It's good that the rest of the nation is catching up with us, to be fair. I'll move that, as I turn to the right piece of information.

We released our first legislated statewide risk assessment for climate change in November 2024. I should say that this is an ongoing piece of work, of course, and as we work through all the activities and actions we're doing both in climate change and through the natural environment work, we're taking a long-range view, but also there's work that we're doing day-to-day in project land.

Tasmania's risk assessment for climate change was produced by Deloitte risk advisory. The risk assessment analyses 40 key risks and opportunities for Tasmania under climate change, 33 of which are considered under tier one and two. Now, that feeds into the work we're doing to support our climate objectives and, of course, being net zero ourselves, we have to continue to push industries - pillars of our economy and community both by way of elevating understanding of what they can do to reduce emissions and then also what we can do to reduce emissions. Our climate change office does a really good job with this.

When it comes to national dialogue and perspectives on net zero, I sit on the Environment ministers' meetings, which are national meetings, and I know the federal government is looking at these issues as well.

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The long and short answer to the question is, we're really proud of Tasmania's position as a renewable energies island. The fact that we are net zero - in a world where, I think we're only one of two nations globally that are net zero - is something that I know we're all very proud of. We don't always agree on how we should go forward from here, but we as a government have taken a substantial step towards implementing, in collaboration with stakeholders, programs of work to improve the reduction of emissions, from the minerals industry and right across all of those sectors.

I think that answers your question, but was there more detail I could provide?

Prof RAZAY - About whether we have any revised emission by 2035?

Ms OGILVIE - I might specifically ask ReCFIT.

Ms PINTO - Through you, minister. Yes, we are legislated for net zero or lower by 2030, and we have been consistently sitting at net zero since 2014.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I hope that answered your question.

Mr GEORGE - So many questions, so little time -

Ms OGILVIE - We'll give you lots of time, it's okay.

Mr GEORGE - The former head of the EPA told a public meeting, about four years ago now, that flowthrough hatcheries were a remnant of the 20th century, had no future in Tasmania, and that work would go on to make sure that salmon hatcheries became recirculating, so that there would be no effluent flowing out of those hatcheries downstream in rivers, causing, as we know, nutrient overloads and algal blooms. How many flow-through hatcheries remain open? When will they be closed or turned into recirculating? How much is each of those hatcheries paying for the use of our water every year?

Ms OGILVIE - It's actually a question for the EPA. I do have information. Would you like to hear from the EPA first and then I will provide the information that I have or how would you like me to tackle this one?

Mr GEORGE - Answer it the way you want to answer it.

Ms OGILVIE - Great. Catherine, would you mind starting the answer, and then I can add to it if we haven't given you everything you need?

Ms MURDOCH - I just want to clarify because I think I heard three questions there. The last one was, was how much are they paying for their water?

Mr GEORGE - Yeah.

Ms MURDOCH - That sits within Primary Industries and Water. So water licences to those hatcheries are through Primary Industries and Water. I do not have that information. The first question was, is how many are there?

Mr GEORGE - How many flow-through?

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Ms MURDOCH - How many flow-through. That I can, absolutely, answer for you. In total we have 21 freshwater licences, 19 active farms, one is a harvest facility and one facility is not built, so realistically there's 19 active freshwater licences there.

There are - sorry I have added this up to make it simple, and I've brought in the wrong one, but seven of those are recirculating aquaculture system (RAS), so are already on recirculating systems. Four of those are a mixture of flow-through and RAS on site, therefore the remaining are flow-through. What I can say is that we regulate those land-based fish farms that hold over two tonnes of biomass, if any are smaller we don't we don't regulate those.

Those ones with flow-through do have upstream monitoring as well as effluent water quality, and we've been moving towards that for a number of years. So that four. Recently with Justin, I think this came up in last year's estimates, Millybrook, we have issued a very stringent environmental licence for that last week. Which has much increased monitoring and a management plan requirements and new effluent quality limits for that and further emissions reductions built into that. We're working with the remaining two hatcheries, they don't have this stringent program in place to analyse all monitoring data and set effluent quality limits within the environmental licences.

Environmental licences have very stringent discharge and upstream-downstream river health monitoring as well in place. We've been working towards that since that time and we're on track with delivering that.

Mr GEORGE - When are you going to close flow-through hatcheries?

CHAIR - Mr George, that's another question.

Mr GEORGE - That was the question to the minister.

Ms OGILVIE - I do have some information I could provide on the government's position. The government in our 2024 election commitment made it clear we're not introducing an arbitrary policy for the phase-out of hatcheries. What this means is that we will take into consideration the latest technical and science-based expertise and data and have a measured approach.

In the interest of giving you as much information as I can, Mr George, it's also important to note some key facts. Some of the biggest freshwater fish farms already use recirculating aquaculture systems, and industry has now set its own targets to phase-out flow-through systems upstream and effluent water quality monitoring is also being undertaken, including rigorous monitoring requirements imposed by the EPA, which regulates larger land-based fish farms in Tasmania.

Three of 12 flow-through farms regulated by the EPA were subject to Huon Aquaculture's Farming Improvement Program. The EPA is now updating the environmental licences for those farms to ensure that legally binding monitoring requirements and effluent quality limits are imposed and transparently available to the public, which I know we like transparency. The independent salmon industry study will also consider the regulatory framework and monitoring and environmental and other performance standards. I know you understand not all of that sits within my portfolio, the study in particular, but happy to try and provide you the information I can.

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Mr SHELTON - My question is around the new container refund scheme and you did mention it in your opening address and I can tell you that our granddaughter is the one in the family that's taken this up and she goes around the whole different families collecting all the cans and into the recycling of a Sunday morning or whatever. I understand it, they are a very busy place nowadays. But I would be interested in your take on the success of that scheme and how big a difference it's making.

Ms OGILVIE - It is a good news story and in my house there's now a little bit of competition about who gets to collect. You suddenly notice how much you use in your own kitchen.. It is a good news story.

Our container refund scheme, which we've branded Recycle Rewards, great branding, you will see it everywhere launched on 1 May 2025, and it offers a 10-cent refund for eligible drink containers and aims to reduce litter, boost recycling and contribute to the circular economy. I'm old enough to remember, and you may be too, Mr Shelton, back in the day where we had recycling deposits when you took your little bottles down to the shop.

For some of us this is a nice return to an old style of making sure that we contribute to the circular economy ourselves. The scheme links Tasmania to Australia's broader circular economy and ultimately diverts materials from our roadsides and the tip. Container refund schemes Australia wide have achieved a dramatic reduction in drink container litter. Our rollout includes 49 refund points, with 44 already operational, ensuring that 85 per cent of Tasmanians will have access within 10 kilometres of their home.

Among the best scheme in Australia with a return point for every 11,632 residents. I've just had an update. We're up to 53.9 million containers returned. It just keeps going. This is great for our water as well with the plastics. So, thank you very much for that. Return point for every 11,632 residents, importantly including King and Flinders islands, which are unique challenges of our state. The remaining sites are expected to become operational shortly and are currently progressing through the relevant local regulatory approvals processes.

Tasmanians are encouraged to visit recyclewards.com.au or use the amazing Recycle Rewards app which I've downloaded. You should download it because you can donate to charities when you take your plastics back and find their nearest refund points. You will find all of that on the app. Those eligible organisations are interested are encouraged to become a donation or charity partner. We're also committed to ensuring that the maximum number of charities and community groups around Tasmania will be able to benefit from the establishment of a container refund scheme. I have a bit more information just come in, \$108,000 so far has been donated to charities. That's really good. So, granddaughter keep going. Although she might be saving up for a bike. It's ok to keep it if you're saving for a bike.

It's also about working together for Tasmanians. Research of Tasmanians demonstrated a high level of intention to donate containers or donate their refunds to community and charity groups. Tasmanian charities and community groups can register as a donation partner and to date the network operator has signed up approximately 500 donation partners to date. Sorry, I would speak a little bit more just about the collection points.

CHAIR - Sorry, minister, we have run out of time.

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Ms OGILVIE - I will close by saying it's going incredibly well. Please everybody keep recycling.

Ms FINLAY - I'm interested with the NRM funding, there was a two-year boost. I'm interested if you can explain the thinking behind the need for a boost, and why bringing a boost to an end and taking funding back to previous numbers of core funding, how that helps NRM achieve the great work that they do. To clarify the question to you, minister, is it was seen that NRM needed a boost, why would it be that they don't need that ongoing level of funding?

Ms Ogilvie - The information, I've just been advised that it was an election commitment under minister Pearce's portfolio. However, I'm always happy to advocate for more, and I know what a great job NRMs do so I think that's the pathway forward if there's concern. I always say in this portfolio in particular, I'm really happy to work with everybody who wants to put Tasmania first. I'm very happy to advocate but I believe that's the background to the boost.

Ms FINLAY - The NRMs would love to hear that, minister, particularly as the consultation for the next Budget is active now.

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely.

Ms FINLAY - They will be knocking on your door, I'm sure.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm very happy to see what I can do. No promises. It's a hard budget environment.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you. That's been my first question. The other thing I think is really important and we've got a few hours here today and so it's going to be universally important that when questions are asked and answers are given around things like our salmon industry, it's often said that I'm a 'defender' or a 'supporter' of them but what I'm a defender and supporter of is correct information, and I want to clarify something that you said. You indicated that salmon industries have a commitment to phase out flow-through hatcheries. I just want to check if that's what you said and if that's true?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll just get my piece of paper back. I don't think I said that. I'll get the correct information. It's good to get the information right and I'm glad you've raised it. I will ask the department to answer that because they have the information.

Mr JACOBI - Yes, there is a commitment to phasing out flow-through hatcheries. In fact, industry have committed long-term to doing that and we're working very closely with each industry about what the timeframes would be for that phase-out.

Ms FINLAY - What sort of documented evidence is there of their commitment to phasing out flow-through hatcheries?

Mr JACOBI - There's no documented evidence that I'm aware of, but they have indicated that that is their intention and we're having conversations with them about what the policy framework for that might be.

Ms FINLAY - Right. Can I ask a different question then? From the numbers that were presented previously on the number, if we set aside Millybrook, I think I calculated from just

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that contribution then - great. So, one, if we can have a correction on the number in terms of flowthroughs and -

Ms OGILVIE - I think you have got that now.

Ms FINLAY - Can I understand of the flow-through hatcheries that are in operation, outside Millybrook, what the water quality monitoring demonstrates from those flow-through hatcheries?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, straight to EPA if we could.

Ms MURDOCH - Through you minister, I missed one farm, so apologies. There are eight current flow-through facilities and five combined RAS and flowthroughs.

In regard to the water quality, because there's a number of them, that's quite a detailed answer for you, but I'm pretty sure -

Ms FINLAY - Outside Millybrook, how many flow-through hatcheries have had reported breaches to the standards that are required?

Ms OGILVIE - Would you like to just seek some information?

Ms MURDOCH - There are two questions in that: the number of breaches and then what is the water quality information related to all hatcheries?

Ms FINLAY - Just the just the seven, so eight less Millbrook, that are in operation. I am keen to understand. There are a lot of conversations around flow-through hatcheries.

Ms MURDOCH - There is.

Ms FINLAY - Actually getting the real information about flow-through hatcheries in the public realm is important.

Ms MURDOCH - I am absolutely happy to do that. I will check with my team if we can get it back in the session or that's more work and we'll take it on notice if that's okay.

Ms OGILVIE - If we can get it back in the session that would be really helpful for everybody.

Ms FINLAY - While that's happening, if I can confirm -

CHAIR - Ms Finlay, it is Dr Woodruff's turn.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through you, minister, to the director of the EPA. Director, the Reflections and Learning - Salmon Mortality Event 2025 document was concerningly inadequate from the community's point of view and one of the actions was to develop an industry code of practice and it was for Salmon Tasmania to consider the development of a code of practice. In response to questioning from my colleague, Cassy O'Connor, we were informed that the industry may consider an emergency harvest provision in this voluntary industry-written code of practice. Can you be really clear for us now that the use of the word

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'harvest' there does not mean 'harvest for human consumption' in any form? And can you explain what you understand that provision would be and when it would be triggered?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister, as I outlined in the Legislative Council, there is no commitment for that kind of a harvest. That is actually not for to comment on, it's an industry perspective. There is no commitment in the Reflections and Learning report that a code of practice would actually contain that. There may have been discussions around that, but we have nothing in writing or understanding of what occurred and I really don't believe I can comment on that because I don't know what that would be.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, I know it's not a commitment, it's all voluntary, but my question is what do you think the words 'harvest' and 'emergency harvest provision' could mean? Would it be harvest for human consumption or harvest for some other purpose?

Ms MURDOCH - I'm not going to enter into hypotheticals. I don't have an opinion on that and it is not valid for me to have an opinion on that; that's not related to my portfolio.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay. On antibiotics and the impacts on the environment and also human health concerns, can you please table the EPA's florfenicol antibiotic residue monitoring schedule and explain how the schedule for florfenicol has been expanded from the previous monitoring schedule for oxytetracycline?

Ms MURDOCH - I welcome the opportunity to answer these questions to get it on the record.

Dr WOODRUFF - You could always have put it out in a press release. The community would have been happy about that.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please.

Ms MURDOCH - I'm very happy to answer the question. How much detail you do want?

Dr WOODRUFF - Everything you've got would be great.

Ms MURDOCH - Perfect. I'm just finding all the right information because I am exceptionally proud of the work my team have done in this space.

In regard to florfenicol monitoring, my exceptional team, led by Dr Raymond Bannister, have developed what we believe is the most intensive program here. Just for some context, the first sample treatment event has over 700 samples being taken as part of that. The first step in the schedule, and I'm sure you will be happy to hear this, is an extensive baseline monitoring program. That baseline monitoring program had to be completed before any florfenicol treatment was applied.

Dr WOODRUFF - When was it completed?

Ms MURDOCH - It was completed before therapeutic was applied to any lease site. In regard to that monitoring and because I know this is really important information, the baseline monitoring has to include - and this is for any treatment, so this is in the schedule - water sampling at internal, external and reference sites. The reference sites for the first treatment were

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between 533 kilometres and up to 1.5 kilometres away from those treatment sites. It also has to include sediment therapeutic residue sampling, again at internal and external sites and those reference sites of those differences at those sites as well; and in fauna sampling in internal sites, external sites and those reference sites as well. Importantly, and I know there's been a lot of talk about this, it also includes sediment microbial sampling, again at all of those sites. I would also like to say in regard to microbial sampling, we have engaged IMAS to do additional control sites, to do research into antibiotic microbials, so we have also added that. That's the baseline.

In regard to what is required then, we also have a mid-treatment sample of those things as well. This is 700 samples for just one treatment and all will progress this.

Dr WOODRUFF - Sorry, what do you mean for one treatment?

CHAIR - Sorry, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - I just wanted clarification.

Ms MURDOCH - I'm happy to, through you, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - If I may, I know you've got timing issues but because it's the EPA, which is independent, I'm very happy for a flow of conversation. I don't want to interrupt.

Dr WOODRUFF - I'm not asking another question, I just wanted to clarify.

CHAIR - I realise that but we're way over time - and that's me being generous. Does the committee want to allow this answer to continue?

Ms FINLAY - With your indulgence, Chair, I think everybody at the table would be happy for this line of questioning to continue.

CHAIR - That's fine.

Ms MURDOCH - I'm also happy to outline exactly what's happening. Per treatment as per the environmental standards, before any therapeutic event takes place, I, as the director need to be notified of what that treatment is. That first treatment, as per what is on our website, is the Tassal treatment at Meads and Stringers, and so this monitoring that I'm outlining now applies to that treatment. This same monitoring is going on for the Huon site as well. If there are any other treatments happening, this treatment - this monitoring schedule will also apply.

Dr WOODRUFF - The question was, how is it expanded from oxytetracycline monitoring?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, no, we're moving on.

Mr GARLAND - Minister, one of NRE's strategic priorities is to put Aboriginal people at the heart of managing land, sea and country. How is this occurring, particularly with the sea, and what legislative structures or requirements are there currently that recognise Aboriginal rights, history and connection to our sea and to give them the ability to have input on this?

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Ms OGILVIE - What a beautiful question, thank you. I know we're doing some work together on the marine environment act, and I appreciate traditional owners, both the land, sea, sky, sky country, all of that. It is a question that is best referred to the department, so we will start there.

Mr JACOBI - Yes, the minister's outlined the work that we're going to be doing through the marine review, but also the most significant example of our work with Aboriginal people recently is around the abalone deed of agreement, and you'd be familiar with that, Mr Garland. That opened up a significant long-term opportunity for Aboriginal people to harvest abalone and to promote and export their product. That was probably one of the most substantial gains that we've had in that in that fishery and certainly we're open to engaging with Aboriginal organisations about any other fisheries, where that opportunity might occur.

Ms OGILVIE - I might even perhaps go just a little further outside of the fisheries realm, more generally in relation to cultural heritage and acknowledging that and protecting cultural heritage. I do think that's something that we possibly could look more at through that marine environment act. I'm the minister for Heritage, but not the minister for aboriginal cultural heritage, so I don't want to go too far and speak for people who are not at the room. I certainly personally had a background in this area. I've worked for UNESCO in this area. I'm very keen to work with you to see what we could do to imagine good dialogue with our Aboriginal friends.

Prof RAZAY - The *Tasmanian Genetically Modified Organisms Control Act 2004* provided GMO moratorium until November 2029. The Tasmanian GMO moratorium means that genetically modified organisms are not allowed to be released into Tasmania's environment without permit. Although the commercial release of GMOs is prohibited and Tasmania is designated as a GMO free area to preserve its clean, green image, is the government committed to extend the GMO moratorium beyond 2029 to protect this state's GMO-free status?

Ms OGILVIE - A very good sciencey question from you, Professor Razay. That question and that decision does sit within minister Pearce's portfolio, but I've just checked with Mr Jacobi, and in the interest of trying to give you as much information as possible, he may be able to speak to it broadly.

Mr JACOBI - I thank the member for the question, and it is minister Pearce, a Primary Industries portfolio matter, but I'm happy to briefly just talk at a high level. The government does recognise the importance of genetically modified organism free status to its brand and its reputation as one of the really important agricultural production issues. We are looking at some of the issues that have emerged around SDN 1 and the importance of recognising that SDN 1 does not constitute a genetically modified product and that some industry producers are very keen to see some more relaxed approach to SDN 1 use, but that will be subject to a further review.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, what progress has been made towards developing a Tasmanian biodiversity offset framework?

Ms OGILVIE - A very good question, a passion project of mine. The Tasmanian government is progressing plans for a contemporary biodiversity offset framework for the state. This initiative will deliver a Tasmanian-specific approach that protects our unique environment, while supporting sustainable development, including housing and renewable energy projects.

The framework will include a Tasmanian biodiversity offsets policy, forming part of our economic statement to build a stronger economy and improve essential services; a mitigation hierarchy and offset principles supported by tools such as an offset calculator, spatial mapping and integration with the Natural Values Atlas and TASVEG; an offset fund with a governance framework to invest in science-based solutions, species research and technology for tangible and improved biodiversity outcomes; and legislative and regulatory changes to create a statutory head of power for offsets and integrate with Tasmania's resource management and planning system.

We've identified four key work streams: alignment with Commonwealth reforms under the *EPBC Act*, including the new National Environmental Standard for offsets and negotiated contemporary bilateral agreement; development of the Tasmanian Offsets Policy, including scope, triggers, offset ratios and guidelines; establishment of the Tasmanian Offsets Fund, a quarantined account for contributions and expenditure on biodiversity outcomes; and legislative reform to support implementation.

We know that Tasmania's unique landscape, with over 50 per cent of its land mass protected, requires flexible offset strategies tailored to our species and island circumstances, while aligning with national reforms where possible. Consultation opportunities will of course be provided; I'd like this to be a collaborative approach and will require federal government support under bilateral arrangements. This is a complex multi-year initiative, but it will deliver certainty, streamline approvals for major projects and achieve real biodiversity gains for Tasmania.

I will just give a little bit more information that New South Wales, Queensland and I think Western Australia already have funds. So, what we're seeking to do in short, is to make sure that any funds associated with Tasmanian biodiversity offsets are brought to Tasmania, spent in Tasmania on Tasmanian science, for Tasmanian environmental outcomes.

Ms FINLAY - Just a continuation of that conversation, which I think was useful. Firstly, I just wanted to check if there's anything more to add from the EPA around the florfenicol monitoring. Then, I would like to ask that next question, which is: how specifically does this compare to the rigour of the oxytetracycline monitoring? Thank you.

Ms MURDOCH - Yes, very happy to answer those questions. In regard to what else is to be monitored, when we get into the monitoring program itself -

Ms FINLAY - This is florfenicol, still? Just for the benefit of the Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - This is completely florfenicol. There are benthic video surveys which must be done at internal sites prior to treatment, day five of mid-treatment and day one post-treatment. Sediment sampling: samples must be collected in requirements with the standards set by my team at internal pens - it's very specific about some of these things, like the samples must be taken at the edge of the treated pen downstream of prevailing currents - there's lots of prescriptions attached to actually how scientific rigour has been applied.

Ms FINLAY - Can you continue to dot-point what those things are?

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Ms OGILVIE - Downstream prevailing water currents and the position must be recorded obviously at time of collection, so we can actually check those prevailing water currents. At external sites it must be taken at two transects at the compliance sites, and three transects within the marine farming lease. The transects must be positioned - I'm not going to read it, I will just show you this is detail.

Ms FINLAY - Maybe given that this is so detailed, would it be possible to request that that's tabled? Is there anything in that that's not -

A witness - I will just check with my team, but I think what we can do is a summary of -

Ms FINLAY - I suppose I'm actually really interested in the specifics.

Ms MURDOCH - The detail, taking out specifics -

Ms OGILVIE - If I may interject - I think that is a good idea, but let's just confirm that there's nothing -

Ms MURDOCH - commercial.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, confidential.

Dr WOODRUFF - What could be commercial about monitoring for a new antibiotic, that's never been in Tasmania that has massive community conversations about?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Ms OGILVIE - It's a question from Ms Finlay. Let's just make sure we do our administrative role.

Dr WOODRUFF - That would be a terrible look if you didn't release that.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Ms OGILVIE - It's a question from Ms Finlay.

Ms FINLAY - Otherwise, I get the sense in the importance of the response that maybe it takes time to detail it, but this is valuable. I am happy for the list to keep being outlined.

Ms OGILVIE - Let's check what I was suggesting we do.

Ms MURDOCH - Can I confer with my team, please?

Ms OGILVIE - We like to get things right.

Ms FINLAY - Once it's on record, then it can't be mismanaged.

Ms OGILVIE - We get it right and it might take a little time.

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Ms MURDOCH - Sorry, I was just checking, thank you, to make sure. I do have a full licence and schedule and mine is highlighted, but we're happy to table that. That's not a not a problem.

Ms FINLAY - I'm happy for you to continue but if we can table it at the same time.

Ms MURDOCH - Do you want me to table it, or do you want me to go through to get on the record?

Ms FINLAY - Both. There's a lot of interest in this. Community, industry, political and people are listening, and *Hansard* will reflect it. Also having it tabled, it means that I can physically have it in my head.

Ms OGILVIE - It's on the record as well. Thanks, Catherine. If you could continue.

Ms MURDOCH - We were up to sediment sampling at external sites and at reference sites. As we're saying, for this one, reference sites are between 500 and 8.5 kilometres away from the pens. Lots of - this is what you will see is where all the monitoring is occurring. We have sample collection, processing and storage requirements which must be complied with. Wild fish sampling - this part of the program particularly has been worked up with Public Health. In developing up the actual schedule, my team with Public Health reviewed 41 papers in regard to florfenicol which again the bibliography we're happy to provide and to be honest between Health and my team they're continually sharing any new research that's found to keep us up to date.

In regard to wild fish sampling, they must be collected from internal zones, but at least boundary to 500 metres to 1 kilometre and 3 kilometres. Public Health has asked for those zones. So those at day five, mid treatment day one, seven, day 21 and 38 post-treatment, we specify how many fish must be collected during those sampling periods. Then there is water sampling as well. Water sampling again must be collected at five internal, three external sites, reference sites, and we're prescriptive about how that must be collected as well.

In-fauna sampling, again, all those internal, external reference and sites and must be prior to treatment, post-treatment on 21 days, and microbial sampling. Again, very prescriptive there, must be provided to IMAS, and IMAS is doing more for us because we want to do some research and make sure, we are absolutely looking into this. Microbial sampling must be prior to treatment, day one, seven, 14 and 21 post-treatment.

That's the full program. In respect to how this varies to OTC, it varies a lot. We have added baseline, we've added water, we've added microbial. Also because of the half-life of florfenicol, the treatment program is earlier, so day one, four, seven, 14 because the international literature indicates that its half-life in the environment is quicker, so the oxytetracycline sampling we're at later periods. If we had a stuck to that, we would have missed understanding when florfenicol is in the environment.

They're the main changes, but if you do want any greater detail on how it varies to oxytetracycline, I am happy for Dr Raymond Bannister to give further detail, but that is the summary.

Ms OGILVIE - Would you like that?

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Ms FINLAY - Yes, possibly because I'm interested in there was a framework for monitoring under that use. Now we've introduced this new monitoring and from what you've described, this seems seriously comprehensive. It seems seriously well informed by research papers and, 700 samples for each treatment. It appears to me from your answer that there's a significant step up in terms of the intensification of the monitoring from that to this in terms of you know more baseline the water monitoring, the microbial monitoring, those sorts of things. Would that be a fair assessment?

Ms MURDOCH - It is a fair assessment and it's because also to remember the difference between the two antibiotics. Florfenicol has not been used in the marine environment here before, nor does it currently have a maximum residue limit (MRL). So the risk assessment for that MRL, whereas we have that for oxytetracycline. This is absolutely a ramping up. It's the first time it's been used. We need to understand what its behaviour is in the Tasmanian environment. Does it reflect international literature? Because no MRL - so there's a number of factors, but absolutely, as you can all see, it is a stepping up of a program.

Dr WOODRUFF - On the comment by Ms Finlay about it being comprehensive and well-informed, it certainly seems to be a lot of information that you're collecting. My question is, previously for oxytetracycline the EPA was monitoring and found, in one sample of wild fish seven kilometres away from the treatment site. There was above approved levels of that antibiotic in the fish. That information was only available through RTI. So it is only comprehensive and well-informed if the public knows what the outcome of this monitoring is.

How will you communicate with the public the results of the monitoring and who's doing it? Is it going to be EPA staff? Is it going to be companies? Is it going to be contractors? Is it going to be IMAS? What are the checks that you're putting in place? How do people know and who's doing it?

Ms MURDOCH- In regard to the premise put forward that the - was not - it had to be through RTI processes, on the oxytetracycline report, that report is on our website with a statement from Dr Veitch outlining that with those results there is no risk to human health. That is actually on our website. I just would just like to outline that.

It's part of our process to - and, as we have put out in every media statement and - is on our website in regard to florfenicol, all monitoring reports will be publicly available. That is our standard practise and they will be absolutely publicly available.

Dr WOODRUFF - So all of the 700 sites of monitoring that you're collecting for this study or the baseline information, the water, the sediments, the wild fish, all of that information will be available and put up on the website? How long will it take for that information to be up on the website?

Ms MURDOCH - I still haven't answered your other question in regard to who's doing that, which I'm happy to answer. As we've said, this is a huge intensive effort to get all of these samples. We will get that as that information comes in. As we've said, we need to look at a whole treatment on itself - Because we've got to look at all of those parameters because these monitoring programs have been based on absolute science - that importance of seeing on first day, seven days, when it disappears what it looks like in the environment.

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Each of the samples do take different times. The water samples are easier to process. Some of the samples, such as the fish samples, take at least three days to prepare. So it's going through Analytical Services Tasmania (AST), those 700 samples. We will work as expediently as possible to get results to the community. I can't give you a definite date as to - this is our first time of this - as to when I will have the full set of results.

As soon as we get those full set of results and understand what they look like, we will share them with other regulators and get information up as possible. We need this information as quickly as possible ourselves so that it can inform our future monitoring programs and understand if we need to add anything, I would hope not with that extensive program or if there's anything of more relevance to change in that program. I can't give you a definite answer as to when the first report will be available, but everyone is working as expediently as they can because we do understand the importance of this information. It needs to be factually correct because we do understand the importance of this information.

Dr WOODRUFF - Who's doing the monitoring?

Ms MURDOCH - It is a mixture. As I said, IMAS is doing some monitoring for us. The companies do employ qualified contractors in this state, who have to adhere to standards to keep what they're doing appropriate. They have engaged suitably qualified contractors to do that work. There is obviously QA, AST is doing the analysis of that work, as I understand at this point in time. To be honest, I'm sure there are a lot of boats out there right now collecting all of these samples, to get them in within the time, so we can actually get information as quickly as possible that we can review.

Mr GEORGE - I'd love to know who's paying for all this - I hope it's the industry; I hope it's not the public. Bearing in mind the latest research, which talks about microbial risks triggered by oral administration of antibiotics in fish aquaculture that persist long after the legally mandated, antibiotic withdrawal time. There's a lot of new information coming out in many different areas about the use of antibiotics.

I'd like to know on what basis the Minister for Primary Industries and the Premier are able to say with such certainty that the closure of the rock lobster fisheries, which are nearby, is only temporary and will be short-term only? If there's all this monitoring going on, and all this testing going on, and we have no results yet, why is the government able to say this is only a short-term closure of the rock lobster fishery, or that it will be short-term if the use of antibiotics spreads to other diseased pens?

CHAIR - Just before you answer, minister, I just want to remind all members to please direct your questions to the minister, or through the minister.

Ms OGILVIE - And this one in particular, because you are speaking of things in other people's portfolios and other ministers directly. I think the end result of your question was where does the monitoring land in relation to -

Mr GEORGE - How can you be sure this is only short-term closure of any rock fishery nearby diseased pens, when there are no results from the EPA testing?

Ms OGILVIE - Okay - the timeliness of testing? I will just seek some advice. We will try and get you some information, Mr Jacobi will assist us.

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Mr JACOBI - With respect, Mr George, minister Pearce I think did cover off on this, to a large extent in in hearings yesterday. We do need to be very clear that in relation to rock lobster, this is purely about a market access issue, and to be very clear, we do believe that the risk in the rock lobster fishery is extremely low. That the chance of any MRL being present in rock lobsters is extremely low, and this is absolutely a precautionary measure just to protect and guarantee market access.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, not according to the Chinese market.

Mr GEORGE - But minister, I'm asking how do you know it's short-term if you haven't got any results? How can the government say it's short-term if there are no results? You have to have the results first, before you discover whether it's short-term, long-term or permanent.

Mr JACOBI - We are doing specific testing. We have commenced testing in relation to just rock lobsters, so we're collecting rock lobster and testing them as we speak. We anticipate to have the results of that monitoring within the next two weeks. That monitoring will absolutely confirm any presence of florfenicol, or not, and it will also give us very good information about any risk to the industry and particularly to the market. I have confidence in my team that the workers and the work that they're doing is proactive, it will be well-informed, and it will be critical to any future decisions accompanied by the monitoring that the EPA are doing, to any closures of any fisheries in the future, hopefully very short term.

Mr GEORGE - So, you don't know?

CHAIR - Mr George, thank you.

Mr GEORGE - You don't know if it will be short-term?

Ms OGILVIE - I will take that as statement.

CHAIR - Mr George.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, can you explain how the landfill levy and the Waste Resource Recovery Board are driving better waste outcomes in Tasmania? I can go back a few years to my local government days, and it's been talked about for a long time.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm relatively new on the scene with this, and the amount of work that it was done foundationally by so many people to get us to this point really should be recognised. The landfill levy introduced under the *Waste and Resource Recovery Act 2022* is designed to divert waste from landfill and fund improved resource recovery.

In 23-24, the levy raised \$9.1 million and in 24-25 approximately \$16.96 million. All levy funds are reinvested into waste-management initiatives, and this sets us apart from other states as a good thing. In total, \$27 million has been collected in levy since it was introduced. The board has reinvested \$23 million either invoiced or committed in signed contracts and deeds - just before people ask about that. Most of this has been in the past 12 months.

Some of the funding highlights include \$5.5 million in High Priority Infrastructure Grants round 3 which opens 26 November 2025. Since launching in 2024, the High Priority

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Infrastructure Grants Program has supported 27 projects and will continue when round 3 opens for application on 26 November 25.

Individual grants, people are interested in this might want to apply, from \$50,000-\$500,000 are available to support industry, local government, community and not-for-profits. To provide that additional support and information for applicants, three online information sessions will be held in November and December.

Other grant funding includes \$250,000 for school waste education programs, \$500,000 for remote council recycling projects, \$4.33 million, for statewide education campaigns, \$2.36 million into regional waste organisations for local programs. I'm sure that Holly Mackey, our terrific CEO of the Waste Board, may be able to elaborate on some more of these projects if we wish.

The Waste and Resource Recovery board just in general terms overseas these various investments and released Tasmania's first Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy in November 2023. Setting the vision, 'Tasmania a place where nothing is wasted', and that's our vision for the state.

The updated strategy is expected to be in place after various stages of consultation in 2026. Early indications of data captured by the waste resource recovery team within our NRE show an encouraging downward trend in waste volumes being sent to landfill over the reported period. We're seeing a reduction from approximately 528,000 tonnes in 22-23 to around 509,000 tonnes in 24-25 so it's going down.

This aligns with the intent of our waste levy, which is designed to incentivise diversion from landfill and promote broad scale resource recovery. It's a really good thing, circular economy. Notably recovery rates have improved from 52 per cent to 60 per cent, so this is really important, quite successful and it's really great to see materials being diverted from landfill.

However, important also to note, the figures are based solely on the years for which we have that data, and our efforts are in their early days. It's all hands to the pump and since the inception of the *Waste and Resource Recovery Act 2022*, so just on the data may not capture some of the broad fluctuations in data. We're keeping an eye on that. The trend though is positive. That's good ongoing monitoring; comprehensive data collection will be central to confirm that sustained progress.

Our journey ahead is long and probably a bit winding. Mr Shelton, thank you for the very good question, but I believe as a state we can do this, and we are well on the way.

Ms FINLAY - It's been great that there's a commitment to table the outline of those monitoring programs and the differences between the two. I'm wondering how the program that you've set up for monitoring here in Tasmania compares to the research that you looked at and how monitoring for florfenicol is happening in other jurisdictions around the world. Just wondering how those differ.

Ms MURDOCH - If it's okay, I might bring Dr Raymond Bannister to the table to answer that question.

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Ms OGILVIE - I think that's a good idea.

CHAIR - Welcome, Dr Bannister, we have Dr Raymond Bannister, Senior Manager, Salmon Science and Standards at the EPA joining us. Welcome.

Mr BANNISTER - In terms of environmental monitoring, we are aware that florfenicol breaks down and does not bioaccumulate in the environment. There are countries such as Canada that have a post-deposit monitoring program for therapeutins. They mainly focus on the impacts of sea lice drugs on the environment, but they also measure for antibiotics. In terms of the quantities that are used in countries such as Canada, you're looking at 3000 kilograms of antibiotics used in a year.

Ms FINLAY - Compared to?

Dr BANNISTER - Compared to somewhere like Chile, for example, which uses 351 tonnes of antibiotics in the environment.

Ms FINLAY - Not world's best practice.

Dr BANNISTER - Definitely not world's best practice, but when we compare back to other countries such as Tasmania, last year we used 180 kilograms of antibiotics. If we compare to China, if you want to do another comparison to another country, they used about 10,000 tonnes of antibiotics last year in aquaculture. If we start to look at the scale of what's happening, we are scaling our monitoring appropriately to the Tasmanian environment. As the CEO spoke about today, we are collecting more than 700 samples at one company's leases that are treating antibiotics and at other company's leases that are treating antibiotics we're collecting over 400 samples for that monitoring program. We're looking at the impacts on the sediments, we're looking at the impacts on the fish, we're looking at the impacts on the microbial community and that's far beyond any monitoring that's being done in other countries.

Ms FINLAY - Fantastic, thank you. A question of clarification, without making any assumptions in the question, one of the applicants is having 700 and you just mentioned 400 for the other one. Could you talk to that a little?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you and for protocol we will send it through Catherine.

Ms MURDOCH - I can do that one. The first treatment was over a large area, hence why they're scaled to the number of internal pens. The second treatment, which is on our website as well, is Huon Aquaculture, that one lease, so therefore there's not as many internal pens.

Ms FINLAY - That's a great clarification. Thank you very much. I appreciate your work and the answer on that one. For my final question of this round, I want to go back and clarify because these things are important. There has been a commitment from government that there wouldn't be any arbitrary closures of flow-through hatcheries and you have said that industry have committed to closing flow-through hatcheries. I want to check that again. Is that correct?

Ms OGILVIE - I will ask Mr Jacobi to give you the information.

Mr JACOBI - I don't think that's exactly what I said. I said that the industry are committed to reducing water through flow-through hatcheries. They're not committing at all to

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closing flow-through hatcheries Some companies have already made substantial progress in terms of their sustainability strategies.

Ms FINLAY - That's an important clarification. So I'm hearing it correctly, in the way flow-through hatcheries might operate there's a commitment to a change, but you're not saying that the companies have committed to closing them?

Mr JACOBI - I'm not saying that, and I apologise if that was what I said before.

Ms FINLAY - It's important to clarify that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through the minister to the director of the EPA and talking about monitoring, is the EPA intending on testing and monitoring impacts from florfenicol on other aquaculture and fisheries industries, including oyster and other shellfish farming industries?

Ms MURDOCH - As explained I think in the Primary Industries portfolio earlier this week, industry will be doing those things. The extensive information we're collecting can be utilised to inform those so we need to make sure we're adding value. What our information will be used for is to do the environmental risk assessment, which my team is already in front of and getting ready for all the avenues where we can apply that to do an appropriate environmental risk assessment. We have worked it up with Public Health because that information will enable them to inform their public health advice as well.

Dr WOODRUFF - I would like to go back to the question I asked about emergency harvesting. I heard your answer and I understand you don't want to speculate on a part of a voluntary code of practice for the industry that may not be progressed, but I think you've got a responsibility to clear the air on this, because your director of finfish regulation did bring this up to the Legislative Council last night. The concept of an emergency harvest has caused quite a bit of concern in the community and I think it's really in your interest to confirm that this emergency harvest concept does not mean harvest for human consumption. Perhaps Mr Cook, who made that reference, could clarify what's going on?

Ms OGILVIE - The question is to the EPA but can I just understand what you're asking? It was a comment made last night you're seeking clarification on?

Dr WOODRUFF - It was a comment that was made by the Director of the EPA's staff member last night.

Ms MURDOCH - It was Tuesday night, I think. Just to be really clear, the EPA has no information. I have not been informed by industry in any way that an emergency harvest protocol is even being looked at by industry. That is not our role. I understand that that was raised in there. I obviously did not clarify that enough in that hearing, so I wish to clarify now: I am not aware that industry is developing an emergency harvest protocol as part of that code of practice. I have no evidence to indicate that and there has been no discussions with me in regard to that.

Dr WOODRUFF - So what were Mr Cook's comments in relation to, then? What did he mean by 'emergency harvest' when he said that?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please.

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Dr WOODRUFF - I think it's important to get the director's clarification, because it was used and now you're saying it wasn't used.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff. You asked a question, it was answered.

Ms OGILVIE - She has clarified. It's been answered.

Dr WOODRUFF - People really need to know the answer to this. I think everyone on this side of the table would agree -

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please. Mr Garland.

Mr GARLAND - Minister, why is there no forward funding for the orange-bellied parrot monitoring program, and does this mean it will face the axe at the end of this financial year?

Ms OGILVIE - I will see if I can get some information for you. I will start the answer and then I will ask Mr Jacobi to speak specifically to budgets, which is sitting at the administrative level. I'm glad you've asked about the orange-bellied parrot because I think we all love them very much and want to see them surviving and thriving. We're investing significant efforts in the orange-bellied parrot program through managing the wild population and maintaining a captive insurance population.

In 2023-24, the Tasmanian government provided an additional \$1.3 million to be expended over two years for tracking birds during their migration to improve our understanding of threats to wild orange-bellied parrots and maintaining critical infrastructure at the Five Mile Beach captive breeding facility. The first year of tracking was completed in 2024, with an interim report released.

In 2025, 42 orange-bellied parrots were fitted with transmitters prior to their northern migration. Eighteen receiver towers were installed in the migration range, including Tasmania's west coast and western Bass Strait islands. Upgrades to the Five Mile Beach wildlife management facility, designed to improve the efficiency of the facility and increase the number and fitness of captive-bred birds available for release to the wild, are underway.

In relation to the expenditure and how the operational side of the budgets work, I will ask Mr Jacobi, as I believe he's well across this.

Mr JACOBI - Just to clarify: the migration tracking project will continue for a third year, using residual funding from the budget commitment. Additional VHF trackers will be deployed on birds prior to their northern migration in early 2026. Funding options for the future of the OBP, VHF and GPS tracking program - and this is excluding any potential future funding commitments from government - will be drawn from the Threatened Species Fund, and possibly also contributions from partners such as renewable energy companies who have monitoring requirements and obligations as part of their environmental approval requirements.

Ms OGILVIE - Does that help?

Mr GARLAND - That helps.

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Prof RAZAY - I would like to contribute to the debate about the use of antibiotics in salmon -

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, good idea.

Prof RAZAY - because what the public want to know - to be reassured that the salmon on sale is free of antibiotics. The reason being that the antibiotics used in salmon are important in the treatment of human infections. When you take food that contains traces of antibiotics, then the microbes in your body will develop antibiotic resistance. The important thing here is that misuse of antibiotics in animals, as in humans, will contribute to the rise of the threat of antibiotic resistance. Sometimes this can cause severe infections and, therefore, less response to antibiotics.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have guidelines that say that healthy animals should only receive antibiotics to prevent disease, if it has been diagnosed in other animals, in this case, fish, because of the threat of antibiotic resistance. Some studies have also shown that interventions that restricted antibiotic use in food-producing animals reduces antibiotic-resistant bacteria in animals by 39 per cent. This is important because it shows that, even if you use it, it has to be very restricted and we should avoid its continuous use because that is when you have an increased resistance.

Sometimes it doesn't matter what antibiotic you use in the long term. If you misuse it regularly, then we'll have resistant and that will impact us. Therefore, it's important to look at alternative ways in the future as well, apart from a clean environment, we all agree about that, but I gather they are looking at vaccines and I think they are also considering that in the future. All I would say is, I am the one, I have been promoting eating fish two or three times a week, but at this stage because of the concern, I'm saying we have to be cautious until we get more information. Until we really feel the salmon is free from antibiotics we'll be cautious, so I'm eating it once a week. Thank you.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. It was more of a statement, yeah, but I thank you for your contribution.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, can you please share with the committee what programs or efforts are in place to assist industry in transitioning to the low-emissions economy?

Ms OGILVIE - Just bear with me one moment, while I flip over my page. Thank you, so much. Our climate change work is incredible, thank you team. I would like to say they do so much with quite a small team - a small but excellent team.

As we've developed this sectoral emissions reduction and resilience plans, the Tasmanian government consulted with industry representatives and stakeholders. They told us that a key barrier to reducing emissions was the cost of testing new ideas that could help them transition to lower emissions and they suggested that idea sharing and financial incentives would greatly assist them.

Taking that feedback to heart, we developed Tasmania's emissions reduction and resilience roadmap 2024-29, which was released in November 2024. The roadmap includes a new commitment to support businesses and industries in all sectors to address common issues,

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and links together with the six sectoral plans - it's exciting work - and Tasmania's risk assessment for climate change.

As part of that roadmap, we've created the climate change business innovation grant program - very exciting - which launched this past September. The program aims to support Tasmanian small to medium-sized businesses to take action on climate change. It's focusing on innovation - as minister for Innovation, I think this is fantastic - collaboration and partnerships. We want to see those innovative solutions coming forward. Grants of between \$25,000 to \$100,000 are available. People listening in, please be aware of this, we're excited to work with you. Total funding for the program is \$550,000.

It is important to note, though, successful applicants must also provide a cash co-contribution, we want people seriously working together. Projects can range from, say, demonstrating the viability of a new or existing concept or upscaling concept, to distributing information about the benefits of concept to the broader community, or even just building local capability. The program prioritises projects that apply novel or unique concepts in Tasmania. This is the pilot state philosophy that we like to use. Come up with the new ideas, supporting local innovation and setting examples for other businesses to follow.

The deadline for the program has been extended to the 30 November because I wanted to tell you about it today; hopefully people are watching, and to allow businesses time to refine and strengthen their proposals. It's hard when you're coming up with a new thing, you have to work it through so I encourage everybody, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, to look into the program. Please visit the ReCFIT website. I won't read out the web address, you can just Google it, and I hope to see great project ideas coming forward.

Ms FINLAY - I acknowledge and appreciate the minister's commitment to advocate on behalf of NRMs for an increase in their core funding. I think that's really important. Historically in Tasmania, the core funding provided to NRMs has always had to be topped up by election commitments or other commitments because the work that they do and the people that they employ to do that work -

Ms OGILVIE - Good people.

Ms FINLAY - They are good people and as deeds come to an end and as funding comes to end, they need certainty in terms of their roles and without that certainty we risk losing good people from Tasmania. They go and find jobs elsewhere or they go and work in different sectors.

There was a comment before about the core funding returning to pre-boost numbers of \$250,000 per NRM, not indexed. For your benefit in your advocacy, the timeframe when it was \$250,000 has been since 2013. That was when NRMs had a core funding level of \$250,000, 2013. As you can imagine, that was a long time ago and lots of things have changed in that time and we know that for every dollar invested in NRMs, there's a \$10 return for all of the effort and the load that they do.

There was a commitment made, and sometimes language can be used intentionally in a bit of an opaque way, but there was a commitment by this government at this election that there would be no reduction of funding to NRMs, either direct, indirect or in kind, which implied to the NRMs that the boosted level was going to be committed to in an ongoing way. They have

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teams of people delivering work, great employees who, at the end of the financial year, will have no certainty in those ongoing programs. I suppose my question to you is, minister, in your advocacy, can you take into account that 2013 was when the numbers were at \$250,000?

Since then, there's been a recognition that it needs to be topped up continually so, would you take on board that the amount that they're currently being funded, \$544,000, there was a commitment. I have gone back and checked. It was under the penmanship of the Premier.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you.

Ms FINLAY - That commitment, made by the Premier, was that there would be no reduction, direct, indirect or in kind to the NRMs. Three of the chairs and CEOs have advocated to me very seriously about the important work they do and the importance of that funding, so could you take on board their directs - it has been cc'd to you so it will be in your correspondence - to ensure that the great work that they do can continue for the Tasmanian environment?

Ms OGILVIE - First, I'd like to say I agree with you about the importance of their work. It is just incredible, great people and I really recognise that.

We had the budget process, which is effectively opening now. I'm really happy to advocate, but I will also note we are in a constrained budget environment, so things are not straightforward.

Ms FINLAY - It's unfortunate though when the Premier puts things in writing and then those things are -

Ms OGILVIE - I appreciate that. I think you advocated so beautifully there and articulated the challenge, which I think is a joint challenge. Yes, I am happy to advocate. Yes, we'll take that on board and I understand that particular piece of the question. I wonder if Mr Jacobi would you like also to make a comment?

Mr JACOBI - Thank you, minister, through you. I absolutely agree with the importance of our NRMs and the important work that they do. We do work very collaboratively with them, in particular through the threatened species fund. Some of the grants that we have issued have been directly to NRMs and we actively support applications that they make to the Commonwealth, many of which are successful. Across the board there are a whole range of different projects in the pests, natural resource management, the monitoring space, that are actively being progressed and contribute to the viability of each individual NRM and the positions that are supported by them.

Ms FINLAY - It's great to hear that from both of you because I think they're feeling a little bit let down and maybe misguided in terms of what their - and it's not long now, where they've got staff coming to the end of their deed and knowing what's going to happen.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm happy to be an advocate, of course, around our budget table and those discussions, everybody will be advocating for all of their constituents and portfolio members, but I really do seriously appreciate the way you articulated that and I will take it on board.

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Ms FINLAY - Thank you, minister. I'm going to go now to Landcare, because as important as our NRMs are, so is our Landcare and the thousands of Tasmanians that give their time.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't want to interrupt your question and please feel free to continue, but Landcare sits within minister Pearce's portfolio, but I don't want to interrupt you.

Ms FINLAY - Okay. No, I'm happy to redirect those questions to the minister at some point.

Ms OGILVIE - Don't want to waste a question.

Ms FINLAY - So, then the threatened species fund that you mentioned. I'm interested in the status of the threatened species strategy, the strategic plan and the implementation plan that's been committed to. I know that you've been doing some public consultation and there was a commitment to having a strategy out; I'm just wondering if you could update the committee on the status of that.

Ms OGILVIE - Very, very happy to do that and I think it might be appropriate to bring Jo Crisp to the table with your agreement. We have joining us Jo Crisp, General Manager, Environment, from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Welcome, Jo. Thank you.

Ms CRISP - Thank you very much, minister. The question was in regard to the implementation plan and the strategy and its progress.

Ms FINLAY - Yes, just the status update. Thank you.

Ms CRISP - Thank you. You will recall that the What We Heard report was released quite recently by the minister, and that was a bit of a synopsis of what we have heard over the last sort of 12 months of both consultation that was undertaken and then deep dives with our scientific advisory committee, our NRMs and a whole range of other stakeholders, underrepresented groups and people who were advocating to be involved in those sessions. That was a great synopsis and that has given us some really good content to develop the strategy and the implementation plan, which we have drafts that are developed, but I have to say, the minister hasn't seen them yet.

Ms OGILVIE - Looking forward to it.

Ms CRISP - Yes, so they will be out shortly.

Ms FINLAY - Great. Thank you. I appreciate that. Part of the reason for my question was that I think there was an expectation that the strategy would be released before the end of the year, and so part of my inquiry around where it's at is to see whether that would still remain true, that there will be a strategy released by the end of the year?

Ms CRISP - We're getting -

Ms OGILVIE - We're close, yes, no, please, you're the expert, yes, go ahead.

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Ms CRISP - Because there's a few details within the strategy that are really important to get right, so we're doing some work around the prioritisation process and key threats that are informed by a lot of scientific work, and because our scientific advisory committee doesn't meet until the end of November, I think it's going to be very tight to get it out before the end of the year, but we're definitely looking to early 2026.

Ms OGILVIE - That's the straightforward answer. I can give you a little bit more information too, just for the *Hansard*, for those who are watching and interested in this area. Just to summarise stakeholder feedback in response to the discussion paper, Developing a new threatened species strategy for Tasmania has been analysed and summarised in a consultation report published on the NRE Tasmania website so people can have a look at that. Guided by stakeholder feedback on the discussion paper, our draft strategy and implementation plan are in the final stages of development.

I just think it is helpful to know as well that a dedicated project manager was recruited to deliver the strategy, so there's been a lot of hard work going on, and the \$300,000 funding allocation for this project has been fully expended on salary and project costs, so it's been all hands on deck to do it and, Jo, thank you so much for everything you're doing and I look forward to seeing it as soon as we're able.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, chair. Through you minister, a question to the director of the EPA. I want to ask a question about the total permissible dissolved nitrogen output in Storm Bay. First, what is the current rolling 12-month average for each salmon company in Storm Bay? Have any companies utilised more than 80 per cent of their stage 1 apportionment over the previous two years? Do you have any indication, or have you had any indication, that any companies will be applying for their stage 2 apportionment in the coming 12 months?

Ms MURDOCH - Okay, four questions there, in regards to that -

Dr WOODRUFF - Three.

CHAIR - Before you answer, I remind members that the rule is one question. If you continually ask questions with two or three more mixed into it, it's going to take a very long time to get through everything and it causes confusion. Please, stick to clear questions because I will be counting them.

Dr Woodruff, there were three questions in that one, and you're not alone.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I'm just following the lead, I'm so sorry.

CHAIR - No, I am pointing it out to all members, because there's been quite a bit of it going on. It's going to be a long time to get all the answers within the three-minute mark. Again, I will be directed by you if you want me to -

Dr WOODRUFF - It is a pack, and I'm very happy to take them on notice.

Ms MURDOCH - Really?

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Dr WOODRUFF - Yes.

Ms MURDOCH - I have a lot of information here that I can read through.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am happy to take them on notice.

Ms OGILVIE - Could I, as the minister -

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, I'm directing it to the Director of the EPA.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, but questions on notice, if I may.

CHAIR - Yes, minister, you have the call.

Ms OGILVIE - On this question - I'm also really happy to have very much a free flow around the table. I think it's working well. In particular, having the EPA here able to answer questions is great. Catherine, if you were able to have a go at answering, if you feel you can, the particular questions, then make a determination on whether we need to take things on notice. I think people are watching, if we're able to -

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, straight to the director now, given the time.

Ms MURDOCH - In regard to the question, in regards to rolling average?

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, thanks.

Ms MURDOCH - That's the first one. I'm sorry, I'm struggling to find an exact figure of that. Can you just speak to that for me, please? The second question, sorry to clarify, minister.

Dr WOODRUFF - Have any companies used more than 80 per cent of their stage 1 portion over the previous two years? Have you had any indication that they will be applying for a stage 2 apportionment in the coming 12 months?

Ms MURDOCH - In regard to the second question - no companies have used over their - I will let Mr Cook answer, so I do not give you the wrong answer, because I can't put my hands on it across my briefs.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thanks, director. Through you, minister, to Mr Cook.

Mr COOK - The way the determination is set up is that a company has a stage 1 allocation and they have to demonstrate that they're using at least 80 per cent of that during a two-year period, over several consecutive months. Once they reach that point, they can then apply to go to their stage 2 determination. We have very recently, very hot off the press, received an application by one of the companies which has been operating above that 80 per cent level to access their stage 2 determination.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, which company?

Mr COOK - That's Huon Aquaculture.

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CHAIR - That's another question. Dr Woodruff, please.

Dr WOODRUFF - Is there any intention to trade nitrogen between companies if they have not reached the prescribed cap for release?

CHAIR - Order, please. Dr Woodruff, as I said before, you asked four questions in the one and it's very, very hard within the time limits allowed, even with me being as lenient as I am, to get all the answers, if you keep asking more questions - which as you know in the rotation, you're only allowed two.

Ms OGILVIE - The other people get grumpy.

CHAIR - I have been lenient.

Dr WOODRUFF - I hear what you're saying, Chair. Can I just say, I heard Ms Finlay ask many questions and points of clarification, and extra backwards and forwards. I really just asked one set of questions around one topic, and that was one clarifying point.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, I said you weren't alone when I addressed the committee before in regard to multiple questions in the one. All the members are taking it on board. So please, moving forward, to keep things progressing nicely as we are, just one question at a time, please.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay. Could I ask my second question now, which is -

CHAIR - No, you'll have to wait until the next rotation because you've had four in the one question. I have to be fair. Next rotation you can ask another question.

Mr GARLAND - Minister, in response to the state of the environment report the government noted it would focus on four priority environmental areas: (1) Develop a long-term vision and strategy for Tasmania's environment; (2) Develop an environmental data strategy; (3) Focus on securing covenants and other effective conservation measures through the Private Land Conservation Program to deliver greater protection for under-represented ecosystems; and (4) Improve native vegetation mapping and information. This was to be confirmed in the 2025-26 Budget process. Is there any funding in this budget to fund these important responses?

Ms OGILVIE - The answer is there is funding to do that, but I will ask the department managers - I'd just like to give you a little preamble without wasting too much time while they're checking their documents. The state of environment report we know is a cornerstone for understanding Tasmania's environmental health. It provides baseline data, trends and risk across 29 thematic areas. It was tabled in parliament on 17 December 2024, prepared by the Tasmanian Planning Commission under the *State Policies and Projects Act*.

Importantly, it was the first report since 2009 and highlighted the significance of shaping Tasmania's long-term environmental strategies. I've got a lot of detail here. I know we're short on time. I will ask the department for the information on the funding side and then if you wish more, we can come back to get you the answer. Thank you.

CHAIR - Does any other Independent have a question?

Ms OGILVIE - Oh, sorry, no, Mr Jacobi was going to add to that.

CHAIR - My apologies.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister. I might refer to Louise Wilson in a moment, specifically in relation to the funding. In terms of the vision and strategy component, and I think I committed the other day that we would be working towards that within the next 12 months, but to be clear, the Tasmanian government is developing the state's sustainability strategy and this will be an important component to that. The sustainability strategy encompasses both social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability, but we do need to focus specifically on what our vision is for the state of Tasmania's environment.

We have a whole range of different activities that are under way and many of the people at the table today are dealing with particular parts of that. That includes the Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2025. The Rural Water Use Strategy has a whole range of different initiatives which were touched on in minister Pearce's portfolio around water quality monitoring and particularly river health. We've got the waste and resource recovery strategy, which I'm sure Holly Mackey, acting CEO of the Waste and Resource Recovery Board, might talk to you later, and we have the Tasmanian threatened species strategy.

It's not like we we have one single point. We have a whole range of different initiatives across government which are dealing with Tasmania's state of the environment. Probably one of the most exciting priorities that we have is the environmental data strategy. There's a huge amount of work that's being done across both the EPA and my department to combine data sources.

A really good example of that is around water quality monitoring that Hydro Tasmania, the EPA, the Department of Health and my department have historically been doing all over the state. We are bringing all that information together into a single-point source of water quality monitoring data that would be made publicly available. That's a really important part of being able to demonstrate that we have a combined whole-of-state approach to that in particular. There's also some amazing work being done in the Natural Values Atlas and we might get an opportunity later today to talk you through that.

Specifically in terms of the funding, is there anything more, Louise, that you wish to add?

Ms WILSON - Thanks, Jason and through you, minister, while there isn't any new funding at the moment through this interim Budget, there's actually quite a lot of work to do to scope out how these new priorities are going to be addressed. There's a lot of existing work being done. I can say on priorities (3) and (4) that we are working through a number of existing programs to address those.

In relation to the private land conservation program and improving the covenanting on private land, we are rebuilding the team and we are looking to contemporise that program. We are drawing on some Commonwealth funding to assist with that. They have historically provided funding to support that program.

In the veg mapping, we have the latest version of Tasveg 5.0 release. That is part of our business as usual, but we can always do better. We're looking to build into continuous improvement and hopefully escalate that a little bit in terms of our BAU.

Importantly, the priorities (1) and (2) are going to be not completely whole-of-government, but they're definitely cross-portfolio and cross-agency. The one that I'm the most excited about is the environmental data strategy. The environmental data strategy is a massive job, and I talked to MRMs, my general manager, Joe, who came to the table. We met with them regularly. I met with the chairs and the CEOs and made a strong commitment and also a genuine request for them to work with us on an environmental data strategy that draws together a range of data.

I've also talked to the Tasmanian Planning Commission. That was quite some time ago, but I have been trying to get in to meet with the CEO again more recently. What we have to do is join up the data, but not just the data but the programs and actions. That is the major challenge here and we have to do some scoping work. We have to map out the different pieces of work and responsibilities and then look at (1) our governance solution, and (2) the thing that can transform how we do state of environment reports. I believe general environmental monitoring over time is going to be the environmental data strategy.

There are some opportunities within the government around digital transformation that we can look at, but we have to do the work first to work out what that looks like and how much it's going to cost. It could be quite expensive and take a bit of time, but it will have ongoing benefits and will generate a lot of efficiencies down the track.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I think that was a great answer of the complexity of it all. I would like to add that the State of Environment report is a good document. We've read it, we've considered it, and now we are mapping it against current activities, and you've heard the detail of that. I hope that gets you somewhere.

Mr GARLAND - Are you developing a long-term vision for our marine environment?

Ms OGILVIE - Would we like to speak about that? Our long-term vision around the marine environment act. I would love to speak about that, Mr Garland. I know it's a passion project of yours. I thank you for identifying it early as something that you have a deep interest, no pun intended, in.

There is work across the Environment sector here, but in relation to the marine environment act, this is something that we as a government, which is an unusual, creative, minority government, can do to work together. We have committed to developing that new marine environment act for Tasmania. For those who are listening in, I've committed to working closely with the member for Braddon, Mr Garland, about this. I truly appreciated his efforts in this space. I look forward to progressing this piece of work.

To give you an idea of where we're headed with it, the act will provide a contemporary framework for managing and protecting marine ecosystems, aligning with national standards and addressing emerging challenges such as climate change and marine pollution in those strategic layers. Work is currently in the planning phase. I will also say that New South Wales and Victoria lead the country with progressive frameworks that integrate marine management in marine estate management act and the marine and coastal act respectively cut across. Tasmania's marine management by comparison, is quite fragmented across multiple acts and agencies. That's something we see in the environment portfolio more generally.

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Our government has committed to reviewing and updating relevant legislation and regulations to ensure we remain contemporary while recognising there will always be differences in legislation across jurisdictions, obviously, because we respond to the environment in which we sit.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, this is an extraordinarily long answer.

Ms OGILVIE - We need to ensure that we have Tasmanians -

CHAIR - Minister, just hold for a second. I will stop the clock. This is a follow up question from Mr Garland so the response from the minister is entitled to go at least three minutes. The minister has been speaking for two minutes and 0.84 seconds. Minister, please continue.

Ms OGILVIE - Good. I will just bring it home for the marine environment act. This is a fantastic piece of work. I'm looking forward to working with you, Mr Garland. I really enjoyed the session that you held in parliament; I wish more people had been there. Everyone should come on this journey. This is a strategic piece of work that we're thinking about - a simpler, more integrated coastal and marine framework.

We've talked about the cultural heritage stuff. I want to look at the shipwrecks. I want to look at undersea cultural heritage as well. There's a raft of things that are really bespoke to our beautiful island marine environment that we can look at - next steps, initiatives, budgets, working together, stakeholder consultation. Really looking forward to working with everybody at this table on this strategic piece of work.

How did I go?

CHAIR - 2.49 minutes.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, I'd like to touch on the threatened species fund and associated grants.

As a preamble, it's wonderful, being a country boy and you drive around Lyons, being 60 per cent of Tasmania, and you get a good look at it. Anecdotally, on the farm, more eagles around in the last six months or eight months than have seen for a long time. It is wonderful, when they're perched in a tree, to be able to walk up within 30 or 40 metres of a tree and see this big eagle sitting up there. Of course, eventually, you will get too close and they fly away, but that's also a spectacular sight. Driving around the countryside and catching a few devils in the lights - not on the road - just witnessing the coming back of the devils and the fact that you see Tassie devils on the side of the road. All of that is really great.

My question to you is: what progress has been made under the threatened species fund and associated grants?

Ms OGILVIE - What a great question. I liked the personal anecdotes as well, it was beautiful. I hope you have owls on the farm as well, I love them.

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As you know, the government established the threatened species fund with \$8 million over four years, 2024-2028, to deliver key conservation outcomes. In 2025-26, the fund had a budget of \$2.165 million. Key achievements include:

- \$515,000 for priority research and monitoring of the Maugean skate, including acoustic tracking and genetic sequencing - that bit is very important.
- \$335,000 for urgent conservation of the red handfish, including habitat restoration and population census.
- \$400,000 across seven projects through the strategic partnership grants, supporting species such as the forty-spotted pardalote - beautiful, the Morrisby's gum, and Miena cider gum.
- Emergency preparedness funding, including \$50,000 for avian flu, which is very serious and important.
- Installation of an emergency generation for a captive handfish facility. That's very practical and pragmatic.

The fund is complemented by ongoing programs for species like the orange-bellied parrot, which recorded a record 97 fledglings last season, and the Swift Parrot Recovery Project, which progressed 29 of 35 national recovery actions.

Applications for round 2 of this threatened species partnership grant program are open this Friday, so for those listening in, please get on board. Have I got that right? Yes - just checking in. They will close on 18 January, so there's a bit of time to put your projects together. Round 2 of the program provides a \$600,000 funding pool for projects focusing on two key themes: healthy habitats and resilience to invasive species and disease.

We are already seeing great environmental outcomes, and we've heard some anecdotes about that today from the seven grant recipients from round 1. We look forward to seeing more positive impacts.

Round 1 recipient, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, was awarded \$88,000 to restore natural water flows to Sloping Main conservation area on the Tasman Peninsula. Historic farming and hydrology infrastructure at the site had resulted in changes to the movement of freshwater and tidal flows, impacting the natural vegetation structure. That project aimed to reverse this impact and help ecological recovery of the site, allowing natural inundation patterns to return, and the re-establishment of saltmarsh vegetation which supports the many species that call the saltmarsh home. Following successful remediation works, bird life has already been seen returning to the marsh.

This is an example of how modest and leveraged and really targeted investments that are strategically placed can transform the environmental health of landscapes. Thank you for the question.

Ms FINLAY - I want to circle back to the statement that Prof Razay made and I'm wondering if we can put some comments on the record in terms of human consumption of salmon, the withholding periods after antibiotics are applied and the concern - I'd love Prof Razay to go back to eating fish three times a week -

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Ms OGILVIE - He is a fish-eater; that's a good start.

Ms FINLAY - Can we make some comments about that antibiotic use and human health. He also asked a question - he thought the companies were about to start developing vaccines, but the comment about vaccination use in fish as well.

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly. That may be for you, Jason. Yes, that is the answer. It is a food safety issue which sits under one of Mr Pearce's portfolios. I'm not sure how to address that for you.

Ms FINLAY - Withholding timeframes and things?

Ms OGILVIE - Maybe it's about monitoring things. Catherine, maybe you could answer this. Oh, Jason - it's broader information, perhaps.

Mr JACOBI - This is really a food safety issue, but I'll do my best to respond to it.

Ms OGILVIE - We'll do our best.

Mr JACOBI - I think we specifically have to go to the APVMA permit. The APVMA approval is the most immediate document that guides the withholding period. The key requirement of the emergency permit that was issued by the APVMA - just to be clear, the permit period, or the permit has been published, so it is publicly available for everybody to review. I'm just reading from information that is already publicly available. The permit period is from 7 October 2025 to 31 August 2026.

As was mentioned before, one of the key restraints on that permit is that fish can only have one treatment and the treatment can only occur in the south-eastern biosecurity zone. The withholding period on the permit is a 300 degree day for the domestic market and a 500 degree day for export.

Ms OGILVIE - I might just add, at a personal level, as an anecdote, fish on the shelves is safe to eat. I've ordered my Christmas shopping. I'm going to get salmon, crayfish, prawns - I have that ready to go. I want people to feel confident, broadly, that our processes work, that our monitoring works, that our standards are good. Whilst not being the minister for the relevant area but just at a personal level to say, please order your Christmas shopping and include salmon and seafood in that.

Dr WOODRUFF - I won't eat crayfish from the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Ms FINLAY - No, but there's plenty of other crayfish being fished in Tasmania.

CHAIR - Order, Ms Finlay.

Dr WOODRUFF - Lucky for that, there's so many fish in the sea.

Ms FINLAY - No, it's not actually. You escalating this isn't fair.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Order, Ms Finlay. Please ask your next question.

Ms FINLAY - There's plenty of crayfish on the docks.

Ms OGILVIE - Squizzy has them down there.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you, minister. Actually, the impact of the questioning from others at this table and the public commentary around rock lobster fishers is impacting people like Squizzy. He's going to sell from the wharf this weekend and the moral panic that is being created is impacting people like Squizzy who is -

Dr WOODRUFF - We didn't shut the industry.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - The government shut the industry. We had nothing to do with that.

Ms FINLAY - You are actually shutting down - Squizzy is seeking to sell fish off the wharf on the weekend, and, because of your inappropriate commentary, he is being challenged about the safety of his rock lobster fish and it's not fair.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff and Ms Finlay, order.

Ms FINLAY - I want to ask a series of questions about other pollutants in our waterways. Minister, it's probably a question through you for the EPA. I am keen to understand the impact of raw spills from TasWater: how that's monitored; what sort of level of breaches occur; and how that impacts the ability of people to recreate through swimming, beach closures and that sort of thing. What is the long-term approach through the Environment portfolio to ensure that we contain this from TasWater?

Ms OGILVIE - Is that one for Catherine?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. There is a number of questions there for you.

Ms FINLAY - I would prefer it to be one.

Ms MURDOCH - I want to make sure I completely answer in full.

In part of Environmental Regulations, we have a section that is waste and wastewater treatment. That team is actively monitoring, working with TasWater to do all those. There are extensive monitoring programs for all wastewater treatment plants. We monitor 77 level 2 activities. We only monitor the level 2, as I'm sure you're aware. Local government does the level 1 activities.

In regards to that, yes, they have very strict end of assay points source monitoring. Obviously, though, TasWater does have an ageing infrastructure in regards to this. In the latest - sorry if I get it wrong, Cindy, is it PSP5? The infrastructure - is that what it's called? - PSP5 that's been submitted, 39 per cent of the investment in that proposal is to improve environmental outcomes. I think that's the first time we've seen that in an infrastructure proposal from TasWater.

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My team also actively work with TasWater in regards to an auditing program. There hasn't been an infringement notice for TasWater in two years, in regards to sewerage spill.

CHAIR - Ms Finlay, we will take a break now and come back to your next question. As time taken for breaks must be made up, I encourage members to be as quick as they can. Thank you. Stop the broadcast.

The Committee suspended from 11.01 a.m. to 11.12 a.m.

CHAIR - (cont) Ms Finlay, you have you have the call. One question to go.

Ms FINLAY - I'm keen to go back to the antibiotic use. Minister, it's important to put all of this into context. Could you outline for the committee how much antibiotic use has been used in aquaculture, say, in the last five years? And per fish, how much antibiotic is used? We heard before about the international comparisons. There's a tiny amount being used in Tasmania compared to other examples around the world. I'm wondering if you can provide the committee with that level of information.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not sure that I can. I think it does sit with Gavin Pearce, but I will see what we've got.

Ms FINLAY - Yes, thank you.

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. I do believe we actually have that information.

Ms OGILVIE - Thanks, Catherine, if you could.

Mr COOK - Through you, minister. You would like to start by antibiotics per lease for the last five years?

Ms FINLAY - Yes, thanks.

Mr COOK - I've got information regarding the last six years of treatment that the industry has undertaken. I can break that down by region if you'd like to know it by region as well.

We can start with the Tamar. The Rowella lease used 146 kilograms of OTC in 2021. We go to the Huon Channel -

Ms FINLAY - That's all from over the last five years, that's all -

Mr COOK - Over the last six years.

I don't have the lease names with me, but I'll go by lease number: Lease number 77 this year has used 233 kilograms of florfenicol. Lease number 94 in 2022 has used 675 kilograms of OTC. Lease 109, which is in the Channel, used 465 kilograms of OTC in 2022 and used 32.5 kilograms of OTC in 2023. Lease 110 used 180 kilograms of OTC in 2024. Lease 144 has used 1133 kilograms of OTC in 2025-26 and 262 kilograms of florfenicol in 2025. Lease 209, which is the last lease in the Channel, used 320 kilograms of florfenicol in 2025.

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Dr WOODRUFF - Oh my God. Chair.

CHAIR - Yes, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - That's a shocking level. Is there -

CHAIR - Sorry. Through you, minister, had you finished?

Mr COOK - I'm not quite finished yet. Through you, minister, I'll continue. Okehampton Bay used 1373 kilograms of OTC in 2020, and used 336 kilograms of OTC in 2023. Storm Bay lease 261 used 391 kilograms of OTC in 2025, and Lease 281 used 400 kilograms of trimethoprim in 2022.

In total, for the last six years, the Tasmanian salmon industry has used 5946 kilograms of antibiotics.

Ms FINLAY - The question was, how does that compare internationally?

Mr COOK - Yes, how do we compare that to other countries? I've got numbers here over the last 10 years. Over the last 10 years, Tasmania has used 6.7 tonnes of antibiotics. Chile has used 3864 tonnes of antibiotics and Norway, as an example, has used 3.9 tonnes of antibiotics. We'll put on the record that Norway also primarily uses florfenicol as an antibiotic treatment and they have done that for the last 10 years.

Dr WOODRUFF - I'm just slightly in shock at that. Norway is the largest producer in the world, 95 per cent or so of all salmon produced, and it's only used about half of what Tasmania's used in antibiotics in the last - that is staggering.

My question through you, minister, is to the director of the EPA around the Total Permissible Dissolved Nitrogen Output (TPDNO). Is there any intention to trade nitrogen between companies, or is that currently happening, if they should not reach the prescribed TPDNO cap for a lease or are not using it in their allocation? Is there any intention to trade between companies?

Ms MURDOCH - The information I have in front of me is the Stage 1 determinations for each of the companies. I am not aware of any request to trade between the companies. I'm not aware of that.

Dr WOODRUFF - No one in the EPA is aware of that. It sounds like someone is aware of that because Dr Cook has got something to say.

Ms MURDOCH - I'm trying to read through, so I don't have to keep bringing people to the table, to make sure I've got appropriate information.

Dr WOODRUFF - Is there anyone in the EPA aware of the trading?

Ms OGILVIE - If we could just let Catherine consult.

Ms MURDOCH - I am correct. There is no intention at this point, that the EPA knows about, to trade TPDNO in that area.

PUBLIC

Dr WOODRUFF - Through you, minister, can you confirm, director, that the TPDNO caps have not been determined on the acceptable environmental impacts of the output, but are based on the 40,000 tonnes of production per annum figure that was announced by the Liberal government for Storm Bay in 2016? So, it's not been based on an assessment of the environmental impacts and what the environment can handle, but has been based on the conversation between the Liberal government in 2016 and the companies on the 40,000 tonnes and working backwards from there.

Ms MURDOCH - The EPA is an independent scientific organisation. Everything we produce has rigorous science behind it. Any decisions we make will be completely done in regard to that environmental evidence in front of us.

Dr WOODRUFF - That's not the question. I'm trying to understand, through you, minister, how the TPDNO caps -

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please.

Ms OGILVIE - Through me, I think you've had the answer.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I think the director misunderstood my question.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, just one moment. Through you, minister, is there anything else to add?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister, all of the decisions that we make at the EPA are completely based on science.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, the Derwent Estuary program is a really important program for the southern part of Tasmania. It's a unique program. As you know, over many years, it relies on a partnership approach of state government, local councils, industry and GBE all contributing funds to that program to ensure monitoring and programs to rehabilitate the estuary.

There's a bit of a question mark about the Tasmanian government's commitment to the program. They are concerned, and there's been concern shared with me that their funding is not guaranteed. If that's the case, that may trigger a sort of cascading impact on industry because the origins of the program is a genuine partnership. Industry has to play a role, local government has to play a role, but also the state government has to play a role. Can you update the committee on the funding for the Derwent Estuary program, please?

Ms OGILVIE - First, let me say I'm very aware of the great work that's being done. I am a supporter and an advocate as well. As I've said - you weren't actually at the table before - I explained that I very much see my role as being a strong advocate for organisations and environmental response groups that sit broadly under the umbrella of this portfolio.

Mr O'BYRNE - You're also the minister responsible.

Ms OGILVIE - I am aware that funding certainly has been requested. We are heading into a budget cycle. It's open now. Mr Jacobi was just telling me they do have some additional information which he would like to share and then I'm happy to say more if needed.

PUBLIC

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister, the Derwent Estuary Program has received funding for this year and has recently received their payment for the grant deed of \$84,428. That was issued in October 2025, but there's been no further decision made about ongoing funding.

Mr O'BYRNE - As a follow up question, that therefore brings into question the future of the Derwent Estuary Program, a program that's been run for a very long period of time and its foundational principles are that there's a collective responsibility to rehabilitate what is and has been considered the most polluted river in the country, arguably in the capital city.

The Derwent Estuary program is crucially important for the management information it assists government, council, GBEs, and industry. I'm concerned that if there's no funding surety, we may have those other players walking away from the table. Therefore, an important program with years of data and years of evidence around and research around how you rehabilitate the Derwent may be lost. Surely some funding guarantee is important to that program, given it's such a small amount of money.

Ms OGILVIE - We don't want to see any of that lost. I share your energy about it and agree with you about the importance of that program. As I said, we are moving into a budget cycle. I will advocate. I think the budget bids are open now, particularly through departments that do that work. I've asked for focus and I think Mr Jacobi has a little bit more information as well. I wanted to be very clear: I will advocate for that program as part of what I do as the minister. I am deeply aware of the great importance of the program and the project and what they do. I also appreciate the way you have articulated the importance. Mr Jacobi, would you like to add some information?

Mr JACOBI - As the minister's outlined, we're absolutely committed to supporting Derwent Estuary Program and their work. As I mentioned before, the first payment of the grant deed has been made, so there's a second instalment, so they have full funding for this financial year. We're committed to pursuing ongoing core funding for the Derwent Estuary Program. There's no confirmation of any type of, or additional funding, at this point in time. That will be subject to further discussions with DEP.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, I understand that Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan was released in June 2023. Can you provide an update around what has been delivered in this action plan since its launch?

Ms OGILVIE - That's correct. Tasmania released its Climate Change Action Plan for 2023-25 in June 2023, and the action plan guides our government's climate action initiatives and includes practical actions across government to improve information and knowledge about climate change, reduce emissions and build resilience. We've committed \$13 million to implement the action plan, in addition to significant investment already under way. We've heard a lot of conversation about that this morning, so climate change activities, particularly across government. The plan includes 98 practical cross-government actions. Estimated total funding across government for all actions on the plan is more than \$250 million. That's a sizeable amount.

Progress on the action plan was publicly reported in an annual climate change activity statement in September 2024. There are many actions in the plan we have completed, or we

will complete by the end of the year. In the interests of time, I won't list them all but I will give you some highlights.

Since the action was released, we've delivered Tasmania's first five-year emissions reduction and resilience plans across six sectors. Tasmania's Emissions Reduction and Resilience Road Map 2024 to 2029, a \$1.2 million package to support the purchase of electric vehicles, ebikes and escooters and the installation of EV chargers in homes and businesses; a \$4 million grant to Tas farmers and to partners to deliver a commercial scale trial of feed supplements to reduce emissions from livestock; \$600,000 to Private Forest Tasmania to deliver the stems for CO2 program; \$500,000 to LGAT to increase climate change capacity and capability in local government

Another initiative included in the plan is an action to develop new fine-scale or downscaled climate projections for Tasmania, including the latest global climate model, CMIP 6. To illustrate how important this is, I will provide a quick bit of context. A climate projection is an estimate of how climate will evolve in the future under different scenarios of future conditions. Projections are generally made over periods of two or more decades and aim to describe the range of future climate states that are possible for a given climate.

Downscaling is the process by which coarse resolution outputs are translated into finer resolution climate information, so for a specific region so that we can better account for regional climatic influences such as local topography. These are known as fine scale or downscale climate projections. Fine-scale climate projections are particularly important in Tasmania as a coarse resolution projection do not account for Tasmania's mountainous terrain, which drives significant regional variations and differences in weather across the state, as we are all aware on any given day. More detailed projections are best to prepare our unique island for the state of future climate change impacts.

In April 2025, the Climate Change Office launched a competitive grant program offering a grant fund of \$1.8 million, to produce a new set of fine scale climate projections for the state. The program was open for applications for eight weeks, between April and June 2025. Details of the program were shared widely with key climate modelling groups and stakeholders in Australia through the National Partnership for Climate Projections working groups. I'm pleased to share with you that the University of Tasmania was successful in securing the grant. Details of the contract are currently being worked out, and I'm just thrilled that we're working locally on local environmental issues. As you can tell, this is a large body of work, and I congratulate everybody.

Ms FINLAY - Minister, I'm keen to understand some more specifics in terms of TasWater, and having had a background in local government, I know full well in our northern regions, the concerns of the community about sewage spills. I can't remember the specific word that was used, but there were no, I think it was infringements, against TasWater, but I did recently read something where in terms of the level 2 plants, that there was a 91 per cent where they weren't meeting their environmental conditions, in that 23 per cent of them, I think, of the plant's posed higher risk to community. I know there have been beach closures and things, as a result of spills, and I'm wondering how those things all correlate?

Ms OGILVIE - I think this is the one for Catherine? Yes. You're happy to address it?

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Ms MURDOCH - Yes, I am. What I highlighted was environmental infringement notices and they are obviously one of the tools we have in our toolbox for compliance. I think in regards to the beach closures, you're talking about the Mandalay?

Ms FINLAY - That was one, yes.

Ms MURDOCH - In regards to that, that investigation and infringement notices were against Mandalay for trade waste matters, which were different. I just might confer with Cindy. So I don't waste time, I might just hand over to Cindy to outline because whilst there's been no environmental infringement notices, there's been warning letters and there's been outcomes of audits that have indicated corrective actions or improvements because of the level of what that was - because some of them are administrative, to be honest - and have not resulted in an infringement notice.

Ms ONG - Just quickly, no spills to the environment are desirable at all. In terms of the types of spills that can occur from the level 2 wastewater treatment plants that we regulate, we tend to look at them in terms of those spills that occur in wet weather and also in dry weather.

We have been in communication with oyster Tas around their concerns, particularly about wet weather spills into the areas where oysters are farmed. We did a review over a 12-month period, that was in 2022-23, just to see what we could find out about the impact of those wet-weather spills and that did result in precautionary closures of oyster leases, to see whether there was sufficient evidence that we could use to proceed with any kind of action against TasWater. Following that review, it was determined that we couldn't find sufficient evidence in the context of wet water spills, because you get a lot of input from other areas in the catchment during that time as well.

Our focus is on dry-weather spills, where the link to a TasWater spill might be a little more obvious. I can say that TasWater is implementing programs to upgrade its system reliability, particularly in relation to management of those wet-weather spills. For example, it's undertaking some sewage pumping station upgrades in areas where oysters are farmed, so Dunalley and Midway Point, for example. Otherwise, we continue, with those 77 larger wastewater treatment plants, to have a program of audits and are continually in discussion with TasWater about their performance.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you. That's really helpful. May I ask, through you, minister, the timeframes for those upgrades on those two areas that you talked about?

Ms ONG - The sewage pumping stations? I don't quite have that here, but I can find that out.

Ms OGILVIE - Can I just check whether we're able to get that during the session, do you think, and bring it?

Ms MURDOCH - I actually think those upgrades are part of the infrastructure upgrades in water as part of the - sorry, you used to have that portfolio, the infrastructure upgrades under the National Water Agreement initiative.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm seeing nods from Mr Jacobi.

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Ms MURDOCH - But I do believe we could obviously have those. Well, we don't have that information. Do we? Because I have someone sitting in a room that knows that, right.

Ms OGILVIE - So, just before we go too far, I just want to be careful because when we're dealing with things that cut across multiple portfolios, I just need to be cautious that we're giving you all of the information, and just within that caveat, we will give you what we have.

Ms FINLAY - Appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms ONG - The Dunalley pump station upgrade has been completed. We're checking on the Midway point one.

Ms FINLAY - Okay, thank you. Could I just ask, in the last reportable year, how many spills there were across the 77 sites at TasWater?

Ms ONG - I might have to go to our annual report for that. Can we come back to that?

Ms FINLAY - Yes.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Just back to the amount of antibiotics that have been used, the information that the EPA staff member provided previously. There was a lot of numbers and I might have missed it, but I think it was in the order of 700 kilograms of florfenicol have been used in a month. It would be helpful, through you, minister, to find out by month and by the areas that were mentioned before how much florfenicol has been used; but can you confirm that the APVMA (Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Management Authority) emergency permit that I understand Tasmania is operating under, has effectively a cap on it in how much florfenicol can be used, and I understand it is 56 kilotons of salmon can be treated before the cap is reached.

I can't understand that and I don't think any other person at this table can. Can the EPA please translate - make a relationship between the amount of kilograms of florfenicol that have already been used and what that means in terms of this? Maybe Dr Raymond Bannister could come to the table. He looks like he's got a fistful of information to provide or, through you, minister, to the Director of the EPA, can you please provide some.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, to me. I would like to just comment. I think Mr Jacobi actually has some information. Let's go there first and then we will follow the conversation.

Mr JACOBI - I can't respond to the specific question that Ms Woodruff has asked, but I can confirm from the permit that a maximum, this is the permit, one of the key restraints on the permit maximum of 56 kilotons of salmon can be treated under this permit. I'm advised that the APVMA has based this on it being 75 per cent of the total farmed salmon in Tasmania. This is because the APVMA has data that approximately 75 per cent of the total Tasmanian production is in the south-east biosecurity zone.

Ms OGILVIE - I should just also comment that obviously this is minister Pearce's portfolio area, but we will always endeavour to give you information we have.

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Dr WOODRUFF - So the information, minister, through you to whoever can answer, is what I want to know is: of the florfenicol that's already been used, how much is left on the emergency permit? How many kilograms of florfenicol are left to use? And it should be simple, like I presume someone's tracking this, this is an emergency permit, an extraordinary situation. There's a cap required under federal legislation; what's left in kilograms of florfenicol, please?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll ask Mr Jacobi to address that.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister. I believe that's a question for the APVMA.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, hold on. Do you mean to say Tasmania is not tracking how much is getting dumped in the waters by salmon companies? Surely you're not saying that?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Can the Director of the EPA, through you, minister, please answer the question?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. This is a federal permit and they are absolutely responsible for tracking the compliance of that permit. Our role of the EPA is to ensure that there are appropriate environmental monitoring programs in place, which I think I have clearly outlined that we have that. So, it's not my role to track the compliance of the federally released APVMA permit.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, how do you know then, through you, minister -

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff. That's two questions.

Dr WOODRUFF - It was only one actually, Chair, and I was very carefully listening to Ms Finlay before - that was one question about how much was left on the APVMA permit.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff. I have checked and you've had your two questions.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, can we just get the information for Tasmanians about how much florfenicol is left to be dumped in waterways? It's incredibly important.

CHAIR - Mr George.

Mr GEORGE - Thank you, Chair. I will try to make this one question, but with some details on it. I would like to make the point, first of all, that Norway produces 14 million tonnes of salmon a year and they use around about four tonnes of florfenicol or other antibiotics. Tasmania produces 80,000 tonnes at the maximum and uses nearly seven tonnes, so it's important to see that there is a difference in size of industries and which leads me on to the question.

Ms FINLAY - Are you saying of florfenicol or antibiotics?

Mr GEORGE - Of antibiotics, mostly florfenicol. I would like to know what is the real cost of regulating and monitoring the salmon industry in Tasmania on an annual basis, and I note that the Treasurer says that it's about \$10.9 million which is contributed by the industry,

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but I would like to know: what is the real cost of salmon industry regulation, and that would have to include the additional costs from what is obviously extensive monitoring that's going on at the moment; who's paying for that? Is that the public, like the IMAS investigation, the contractors and so on, who's paying for the additional resources and what additional staff has been put on to deal with this issue?

Ms OGILVIE - Okay, so I think -

Mr GEORGE - Is that clear?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes. Yes, I think your question was - well actually, when you say the real cost, what exactly do you mean by real?

Mr GEORGE - Well, we should be able to know in terms of EPA staff, in terms of resources and also the real cost in terms of outside contractors that the EPA may be paying for, including IMAS.

Ms OGILVIE - Okay, I do understand, thank you, and it's an important question. Catherine, is that one you would like to tackle? Thank you.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister, we will come to Catherine in a minute to correct the record on a previous question, but in response to your question, Mr George, we do receive full cost recovery from the industry in the order of \$9.7 million per year. That full cost recovery goes towards a variety of positions across my department, the EPA and the Inland Fisheries Service, particularly focused on compliance and regulation of the industry.

In terms of your question, does that recognise the absolute full cost recovery of all activities associated with industry? I think we - it would be fair to say that there are activities that are undertaken by all of the departments, EPA and myself, particularly in relation to things like emergency response, the mortality event last year, that aren't specifically captured or recovered under that full cost recovery, and I think that's something we would turn our minds to as part of the independent study that the government has announced, you know, is the cost recovery arrangement model fit for purpose? In terms of your - I think this answered -

Mr GEORGE - I am asking who's paying for the cost of the monitoring and the regulation as a result of this incidence?

Mr JACOBI - Sorry. Thank you. In terms of the monitoring, my understanding is that all of the environmental monitoring related to the application for florfenicol that Catherine has outlined previously is being paid for by the industry. There are some monitoring costs associated with the rock lobster component that we have talked about, and the way in which those costs will be paid for has not yet been agreed or determined.

Mr GEORGE - So, there's no public money going into the monitoring and the work that's been done by the EPA around these current outbreaks of disease?

Mr JACOBI - That's really a question for Catherine, as the EPA director. In terms of the application of florfenicol, industry is paying the costs of that monitoring work. As was mentioned before, Analytical Services Tasmania in my department, is doing most of the

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reporting and analysis of that data, and that's through a cost-recovery arrangement as well. I might just go to Catherine and note that the EPA did want to correct the record as well.

Ms MURDOCH - A hundred per cent of the staff within my finfish compliance - so, salmon science, salmon regulation - are funded through cost recovery. As Jason has outlined, all the monitoring that is currently being undertaken will be absolutely through cost recovery. So, 100 per cent funded by industry there.

I also wanted to just - in regards to that antibiotic, all information is available on our website, so it's already there as to how much over the years the industry has actually used. It's really important to keep it in that context of that comparison to other countries, and we are - yes, benchmark there. That information is actually on our website.

Mr GEORGE - It's not a great benchmark against Norway. Sorry, that's not a question; that's a comment.

Ms OGILVIE - But it is there, so that's a good thing. The transparency is there.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, how is the EPA improving its assessment timelines and resourcing?

Ms OGILVIE - It's a good question to ask, given the conversation we've just been having in particular as well. I can give some more information.

The EPA achieved 100 per cent of environmental assessments within statutory timeframes in 2024-25, and all seven assessments completed between July and October 2025 met the statutory timeframe. The number of proposals under assessment remains high at 120 compared to an average of 50 before 2020.

The EPA's budget for 2025-26 is \$21.521 million, up from \$21.082 million in 2024-25, reflecting increased investment in environmental regulation and assessment. This includes funding for new initiatives such as the information management systems upgrade, which I'm a big fan of, air quality monitoring network refurbishment, which also is a great project.

Catherine Murdoch has now taken on the role of director - thank you, Catherine - following the retirement of Wes Ford after 39 years of distinguished public service - and we thank him for that. Catherine's appointment comes at a time of significant complexity in Tasmania's regulatory environment, which you've seen in this discussion, with increasing investor interest in renewable energy projects, transmission infrastructure and major industrial proposals.

Catherine's leadership has been impressive - and I look directly at her to say that; it's true - ensuring continuity and strengthening the EPA's capacity to deliver independent, transparent and efficient environmental regulation. This includes overseeing critical reforms, managing a growing portfolio of assessments, and maintaining community confidence in Tasmania's environmental management systems.

If I have time permitting, I might just actually put Catherine on the spot and say, would you like to highlight a couple of things about the EPA that are really great successes or that you think your team has been doing particularly well? It's your chance to show off a little bit.

Ms MURDOCH - Thank you, minister. I actually don't want to miss anyone out, because I -

Ms OGILVIE - Don't name them, just say it's teamwork.

Ms MURDOCH - Well, I have to say, in the seven months I have been privileged to lead this organisation, I have been a little bit overwhelmed at the depth and breadth of science and skills I actually have. Obviously, in this Budget this year is the upgrade of the air quality network, which I think - you know, when that first came into play, that team - and a lot of that team is still there; shout out to Dr John Innis who leads that team - but that was ground-breaking at the time, and they built their own air quality machines.

Ms OGILVIE - They did it themselves, yes.

Ms MURDOCH - This opportunity to upgrade that network is a really fantastic thing for that team. It will keep us contemporary. It will keep us up to date and leading the country, I hope. Because we're about budgets, I think that's important to note that that network is exceptionally important for public health, bushfires, police; it's a critical network that we're looking forward to getting into place.

Ms OGILVIE - That's strategic work. When we say to people come down to Tasmania for air, we will have good quality monitoring of that air.

Ms FINLAY - I wanted to turn my attention to some of the other areas of regulation and hopeful reform. I am wondering if you can share with the committee your intention or thinking around any reforms for the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act*.

Ms OGILVIE - Bear with me a moment. Yes, I can give you some detail. I will start and then if we need more we will turn to Mr Jacobi. The Tasmanian government is committed to delivering high priority amendments to EMPCA it is found to be the best approach to support the Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority. These things have to work together in regulating and assessing environmentally significant activities and to provide better certainty for industry.

Any required amendments will be commenced once scoping of a new marine environment Tasmania act has occurred, that's that strategic piece of work that we're doing, and we will be mindful of national reforms occurring within the EPBC act and that is, as we know, a big national discussion that's happening at the moment. Public consultation will occur as part of any amendments proposed for the EMPCA. We do realise that a sound environmental protection framework is vital to the government's plans for economic and population growth. We have to get this in balance.

Parliament passed amendments to EMPCA in December 2022. Those amendments confirm the separation of the EPA from the Department of NRE, which has been working well. The independence of the EPA has been well regarded and welcomed, and we've seen its value particularly over the last year. Those amendments included releasing environmental monitoring information via the EPA and powers for the minister for Environment to make environmental standards. I acknowledge the government indicated it would progress a second tranche of high-priority amendments to EMPCA, which will assist EPA in regulating and assessing

environmentally significant activities. As you know, legislative change must be justified and they occur after opportunities for non-statutory information and policy have been exhausted.

At a national level, the EPBC is undergoing significant reforms, so this all feeds into it. At the same time, here in Tasmania, together with Mr Garland, we are considering and leading engagement on the marine environment act and that in itself will be shaped by the independent review of the salmon industry. We have these multiple threads leading into this conversation. Having said all of that, progress is being made. A workshop was held at the end of August with TMMEC, Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing and Energy Council, and Cement Concrete Aggregates Australia. That discussed barriers to industry and identified reform opportunities, including a range of largely non-legislative changes to improve clarity of policy and processes, and the development of new guidelines and more contemporary risk-based assessments.

EPA and NRE are actively working on delivering guidelines and tools to improve how we regulate and assess environmentally significant activities. So that's the information I have. I can see from your face you might like a little more, or would you like a second question?

Ms FINLAY - I have two questions leading out of that answer. One is you said that there was scoping work on this, if I was correct, the scoping work on this would start after the work on the marine environment act. I'm wondering how far through that process or when that would be.

Ms OGILVIE - I will ask Mr Jacobi to talk to that, but we're doing in parallel.

Mr JACOBI - I will refer to Louise Wilson, but there have been active investigations already with the Tasmanian Energy and Minerals Council about their proposed amendments to EMPCA. We're working through those, and the draft bill is well and truly underway. We can honestly say there is progress in this space. Is there anything more you'd like to add, Louise?

Ms WILSON - We've identified a number of minor amendments to EMPCA that could be introduced. However, we've also had suggestions from TMMAC and CCAA about a number of other proposed amendments. We've had - forgive me for talking about Catherine, Catherine and I have met - together from the EPA, from the practical application of regulation for EMPCA and myself representing the department and the minister for the policy side, and went through all their solutions and unpacked what their issues were. It would be fair to say that for most of their underlying issues, the solutions to those were not amendments to the legislation, they were actually guidelines and wanting clarity on process and certainty, those sorts of things.

It's not to say that EMPCA couldn't do with improvement, but particularly since then, the landscape has changed quite dramatically. We've had a very strong signal, Jason and myself, several meetings with the commonwealth department responsible for environment - DCCEEW - and strong signal that the bilateral for assessment that the Tasmanian government has with the commonwealth government needs to be addressed and that would require legislative change as well.

At the same time then, minister Watt, the federal minister for water and the environment has just introduced on 30 October a reform bill to the EPBC act, and a suite of other pieces of legislation as well to support that and two new draft standards under the EPBC act. Essentially we've got to watch how those reforms play out, because to fix our bilateral, which is not working well, I think everybody would agree, and to get the new biodiversity offsets policy

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accredited, we'll have to influence where those reforms are going, but also align with those to get accredited. Given the amendments we've got are largely quite minor, they're not a major review of EMPCA, we're watching how that pans out but we are doing that policy work underneath and we're doing the practical guidelines and working through practical solutions. The other new emerging initiative that the minister mentioned is the development of the marine environment act, so there's a lot of things coming together.

Ms OGILVIE - Hardworking people. Yeah. I didn't want to just leave it with you thinking things were being done on one plane. There's work happening in parallel.

Ms FINLAY - That's great. Thank you. As a result of that answer, which is fantastic, thank you - how that all sits together - the non-legislative changes that have been identified, are you able to talk me through that?

Ms WILSON - I can talk through what the department's doing and I'll say it at a high level, if you want more detail, I have to bring my experts up. We're doing some guidelines around the management of risk to masked owls and threatened eagles; they're our main priority. We've been hearing that for a long time, from industry and also from regulators. Through you, minister, if you don't mind, I'll throw to Catherine because there's some -

Ms OGILVIE - The more information the better. Thank you, Catherine.

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. Yes, quarries and extractive industry are actually our biggest sector. I think that's important to remember that in the assessments. They take up close to 50 per cent of what we do. Then in that framework, just so you know, so 50 per cent of what we do, and then off all our assessments around two-thirds of that are increases in production. They are an exceptionally important sector for us.

Out of this consultative process, which I think was a fantastic process, there were just anomalies in the act. For instance, some of those older quarries got their extractive but at the same time didn't get screening, which is another thing under the act. So therefore, to amend Schedule 2 - sorry, what is screening? Materials handling to have the same limits as extractive industries, because it's silly if you can extract that but then you can't have the materials handling. That was a simple thing that we can change to Schedule 5 - absolutely, let's do that.

Then we've got a couple of pilots underway in regard to how we do our assessments process right, particularly for those already in production, ensuring that we assess the right things that they are changing. What's the increased risk of that increase in production and making sure we focus on that as part of the assessment, their change in their footprint is that fauna and flora, versus groundwater, versus noise and dust. We've got a pilot underway working with that.

Ms FINLAY - Which sides are piloted?

Ms MURDOCH - That one we're working through with industry to -

Ms FINLAY - So, it's a broad pilot?

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Ms MURDOCH - Yes, and it's important to get the scope right first. Like, what are we talking about here? We have to assess things in accordance with EMPCA. So, what are we bound by legislation to do, but what can improvements be made?

Then also one of the projects we're scoping out is guidelines in regard to the act, we have to provide guidance to proponents as they put in a project. We've, in the past, done that as extensive guidelines that might take us quite a lot of months and instead of that, we're trialling the same as EPBC, that the proponent can lodge a detailed guidelines themselves outlining the risk, and we then assess that and provide guidance back. It's a simple process improvement, but it will make our processes a lot more efficient, to be able to work with the proponent straight-up, ensuring they understand their project and what those risks are. It will have better assessment outcomes as well, so we can have that engagement as well, and that they understand the risks and have looked at those from a project perspective.

Dr WOODRUFF - Can I please return to the Director of the EPA. Dr Bannister provided information about the total amount of florfenicol and other antibiotics that have been used in different regions. Can I get the figures, just to be really clear - since florfenicol was approved for use in Tasmania on 7 November, which was 13 days ago - how much florfenicol has been used in the last period?

Ms MURDOCH - I just need to check something. To be clear, we actually don't have the final figures because we're not sure of those treatments finishing or what has been used. In reality, that's an estimate that was put to us, so I don't want to mislead you and have the exact figures, because that treatment has not finalised for that second treatment.

Dr WOODRUFF - I'm asking about the information you have to hand of florfenicol that's been used, because I heard the figure of some 700 kilograms of florfenicol. I would like for the committee and for Tasmania to know the information that the EPA has at hand - how much since it was approved do you have? Bearing in mind, it may not be the final amount, but to date how much has been used?

Ms MURDOCH - I don't know how much has been applied and used, and I do not want to mislead you. Proposed treatment plans, what has been tabled is in around that. As soon as we understand that and get those final -

Ms OGILVIE - We might be able to assist with that, Mr Jacobi has some information.

Mr JACOBI - Whilst we don't have the specific figures at the moment, I think it's important to just spell out that under Marine Operating Standard 30:

A salmonoid producer engaging in the use of antibiotics must ensure that

(a) prior to the use of an antibiotic, the Chief Veterinary Officer is notified of the proposed use and provided with a copy of any medication authority specific to the stock treatment that has been issued; and

(b) all stock receiving medicated feed is recorded to ensure the correct withholding period, if any, is met; and

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(c) all feed equipment used to deliver and distribute medicated feed is appropriately treated after use, to manage any risk of residual antibiotic entering any other than treated animals; and

(d) any requirements to undertake residue testing specified in any relevant legislative requirements -

Dr WOODRUFF - Through you, minister, I'm just trying to get the answer. What we heard was about 700 kilograms earlier at the table. I just want to get clarification, is that roughly in the area?

My second question is that roughly 700 kilograms of florfenicol being used at three sites in southern Tasmania, in the last 13 days represents roughly 10 per cent of what Tasmania has used for all antibiotic treatments, according to the figures that we heard, in the last 10 years - 6.7 tonnes and in the last six years, 65,946 kilograms, 5.9 tonnes, 10 per cent has been used in the last 13 days roughly. Norway is at least 10 times the size of Tasmania, and annually it uses 500 kilograms of antibiotics, less than Tasmania has used in the last 13 days. That is horrifying. Why, minister, are salmon companies not being told to destock instead of dump antibiotics into marine waterways and poison the marine environment? Why aren't the companies destocking and fallowing? That's the way you deal with disease. That's the scientific approach. That's the best practice for global standard.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, you've asked the question, please let the minister answer.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. That was a big speech. Thank you for your contribution. When we know your perspective and understand your genuine -

Dr WOODRUFF - Do not patronise me, minister. I want to hear an answer from the director of the EPA. She's meant to be independent. Why isn't that not the advice going. Honestly.

Ms OGILVIE - If I may just finish my comment. I don't like it when you point at me like that so perhaps you may not want to do that in future. I'm very happy to provide access for all of the staff here to answer questions. It did have a very long preamble in which you obviously put your perspective and we all appreciate and understand that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Lay out the facts for Tasmanians who are desperately trying to find out what's going on. You've closed the rock lobster industry. You're poisoning the waters.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please let the minister answer your question.

Ms OGILVIE - I was just going to say that everybody at this table cares about our environment and this is the Environment portfolio. Unfortunately, some of the questions you needed to ask, I believe sat with minister Pearce, nonetheless, I am very happy to have open dialogue here, as I've said all the way through.

Catherine, I don't quite know what the end question was, it was more of a statement, but I am very happy for you to attempt an answer.

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Ms MURDOCH - As I have outlined before, we regulate inputs to environment, destocking or any of those matters. The use of florfenicol is prescribed by the Australian Government. It is not prescribed by me and I want to be very clear about that because we do not allow the use of florfenicol; that is approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

With regard to stocking rates, that is also not what the EPA regulates.

Dr WOODRUFF - Everyone's pointing at everyone else. This is the most extreme situation. We've closed down a fishery. How much more antibiotics can he keep dumping before the cap's reached?

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand your energy, but you have to ask the right questions of the ministers who are responsible.

Dr WOODRUFF - Will you talk to Minister Pearce about it?

Ms OGILVIE - I can.

Dr WOODRUFF - Would you?

Ms OGILVIE - Well, would you as well?

Dr WOODRUFF - Why not destock?

CHAIR - Let's move on, please.

Ms OGILVIE - It's a misplaced portfolio question.

Prof RAZAY - You don't know how I was pleased to see you so excited when you mentioned air quality.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I love it.

Prof RAZAY - I have been waiting for this all morning. This is the word which is missing from the environment debate.

As you know, chronic exposure to air pollution is leading to chronic respiratory illnesses, heart disease, mortalities, and we have the highest of chronic illnesses in Tasmania and transport is a major contributor to air pollution and one of the main pollutants is nitrogen oxide, which comes specially from the city traffic and the majority also come from diesel.

If you look at what's happened in Tasmania, we have more than half-a-million cars registered in Tasmania. That's an 80 per cent increase since 2008.

What are we going to do about it? We know we should improve the air quality. Transport is essential.

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I want to point out the federal government's recent National Climate Risk Assessment in which two action plans are really very important, which is decarbonisation of transport and national electric vehicle action plan. What is the state government doing because we can do a great deal in improving air quality.

Ms OGILVIE - This is fantastic because I'm really enjoying your enthusiasm. Coming into this portfolio as a new minister, this was one of the areas, and I know there was a lot of energy in government to fix the quality of the apparatus that we were using to measure air quality and great credit to the people who built those machines but it was time for an upgrade. After many years of lobbying and pushing, we're able to get some funding into that so this is good news, but I will give you a bit more of an overview, seeing as you have shown perhaps foolishly, an interest in one of my areas of interest.

The EPA obviously operates Tasmania's air quality monitoring network, which includes three reference stations at Hobart in New Town, Launceston, Ti Tree Bend and Devonport at the TAFE, 34 BLANkET real-time monitoring stations reporting PM2.5 and PM10 data every 10 minutes. This network is critical for compliance with the National Environmental Protection measure Air NEPM (National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure) and for protecting public health.

We have allocated \$350 000 per year for four years under our digital transformation priority expenditure program - so it sits in one of my other portfolios - to refurbish, maintain and upgrade this network. The investment will deliver:

- Refurbishment of reference stations at Hobart, Launceston and Devonport, including replacing ageing PM2.5 low-volume air samplers. They're the technology that does the sampling;
- Rejuvenation of the BLANkET network by replacing the oldest DustTrak DRX particle instruments, to ensure continued statewide indicative monitoring;
- Recommissioning of the George Town Air Monitoring Station near Bell Bay, Tasmania's largest concentration of heavy industry;
- Deployment of low-cost sensor units for smoke, dust, and meteorological measurements to expand spatial coverage and improve resilience during power or communications outages;
- Commissioning of a mobile air monitoring station for campaign and incident response studies - I think that's really important;
- Integration of all new data streams into EPA's upgraded information systems. That will enable real-time reporting, which is really exciting;
- Strengthen emergency response capability and reduce maintenance burden by replacing outdated, unsupported instruments.

So, as you have said, and I am happy to go on this journey further with you over time, benefits to Tasmanians are very real in this area. We will have:

- Improved public health protection through timely alerts and compliance with national air quality standards;
- Enhanced smoke management for planned burns and bushfire response, reducing exposure risks;

- Support for sensitive sectors such as the wine industry and the agriculture sector more broadly, which rely on that accurate smoke data to manage smoke taint risks- I did see somebody had some blueberries here, and I know blueberries are sensitive to it;
- Greater transparency and community confidence via real-time online air quality data, future-proofing Tasmania's monitoring network against climate-driven air pollution.

I will just say, at a personal level, as well, that I have lived and worked all over the world. I have lived in places where air quality has been terrible - Central Java bushfire burns were awful - right all over the planet. Melbourne - terrible. I developed an asthma response condition. Coming to Tasmania has literally been a breath of fresh air, and I am delighted to play a small part in ensuring that continues for the health of all Tasmanians.

Prof RAZAY - I wanted to ask a question about what measurement you use for the air quality? I know we measure the impact of smoke. Any specific measurement for traffic, like nitrogen oxide, for example?

Ms OGILVIE - Okay, that may be one for Catherine. She looks like she's gathering some information. Great, had I only known this was your specialist topic we could have led off with it.

I have a little bit more, while they're looking for their information. I can talk a bit about net emissions. Oh, you're alright to go?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. What we do measure is, obviously, in accordance with the national air quality standards or the NEPM, for air. Here, because of the priorities of - we have done risk assessments in regards to what should be measured, but we measure particular matter less than 10 micrometres and 2.5 micrometres and diameter, PM10 and PM2.5 - I can see that you understand this - they're the main indicators for urban air pollution. Therefore, we focus on monitoring PM10 and PM2.5.

As we said, this is the most appropriate quantity for assessing wood smoke, which we know is one of the major issues, and the PM10 includes smoke as well as dust.

Prof RAZAY - Just for the future. Quickly, I think if we have gathered the resources, why don't we measure something specific, like traffic pollution. I think that's important.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand. Sorry, could I just have one last comment to wrap that up. I did find the net emissions reduction. In 2023, we had 125.2 per cent decrease from the 1990 baseline of 19.55 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent. You just did mention the carbon dioxide one. I'm really happy to go forward and work with you more on this.

Mr SHELTON - To the minister, I understand the key piece of legislation surrounding climate change, the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*, is undergoing a review. Can you please update the committee on this review process?

Ms OGILVIE - I'd like to reiterate our commitment to addressing the challenges and opportunities related to climate change. Here in Tasmania, we are leading the charge. Well done to the team. We're currently conducting an independent review of the *Climate Change*

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(State Action) Act 2008. I'll just call this 'the act'. The act requires an independent review of its operation is undertaken every four years.

The act was most recently reviewed in 2021 and that review informed a range of amendments to the act, which were legislated in November 2022. Consultants Ricardo, in partnership with local firm ERA Advisory, were appointed as the independent reviewers for the 2024-25 review. In this 2024-25 review, Tasmania's climate change governance arrangements are also being considered and, importantly, stakeholder and community consultation is an essential part of the review process. Public consultation was open from 21 July 2025 to 7 September 2025.

There were multiple opportunities for the community and stakeholder groups to contribute to the review process, including through written submissions, workshops, meetings and digital engagement. The independent review team will prepare a summary report on the consultation, feedback and the final independent review report.

The final review report is expected before the end of the year. Both reports will be published on the ReCFIT website, and the final report will be tabled in both Houses of parliament.

Ms FINLAY - I appreciate the responses and the information regarding TasWater. I'm also interested, from a local government, sort of historic perspective, about the management of our landfills. There's been some audit outcomes in terms of the management and monitoring governance of our landfills in Tasmania. I'm wondering what the status is of your response to the audit office's concern with landfills.

Ms OGILVIE - Let's see if I can get some information for you. That might be one for you, Mr Jacobi.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister. I will defer to Louise Wilson to respond to that question.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. We had an input into the landfill audit itself, and we've had a good look at the findings. The findings and recommendations cut across a number of parties, which is part of one of the fundamental issues that Audit Tasmania raised in the report - that is that there are a number of parties involved in this space. The state government, the EPA as the regulator, 29 councils, and the Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board has an interest in this as well - and that there needs to be a more integrated approach.

We're looking at those recommendations and looking at who needs to do what. So the state government and the departments will be sort of leading the coordination of a statewide landfill strategy in partnership with the Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board. Because the board, obviously, is looking at future waste streams and hoping to reduce the amount going in to landfill. They're looking at how much, over time, that will reduce, and how much of different types of waste will go to different - say, C-cell versus normal landfills - and where some of the pain points might be.

We're looking at that strategy and the Waste Resource Recovery board is going to do some more strategic work in that space as well. I won't speak on behalf of the EPA, I'll throw to Catherine in a moment; but, we'll also need to talk to local government in that strategy

because the 29 councils have, largely and historically, been responsible for landfills. We need a joined-up approach to that.

Ms OGILVIE - Would you like to have a say in that regard, Catherine?

Ms MURDOCH - With regards to implementation and how we're going. This was absolutely a joined-up approach because policy and implementation was across both of us. There were four recommendations in that audit that were relevant to the EPA and NRE Tasmania and we agreed to all of them in principle. Recommendation 2 - the implement timeframes are for, which was - I won't read them out because I won't waste time - the implementation timeframes for there were for 2026-27. NRE Tasmania and EPA are engaging in agreements on data sharing, so we get better information out of it, because they get all the landfill data, to help inform our regulation. EPA regulatory systems upgrades are to be completed by mid-2028. That's in the Budget this year.

Ms FINLAY - There's money in the Budget for that?

Ms MURDOCH - There's money in the Budget for us to upgrade our regulatory information systems. So, because this audit is out, we will have a look at how, strategically, what's in this that we can build into a new regulatory information system. A project manager commenced on that project this month to design what this looks like.

Recommendation 3, the implementation timeframe, that's where strategic planning for the regulatory sections within the EPA to commence immediately and to be reviewed. That was calling out that where our resources allocated in this space, so we're having a look at that outcome.

Recommendation 4, is exactly what Lou has just outlined, for us to work in collaboration to develop contemporary guidelines, as well, for material for landfill owners and operators. We know there's a good guideline in Victoria that we're using by proxy and that stakeholders say is good. So, we need to have a look at that and formalise that.

Recommendation 5 is to support councils to develop sustainable landfill management practices. We see that as ongoing and we have an authorised officer manual to be completed in 2025-26 that we'll share through our engagement with local councils. We'll also ensure that we're continuing to support them and that they understand their role in regard to landfill management compared to what we do.

Ms FINLAY - Through you, minister. The work is more at a strategic governance level as opposed to responding to concerns. The audit didn't necessarily raise practice concerns, it's more about governance and integration strategy?

Ms WILSON - Largely.

Ms FINLAY - A follow-up question, were there practice concerns in terms of environmental concerns with the management or operations of landfills out of that audit?

Ms OGILVIE - Not that we're aware of is the answer, I think. We'll get some information, to see if we can confirm that.

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Ms WILSON - Not really, but the sustainability - the contemporary guidelines that Catherine mentioned that I neglected to mention, I apologise. There's a lot of overlap in here, that's why it's important we all work together. The sustainability guidelines will address those. That's important that the department's developing those, but the overall strategy about coordination and who's doing what, not just now, but into the future because there is going to be change going forward.

Ms FINLAY - So, from that - thank you for the outlines of budget allocations and things to do with like data sharing in 2026-27 and other things happening, but does the overall strategy have a timeframe for delivery? Will there be a strategy for these things?

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. To be honest, we haven't had a lot of time because the report was dropped in October, which - and since then the time has gone quickly.

Ms FINLAY - I've only just become aware of it, so I wasn't sure how long it had been around.

Ms WILSON - Yes, and, because we have the councils, - after Estimates, obviously, this needs to be led from a senior executive level in the department and in the EPA and would need to bring the Waste board along as well and while the acting CEO is also a general manager in the agency, the acting CEO has been having discussions with the board as well.

There's a lot of goodwill going forward, but we really need to get together and look at how we're going to do this and that will be something we'll focus on in the new year.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, through you, I have a question for the director. Director, Mine Watch Meander Valley is a local community environmental protection group committed to protecting the natural values of the Meander Valley region from inappropriate developments, including ABx's bauxite mine at Reedy Marsh. The EPA has lodged a notice in the Supreme Court to appeal a decision made by TASCAT to allow Mine Watch to be joined as a party to appeal the Meander Valley Council's approval of the permit for the bauxite mine.

Now, I completely appreciate that you can't comment on the specifics of the case. However, Mine Watch Meander Valley is a community group that's dedicated to protecting the environment and its president is an appellant and its members made submissions. I'm just keen to understand why on earth the Environmental Protection Authority is appealing to the Supreme Court to try to block a community organisation from being joined to an environmental appeal. The appeal is already being taken by the proponent and by an individual who happens to be the president of Mine Watch Meander Valley. What is in it for the EPA to prosecute this appeal and block this community group from being party to the appeal?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Bayley, before we start - I'm very happy to refer it and have a free flow of conversation, but you and all of us here would be aware that matters before the courts - we're very careful about commentary regarding that.

Mr BAYLEY - I'm after motivation more than anything, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I just think you went through quite a lot of detail about the court action as well. I'll just put that caveat on it, then allow the question to flow through.

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Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. As outlined and as you know, I cannot comment on an active case. As to motivation, the motivation is law, of course, and it's land use planning and things appropriately. The motivation is all about in law and in regards to appropriate processes. I cannot comment further. It's currently, as you've said, in court. There's no motivation except for absolute legalities -

Mr BAYLEY - Purely upholders of the law? You know, you disagree with TASCAT's - you don't have to take an appeal.

Ms OGILVIE - Through me, Mr Bayley, if you wouldn't mind. Is there a second question, or -

Mr BAYLEY - The second question to this, minister, is how much has the EPA budgeted to prosecute this appeal in the Supreme Court?

Ms MURDOCH - Through you, minister. I don't have any figure on that.

Mr BAYLEY - A blank cheque to prosecute - to try to block -

CHAIR - Mr Garland.

Mr BAYLEY - Really? A community group from participating in an appeal of a mine -

CHAIR - Mr Bayley, please. Mr Garland has the call.

Mr GARLAND - I have a climate change question, minister, and through you, I think this should go to Ms Pinto from ReCFIT.

Ms OGILVIE - Okay, thank you, she's on notice, so she can tune in.

Mr GARLAND - Yep, good job.

In the other place earlier this week, Treasury was asked questions about the impact of climate change on the future budgets. The response was that they rely on ReCFIT for this. What modelling has ReCFIT done in the last two years in relation to the impact of climate change on Tasmania's hydrology and water storage, agriculture, and state and local government community assets? Can this modelling be tabled?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm very happy to refer that question.

Ms PINTO - Thank you and through you, minister. In relation to modelling that's undertaken - and you were particularly relating to impacts of modelling on climate change and water, particularly, for example, in relation to our hydro systems. Modelling of that nature is often undertaken - I'll use Hydro Tasmania as a really good example, and I note that next week, the GBE scrutiny sessions would be an opportunity for a discussion there. If I use that as an example, Hydro Tasmania will work with Bureau of Meteorology, IMAS and other groups to do quite detailed modelling themselves - it's usually done in a collaborative process. They undertake - as part of their sustainable yield assessments, they undertake modelling over a fortnight, over three months, and over extended long periods.

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They're done by - so, in answering your question, does the department do that modelling? No, we do not, and we don't do modelling for other purposes either. That's not the function of that government department.

For other purposes either that's not the function of that government department, but I might, I was going to say I'm just looking his way very politely. I think I will just finish on that regard and then I might just politely pass. Mr Jacobi could you add some value.

Mr JACOBI - Thank you, minister and I'm really glad you asked that question. I think it's important to highlight that under the Rural Water Use Strategy, we have a dedicated project which is focusing on the drivers of climate change. I can talk more to that if you'd like, but it's funded this year and it specifically is going to provide a wealth of information long-term about what are the catchment carrying capacities of each of the catchments in Tasmania based on predictions for climate change. It will be incredibly informative in terms of the allocation of water for a range of different activities, be it for agriculture or for hydrogen or for other activities.

There's some other whole-of-government activities underway as well. There's a spatial climate modelling and monitoring project, which is the Tasmanian government, through NRE Tasmania, is advancing spatial climate modelling and monitoring to better understand localised climate impacts and to support informed decision-making. Also, we have a Tasmanian strategic flood mapping data project which is available on the list map and it's used for planning land-use decisions.

Mr GARLAND - Right. Was any of the modelling that's been done used as part of the whole-of-state business case?

Mr JACOBI - The driver for the climate change project is only recently commenced so we don't have the data, it isn't readily available for that yet.

CHAIR - Mr Shelton.

Mr SHELTON - My question now is around climate change and emissions. Tasmania is in an enviable position leading the rest of the nation by achieving our net zero status in 2014 and maintaining it after that. So, can you, minister, please provide some details around our current position on emissions?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you for that question. The latest reported greenhouse gas emissions data for Tasmania for 2023 were released on 30 May 2025 by the Australian Government. Tasmania's net emissions in 2023, as I mentioned earlier, revealed 125.2 per cent decrease from the 1990 baseline level of 19.55 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent. This is for you Mr Razay, give you all the information. Tasmania's total emissions decreased by 24.48 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent, that's 125.2 per cent between 1990 and 2023 according to the most recent data, despite our population growth and gross state product having increased over the same period. The reduction is because we take more carbon dioxide out of the air than we emit, offsetting all of our greenhouse gas emissions. This accomplishment reflects our long-standing investment in renewable energy generation and the carbon sync in our managed forest estate.

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Emissions from the land use, land use change and forestry sector waste and electricity generation have decreased between 1990 and 2023, so it's important to note that. Emissions from the industrial processes and product use sector, agriculture transfer, transport and direct combustion of fossil fuels for stationary energy purposes increased over this period.

Even with emissions from the land use, land use change and forestry sector excluded, emissions have remained relatively stable from 1990 to 2023 while the economy has expanded and the population has grown, indicating that Tasmania is successfully transitioning to a lower emissions economy.

The latest report also shows we are still ahead of our legislative target of net zero emissions or lower from 2030. This target is the most ambitious legislated emissions reduction target in Australia and one of the most ambitious in the world. However, achieving this target is not guaranteed and will require continuing effort across all sectors of our economy and because of this, the government has a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions and increase carbon storage. Through our Climate Change Action Plan 23-25, our government is delivering practical action, working with businesses, industry, communities and households to reduce emissions in our key sectors.

Key projects delivered as part of Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 23-25 to include Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions include six emissions reduction and resilience plan to provide a pathway for our key sectors to reduce emissions, transition to a low-carbon economy and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. Reduce emissions from livestock by supporting a large-scale commercialisation trial of asparagopsis, have I said that right, scientists? Yes, I'm getting nods. Seaweed supplements, what a great project.

Supporting landowners to sequester carbon on their properties by providing grants to plant more trees and support Private Forest Tasmania and the Tasmania Forestry Hubs Farm Forestry Carbon Tool. Community Climate Change Action Grants program which we've spoken about to support community level actions to improve information and knowledge about climate change, reduce emissions and build resilience and support the uptake of electric vehicles, public and active transport by providing financial incentives and trialling zero-emissions public transport. Our government remains committed to effective climate action.

Ms FINLAY - A lot of the things that we're discussing today is crossover between portfolios and so from my primary industries portfolio, I'm really interested in veggie boxes. So there's been quite a strong focus on elimination of single-use plastics and as I understand it, expanded polystyrene (EPS) has sort of been caught up in that.

It gets used for veggie boxes, for fish boxes, the medical boxes as well. I understand there's been some consultation. I'm keen to know if the consultation has come to an end, and whether the EPS veggie boxes are likely to be recommended for exclusion from those.

Ms OGILVIE - Great question, and with your okay, I'd like to bring Holly - we got it? Yeah, Louise has got it. I've done a deep dive into this area; I call them fish boxes. I know what you're talking about, but I think -

Ms FINLAY - I thought at the table it might have been better to call them veggie boxes.

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Ms OGILVIE - It's up to you, nonetheless.

Ms FINLAY - Or medical boxes, that's why I brought in Dr Razay.

Ms OGILVIE - Just sort of transport boxes anyway. Yes, if that's okay, Louise?

Ms WILSON - The first phase of consultation in response to the discussion paper has been completed. We got a very good response to that, something like 1200 either written responses or responses to an online survey. We've also had some advisory groups working through and discussing issues as well.

I can confirm that EPS is out; EPS boxes are out of scope for this tranche, absolutely. Also we did get some feedback from the health and disability sector around straws, absolutely out. Now we had always intended to have exemptions for that and we weren't clear enough. We need to set the record straight and we have gone to the stakeholders that have asked about that.

We're really looking forward to moving into the next phase, in which we will be looking at developing the bill and we've got a regulatory impact statement also that we want to consult on soon as well.

Ms FINLAY - For my personal clarification in terms of process, when you say it's been excluded from the first tranche, is that excluded from the first tranche of products being considered, or is the first stage of this overall project just about where products - what will happen in the second tranche, could it come back?

Ms WILSON - Well we don't know how many tranches at the moment, but we're also looking at the national scene and trying to harmonise as well. This initiative has always been a phase-out, so not a blanket ban. We will do it in a staged and measured way and stage 1 - We're at very early days because this is a big change for Tasmania and so we've got to do stage 1 and then we will review.

What we have been able to do is benefit from other states. I keep talking about this in other sessions as well about how we've learned from other states, for example, with a Container Refund Scheme (CRS). Going later can sometimes be frustrating for everybody, but going later in some of these big change projects has meant that we've been able to benefit tremendously from the learnings and lessons of other jurisdictions.

Subsequent tranches, we haven't planned those yet. We haven't even finished the first tranche yet and we will review and see how we go.

Ms FINLAY - But it's clear to industry that EPS is out.

Ms WILSON - Yes, absolutely.

Ms FINLAY - And you mentioned the regulatory impacts -

Ms WILSON - If you wouldn't mind -

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Ms FINLAY - not the clams, but the big white boxes. So, I'm particularly interested in the fish boxes and the veggie boxes and the medical, all of those sorts of things, but not the - because that's a different product and I think that's where this actual whole lack of clarity initially came from - happy for you to do that.

Ms WILSON - I just wanted to clarify, when I was talking about the EPS, it's the big boxes and we cannot rule out anything over into subsequent tranches, but in practical terms, they are somewhat down the track given we're not even halfway through this tranche and we will absolutely be listening to the community and to industry, but straws for medical and disability purposes and EPS boxes, the big ones, they are out.

Ms FINLAY - Great, thank you.

CHAIR - Mr Bayley.

Mr BAYLEY - Thank you, Chair. My question is to the minister. Minister, on threatened species, I heard some of the conversation earlier around threatened species and specifically, I want to ask about the swift parrot. Obviously, some of the threatened species investments are, I guess, what you would call 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' kind of projects-

Ms OGILVIE - Oh, I wouldn't.

Mr BAYLEY - Well, captive breeding, you'd have to admit, is that. Habitat restoration is obviously critically important, we welcome that wholeheartedly and we need to do more of it, but of course, that is second best to habitat protection. I draw your attention to your own national recovery plan for the swift parrot, which is very clear in terms of identifying forestry and land clearing as a threat and, I quote:

Loss of potential breeding habitat in Tasmania via clearance for conversion to agriculture, native forest, logging and intensive native forest silviculture continues to reduce the amount of available swift parrot nesting and foraging habitat and it therefore remains a significant threat to the continued persistence of the species.

The plan has a specific recommendation to identify and protect remnants of state and commonwealth-owned land in areas of habitat critical for survival of the swift parrot. Now, under the Liberals' watch, logging in important swift parrot breeding habitat has doubled from 139 hectares a year to over 300 hectares a year. Why is it that you are consistently ignoring the advice of experts, scientists, and also the recommendations of your own swift parrot recovery plan and not increasing the reserve estate on public land to protect important breeding and foraging habitat for the parrot?

Ms OGILVIE - So, that was a very long question. I will endeavour to answer it as best I can and I have some information here in front of me. So firstly, I think it's important just to set the context within which we are having this discussion about the government's investment in the swift parrot. In 2021, we committed \$250,000 per year over four years to implement the actions identified in the national recovery plan for swift parrots. The recently concluded - that was 30 June 2025 - Swift Parrot Recovery Project worked with key research and land management organisations to deliver a significant range of recovery actions - 29 of the 35 actions identified in the National Recovery Plan relevant to Tasmania have been

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progressed either partially or fully through this project. These include research and monitoring as well as habitat mapping, protection and enhancement.

In 2024, the Tasmanian Threatened Species Fund was established, providing \$8 million over four years to continue supporting the conservation of priority species, including the swift parrot. Now, you asked some questions in relation to another portfolio and I do appreciate that this traverses portfolios, so I will endeavour to give you some additional information.

Important outputs of what we are doing in this portfolio, before I turn to the Minister for Business, Industry and Resources' portfolio, include priority research and monitoring, which has been co-ordinated and supported through the project that I have just spoken of, with \$50,000 allocated to swift parrot breeding, season monitoring, habitat protection and enhancement, \$15,000 allocated to a partnership with the Bruny Island Environment Network, a spatial habitat prioritisation tool has been developed with outputs that identify and prioritise swift parrot habitat to guide external stakeholder habitat protection activities. Additionally, in a partnership with the Forest Practices Authority, a contribution of \$60,000 secured statewide LIDAR data that would enable an important update to the Big Tree model and provides contemporary information on the availability and distribution of hollow bearing trees, so that goes directly to your question.

A sugar glider impact research strategy is currently in development based on a comprehensive technical review completed by the project team with the intent of supporting a co-ordinated approach to understanding and addressing the impact of predation on swift parrots. Ongoing co-ordination biological sample collection has occurred to obtain genetic and health information contributing to the national discussion.

Then in relation, more broadly, as a priority species, swift parrot recovery tools and activities that protect and enhance species habitat in Tasmania will be funded through the Threatened Species Fund, which we've established and existing resources. I can say we are committed to doing all that we can. Particularly in my portfolio we're working hard to manage this. I'm not sure that I do agree with your characterisation of the work that we're doing, particularly in relation to this very important species - I can't remember exactly the words used, but they're a little bit strident. We care very deeply about the swift parrot. We're doing a lot of work. The team here has done some incredible work and we will continue to do that. In relation to any queries, you have around Forest Practices Authority, that is another portfolio area.

Mr BAYLEY - Notwithstanding those things you outlined, the loss of swift parrot habitat continues, including on public land that's managed by Tasmania and there is a recommendation in the Swift Parrot Recovery Plan to identify and protect important habitat areas of swift parrot on public land, and that is something that clearly has been rejected by this government. In fact, you consistently point to protecting habitat on private land, which is very welcome, and the work of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy is outstanding in that regard, but even on that measure, you're continually failing and I look to the NRE annual report which identified that versus the target of meeting private land reservation targets we were 400 hectares short this year and we've got an 1800 hectare target next year, so we've got a target that's multiple times more than we are under-achieving as it stands at the moment.

Can you outline how much money specifically is in the Budget for the private land conservation program and how many staff are currently working in that program?

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Ms OGILVIE - Again, a very long preamble and then the question was slightly separate to the first statement. I'll just get some information for you.

Mr BAYLEY - I did notice the comment earlier about rebuilding the team in the private land conservation. I'm really interested to know the sort of historical and the current figures.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand your genuine background and interest in this. Mr Jacobi, would that be one for you?

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister, I'm just getting information together.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister, I'm just going to check one number with my general manager, but covenants are identified in the government's response to the State of Environment Report. We're really committed to continuing to deliver on that program and ramping up activity. Historically, this program has been funded through commonwealth funding and, you weren't here earlier when I mentioned that, and we've got some commonwealth funding on the way if not already. We've got five people. We're recruiting I think for two positions at the moment, but five people will be in the team.

Mr BAYLEY - How much was the program funded last year and then this year?

Ms WILSON - It's not funded as such. We have money in trust. We historically have had a lot of money in trust, and we've used that, but we have got it topped up and it's the dollar figure I'm looking for at the moment, and I cannot find it here. I will ask my general manager to tell me.

As I said, the commonwealth government has historically funded this program and that is because largely the covenants are joint covenants in perpetuity with the commonwealth government and decisions to vary the covenants and those sorts of things need to be jointly agreed by both governments or both ministers and they contribute to the National Reserve Estate.

I do not have the number of the dollar figure of how much have in the trust fund, but we have another \$1.56 million over two years from the commonwealth through a grant and we're looking at additional submissions for commonwealth funding under the Heritage -

Mr BAYLEY - Does Tasmania make a contribution to the program then or do we rely entirely on the commonwealth?

Ms WILSON - We provide in-kind support through other areas of the environment business unit in particular that sits in my division of which Jo Crisp is the general manager but historically that has been largely funded by the commonwealth government and because of the joint nature of these, the commonwealth government looks at these as part of the National Reserve Estate.

Mr BAYLEY - Can you confirm is the target really 1800 hectares this year?

CHAIR - Mr Bayley, sorry, that will come around to the next round.

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Prof RAZAY - Minister, Robbins Island is situated one kilometre off the coast near Montagu in north-west Tasmania. The 9900-hectare island sits on the end of one of the busiest migratory bird flyways where birds migrate long distances from as far away as Siberia, Alaska and Korea.

The federal government has approved a 100-turbine wind farm on Robbins Island and the approval comes with 88 conditions around the operation and construction of the wind farm. Construction is expected to begin in 2031, so how is our government going to reassure Tasmania about the negative effects of wind farms on habitat fragmentation and bird fatalities?

Ms OGILVIE - That again crosses two areas. We might start with Vanessa.

Ms PINTO - Minister, I might start at a high level and then I can always direct down the table appropriately. What I can say at a high level is that Robbins Island has been working very closely and effectively to ensure appropriate monitoring occurs on-island. It's one of the conditions under the permit they've received and I can of course direct it down to the director of EPA to provide a bit more detail with regard to that.

That includes monitoring on site. Orange-bellied parrots is one of the categories that is obviously a threatened species that's under consideration and as a part of one of the conditions that they have, they are required to undertake monitoring and also prepare a control and management plan associated with that. That's the first commentary that I would make and then I might pass to -

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. We might go down the line.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister, these large-scale energy projects which can have quite site-specific impacts, but also, for example, like the North West Transmission Developments, which is associated with Robbins Island and other north-west transmission projects, can have quite linear large-scale impacts as well. Those impacts do cross a whole variety of tenures, they cross freehold land which is of interest to the agricultural sector, but they also cross a range of different protected areas and all of those projects are addressed through an EPBC - *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* - process. Are you familiar with that?

Prof RAZAY - No, I'm not.

Mr JACOBI - That's a commonwealth government-led environmental assessment process and that at a very high level considers a whole range of different - I believe what you are saying is regional scale impacts - and in particular the issues associated with possible habitat fragmentation.

As you can appreciate with those projects also, there are a whole variety of quite maybe localised or species-specific impacts that might arise and they are dealt with by my department and by the EPA in close consultation with the EPBC assessment officers, so we provide advice, in the case of Robbins Island, what are the possible impacts to orange-bellied parrots. We've done a whole heap of monitoring as you've heard about today that's helped informed some of the decisions under the EPBC process. We're also asked to provide advice about impacts to Tasmanian devils and we take all of the information and data that we have from monitoring and specialists in my department and external to my department to inform how those impacts

may be mitigated and that has led to the Commonwealth's decision, particularly in relation to Robbins Island.

Mr SHELTON - As around the table we're talking about parrots and orange-bellied parrots have come up again and have been mentioned earlier today, minister, the orange-bellied parrot is one of the world's rarest and most remarkable migratory parrots and Tasmania plays a critical role in its survival.

Can you please update the House on what the government is doing to protect this species and any recent successes in the recovery program?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you for the question. Professor Razay, this is for you as well. We all love the orange-bellied parrots, so we call them OBPs and I will try and do that. It breeds only at Melaleuca in Tasmania's remote southwest and migrates across Bass Strait to mainland Australia each autumn.

It is one of only three migratory parrots in the world and its survival depends on the work we do here in Tasmania. Monitoring of the population of orange-bellied parrots at Melaleuca commenced in 1979 and has been conducted annually since 1992, with captive breeding starting in 1981. I thank the generations of hard-working staff and all Tasmanians for this and other critical programs within our NRE, some of whom are here today or listening in about all the work that's been done over this time.

The Tasmanian government has been investing in OBP conservation for more than four decades and today our efforts are delivering real results. In 2023-24, we committed an additional \$1.3 million over two years to improve our understanding of migration threats and to maintain critical infrastructure at the Five Mile Beach captive breeding facility. I have been there, and they're beautiful.

The funding supports the OBP Migration Tracking Project, which is now in its second year with 42 birds fitted with little transmitters and 18 receiver towers installed across the migration route. This is a great example of using technology to solve problems. These technologies are giving us an unprecedented insight into the species movements, including nocturnal travelling patterns along Tasmania's west coast and across Bass Strait. At the same time, upgrades to the Five Mile Beach Wildlife Management Facility are underway to improve breeding success and biosecurity measures ensuring we can release more fit and healthy birds into the wild.

This facility holds the largest captive population of OBPs in Australia and its role is critical to achieving our long-term goal of a self-sustaining wild population and the results speak for themselves. Last season the wild population reached 91 adults, the highest since the 1990s, and produced a record 99 wild-born fledglings at Melaleuca, 28 captive juveniles and 15 captive adults released.

These successes meant an estimated 172 birds migrated north, a figure unimaginable only a decade ago. Even more exciting is what we see this season. As of this week, 69 orange-bellied Parrots have returned to Melaleuca and the season is far from over. Of these, 37 are males, 29 females with 49 wild-born birds and 17 captive-born birds and three yet to be confirmed. Among them is a very special wild-born female from 2017, a testament to the longevity and resilience of this species.

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With record numbers returning last year and the potential to break that record again this season, these results show that our investment and the dedication of our staff and partners is paying off. The orange-bellied parrot remains critically in danger, but thanks to Tasmania's leadership, as a state, and I include everybody in that, its future is brighter than it has been in decades.

Ms FINLAY - I want to loop right back to the beginning and around florfenicol. I have a different type of question. A question has been raised with me specifically about whether there's any understanding or monitoring going on or any comment that you can make around water that in king tides goes up into farming areas, where- I'm going to read the actual question, because it's been put to me directly. Someone has a property at Parsons Bay near the Nubeena pens - so within sight of, but it doesn't say the distance - but the lower section of their property has water comes on it from the king tides. They run sheep. They're interested to understand whether there would be any understanding around the impact on their sheep and from eating the grasses that have had the waters on them from the florfenicol in the area.

Ms OGILVIE - Before we go, I need to disclose quickly that I own a property at Nubeena, for the record.

Ms MURDOCH - I think we'd need to understand that question a lot better, and happy to -

Ms OGILVIE - Would you like to -

Ms FINLAY - Well, I suppose one of the reasons why I chose to ask it today is because this has been asked of me publicly, and so, again, there's a lot of public narrative around this and there can be all sorts of worries presented. Given that this has been raised publicly, it would be useful.

Ms OGILVIE - Ms Finlay, may I suggest - I know we're really close to time on this and appreciate the importance of this and the public nature. Is it something that perhaps you could write to me and we could deal with it so that we get the proper detail back, and we make that commitment here? It's going to take a little bit of work across.

Ms FINLAY - Yes, fantastic. Great. I think it's just useful to know what people are asking.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. Please do feel free to send that through.

Ms FINLAY - Yes. So then, just to round out our session - and you have already said this, and I will - I had a clash in my Estimates last year, and last year was the first time I had Environment as a portfolio. This has been fantastic. Everyone has been great in the answers they've been given, and I find this level of exchange very useful. It's informative, which is good.

Ms OGILVIE - That's good. That was the goal, yes.

Ms FINLAY - I will finish on a big overall question. One of the things that was raised out of the State of the Environment report was - and this is my own paraphrasing - a lack of an overall understanding of the vision from yourself as minister or the department for the

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environment in Tasmania. I'm just wondering whether you can just speak to your own thoughts and thinking, your own priorities around what is your vision for the Tasmanian environment, given all of the things you need to balance. Where do you see that?

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely, I'd be really happy to do that.

I've come into the portfolio at a really critical time in Tasmania's life in relation to how we go forward with environmental matters. I've been around in Tassie a long time - I think I mentioned this the other night - and I was around during the dams debate, and I've seen the growth, the organic growth of Tasmania's - and in fact, the world's - response to environmental matters.

As a lawyer, I can say I think that our legislation, which also has sort of grown organically over that time, does need to be contemporised, and I think in fairness, that is a complex task because it does go across so many different areas. So, I feel that perhaps with my background and skillset, that's an area that I can assist with.

In relation to specifics of that, I have mentioned today the marine environment act. I do think focus on the oceans is really important. That's a great place to start, which is why when Mr Garland said he had a passion for that, I advocated strongly for our government to come to the table and have that conversation. I would like to work with everybody on that around this table.

I think also - when I mentioned before everybody at this table cares about the environment, there's some deep truth in that. The environment sustains us; we sustain it. We have to work together to make sure there is abundance for everybody, and that includes balancing people's need to work, put money on the table, get the kids to school, pay the mortgages, with care of our environment and how we manage our waste sector.

The foundational work that I see that's been done across the portfolio is incredible. We're in a unique period where we could leverage that into a higher level, but we need to do that collaboratively, listening to all voices, and work across that.

Mr Jacobi, who's always got his finger on the pulse, has also just reminded me that at the heart of this, our beautiful island state that we all love and know has a reputation for being clean, green and beautiful, and it's in our interests across all the realms that we work in, from tourism to environment to heritage to the arts, that we do all of that in an environmentally sustainable way.

It's like when you're weaving a fabric, we have to get the weft and weave right - the weft and waft, whatever the phrase is - to get the fabric of it all into a more contemporary mode.

My vision is to do that, to be a good collaborator, to be pragmatic and practical, to address real issues as they come up. If things don't need big legislative response, then we do the practical policy or administrative work. We have a huge opportunity in the climate section as well. I cannot say enough good things about ReCFIT, I love working with ReCFIT.

The complexity across all of the work we do is huge, so let's lead some change in the areas where we know we can front foot it - the marine environment act. I care about the salmon industry as well. I know such good people working in that industry. I'd like to find that

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moderate science-based, data-driven centre to take us forward, hopefully, together with some unity, particularly in this unusual environment in our government, where we have a minority government, and the equality of all voices and dialogue across Tasmania matters and is meaningful. Sorry - you opened the door.

Ms FINLAY - No, it's good. It's important. I was keen, because it was specifically laid out. One of the things that you have identified there is that a lot of the legislation is really aged - it's decades old.

Ms OGILVIE - It's no-one's fault. It's just the organic nature of how we've arrived where we are.

Ms FINLAY - My second question then - and I'm grateful for all the information that's been provided today because this is a learning opportunity, as much as an interrogation opportunity -

Ms OGILVIE - No, that's fine.

Ms FINLAY - with where government is at with everything. There are a lot of parallel projects going on, there's a lot of complexity to bring it together. My next question is, do you feel that the budget allocation for your areas of responsibility are sufficient for the complex and multilayer work that you have to do, given that the legislative instruments are so aged and there is so much work happening between the different jurisdictions?

Ms OGILVIE - There is so much work, and I will advocate strongly for this portfolio area. I am also looking to see ways we can be - in this constrained budget environment - innovative. How we can work with researchers, university, IMAS, industry, and other sectors - Derwent Estuary is particularly on my mind as well. How we can work more collaboratively in an innovative way, in a really effective and efficient way to do more. It's incumbent on me to say that: I'm actively looking at that with my Innovation hat on as well.

Also, the deep and really clever use of advanced technologies. There is such an important role for those across Environment. I'm thinking about Geoneon, for example, through my Innovation portfolio. The space sector that we have developed has enabled a company like Geoneon to arrive and base itself in Tasmania. Effectively, what they do, in summary, is measure climate change from space. They do it from here because our university owns those radio telescopes. That's the mode I'm in. I will advocate really strongly for budget for the Environment portfolio. I think it's a critically important portfolio for our state, but every one of my portfolios will get my effort.

Ms FINLAY - My third question is, at the very beginning, you committed to tabling the outline of the monitoring and I hadn't seen it tabled yet. Can we confirm that that's been tabled today?

Ms OGILVIE - There we go, alright.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, fabulous to hear your capacity to influence your colleagues in Cabinet with the marine protection act.

Ms OGILVIE - Suggested.

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Mr BAYLEY - Last week, my colleague in the parliament asked you a question about the government's decision not to declare swift parrot important breeding area over forests in Lonnavele because of the economic impact on Forestry Tasmania. I don't recall you even mentioning the parrot. Did you take that issue up and what did you do within Cabinet to advocate for the declaration of a swift parrot important breeding area over Lonnavele?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm trying to recall exactly what question was asked.

Mr BAYLEY - I guess it was that. What have you done in relation to declaring a swift parrot important breeding area at Lonnavele, given the importance of the habitat there and the imminent logging of those areas on public land?

Ms OGILVIE - Mr Jacobi, I think NRE Tasmania probably had input into this.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister. We have not had any direct input in relation to that particular matter. I suggest, Mr Bayley, that you refer that to GBE scrutiny - is it GBE scrutiny, or is it Forest Practices Authority later this week?

Ms OGILVIE - But I note your interest. Now I'll have a -

Mr BAYLEY - Okay. Another question, perhaps through you to the Director of the EPA, about Lake Rosebery and the oil spill: by way of an update on the response to that and how it is at the moment. And a question - that was a legacy industrial site that happened, what work has the EPA done to identify other legacy sites that are out there across the environment that pose this risk and need to be addressed in a systematic way, and has a budget allocation been made to deliver that? Through you, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you.

Ms WILSON - Through you, minister. I'm happy to answer that because I think the team and all across government did an immediate and really good response to Lake Rosebery.

Mr BAYLEY - We appreciated the briefings at the time.

Ms WILSON - Thank you. Regarding that, you're aware of those findings that, yes, it was a legacy site that caused that. In regards to - sorry, I'm just trying to find, because you asked about any ongoing environmental -

Mr BAYLEY - There are two things: are there any ongoing actions at Lake Rosebery or is that response resolved now? And, what are you doing more broadly across the landscape to identify other legacy sites and deal with them before they cause a problem?

Ms WILSON - Yes, we are currently finalising our investigation to determine potential contraventions of environmental legislation, so that court file is currently being completed. In regard to legacy sites, we have the up-assess. We do old petrol stations - known sites are actually on a register - Cindy, probably, to be honest, has a lot more background because she manages this. One of our specific areas in regulation is the management of this space so, yes, we are continually updating that as appropriate sites. If that's okay, through you, minister -

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, please.

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Mr BAYLEY - And I guess taking action to address them is the point, more than anything.

Ms WILSON - Yes.

Ms ONG - In relation to your question about sites, like the one at Lake Rosebery where it was an old underground petrol system, we have had early conversations with both TasWater and Hydro about other such situations. As Catherine mentioned, there are underground petrol station storage system regulations that we regulate as well. There are around 500 sites in that database.

Mr BAYLEY - What are you doing to those sites that exist, such as the one at Lake Rosebery? Do you have an active program to talk to the owners or, indeed, talk to Hydro who should own the liability, about addressing them before they flood or spill or burn or whatever other impact may happen?

Ms WILSON - These are the subjects of the early conversations. We don't have a program, as such, in place that I can give you, but, certainly, it's a thing that we want to do.

CHAIR - The time for scrutiny has expired. We will now break for lunch.

The next portfolio to appear before the committee is the Minister for Innovation, Science and Digital Technology at 2.00 p.m. Thank you, minister, departmental staff and members.

The Committee suspended from 1.10 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

CHAIR - The scrutiny of the Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce persons at the table, names, and positions please, for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. We have Justin Thurley, Department of Premier and Cabinet; Michael Mogridge, Department of State Growth; and Tara Martin, Department of State Growth.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for Innovation, Science and Digital Economy is one hour. Would the minister like to make an opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - I would. Thank you, so much. Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for coming along. This is a really interesting area and I hope you enjoy the conversation.

The future economy will obviously be a digital one, powered by knowledge, creativity, and innovation. In this year's budget, we're investing \$37.5 million in whole-of-government ICT and digital transformation initiatives, with more than \$98 million being invested across government in innovation and technology projects in 2025-26, including \$225 million over the forward Estimates. This investment underpins our long-term digital transformation strategy, which we call Our Digital Future, which is being refreshed to ensure Tasmania remains at the forefront of digital government innovation and cyber resilience.

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Our goal is clear: delivering efficient, transparent, and secure services that meet the modern expectations of Tasmania. We are modernising outdated systems, strengthening cybersecurity, and building the digital capability of our workforce. Importantly, we are also focusing on inclusion, ensuring no Tasmanian is left behind in the digital age. Already, we are seeing significant progress across agencies; projects like the digital driver's licence, the EPA information and management system upgrade, the gaming and licencing information system replacement, and the parliament digital transformation project are improving accessibility and efficiency across the public sector.

The Cyber Hubs Initiative represents a major step forward in protecting Tasmania's data and digital infrastructure to strengthen defences, improve coordination, and help government respond to emerging cyber threats. We're also ensuring that our digital future is powered by Tasmanians through initiatives like the advanced technologies industry strategy. We are guiding industry through policy, workforce capability development, and the provision of world-class digital infrastructure to enable the sector to flourish here at home in Tasmania.

We're also working closely with UTAS to ensure that its future developments, including the proposed STEM campus at Sandy Bay, deliver real outcomes for Tasmanians. A key part of this partnership will be to ensure the university continues to build the skills and capabilities our state needs for the future.

As leaders in government and industry alike, we must continue to champion that spirit to demonstrate that digital transformation is not only about technology, but it's about leadership, it's about vision, it's about courage to think differently. All these initiatives come together under one vision to make Tasmania a place where innovation thrives, government leads by example, and technology serves the public good. Thank you, Chair.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you, Chair. Minister, I'm interested in asking a question in two parts, one from your perspective as minister with your parliamentary colleagues, and one from the department. It's about the use of AI. Obviously, I'm super keen and interested in how we, as a state, can remain very human-centred and human-focused regarding the use of AI to support the experience of living in Tasmania and to support Tasmanians to live a better life in Tasmania. It was noted earlier this week that the Premier used AI to prepare something to present to parliament. I want to understand what agreed ground rules you have as elected members and then also how, not just in the Department of State Growth, but across all government, the governance and frameworks of managing AI.

Ms OGILVIE - Obviously, AI is exploding globally and it's a challenge for everybody, no matter whether you're in government or in business or across community sectors. Everybody's now grappling with the AI question.

What I can say is that we've been doing a lot of work on this. The technological development and use of AI has significant potential to fundamentally transform society and the economy, and even the very ways we work. Our government views AI as a strategic enabler for innovation, in particular, public service improvement, and regional development. By leveraging AI, government can enhance decision-making, streamline operations and deliver more responsive services. Sectors such as healthcare, education, tourism, agriculture and environmental management really stand to benefit quite significantly. We are actively exploring opportunities to harness AI while working with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to support a nationally consistent, safe and ethical framework.

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We are also committed to collaboration and knowledge-sharing to ensure that AI delivers real value for communities across the state and beyond. But we know there are risks. We understand that there are risks associated with it and understand also sectors of the community are concerned, and perhaps some are increasingly concerned. We're committed to the safe and responsible use of AI. We want to build public confidence and trust in government. We have guidelines; I brought some to the table because I thought you might be interested. Let me do that. I think that's specifically what you were interested in.

The Tasmanian government has developed guidelines for the use of AI within government agencies. We've collaborated with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions to develop a nationally consistent approach to the safe and ethical use of AI. Tasmanian government AI guidelines, which I've just tabled, are closely aligned with the national framework for the use of AI in government. The voluntary AI safety standard guidelines also provide additional advice for aligning with national AI assurance practices and processes. For anybody who's listening in, they can be found on the government website. It is interesting to look at those.

Ms Finlay, if you would like, because I like to try to have a free-flowing conversation, I'm not the science expert, but we do have Dr Justin Thurley here who is our expert in AI if you like.

Ms FINLAY - Before you pass on - and I'm really happy to hear. Did you have other documents that you're going to table as well?

Ms OGILVIE - These are to do with other areas; we tabled them upstairs. I'm happy to do it.

Ms FINLAY - No, that's okay. Before you pass over, I was really interested in whether you have a set of agreed AI ground rules for yourself and your colleagues around the use of AI.

Ms OGILVIE - As MPs? In our ministerial offices? Yes, that's included in the work that Justin's doing. Why don't we ask Justin for some input and then I'm happy to say more if you need me to?

CHAIR - Before we do that, Ms Finlay, I am just letting you know the time is past three minutes for the response, but if the committee's happy to hear, I'm easy.

Ms OGILVIE - It's an interesting topic.

Ms FINLAY - Yes, that's my first question. If you give me longer for the answer, I will take it as one question. Thank you.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you.

Dr THURLEY - In relation to the last part of that question, the AI guidelines were set out for ministerial staff as well so that they are subject to the same guidelines.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you, I appreciate that. Before you answer the other bit, my question then remains to you, minister, is there a shared set of guidelines for ministers?

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Ms OGILVIE - I rely on those and I think each minister does rely on the program. It's like cybersecurity: there's one set of rules for everybody that we follow. There's not a separate set of rules just for ministers. I think that's your question.

Ms FINLAY - Yes.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, before we close, I do think that, because I'm looking at AI more generally as well, there is a role, there is a space whereby if other MPs need some guidance and assistance, we ought to be thinking about that as well. It's much harder when you're not in government to have that support. I make that offer.

Ms FINLAY - Great. That was actually my next question. In terms of the way employees within the departments are supported to understand and know how to get the best benefit and use it well, what sort of investment in that process and has that been rolled out equitably across the public service?

Dr THURLEY - I will give a little bit of a background to how we've got to the point where we are. I guess a couple of years ago, we started a process to - with the explosion of ChatGPT onto the scene, obviously, we could see there were some risks associated with it, and we were primarily focused on risk in the first instance, but clearly there are opportunities that we need to pursue as well.

In the first instance, we developed these guidelines that you see today. Those guidelines provided some considerations for staff, particularly about taking a risk-based approach to everything we do when it comes to AI. We provide some civic guidance on some areas where there are either legal or procurement risks, for example. There are plenty of others too, so we provided a bit of guidance on that. We got to the end of that process in 2024 and ran a roundtable within government across all the CIOs, and a few other stakeholders, to see what we felt might need to be the next steps, given the fast pace of development of AI.

So, we moved to establish a roadmap for what else needed to happen. I won't go through every detail of that roadmap, but a couple of items that popped onto it we needed to provide clearer policy for, and we have developed clearer policy. That policy is in consultation at the moment internally. We'll be hoping to get that out within a few months or possibly early in the new year. That will establish quite a bit.

The other areas that we're acknowledging that skills, in terms of AI literacy and fluency, are a real issue for us moving forward - and they're a complementary component to success - we're starting to look at what our options and investments are in that space.

Ms FINLAY - Thank you. That's a good segue to that follow-up question. What is the current investment across the service in terms of being able to support people to understand how to safely, actively and productively use AI?

Ms OGILVIE - At a training level you're asking about?

Ms FINLAY - What support is available?

Dr THURLEY - Through you, minister. At the moment we would be bound by probably the work that we've been doing with our core platforms and agreed platforms. That, in this

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instance, is Microsoft 365 with the Copilot component, primarily the baseline chat and processing tools. There are other tools that we get accepted in - that will be up to the discretion of departments, as long as they do the risk-based assessment. So, the investment would be difficult to attain straight up, other than to say that our investment in Microsoft, throughout the government, is considerable. They provide a lot of material and training, skills uplift, for us as part of that arrangement.

Ms FINLAY - For clarification, when you said there's the baseline model and then the further - is that the enterprise model you're talking about? Not everyone has access to the enterprise model?

Dr THURLEY - Through you, minister. Yes, we've actually gone to what we call - at least with enterprise data protection we have the chat component of Copilot, and that has enterprise data security on it. So, it's an uplift from the foundational model that 'Joe Bloggs' on the street could get. In other words, we've got the enterprise protections, and we don't suffer from data leakage, privacy issues and sensitive information flowing in and out of those types of tools.

CHAIR - Ms Badger.

Ms BADGER - Minister, as a part of the Marinus whole-of-state-business case, the fibre optic cable that is proposed as a part of the power generation aspect wasn't considered. I'm wondering if you could talk us through.

Ms OGILVIE - What do you mean 'wasn't considered'?

Ms BADGER - Some of the benefits. For example, what kind of private investment that there might be, what that would mean for the actual business case of Marinus. I'm wondering if you can give us an outline of where your discussions are up to on the Marinus fibre optic cable, and how you see, as it stands at the moment, that will be operating to Tasmania?

Ms OGILVIE - I can speak in broad terms, not being the minister for Marinus, but having a deep interest in subsea cable. This journey that we've been on as a state for many, many years to get additional subsea cable connectivity in Tasmania is something that I've taken on at a personal and passionate level. This is to give you the overview.

We've had a number of efforts to connect into projects that are being rolled out both nationally and internationally with subsea cable. I've written many times to the federal government requesting their support for additional investment into cable. I've been rebuffed, but I am like a terrier and keep going back in asking again. I've brought some of those letters here. Happy to share them, if you wish.

Telstra would say - and I know them well - that there is additional capacity already on their two cables and they're not at end of life as yet. We have the old Basslink cable, which I think APA now owns, being run by AARnet, so there's capacity there.

The Marinus Link cable - which I understand is in plans - I have met with Marinus and asked them specifically about the cable. The challenge with cables that are connected, with electricity subsea cables, is that they are part of one cable; they're intertwined. So, we've seen that challenge when Basslink went out. You'll recall having to repair that. That takes your telco cable off at the same time. Generally, the telco cables are used to manage the reporting on

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electricity cables. They're pinging, so you know how much electricity is going backwards and forwards. The good news is that the Marinus optic cable is big. That is going to help us as a state. It won't be the ultimate solution but it's certainly going to assist us with capacity.

In order to commercialise an optic fibre cable, it doesn't have to sit outside that organisation, but it probably needs some telco skills. I do know that they have a particular group within Marinus who have those skills to commercialise that. Then you have a question of whether you do it on a wholesale basis or whether you do it at a retail basis.

My view of the world is that we still could do more. We welcome Marinus cable, but we could still do more with direct international connectivity. I have some other views about what we could do for scientists on the island as well with big data, AI coming, data centres coming, et cetera.

Ultimately, Marinus sits with Mr Duigan, but that gives you a good perspective on how involved I've been over a decade.

Ms BADGER - Sure. I wanted to clarify on that. Ultimately the fibre optic component of this would fall to Mr Duigan, not yourself. Am I hearing that right?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes. Currently, it sits within Marinus, which means it sits within his portfolio. Having said that, I have involved myself in the dialogue.

Ms BADGER - Fantastic. As a part of that dialogue, going back to the original question, to clarify, the whole-of-state business case says that at the moment the Tasmanian government has no plans to use the Marinus Link's telecommunications asset to address the current limitations and risks with Tasmania's subsea fibre optic backhaul infrastructure.

Ms OGILVIE - You said the Tasmanian government?

Ms BADGER - Yes. Are you advocating to change that circumstance?

Ms OGILVIE - Let's hear specifically about what the government's need for capacity is.

Dr THURLEY - Through you, minister. In relation to the use of particular services and particular infrastructure, we don't actually mandate or suggest that we use a particular carrier or pathway for our services. We just go to the services and it's up to the industry to decide how it builds those pathways.

We do place demands on our service providers to provide certain levels of resilience, redundancy and availability. That would, of course, invoke that when those services are available, the suppliers would use those services. For example, Telstra may have a few links that go across Bass Strait. They may rely on them for their resilience and availability. However, we also have Basslink in the mix there, too. They would take services from Basslink to ensure that they have at least three levels of redundancy, I would suggest, in that instance.

We have other suppliers, but it depends on the demands that we place on them for availability and resilience in relation to government services. I won't speak on behalf of what the rest of the community needs, et cetera - that would be for State Growth.

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Prof RAZAY - Honourable minister, science is a powerful and necessary tool for making the world a better place. Promoting science in school and university, to encourage children and young people to participate and becoming enthusiastic about science, helps Tasmania to remain connected with both science and the community in the future. Does the government have initiatives to make science more accessible and engaging for children and young people in light of the recent TAFE cuts in the laboratory training courses?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, it is an important question. Yes, absolutely. I enjoy your question. Science drives so much activity and a healthy state. What we do here is very much connected to that. We, as a government, support and invest in the science research sector. We want to see it driving capability, the community engagement that you've spoken of with schools and universities, and importantly, industry growth, particularly with old industries that need to be brought up into the AI economy.

The sector employs approximately 4000 people and contributes over \$300 million to grow state product - and I can see Tara smiling.

The Department of State Growth, over this side of the table now, delivers a range of activities and initiatives to support our beautiful science sector and all its people in partnership with key stakeholders. Importantly, the University of Tasmania is top of my list, but we also include CSIRO, the Australian Government, the Australian Antarctic Division, and the Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

These include science engagement and outreach programs delivered through the Inspiring Australia Tasmania partnership such as annual Tasmania National Science Week, which is always fun, and Science Meets Parliament events, which we're re-scoping at the moment - taking them up a level - as well as the government's annual STEM Excellence Awards. The Inspiring Tasmania program envisions a society that is inspired by and values scientific endeavour. I know you have a science background, so hopefully I'm just warming you up. We want to critically engage our community on this. In 2025, 254 registered events were held across Tasmania for National Science Week. We really are an island of science and innovation, which is great. We had 194 events delivered in regional locations.

A leading example of this is Tasmania's scientific research excellence that occurs at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research. We provide \$500,000 through this portfolio to Menzies - I think that is annually - to enable research and collaboration activities to enable Tasmanians to live a healthier, longer and better lives. We also specifically highly regard the retention of high-quality, skilled medical expertise by fellowships - that's important - and we know there is focus on medical research into brain health, cardiovascular health, cancer and genomics.

State Growth also participates in national conversations via the Forum of Australian Chief Scientists - thank you, Tara - and other science policy-related committees coordinated by the Australian Government. Implementation of relevant key policies such as climate change, which we've spoken of this morning, and Tasmania's Antarctic Gateway Strategy, which is really important, are managed by the relevant portfolios of Environment and Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Negotiations with the Australian Government for Infrastructure Australia to fund the UTAS STEM precinct, both within the Sandy Bay campus and more broadly across the state,

are of critical importance. I implore everybody to get behind science and help us get that delivered. Thank you.

Mr GARLAND - Minister, how many data centres do you anticipate will be introduced into Tasmania by 2030, and what will be their total deployable capacity?

Ms OGILVIE - That's a good question. I think we were asked this the other night. I did get some information on that. We will respond through Michael.

Mr MOGRIDGE - The Coordinator-General has an active policy in relation to data centres and artificial intelligence data centres that is being considered in the context of investing in data centres in Tasmania. That's primarily a matter for the Coordinator-General, but it does provide the structure that we need to contemplate as to how we look strategically at the opportunities and what the outputs might be for regional communities, what the jobs might be, what the energy desires might be and so on. I think, fundamentally, that is the strategy through which we would be contemplating an investment process.

The other piece of the puzzle that's being developed by the Tasmanian government through the economic statement is the diversification and investment strategy. That is a multi-pronged proposal for us to turn our minds to: how does the Tasmanian Development Board focus on long-term investment in Tasmania that benefits Tasmania in the best possible way? Also, how do we leverage things like technology in the context of building productivity and jobs for future generations in Tasmania that are going to be competitive into the future?

Through that model, it's really about aligning some of these important strategies that we've got all across Tasmania, with our advanced manufacturing and all the successes we've got in that space, towards a long-term strategy for investment. I couldn't provide you with a specific forecast number, because I think we need to step through that on a case-by-case basis in line with those decision-making protocols.

Mr GARLAND - Has there been many discussions -

CHAIR - Mr Garland, sorry. Next rotation. Mr Shelton.

Mr SHELTON - There are mini-computers. I can recall when my dear old mum was driving the school bus and dad bought her a mobile phone and it was a brick that had a phone and it clipped into it. It was it was a phone that was mobile. Nowadays they are a mini computer, so how do you keep up with that? My question is around, what the government is doing to improve digital inclusion and literacy within Tasmania?

Ms OGILVIE - It is such an important topic. I loved your preamble as well. I think I've been through all the different phones from the rotary dial-up to here and it's been quite a lifetime's journey.

We're really aware of the digital inclusion challenge. Improving digital inclusion and digital literacy is a key priority for us to ensure that all Tasmanians can participate and excel in our exciting future. As part of the digital future refresh that I was speaking about before, consultation is currently under way with industry and community to ensure the development of a well-rounded and digitally inclusive plan.

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The digital community objectives and priorities outlined in our digital future, that's the document strategy, will form the basis of the plan for future digital inclusion activities. Digital inclusion, as we would all understand around this table, is complex. We're providing focused services and programs to improve digital literacy and inclusion, but also a range of government agencies, community organisations and private sector bodies are providing focused services and programs to improve digital literacy and inclusion throughout the state.

In an increasingly digital world, the ability to use digital devices and services has literally become a fundamental skill for navigating daily life. The issue does not discriminate; it can affect anybody from any walk of life. Language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills - LLND - are now recognised as fundamental to improved workforce participation, productivity, well-being and, importantly, social inclusion.

The Digital Ready for Daily Life program delivered a successful pilot in 2022 to provide digital assistance at three neighbourhood houses in the northern suburbs of Launceston. The Digital Ready for Daily Life program embedded digital trainers in four communities - Clarence Plains, Geeveston for the Huon Valley, Glenorchy and Ravenswood. To date, the program has been highly successful in assisting a wide range of vulnerable individuals improve their digital literacy and confidence through regular assistance and flexible delivery methods. In the financial year 2024-25, other program funding, \$255 722, was repurposed to extend delivery of the Digital Ready for Daily Life program for an additional year and that was welcome news.

Libraries Tasmania sites around the state offer free Wi-Fi, computer access and digital literacy support with more than 80 trained volunteers. As part of our digital future refresh, consultation is currently under way with industry and community to ensure the development of a well-rounded digital-inclusion plan.

One thing that we have done that was incredibly innovative and clever, was the statewide Wi-Fi access program, which we have unimaginatively called SWAP because that's the acronym. Free Wi-Fi is available at more than 80 Tasmanian government sites throughout the statewide Wi-Fi access program established in December 2023. Basically, what we did, is we used excess capacity and worked out a way with our vendors to provide free Wi-Fi right across the state, at our government buildings. Online access centres - there are 46 -

CHAIR - Thank you, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Sorry, I was, again, enjoying it.

CHAIR - I respect your passion. Ms Finlay.

Ms FINLAY - I am interested in understanding what call there has been for the department to address the efficiency dividends that are being requested from all the departments across the government, and what considerations or frameworks might be being used to ensure that any AI or technology driven efficiencies are again focused on the benefits of people, not at the detriment of people.

Ms OGILVIE - You are asking the right people that question. We will ask Mr Thurley to opine on this.

Mr THURLEY - Just put my stuff together, get the information together.

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Ms OGILVIE - It is a good question. Just getting the information right.

Dr THURLEY - Through you, minister. Two stages of a question there, I will answer the first one and we will get there. In the Department of Premier and Cabinet in particular we understand the government's implemented these efficiency dividends across all the departments, but this is what I can talk to with our department and, of course, we have a range of digital services involved there.

The 2025-26 Budget includes the budget efficiency dividend of \$1.972 million for DPAC and the department takes a whole-of-agency sort of approach to it. We've implemented several strategies to deal with those efficiency dividends. Primarily, the strategy that we've employed is reviewing and downsizing the department's office's accommodation-type footprints.

Ms FINLAY - Do you mind, only because we've just got an hour of the output. Most departments are approaching their efficiency dividend in that way. In this output, my specific question is: have you uniquely, given your role in the overall public service, been called on to contemplate any technology or AI-driven approaches to efficiencies across government bureaucracy? There's a lot of inefficiencies obviously and there's things that could be supported by technology and AI -

Ms OGILVIE - Paper-based processes need to be replaced.

Ms FINLAY - Rather than just the standard approach to efficiency, I wonder whether your expertise has been called on to support a government-wide approach to that.

Dr THURLEY - Yes, of course. We're contemplating that digitalisation, in particular, will play a role in any efficiencies and productivity that government can achieve. At the moment our focus is on using the efficiency and productivity units' approach to digitalisation and looking for various wins that we might better provide across government, whether it be through common systems and platforms, the use of artificial intelligence to either automate or improve or augment human capabilities. Also, any other efficiency we might achieve out of shared services and should I say in the consolidation of capabilities.

Ms FINLAY - Do you feel like there's sufficient investment to make efficiencies you need an investment, particularly where it's focused? Do you feel there's been an appropriate amount of investment provided for you to do that in a reasonably timely way?

Ms OGILVIE - We might have different views about that. I would like to very quickly say before referring that question that the work Justin and his team do across government with major digital and tech projects is enormous and really necessary. Many of those projects sit within different portfolio areas, but it's quite a distributed food chain from Justin's group to do that.

My personal views, we could always invest more in tech, which is great, but I want to make sure we've got a balance so that we're making people's lives better and work lives better. To have that human lens.

Ms FINLAY - And Tasmanian's experience of living in Tasmania better.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, sure, and to have that lens is really important. That's my philosophy. But I would turn to you directly about money. You will probably say you want more. You can.

Dr THURLEY - We'd love more money, but we do understand the constraints that have been faced at a budget level, too. We think we have a role in that space. I will turn to particularly the way that we've been approaching this. We've had for some period of time a focus through Our Digital Future and the action plan that was associated with Our Digital Future that was born at the beginning of COVID, or amid COVID.

We obviously have been in that space for about four to five years since then with this action plan. We've gone through, tracked against the action plan, and some of the investments that we've made have been really good. We've had really good outcomes from some of those investments. We recognise that after five years we have to refresh the approach, and it comes in line with the work that we're doing around efficiency and productivity as well.

It means our priorities and our focusses, and our targets, can be set better. We're in the infancy of determining what role we can play longer-term and what investments might be needed in either replacing legacy, adding new technologies to the stack, et cetera. Very conscious that the use of modern technologies, in particular artificial intelligence, is also hooked into a range of complementary assets, such as humans' capabilities. We do need to ensure that staff and employees in the State Service, if we're going to leverage these technologies are adequately skilled and capable of delivering those as well. It is a question of strategy and a question of planning this out in the best possible way to meet the priorities of government.

Ms BADGER - I wanted to touch on AI, and thank you, for sharing the principles and ethics of responsible use of AI. What work are you doing across the portfolios? It touches on almost every department in some ways, the rollout of AI, particularly the data centres and the AI factories coming into Tasmania. What sort of planning is going to be needed to be put place as to where they could go? For example, some are quite water-heavy; the non-flammable liquid cooling is still a novel technology that's been rolled out. As these things are coming online very, very quickly, we need different precautions in place.

As well, we've got things like Firmus that are coming on very quickly, that are going to need a lot of power, quicker than what - if Marinus is built, so there's the question of ensuring that if we're doing deals with these businesses that you can guarantee their power supply and not at the cost of any other industry in the state. Can you talk us through those sorts of elements that are being rolled out and how that balance of having the facilities and everything?

Ms OGILVIE - The whole world is grappling with AI and the need for more data centres; and the explosion of big data and where it all sits. The first principles layer -Tasmania is well suited to host data centres being a cool climate, with renewable energy rather than coal-fired energy. I understand why we are an attractive place, and we seek to maximise that. I think it's also true to say that data centres don't generally employ a lot of people, so the business case is slightly different; it's not a huge employer of people. What it does do, is it enables us to leverage our capability in innovation, in the arts, in anything that generates intellectual property that we can sell over the wires and get royalty streams back. So that's at the top end.

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Mr Mogridge was speaking before about the Office of Coordinator-General's strategy and thinking, and I think you can touch on some more there. There is a document called advanced technology strategy that we've been working on. That is, AI sits within advanced technologies, and we were a little bit ahead of the ball, which was great. I'd just come back from the States and had seen what was happening on the west coast. In our consultations with advanced technologies for that strategy development, there's obviously some underpinning infrastructure - data centres are going to be needed, better telco, more cables, fatter pipes, all of that is required.

I understand your thinking around Firmus, in particular the Marinus energy telco cable, but I will ask Mr Mogridge to speak about it. That's one example. You're wanting the strategic layer for Tasmania and where does that go?

Mr MOGRIDGE - I think touching on a really critical strategic point for Tasmania and certainly I recognise there's several different portfolios that are involved in this. For example, ReCFIT has a function in long-term energy design, but equally Hydro Tasmania needs to turn its mind to its assets and durability of the provision of energy over a long period of time.

We've spoken about some of the longer-term strategies here, and to dig into that a little bit more - there is this opportunity for us to understand how we can drive and create a market-maker scenario for energy, for example, to take that in particular so that we can unlock things like Weasel as a development of significant solar energy moving forward and have a long term power purchase agreement that directly aligns with the investment as it comes to life. I think that's part of this critical discussion that we need to look at with the diversification strategy, to make sure that we have all the arms of government working collaboratively to do that design -

Ms OGILVIE - We talked about this as well.

Mr MOGRIDGE - Absolutely, making sure that our AI industry dialogue is directly aligned with that, so that when we are making these investments in the context of major data centres, we're contemplating how that will be influential in supporting industry in Tasmania.

There's other elements of this that I think go critically to your point around the need for us to be smarter in how we're leveraging energy moving forward, so that we're not having one thing at the cost of the other. I'm just making things up in a room - but industrial symbiosis is something we've seen in in other jurisdictions where you might look at something which is high-energy use, typical old-fashioned industry and we need data centres. They use a lot of water, for example, they generate a lot of heat. If we have a large electrical boiler, for example, that desires a lot of heat, how do we actually create some symbiosis here which creates a net reduction in emissions, net reduction in energy desires, and create some more efficient and productive output for Tasmania.

Ms OGILVIE - May I also add, we're talking about the industry dialogue. I will specifically let everybody know that we are having the first of our industry dialogues in conjunction with the economics department at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). We're gathering people around the table to really start identifying this. The door is always open.

Ms BADGER - Thank you. On the Advanced Technology Strategy, that's what's being developed at the moment. I'm seeking clarity of when we would see that? Just to confirm that that would include an analysis of what the forecast of - and I completely understand this is

changing every day - the forecast of AI factories and data centres that are coming here versus available power, available water sources and how those water sources are going to be coming online. Even at the moment there's no take agreement for Firmus from the North Esk. Is it like a Tas Irrigation set up? How are we going to do that? That is one example coming online very, very quickly and there's a lot in the pipeline and nothing to confirm with Tasmanians how that's going to look?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I don't want to dodge anything but that actually sits with the Office of Coordinator-General to do that work, unless Mike has more there?

Mr MOGRIDGE - Absolutely right. Also, Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT) and some of the other portfolios outside of this one.

Ms OGILVIE - I just want to mislead you, the Advanced Technology Strategy won't include the business case for data centres in Tasmania, that sits with this piece of work, but it will be done.

Ms BADGER - No absolutely, that's fine. That's what I wanted to confirm. We've got a business case at the destruction of everything else because we haven't done the planning.

Prof RAZAY - With the growth of AI technology, it comes with emerging risks that have evolved as part of its growth. Issues with bias, algorithms, privacy violation, social manipulation, transparency. I really believe that our government should have strategies to guide our public, our small businesses, when they adopt AI so they can manage and minimise any potential risk with digital economy, particularly in relation to privacy and safety.

Ms OGILVIE - I agree with you it's of the utmost importance. I will give you a heads up - it's going to come your way but I would like to sketch for you the level of work and importance with which we regard this particular issue. Specifically around having humans in the loop when decisions are being made and all those sorts of things.

The AI spark has just ignited, and it's gone global very quickly. Your question is good, because it's not just about what we're doing internally with government, but our broader community. That is why we have two parts to this portfolio: we have the internal work, and we have State Growth, which is on that economic development trajectory.

Justin is closest to the question of bias in algorithms and how to manage that. I may ask you to speak to that and then I will -

Dr THURLEY - I will go through a more general, sort of a version of it because I thought you asked a few things there. Realistically, when it comes to the broader AI, let's call it regulation and safety, then the federal government is well engaged in this space, and we are well engaged with the federal government as well. We've been working with their roundtables around AI regulation and the development of policy and safety, and the real focus has been on those risks that you identified. They're very real. They emerge and flow through to our guidance work even for our own staff.

Also you are right in that small businesses, et cetera, which I won't talk to the full extent to, but they're effectively dealing with the same issues, but possibly in a less sophisticated way. We need to make sure that they understand and know those risks, which is why the federal

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government has been working on the voluntary safety code and other information to build awareness and literacy with AI. We would certainly expect to play our part in some way in that space. At the moment that part is working with the federal government, with the consultative groups to develop good policy at the national level.

Ms OGILVIE - And there's a little bit more, so turning then to the other side of the portfolio. Thank you.

Mr MOGRIDGE - Though you, minister and I suppose venturing into small business somewhat, just to acknowledge that through the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce there is a framework for providing regional grants to support training in the context of cybersecurity and also advanced technologies. So, through those processes, I think there is some educational programs that are rolled out to support small business to build this understanding.

Ms OGILVIE - Open to ideas though. Please bring them forward. We're all working very hard on this one. Thank you.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, part of the role of government of course is providing services to the Tasmanian community and so can you please update the committee on how the digital transformation priority expenditure program is improving government services for Tasmanians?

Ms OGILVIE - I'd love to because I think it is. You talked a little bit about that. So that program is really implementing our commitment to modernising our systems, strengthening cybersecurity, which we know is really important and improving service delivery across the Tasmanian public sector. The program provides an ongoing annual allocation to enhance digital capability, efficiency and transparency across all government agencies.

Now in the 2025-26 Interim Budget, funding for the program has increased to \$37.5 million, up from \$25 million in 2024-25. Look, that reflects our strong focus on digital transformation as a driver of better outcomes for all Tasmanians.

This year funding supports a range of new projects including:

- The digital driver's licence business case for statewide rollout
- The EPA information Management systems upgrade, overhauling key regulatory data systems.
- The gaming and licencing information system replacement
- Delivering modernised digital licencing for Treasury
- Information management, storage and access upgrades in the Department of Education
- A new leasing management system for property management.

We are also continuing a suite of ongoing transformation projects including importantly:

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- The emergency dispatch messaging and alerting project.
- Justice Connect, which has been a marvellous project and improved things a lot.
- The statewide booking system and the Cyber Hubs initiative which I'm really pleased to have been part of building that led ably by Justin. The Cyber Hubs project is strengthening the state cyber resilience and ensuring government information assistance are protected from malicious cyber activities.

As of November 2025, there are more than 35 cyber professionals across government. We're a big hirer and manager of cyber expertise, which is why we have a moral obligation to help the broader community as well.

Together these projects are delivering more efficient, secure and transparent government operations, ensuring Tasmanians benefit from modern, reliable and trusted digital services.

Ms FINLAY - As you'd be aware given your portfolio, the tech sector in Tasmania employs over 11,000 people and there was a report just released I think it was last week or the week before that shows that there's masses of capacity for increased jobs by 2035 maybe another 21,000 jobs. There's already a \$1.1 billion contribution to the economy but there's concern and I want to say that the people that are doing good work are doing great work but there still remains a concern that there's a lot of conversations and a lot of plans but not necessarily a lot of action to create a digital road map for Tasmania, where we can actually capture a lot of this opportunity.

I think in industry there's an ongoing concern that there's not a great enough investment and there's a return on these investments, right. The economy would be supercharged by greater investment and an actual road map and action on the ground. There's a lot of discussion around the fact that we're not actually making advances year on year that in fact we're probably going backwards with that investment.

The TAS ICT recently released their concerns and I think they did a survey of members and nearly all members, over 80 per cent of their members, expressed concern in this area. So, I'm just wondering what your response as minister is to this and how you can take your approach to this tech sector from conversation into action.

Ms OGILVIE - So again, there's two parts to that and I'd like to reflect on those as well. Absolutely aware that we need to be more agile. I think we need to be faster. That's a challenge with government as well. I've worked in the private sector and yes it was hard, we have multi layers, and we have to provide services to all people. The drivers of government are a little bit different to the drivers of business. I understand the agility question and sometimes push back and gently on that; we have a specific role to fill in relation to that. Ideally, I would love to see a lot of investment in projects that can supercharge innovation tech, AI, advanced technologies.

So, my perspective has been whilst we're in this constrained budget environment - which I think we just are, we need to accept that - this is the time when we do our thinking and the thinking time is Our Digital Future, Advanced Technology Industries Strategy, the data centre work, but importantly the AI dialogue we're doing with the university and rebuilding the university's STEM precinct and capability is absolutely essential. I'm acknowledging the concern, which I think is real, but also suggesting that there is quite a lot of base-level work

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happening. You can only do a road map once this is done. But let me just pass to our two experts and it sits with Justin, Our Digital Future.

Dr THURLEY - I will just answer the first bit. Regarding the Our Digital Future strategy work that we've been doing, we're just recognising that we've got to a point where we have to reinvent what we've been doing, or refresh, at least, what we're doing. We hear the voice of industry in particular, and because government's such a big supplier into industry, we effectively help build capabilities by purchasing services, and technology, et cetera. We're hearing that from them, we're doing the consultation with them, we're taking in those concerns and we're trying to turn that into a plausible action plan to move forward; the action plan will be the road map.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, and then also from the State Growth perspective?

Mr MOGRIDGE - Through you, minister and I think just reinforcing what you've said around setting up the digital strategy and making sure that that's on deck next year. Early next year is the target. It was regrettably delayed by the caretaker and the election process, but we are aiming to have that on track next year. What should sink in behind that is this greater collaboration with the university, and directly in relation to STEM, so that ideally when kids are going through school, they can see the clear jobs pathway through the other side of the STEM precinct graduation process. I think we've perhaps lost that in recent times, that clear narrative from students through university to tangible opportunity in Tasmania and that's exactly what we want to look at through that collaboration.

Ms FINLAY - I suppose one of the challenges is that - and I'm a massive supporter of the university, so I'm not saying that those pathways aren't important, but speed here, if we don't act quickly and if we're not nimble, we will get left behind. And if we keep trying to modify what we're doing because things have changed, we will never actually be in action and there's got to be multiple layers of opportunity to stimulate the economy, not just through that university pathway, particularly in tech jobs now. A proportion, but not a great proportion, of people will go through that university pathway and be able to stimulate things here in Tasmania. So, thank you. Early next year, I look forward to the road map.

There's \$300,000 in the budget for what's called an Innovation Hub in the north and the south. I suspect that's new language for Enterprise north and south, but it only appears to be in the budget for one year and there doesn't seem to be any ongoing commitment to that. I'm wondering if you can talk to the ongoing commitment to Enterprise in Tasmania.

Mr MOGRIDGE - The Office of the Coordinator-General primarily facilitates that pool of funding. I can't speak to the ongoing funding there except to say that this is an interim Budget, and I think for that reason, there's ongoing contemplation of what does the forecast budget look like year-on-year.

Ms FINLAY - So, given that it's not in the futures, are you suggesting there's a contemplation that it doesn't continue?

Ms OGILVIE - No, I'm not suggesting anything because I'm not the responsible minister. I'm very supportive at a personal level of enterprise. It does sit with the Office of the Coordinator-General with my understanding that it goes up through

minister Ellis. Having said that, we absolutely need the innovation capability that organisations like Enterprize drive. Also, perhaps we need to think about what we can do more of in the innovation space outside of Enterprize, and UTAS is a really good example of that.

I hope I'm not talking too much out of school if the university is listening, but they have very much been in the dialogue with us around innovation, particularly. One of the things I think about when I look at those stats about how many people we've got working in tech and how many we could have - thinking about how Silicon Valley got started - it gets wrapped around a university. You're graduating the engineers, the techs, the lawyers, they set up businesses, they go global. Some of that ecosystem work, I believe in the past has sort of slid away. We can rebuild that and work with industry as well but specifically in relation to thinking about the Enterprise 300, we'd have to ask the minister.

Ms FINLAY - It is concerning and this is not just a reflection on you, but across all of these outputs where there are organisations that we know will be funded in the future that only have one year's allocation, it's the way to make a budget look good and it's the way to make a narrative around a pathway to surplus when you don't put things in the out years. If there's going to be an end to the funding, I believe the government needs to be upfront about that. If there's not, the government needs to be upfront about putting it into the budget papers.

Ms OGILVIE - I will refer your comment to minister Ellis.

Ms BADGER - Online access centres have been vital to lots of regional communities. The Education minister recently headed up a review into those. I can't speak for online access centres in other electorates except for my own in Lyons, where of course the internet and phone reception is notoriously terrible. Those hubs are the heart of the community and there's not a single online access centre that I've spoken to that felt heard or seen by the review.

A lot of them didn't even get feedback on what they provided, and they're really keen to hear from you to find out what advocacy you've been doing on their behalf and if how you're going to integrate their views and the essential service that is online access centres that isn't provided anywhere else to make sure that these communities don't fall further behind, as these services are rolled and amalgamated with Libraries Tasmania.

Ms OGILVIE - There are multiple bits to that question as well, but I know how well-loved online access centres are and how they've been around for a long time and have morphed from just a place where you can get access to a truly social community hub, most of them, so I get that. They do sit under Libraries which is the minister for Education, not me, but in recognising the reason for them, that is about digital inclusion. We have been doing that work through Our Digital Future. I believe it sits in there, mapping out what we think models could look like, so it's not just online access centres; we have contemporisation needed for them, but also for small business and other sectors of the community.

That piece of work, particularly as it sits within Education, is funded through those channels, not through me, and there's some frustration over time that I haven't been able to just wade in as well, but the opportunity is here now to look at what we should be or could be doing in the future on those. I believe there is a really strong role for libraries to play in this as the centre of digitised information and I certainly know that my local library in the north of my electorate does a great job as well. I don't want to dodge the question, but I'm not the responsible minister. I do see the need and I do understand how much people love them. Digital

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inclusion in a contemporary setting needs, again, a bit of a road map and we've been looking at that.

Ms BADGER - Thank you. Will you make a representation on their behalf, was really the hub of that question. I'm noting the time, I guess 30 seconds or less, what are you also doing to ensure there is a high-powered internet for AI data centres, because obviously Tasmania is not renowned for that, unfortunately?

Ms OGILVIE - Subsea cable and all I need is the federal government. If you could help me lobby them, I'd be delighted. I can table a couple of letters. Help me get the cables and we will be good to go. But yes, I will lobby for -

Ms BADGER - I believe we went through this in the last Estimates, minister, and it goes back to the Marinus fibre optic cable as well.

Ms OGILVIE - No, there are other projects and other cables. I am just going to go for it, because I can't see any Labor people here: we need the federal government to step up. Telecommunication sits in the constitution. It's their responsibility. We should have more subsea cables.

Ms BADGER - So you're seeking more cables, more projects in addition. Thank you.

Ms OGILVIE - And with online access centres, I'm always happy to wade in with conversation and support where I can. It may be that we need to think about how we're delivering it as a government, where it sits in portfolios, those sorts of things. I am happy to have those conversations.

CHAIR - Prof Razay, I don't know how far you are going to get.

Prof RAZAY - It's a quick one. How can we motivate our young students to study science because, about 47 per cent don't even finish Year 12?

Ms OGILVIE - Did you know that Tasmanian technology is going into space on the mission to Mars? We just have to keep telling them.

CHAIR - The time for scrutiny has expired.

The committee suspended from 3.00 p.m. to 3.06 p.m.

DIVISION 11

Department of Community and Multicultural Affairs

CHAIR - The scrutiny of the Community and Multicultural Affairs portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce persons at the table, names, and positions please for the benefit of *Hansard*.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Chair. At the table today we have Noelene Kelly, Deputy Secretary of Community and Government Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet; and Corrina Smith, Director, Community Services.

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CHAIR - Thank you. The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs is two hours. Would the minister like to make an opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, thank you.

Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you all this afternoon and to provide an overview of the Community and Multicultural Affairs portfolio. As you know, I was appointed to this portfolio in August - fairly recent - and what a privilege it has been so far. I must begin by first acknowledging my friend, colleague, and the previous minister for community services, Roger Jaensch. I want to acknowledge and recognise that he was instrumental in developing so much of the work that I'm now launching, such as Tasmania's first volunteering strategy, which I had the honour of doing last Friday alongside Volunteering Tasmania at Goodwood Community Centre.

The Community and Multicultural Affairs portfolio covers a wide range of organisations from Men's Sheds to volunteers, food relief, and our multicultural organisations. The Tasmanian government acknowledges the invaluable role the community services industry has in keeping Tasmanians supported, connected and healthy. This is reflected in our 2030 strong plan for Tasmania's future.

I am overjoyed that for the first time in our state - I think - we have a multicultural affairs standalone portfolio, helping to promote our multicultural communities because we know that we are all richer for diversity and, as we know, all the great work community services do and, importantly, how they're stepping up to help Tasmanians address cost-of-living pressures.

One important component of this are our excellent Neighbourhood Houses. They are place-based, so they can work flexibly to support the needs of their local communities. While funding for Neighbourhood Houses has increased from \$4.7 million in 2013-14 to more than \$15 million in this interim Budget, we want to ensure that they have the right resources to support those who are disadvantaged in their communities. We acknowledge Houses are reporting increased demand. Because of this, we want to better understand that demand and work to address the long-term sustainability of the House network. That is why I'm pleased to announce that the Department of Premier and Cabinet has secured funding of \$150,000 for an independent needs analysis of the Neighbourhood House network. This will include staffing and the safety of staff, operational cost, the existing tiered framework for funding, the support or programs that Houses are providing in their local communities, the location of Houses and whether they are representative of the needs of Tasmanians, the governance framework, including the role of the peak body, and opportunities for community capacity building and partnerships. The analysis will also review the back-end, longer-term funding agreements, multiple funding deeds, and streamlining the administrative burden. The needs analysis will get underway early next year. While we want to ensure sustainability for Houses, what we don't want to see is a one-size-fits-all approach because the wonderful thing, as we all know, about the network is their adaptability to their needs of their local communities.

Further to this, our interim Budget demonstrates that the Tasmanian Liberal government will always support a well-resourced, sustainable community sector, which in turn can support and deliver for our communities in every corner of the state. We are doing this through a raft of work in developing and rolling out strategies and action plans, including implementation of our Embracing Diversity, Fostering Belonging: Tasmania's Multicultural Action Plan 2025-29,

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that we launched in March; development of our next carer action plan, and implementation of our new LGBTIQ+ strategy, which I'm pleased to say will be launched very soon.

I'm really happy to discuss all of these matters with you and more, and I hope we have a really free-flowing discussion about things that I know are really important to every single person at this table. I would like to offer to table some documents. If you haven't already seen it, the Embracing Diversity, Fostering Belonging: Tasmania's Multicultural Action Plan, I table that. We also have multiple copies of Valuing Our Volunteers: Tasmania's Volunteering Strategy. That might just inform some discussion.

Mrs GREENE - Minister, Treasurer Abetz says that we need to rightsize the public service by cutting 2800 jobs whilst also flagging that there are cuts on the horizon for the community sector. These sectors are so interconnected when it comes to supporting vulnerable Tasmanians.

Minister, do you believe that funding to the community services sector can or should be reduced, and is your government planning to rightsize the community services sector in the same way that public sector jobs are on the chopping block?

Ms OGILVIE - Well, that's a very challenging question. Look, I'm a really big supporter and fan of the community sector and I will always fight for those organisations that sit within my ministry. I have reached out to as many people as I can to say, 'Please make sure you get your full budget bids in. They're open now. Get them in, and I will fight for you at the budget table.'

It is important, I think, that we recognise as a government we have responsibilities that are not just within our government but are much broader as well, and that's a unique thing about government. I don't believe funding should be reduced, no, but I do appreciate that we are in a very constrained budget environment and it will require energy and advocacy, which I have offered and continue to offer to do.

I'm not sure if there's anything Noelene would like to add - perhaps a little bit about the five-year stability with the contracts? Yes, thank you. This might help a little.

Ms KELLY - Maybe a couple of things to mention there: firstly, part of our role as well is to support organisations as they're going through that budget process, to understand the budget process and how it works but also to support them with the bids and submissions that they put through. Also, I can talk a little bit about the longer-term funding agreement program if that's of interest as well.

This has been something that's been talked about in the community services sector for quite a while. There are three parts to this program. The first part is around indexation of community service organisations. That was put in place a couple of years ago, I think, during the last financial year. The second part is the longer-term funding agreements. Often people refer to that as five-year funding agreements. We've done a lot of work in that. We're progressing that in stages. It's a really complex program, and I'm really pleased to say that we're coming to the end of stage one of that.

We're in the process of working with our peak bodies and putting them onto five-year funding agreements if that's what they choose. The third component of that program is around

outcomes framework, and that's being incorporated into stage 2 of the longer-term funding agreement.

Mr GEORGE - Around what? I'm sorry, I misheard.

Ms KELLY - The outcomes framework. That's really looking at the outcomes that community organisations are delivering as opposed to just the outputs - you know, how many people visited a centre, or to cut that program, is it ultimately making a difference for the community.

Mrs GREENE - You mentioned pre-budget bids and submissions are now open. I note that the 2026-27 pre-budget consultation explicitly asks community organisations to nominate which services should be transitioned out or delivered with more streamlined resources. Why is the government asking frontline organisations to nominate their own cuts? Isn't that just outsourcing austerity?

Ms OGILVIE - I think that the characterisation of the query about whether we are doing as much as we can with what we've got as an austerity measure for community organisations is a bridge too far. But, I absolutely acknowledge that our community sector organisations are running very lean and it is difficult. The question is more about: can we put these five-year agreements into place, what does the scope of activity look like, and to make sure that we fund that appropriately so we get that balance right. That's my mindset. I'm uncertain what's in particular documentation that you've referred to.

Again, I would implore our wonderful community sector organisations to put your budget bids together, let me know you've done it, and I will fight for you at the table alongside everybody in this constrained budget environment, but, as a minister, I take that responsibility very seriously.

Mrs GREENE - Just a final question on this, I'm a bit concerned that you're not aware that community services organisations have been asked to -

Ms OGILVIE - I'm aware of the letter.

Mrs GREENE - Sure, because that's not quite what you just said there.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm aware of the letter. I'm taking my own perspective on what we're going to do so get your budget bids in and I will fight for you at the table.

Mrs GREENE - I'm not too sure that's giving a lot of comfort to the community services sector. In fact, I know that letter has caused a great deal of distress and confusion.

Ms OGILVIE - It has. I've had many conversations as well on the same topic and I'm a straight shooter. Put your budget bids in and I will advocate for you.

Ms ROSOL - Minister, community service organisations, you've already said it, they do incredible work supporting Tasmanians in need. They've been underfunded for years and more so underfunded as a community need has increased and in the words of a service provider, I'm going to quote from them:

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We're already operating at full stretch. There is simply no room left to squeeze more from the service without risking its integrity. Government needs to fund, support and strengthen the community industry and not dismantle it.

I note in the Budget the election commitments in 2024, so the 24-25 Budget went some way to helping community sector organisations. However, they're all gradually being phased out over the forward Estimates and that's reflected in this interim Budget's figures. There was an explanation of the variation in community services funding going forward saying that was a reflection of the - I just can't find a word but anyway, that was to do with the profile. It was the profile of the 2024 election commitments.

I did the maths on the 2024 election commitments that fit within the community services sector, and by my calculations the funding reductions in this interim Budget forward Estimates are greater than the planned winding down of election commitments in 2024. It doesn't actually match the profile, the funding decreases more than the election commitments in 2024.

That's cuts in the funding, the reduced funding. Why are we looking at cuts over the forward Estimates in the community sector? What are you planning to cut?

Ms OGILVIE - That was a very long preamble, so I will do my best. Firstly, if we could just set the scene about what the funding is and actually does and then we have a little bit more detail about - you're asking for the tapering off question -

Ms ROSOL - The tapering of the election commitments in 2024 is less than the tapering off of the funding in community services in this interim Budget.

Ms OGILVIE - Let's see if we can deal with that specific question. I do want to do a little bit of scene setting if I may. The Tasmanian government through 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future is committed to delivering increased financial certainty for community services organisations. I want to say that very clearly.

The Community Services Funding Review, the review, was established in 2023 to address three key government priorities aimed at supporting the sustainability of the community services sector. These being reviewing indexation, progressing longer term funding provision, delivering an outcomes framework and we've heard a little bit of that this morning.

The breadth of work on this is considerable. The key areas of work are intrinsically linked and the review has focused on longer-term funding arrangements for community sector organisations to give that funding certainty.

Ms ROSOL - You're repeating things that you said earlier; you already said this.

CHAIR - Ms Rosol, please.

Ms ROSOL - This has already been covered in the opening statement.

Ms OGILVIE - Organisations need to operate with increased confidence and we're doing that whole-of-government work. Stage 1 focus on recurrent funding, which is what you're partly interested in for community services peak bodies and we're about to complete that work.

Stage 2 and beyond, there will be a focus on broader recurrent funding across the community services sector and cross-agency considerations that may need to be addressed. So that's the context within which we are working. I would ask if you perhaps could speak to the question of the tapering-off issue.

Ms KELLY - If we focus on 24-25 and 25-26 in the budget movement there, it's largely made-up of a number of election commitments that come to an end, but also there are a number of other initiatives that are outlined in the 24-25 Budget beyond election commitments that are also coming to an end and a number of other programs. There's money that's been transferred out of the Community Services budget, in relation to the family violence grant - they've moved to another part of our department. Also, our community grants and our card groups, Seniors Cards, Companion Cards and so on, moved to another area in the agency as well and they've come out of the Community Services budget. We also had some money that moved out to another department as well.

That's largely the 2024-25 Budget movement, and in terms of the 2025-26, there are a number of key deliverables in 2025-26 that are for one-year funding arrangements. Some of the 2024-25 election commitments that last for two years are coming to an end. There's also some other programs that have been funded in previous years - I don't have the detail of all those - but some other programs that were funded in previous years that might have been funded across the forward Estimates or multiple years, are coming to an end too.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you, for that. That still sounds like cuts to me, minister, because community sector organisations are saying that they are struggling to meet the level of need as it is, with the funding that they have. These have been really necessary, important funding measures that they've needed and they've been relying on. Why are we ending these funding things and not continuing them, when we know that the need is great? Why are we not planning for the long-term? I know you're looking at long-term funding agreements, but why are we allowing these funding agreements to end and not replacing them already? The need is huge.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I feel your energy and I completely agree that the need is huge and I know you're very genuine in your advocacy, and my concern is very genuine as well. Time-limited projects do come to an end, it's something that happens. We make commitments for particular projects and programs and they do come to conclusion. The answer to this is again, the budget-bid process which we're going to enter into and is open now. Again, I would say robustly, I would implore everybody to get your bids in, and if there's programs that people, groups and organisations would like to continue, put them in the bid and I will be an advocate for this sector.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, I heard in your opening statement this commitment for a study or research work on the Neighbourhood Houses. I would argue that if you talk to the Neighbourhood Houses, the co-ordinators would say 'we know what we do, we know what we want', that's pretty clear. You outline very quickly the terms of reference, I'm not sure how far you've consulted on those terms of reference, are they locked in stone? Are you going to consult with the Neighbourhood network and their peak in terms of any - based on what you read, they're pretty broad, which is good in some respects, but it's also important to ensure that the sector that you're trying to review has some input into the terms of reference. Are they up for consultation?

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely. My demeanour and posture with all of these things is to be naturally consultative, happy to consult, happy to be open to it, but also really to be very clear-eyed about the challenges that we have, both with the cost-of-living pressures and the challenges among Neighbourhood Houses. As I've been out and about as well, I see different challenges with different groups, not just Neighbourhood Houses - I don't want them to think I'm singling them out.

Noelene might be able to give a little bit more information about how you think we're going to go forward with this approach; but I do want to just again say, happy to talk, happy to consult, want to hear from everybody and if we're going to take this step to go forward together, particularly as we've got these five-year contracts coming on board, which will capture scope as well, that is something that can only be done in collaboration.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister, I suppose the broad scope that the minister mentioned previously, provides the general requirements that we will be looking at in terms of this work. But we will need to be doing some work in consultation with Neighbourhood Houses and Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania, to determine a tighter scope and being really clear about what the deliverables are out of this process. Perhaps if I can talk through the process, we will go through a request for quote where we will approach a number of independent consultants with those requirements and as part of that we will be stipulating that the project or the needs analysis will need to look at consultation with communities, understanding the needs of the communities, understanding the needs of Neighbourhood Houses, what they currently deliver, what the perceived gaps are in terms of what they deliver and also feedback on administrative processes like, maybe, their funding agreements but also things like their reporting and so on.

As I mentioned, we'll also be consulting with Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania as a peak body because governance will be really important to this project and also other stakeholders who interlink with the Neighbourhood House network as well and other peaks. We'll also be asking the consultant to look at best practice approaches to community houses and what other jurisdictions are doing in this space as well. We're planning to do that work around the request for quotation in early 2026 and then we'll be working with the consultant on a timeframe on that. We'd be looking at around the middle or just after the middle of 2026 in terms of delivering that, but some of that would depend on the consultant that we use and the time it takes to do the consultation and so on.

Mr O'BYRNE - Just as a follow up, if that's okay, Chair? That's great, I think that will will hopefully produce a good body of work in terms of understanding the importance of Neighbourhood Houses, particularly in working-class communities. The question I have is though that there's a bit of advocacy from the Neighbourhood House network about their acute needs now. Based on your timeline, you're pushing past the next Budget and therefore the request from the Neighbour Houses are pretty clear now. What does that mean for the interim between the announcement of the review, but the acute needs of the Neighbourhood Houses prior to the finalisation and completion of that Budget, because there are some needs there now.

Ms OGILVIE - Again, I would implore Neighbourhood Houses to put their budget bids in. Put it in your budget bid, get them in and I will advocate for you. The interim Budget is what we have now, we're looking at this. It was the Budget that wasn't passed is now being passed. That is the pathway.

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Mr O'BYRNE - I don't mean to talk over all the time. I just want to follow the thought through, if that's okay, Chair. The issue will be that the defence from Treasury will say, well, there's a review.

Ms OGILVIE - I see what you're saying.

Mr O'BYRNE - It's almost, as if they're caught betwixt.

Ms OGILVIE - Yeah, I don't think that the word defence is the right characterisation.

Mr O'BYRNE - I've been on Budget committee, I'm pretty sure it's defence.

Ms OGILVIE - Well, I implore you all, and I will say it again, I'm on the record. Please ask your constituents to put their Budget bids in and let me know if they're coming in and I will advocate at the table when we're having those discussions. The review is a good idea and needs to happen.

Mr O'BYRNE - Yes. I'm not against the review at all.

Ms OGILVIE - I understand your nervousness about that. Yep.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, this is a wonderful document. I haven't had time to have a really good look through it, on volunteering, yet. My question is around volunteering and I'm sure everybody at the table agrees with me how important volunteering and volunteers are around all our communities. They come from every walk of life in every style of community and that sort of thing. I would put it to you that this document is more valuable to the regional community because over my lifetime, I would suggest that there's a greater proportion of people per head in regional communities, smaller communities, actually volunteer. This is a very important document, and I'll ask you in a moment about where you see it going.

As an example, I would simply say that through my life, our children went to Prospect High School. Prospect High School as a catchment of Hagley or, not only the Prospect people, but Hagley and Westbury and Bracknell and I was quite familiar with all the families around most of the areas as mayor and that sort of thing. When we went into Prospect to the parents and friends meeting, you would go to a Prospect parents and friends meeting and you would see the parents of the Hagley kids, of the Westbury kids and of the Bracknell kids that took up sort of 70 per cent of the, the volume there. That's why I say that it's absolutely vital to keep volunteering going, to support volunteers, particularly in regional communities right across Tasmania, of course.

My question is, this has been developed, how will it help Tasmanian volunteers?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. What a superb question with a huge preamble which was fabulous. We all agree about volunteers and we all probably still are volunteers even though we're doing our day jobs and particularly as parents, we're all out at the soccer at 7.00 a.m. in the freezing cold, et cetera. What I would like to begin by thanking all of our volunteers. We all really rate them so highly right around the state, the work they do each and every day from your neck of the woods right through all of our electorates, we would agree on that.

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I had the pleasure of launching the Valuing our Volunteers: Tasmania's Volunteering Strategy 2025-2030 last Friday at the beautiful Goodwood Community House. What a great garden they've got, it was really fantastic and can I say briefly, what a great neighbourhood house to visit and beautiful staff and volunteers.

Ms HADDAD - They need money for the garden, though.

Ms OGILVIE - Everyone's bugging me on money for gardens, I have to find a way, but I have an idea and we will talk about that after, which is exactly what I want to talk about, ensuring we support our valued volunteers now and into the future so that they're safe, valued and enabled. We all know that volunteering is vital for the Tasmanian community, environment and economy, with estimated value of volunteering to the state of \$12.1 billion, can you believe that figure, in the past 12 months. Our government recognises that a strategic approach is required to addressing the changing conditions faced by the volunteering industry and the needs of volunteers.

This includes, but is not limited to, the need for volunteer training and development, the increased cost of volunteering, as well as the desire for more flexible volunteering opportunities. In 2024-25 we invested \$150 000 to develop Tasmania's first volunteering strategy and action plan in collaboration with that great organisation, we would all agree they're great, Volunteering Tasmania. In the 2025-26 interim Budget, we've committed \$600,000 over two years to deliver initial actions, the five-year action plan and importantly, a pilot program that will remove the cost of new or renewed registration to work with vulnerable people fees for volunteers. This has been really well received and I know it was the result of a lot of advocacy.

Development of the strategy in the action plan has been informed by extensive consultation undertaken between February and April this year, including regional forums, sector expert interviews, focus group discussions and a public online survey. The strategy aims to strengthen the engagement the government has with the sector by enhancing coordination across local and national initiatives and unlocking new opportunities to build more connected, resilient and impactful volunteering strategy.

The focus areas for the strategy are: volunteer experience, conditions for volunteering to thrive and community impact, and these align with the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023 to 2033, so will be underpinned by the action plan which will describe the key initiatives our government agencies will implement to enable the industry to meet the challenges of the future and empower them to continue to make a lasting impact on our communities. Once again, thanks to volunteers and Volunteering Tasmania, everybody for working closely with us to develop this strategy and we would all share that sentiment.

Mrs GREENE - Back to budget consultation. The consultation guidelines repeatedly refer to savings offsets and streamlining resources to deliver core outcomes. What dollar figure is the government attempting to cut from the community services portfolio in next year's budget?

Ms OGILVIE - I am not aware of a dollar figure that anybody's trying to cut from the community services portfolio. Noelene, has anybody made you aware of it?

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Ms KELLY - That's a question for the government, but we certainly haven't been aware of a figure.

Ms OGILVIE - No. You probably need to refer that question to the Treasurer.

Mrs GREENE - Sure, I will. I'd like to go to workforce for the community services sector. We know that there's very likely to be some SCHADS changes on the horizon where wages will rise and let's face it, mainly for women in the community services sector, and without additional funding services may struggle to fund that. Is that something that you've considered with regard to funding for community services?

Ms OGILVIE - SCHADS being their salary question, the uplift. Is that something that we've built in, yes?

Ms KELLY - The department and the public service in general with regard to the areas that work with the community services sector are certainly aware of the SCHADS review and we're continuing to work with organisations to understand where that will go, and that includes areas like TasCOSS and also federal government agencies as well that are impacted by this. We're also working, through TasCOSS, with the coalition of community services peaks, particularly around the longer term funding agreement and so on, but that's a great group of people that we can also work with through this.

Mrs GREENE - Thank you. Also, just on workforce for the community services sector: where do you think the gaps are? Where do we need to be ensuring that we've got a pipeline of skilled Tasmanians ready to work in the sector?

Ms OGILVIE - Well, certainly ask Noelene, but I think we have been looking at a community services industry plan. You might find some helpful information there. Let's just get the right tab. There we go. Yes, I've got it. So, I think it does sit within the industry plan development work that we've been doing. I acknowledge as well, of course, it's a growth sector which is good. I mean it's good that there's going to be more roles.

So, the Community Services Industry Plan represents the Tasmanian government's collaboration with TasCOSS specifically to deliver a stronger future workforce and community services industry. It's going to be an overarching framework which will guide and strategic industry development, transition planning, but importantly driving local jobs as well. I know that the plan showcases a lot of benefits of collaboration, including seeking to enrich our state's social, cultural and economic wellbeing. I'm just going to see if I can find some specific numbers for you or details of the areas in which we think we're going to need more people.

So, what I can tell you is the community sector is one of our fastest-growing sectors. As we know, 28,000 paid workers supported by around 46,900 formal volunteers. Our projections indicate that an additional 4000 industry staff were required to meet growing community need and the 10-year industry plan, which is funded through the 2021-22 state Budget, committed \$3.1 million over 3 years to assist in meeting industry projections, requiring an additional 4000 staff.

That funding to work on that issue was supplemented by DPAC providing 5000 for 3 years to TasCOSS for the strengthening governance project. So, TasCOSS administered a scholarship program to strengthen governance and develop leaders in the industry

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organisations. Also \$57,302 in one-off funding to TasCOSS to support the implementation of the industry plan. I think that's the information you are seeking, but is there more? It's a good start.

Mrs GREENE - No. That's a good start because it's something we need to be really mindful of in the public sector, they're also experiencing shortages of social workers, for example, and other allied health professionals and so we need to make sure that we've got that pipeline of workers coming.

Ms OGILVIE - I acknowledge your personal expertise in this area too. Happy to work with you.

Ms ROSOL - I'd like to turn to the community support levy, which is the levy collected from the gambling industry, and 25 per cent of it is for the benefit of charitable organisations. Last year in budget Estimates it was revealed that the community support levy had \$1.23 million in unexpended funds. This year I believe in one of the estimates hearings yesterday, there was \$2.4 million in the balance of unused funds. Are you able to update us on that levy and how much there is available at all please?

Ms OGILVIE - That's actually a question for Treasury, unfortunately. I think your numbers are about right, but it doesn't sit with my portfolio and I don't have the detail.

Ms ROSOL - Now, Minister, I know that you're not a gambler.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not a gambler.

Ms ROSOL - You're on record as saying that you would personally prefer it if pokies weren't in the suburbs, but how do you feel about funds from the levy that was supposed to be used to support community organisations not being used, because if there is \$2.4 million sitting there, that's 25 per cent of that should be available for charitable organisations which would include the community sector. Will you ask the Treasurer to release these funds so community sector organisations can do more work?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm really concerned to make sure that everybody in Tasmania is safe and happy and protected. In relation to gaming and this money, because it doesn't sit with me, I don't have visibility of the process by which it is released. I'm very happy, though, at any time - because I'm a pragmatic and sensible person - to have any conversations with the Treasurer about what we think we could be doing better with that pool of funds. I would agree to do that.

Ms ROSOL - Okay, great, because 25 per cent of that money should be coming across to charitable organisations in the community sector.

Ms OGILVIE - We have some information.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. To provide a little bit of background, the Department of Premier and Cabinet runs the Gambling Support Program, which is the non-regulatory harm minimisation program. Each year we put a submission through to Treasury for funding, and I can confirm that in 2024-25, we received \$5.145 million. That was

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to address four main program areas, so commissioning and managing specialist gambling support processes, such as online and in-person -

Ms ROSOL - My understanding is that there is - I can't remember whether it's 25 per cent or 50 per cent - set aside for gambling support. But there's 25 per cent set aside specifically, separately for charitable organisations as a separate thing from the gambling support.

Ms KELLY - That was the old community support levy and it's been reviewed -

Ms ROSOL - It hasn't been updated on the website then.

Ms KELLY - In 2023-24 it was changed to the community support fund. I understand that 25 per cent of that is legislated for Active Tasmania, and some funding is kept aside by the Department of Treasury for administrative support and services and research. The remainder is for agencies to put in submissions to secure, and the Department Premier and Cabinet put in a very good submission every year for that. I confirm that in 2025-26 we made our submission, and we're just waiting to hear back on that.

Ms ROSOL - I will ask more questions in the next round.

Mr GEORGE - Minister, I see that what you want to see, according to this strategy, is Tasmanian volunteers are safe, valued and enabled. Frankly, that rings pretty hollow from talking to communities that I've been talking to, who tell me that there are no more efficiencies to be found. In fact, worse than that, Community Houses can't employ enough staff even to keep them safe and to maintain their current programs. They're all thinking of cutting.

So, I can't agree with my colleague Mr O'Byrne that yet another consultation, spending more money on a report into Neighbourhood Houses, is necessary. They know what they need to do. They know what their job is. They have a track record, which is a damn good track record, and you should be supporting that.

What worries me is where the money is being spent. As I understand it, and tell me if I'm wrong - Tasmania's Volunteering Strategy, which you launched on Friday, allocates \$600,000 over the next two years. However, as I understand it, \$500,000 of that is going towards the cost of revamping the Working with Vulnerable People organisation, and \$100,000 of that is for DPAC to work with Volunteering Tasmania to finalise the action plan.

Is that right? That's surely \$600,000 that should be going to frontline community services.

Ms OGILVIE - I do have some more detail. Again, a bit of a preamble, and I appreciate your perspective.

Mr GEORGE - It's a real worry. These people are working hard.

Ms OGILVIE - I appreciate your perspective, and don't think that I'm not on the same page. I know people are working hard and I back them in. I've been around a long time and I see the work they do. It's really important. However, we're going to have a conversation

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around that money, and I think we are able to get a little bit more information about how it is to be deployed, which is I think was at the heart of your question.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. Largely, the money in the 2025-26 Budget will go towards subsidising volunteers for their Working with Vulnerable People Cards. So, the cost of \$22.44 for Tasmanian volunteers will be covered through those funds.

There's a small amount of money in the 2025-26 funds towards the implementation of the strategy, also noting that we do have some carried forward from the previous financial year that we're bringing through into implementing the strategy as well.

One other thing is that we'll be working really closely with Volunteering Tasmania around the strategy, and the subsequent action plan, and also how that money will be best used to support the broader volunteering sector.

Mr GEORGE - I'm just trying to work out - how much of that \$600,000 goes to any frontline services? Or is it all just administrative cost?

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. The majority of that money is actually subsidising the cost for Tasmanians across the state. So, if I'm a volunteer and I require a Working with Vulnerable People Card, that means that when I go to pay for that or to renew that, I won't have to pay \$22.44. That was actually something that Volunteering Tasmania strongly advocated for through, I believe, their previous budget submission.

CHAIR - Before we go on, just a reminder for all members to direct questions to the minister and through the minister.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, I understand that you recently announced the expression-of-interest process open for the Tasmanian Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council. Can you please explain a little bit more about this, and the proposed work of the council?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, what a great thing. Thank you very much for the question.

The establishment of the Tasmanian Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council is a commitment made under our Embracing Diversity, Fostering Belonging: Tasmania's Multicultural Action Plan 2025-2029, launched in March. It was informed by over 1000 Tasmanians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families, and addresses a broad range of concerns, including:

- Racism and social cohesion on a systemic level and through direct supports to communities, enhancing Tasmania's social and economic participation, including projects that restore community confidence in workplaces being culturally safe; and
- Ensuring CALD Tasmanians feel they are recognised, valued, and their needs are met through local services.

The 2025-26 interim Budget includes \$200,000 for the implementation of the plan. This is made up of \$190,000 to implement actions of the plan in 2025-26 and \$10,000 for the establishment of the advisory council.

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The advisory council will ensure lived experience is at the centre of the plan and setting future priorities for our state. We are seeking up to five community members and two organisational representatives that will assist in shaping government policies, programs and services, and to monitor actions within the plan.

The appointed council members will reflect the diversity of the Tasmanian community. Culturally and linguistically diverse Tasmanians and representatives from organisations with a range of experiences, background and skills are encouraged to apply for membership. The period for expressions of interest close on 16 January 2026, so please get your applications in. I'm looking forward to working with everyone.

Mrs GREENE - Minister, Hobart City Mission recently said publicly that they have had to reduce some staff and are preparing to sell properties to stay afloat. What does it say about funding to the sector when large organisations as important as Hobart City Mission need to sell their assets just to stay afloat?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm not familiar with Hobart City Mission's particular circumstances and its internal decision-making - I just want to be really clear about that. I'm very happy to meet with them to see if there's work we can do, but again, I would say, budget is open.

Mrs GREENE - I'm pretty sure they've written to government.

Ms OGILVIE - I don't know if they - they might have written to me, I'm not sure, I will check with the department. Yes, we have some information. Thank you, for the nudge.

Hobart City Mission is funded by the Tasmanian government for the delivery of family assistance and personal family counselling - is that what you were talking about? In 2025-26, Hobart City Mission will receive \$149,562 for personal and family counselling, and \$25,000 for the family assistance program. 50 per cent of the 2025-26 funding due under both grant deeds has been paid with the organisation, in line with the supply bill. The organisation was also a recipient of funding through the Tasmanian community food relief grants program, receiving \$10,000 in June 2025 for the provision of emergency food relief.

Would you like to contribute that bit?

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. Primarily, Hobart City Mission is funded through the Australian Government. They receive specific funding from us for particular programs, but they are largely funded through the Australian Government.

Mrs GREENE - Thank you. Yes, I'm aware that they receive money from the federal government, particularly for food security. I do have some questions about food security as well, minister. What is the Tasmanian government doing to increase sustainable food relief funding, so families aren't having to choose between groceries or a roof over their head or keeping the power on at home?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. What an important area this is. We, of course, are committed to ensuring all Tasmanians have access to appropriate quality and nutritious food. The previous food relief to food resilience strategy 2021-24 and the associated current food relief to food resilience action plan 2023-25, provide a whole-of-government approach to work towards a shift from emergency food relief to food resilience.

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The next five-year strategy, Building Food Resilience Community: Tasmania's Food Relief to Resilience Strategy 2025-31 will be released prior to the end of November, and will provide the road map of the Tasmanian government's response to food resilience, including whole-of-sector systems and whole-of- government collaboration. This will be underpinned by a new action plan to be delivered during 2026.

Then, there's a series of grant programs, we have the Tasmanian community food relief grants program, to increase the provision of direct food relief for people in need; the Tasmanian food relief capital investment grants program, to support food relief providers to make capital improvements to cold storage, logistics, infrastructure upgrades or the purchase of premises - I've seen some of the new fridges and the cold stores.

Loaves and Fishes Tasmania, for example, was funded to deliver food relief and school lunch programs via partner organisations; Foodbank Tasmania to deliver food relief to charities, community groups and individuals statewide; and Eat Well Tasmania to deliver educational training programs for organisations on nutrition, healthy eating and cooking. We also funded food vans. Saint Vincent de Paul, or Vinnies, as we know and love them, operates the Loui's Vans in greater Hobart; City Mission operates Snag Chat in Launceston and Gran's Van in Devonport and Latrobe. Then we have a range of other organisations that are working together as well.

It is such an important topic because, as I've come into this portfolio area relatively recently, it is a complex ecosystem of need and food resilience. What I'm endeavouring to do is put the jigsaw puzzle together in a way that's more effective and efficient and builds resilience rather than just emergency food response. I'm always open to working with everybody collaboratively - everybody has good ideas in this area - love to hear from you. I've tried to get around as much as I can. The community gardens should be part of the big picture with all of this - I'm a keen gardener, I will confess that, so they're leaning on an open door, but we have to find a way of doing it that's meaningful and good for local communities. Hopefully, that got somewhere towards answering your question.

Mrs GREENE - Yes, thank you. I look forward to seeing the road map.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, happy to do that.

Mrs GREENE - Given the pressures and demand that our community service organisations are under at the moment, are you getting inquiries to funding managers within the department, or to you directly, to say that the organisations are struggling to meet the requirements under their funding contracts?

Ms OGILVIE - That is probably a question for the department -

Mrs GREENE - I don't need specifics.

Ms OGILVIE - It's probably to do with the five-year security contracts that we're trying to do as well.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. We have a general open relationship with the organisations and meet with, particularly, the peaks, but other organisations throughout the

budget cycle and throughout the annual time. Certainly, we're aware of particular organisations like Neighbourhood Houses through the advocacy that Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania does.

Going back to your original question about food, we do meet with various food organisations and discuss issues. I don't have specific information to tell you about that, but we do keep that relationship ongoing and very close. Meeting regularly, you find out what the pain points are in terms of different organisations.

Ms OGILVIE - I just want to express that, I don't think anybody's under the misapprehension that there isn't a great need, as well. So, I just share that philosophy with you. Whatever we can do to help people, I will do and, as I've said, I'll be the best advocate that I can be.

Ms ROSOL - I'd like to talk about the community sector organisations indexation; the increase that was an election commitment made in 2024. It was in the forward Estimates for the 2024-25 Budget until 2027-28. In this interim Budget, we've already talked about how the variance in decreasing funding is related to the ending of previous election commitments. Given that the increased indexation was an election commitment, what does that mean for indexation going forward? Will it end at the end of 2027-28? What's going to happen to indexation in the community sector beyond 2027-28?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll just see if I can get that information for you. I've just been advised that during the 2025 state election, the Tasmanian government committed to reviewing the level of indexation for community service organisations to provide ongoing certainty before the conclusion of the 2024-25 indexation commitment in 2027-28. I'm also advised that it is part of the conversation about the longer-term contracts that's underway and about to commence.

Ms ROSOL - So there's no certainty?

Ms OGILVIE - Well, if you have it in a contract, it's fairly certain. Did I misunderstand the question?

Ms ROSOL - Well, you're saying it's part of the conversation about long-term contracts, but long-term contracts to longer-term contracts are only being phased in gradually and it will take time for them to reach people so, I guess there's some room for uncertainty there going forward with organisations.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. There's certainty until 2027-28 in that we have funding in the budget -

Ms ROSOL - That's what I'm asking, beyond that.

Ms KELLY - Part of our work through that longer-term funding agreement process will be to look at the indexation and to put forward a model for government to consider around that.

The other thing I might just mention there is part of the longer-term funding agreement process will also be to look at organisations that are funded recurrently and organisations that are funded for fixed-term arrangements and how indexation applies to that, too.

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Ms ROSOL - Thank you. I have a question about reporting requirements because I've heard reports from community service organisations about onerous new reporting requirements that have been placed on them and that are taking them away from the face-to-face work that they want to be doing. Can you provide some information about the reporting requirements that were recently introduced and whether there was any consultation undertaken with community service organisations in deciding what the reporting requirements would be?

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. Reporting's really important with the work that we do with community organisations because it ensures that there's accountability around the funding and that we understand that the money the government's providing is reaching the right targets, and so on.

We are going through a process at the moment where the allocation of funding to community organisations, for some organisations, has been annual. We're looking at changing that to a quarterly process and that's really around that sort of accountability around funds and and those sorts of things. I absolutely take on board what you're saying there and part of the work we need to do with community organisations is to understand the burden of reporting and the impact that that has on them and ensure that the reporting that we do have to put in place to enable those funds to be administered, meets the requirements in terms of ensuring that accountability, but is not onerous.

Some of the things that we've been talking about is that we meet regularly with community organisations, and actually using that meeting as a way to say 'okay, yep, we've met with this organisation and through that we've identified these things that we're going to collectively work on' or 'there's no issues that we need to progress'. So, doing it more in terms of an interactive consultative way rather than sending in a 10 page report every quarter. I absolutely understand and acknowledge what you're saying.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you for that. It sounds like there is some space for consultation. I guess my follow-up question is then, if they are being required to report quarterly rather than annually, will that be taken into consideration when funding decisions are made, because that's going to take them away from doing the work, it's going to require more work hours and become not just a time burden but also a financial burden on them.

Ms KELLY - Thank you, through you, minister. I think that part of that is us ensuring that the burden we place around reporting does not have that impact and that cost. Also I think it ties in with the work that we're doing more broadly around that outcomes framework that I was mentioning before, and that we're funding for outcomes as opposed to output. But yes, I absolutely take on board what you're saying. Ensuring as well - a lot of our grant deeds at the moment include KPIs, so how many people have visited or how many people have accessed this particular service. What we'll be working with the community services sector on - and this is something that we've had discussions with TasCOSS and we're looking forward to discussing with the peaks as well - is what are we actually trying to achieve with that money?

If we look at financial counselling, for example, at the moment we might say how many people have sought advice through Anglicare for financial counselling services, but maybe we should be looking at that more broadly to look at decreasing the number of people who are under financial stress and providing better budgeting services and so on.

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Prof RAZAY - I would like to talk about how valuable our volunteers are, and I'll tell you about a recent experience. In one month I attended two events, one organised by a non-profit organisation and one by one family. The non-profit organisation organised it in a big hall and it was very sophisticated and very well marketed, great presentations and they raised thousands of dollars. We're all familiar about this event.

The one family, very humble working-class family, organised in a simple hall in their suburb and attracted the local community. It was a real community, and it was a multicultural community, from Bhutanese to Nepalese. Everyone provided multicultural food and we had multicultural entertainment, dancing and singing and all that. They raised a few hundred dollars. I looked at the contrast here and the few hundred dollars, but the few hundred for me, were so valuable, they are worth a lot.

My question for the government, these are the volunteers who you don't hear about, they don't have resources to ask for funding from the government and we forget them, but they are the most valuable. They are scattered everywhere in our community and regardless-

CHAIR - Mr Razay, can you please ask your question?

Ms OGILVIE - I was kind of enjoying the story.

CHAIR - I admire your passion, I love it.

Prof RAZAY - How can you actually support these forgotten volunteers?

Ms OGILVIE - Firstly, we're assuming they're forgotten volunteers. I don't know what their arrangements are and certainly as a government we want everybody to be safe in volunteering and we want people's engagement with volunteers to be safe. Working With Vulnerable People cards are important and we've just put this project into place to take the cost of that away.

Firstly, encourage them all to get Working With Vulnerable People cards, which would be helpful. Volunteering Tasmania as the peak organisation does a great job and it may be that you know some groups or people that should be introduced to Volunteering Tasmania. I could start a little bit with that in the Multicultural Affairs portfolio. I just see so much good stuff happening all the time particularly around organising events that speak to the cultural heritage of groups, their events and celebrations and beautiful music and dancing and all those things which which I just love a lot of that, most of that is volunteerism, which is great.

What we do in the multicultural affairs portfolio is we put - never enough - funding into multicultural groups celebrations. Diwali was a good example of that and others, to try to help them build it up. What I notice with those sorts of celebrations is that they're all at varying layers of development and they all need different things. What seems a very simple thing when you first take on a portfolio becomes more challenging when you realise one group is at this layer of development with their community work and another is perhaps over here. It can be quite disparate.

The Working With Vulnerable People cards is important, now free, then also for the multicultural affairs portfolio where we're investing, and in relation to Volunteering Tasmania

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as the peak organisation. If you know good people who you would like to connect them with, please, I encourage you to do that.

Prof RAZAY - May I make a suggestion?

Ms OGILVIE - Of course.

Prof RAZAY - These two events were to raise funding for medical disorders and I feel the small group, I wonder whether if they raise a few hundred whether the Government can come and say we can match what you raise and here you can motivate them to do even more.

CHAIR - Professor Razay, I'm sorry, we do have to keep moving.

Ms OGILVIE - We'll come back to this one but yes, enjoy your energy.

Mr SHELTON - Looking at this interim Budget, minister I see that there's \$1.4 million has been set aside for the Community Participation and Appeals Fund, what is the Community Participation and Appeals Fund?

Ms OGILVIE - In the 2025-26 interim Budget, we've committed \$1.4 million, or \$350,000 per annum over four years for the Community Participation and Appeals Fund. The fund aims to encourage broad participation through its supportive community and cultural. As the first Tasmanian government minister with the multicultural affairs portfolio, it is wonderful to specifically have a fund from which community organisations can seek funding for their cultural event or charitable appeal.

I love attending all multicultural events and have the privilege to attend a number - as many as I can get to actually, I love going - since taking on this role, including celebrating Durga Puja with our Bengali community in Kingston, the Nepali festival in Moonah and Diwali in Hobart. I also had the pleasure of sponsoring the first Diwali event in our Parliament House hosted by the Baps Hindu Mandir of Claremont last Thursday evening. It was so fantastic. Great first start. Hope you can all attend next year.

In regard to the Community Participation and Appeals Fund, it will uplift our multicultural festivals of \$15,000 per annum for four years 2025-26 to 2028-29 for Festa Italia, the Estia Greek Festival and the Chinese Lunar New Year Festival. \$15,000 per annum for four years will also be provided to the Nepalese community for a cultural event. Other community organisations to receive funding under the fund in 2025-26 include, but are not limited to, the Cancer Council Daffodil Day of \$2000, the Colony 47 Christmas lunch: \$5000. That's an old name for the Colony 47 Christmas lunch, I think it's changed now.

Ms KELLY - Home Base.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, Home Base. I think it's also changed again, but I might be first with the news, who knows; the Rotary Club of Deloraine, Tasmania Craft Fair: \$10,000; and the Royal Hobart Regatta Association: \$28,000. That is the fund and it's very important, and small strategic investments help our local communities.

Mrs GREENE - Minister, what is the government doing to make sure that Tasmanians are feeling safe, who may be feeling marginalised after those awful anti-immigration rallies in

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Tasmania? Perhaps you can share your thoughts around that with us and particularly how the government is working with multicultural communities to provide reassurance at this time.

Ms OGILVIE - We have certainly had a really bad series of events culminating in those rallies, and I'm thinking specifically about over the last couple of years, the assaults, that's been awful and other worse than assaults. I have reached out personally to people who've had terrible times, met with them specifically in relation to being safe on the streets as well, but I do have information around what we are doing. Just make sure I get the right information, sorry, on the wrong page. There we go. I'm on the pink page instead around the rallies.

Our beautiful state has a really strong history of welcoming people to our shores and ultimately we're all from somewhere else, I guess. So our support for multiculturalism is rooted in the understanding that migrants have and continue to make a vital contribution to Tasmania's prosperity. I married a migrant, so we're all in it together. We want all Tasmanians to share in the opportunities presented here, from education to work and lifestyle and genuinely, there is so much that brings us together, to live safely, securely in a welcoming community is something we all want and everybody deserves.

I want to share publicly my thanks for our skilled migrant community in particular who've chosen to make Tasmania their home. I'm often thanking them, particularly the IT folk, they all seemed to have masters degrees in IT, fabulous. They work everywhere and they're great. Our government is working to ensure jobs, health, housing and our environment are prioritised. We want people to live here and be happy, and I accept people have the right to protest in a peaceful manner, it's a fundamental thing, but what I do have a concern about is any sense of racist motive, vilification, sensationalisation that incites hate. I didn't like those rallies, I was very concerned about it and as a minister, I did reach out individually to groups and people. There was a great deal of community concern.

I want to make sure that I'm a very steady hand at the tiller on this, and that is my goal, and I felt embarrassed and saddened. As the minister for Multicultural Affairs, I will continue to strive for a fair and equitable access to all. A few key thoughts towards the tail end: Tasmania is home to thousands of people from countries right across the world. We are a richer community because of this diversity. We're investing more than \$2 million over two years to support the needs of Tasmanians from culturally and linguistically diverse families, many of whom are my friends, and this includes an uplift in funding to the Multicultural Council of Tasmania to \$175 000 per year.

Unfortunately, due to conflict of interest, members of government were unable to attend the MCOT-organised Multicultural Tasmania Employer Conference on 21 October, but I understand it was well attended and great discussions occurred. We have our multicultural action plan, embracing diversity, fostering belonging. We've worked hard with people on that and our whole-of-government plan addresses a broad range of concerns including specifically addressing racism and social cohesion on a systemic level through direct supports to communities, enhancing Tasmania's social and economic participation, including projects that restore community confidence in workplaces being culturally safe, in ensuring diverse Tasmanians feel they are recognised, valued and their needs are met through local services. A new ministerial advisory group will help me.

Ms GREENE - You probably touched on a few other topics that I was going to ask in subsequent questions

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Ms OGILVIE - Happy to continue.

Mrs GREENE - I'm just having a look through the multicultural action plan at the moment and I note that there's a number of short and long-term goals in here. Just wondering how you're going to present the outcomes of - and whilst it says short to medium term, I can't really see in here when you're expecting some of these things to be delivered.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, okay. Well, that's a great question. We might ask for some assistance there.

Ms KELLY - The new governance committee that we're establishing will be heavily involved in helping inform this. In terms of the short, medium and long term I think - I will just check on this, but probably sort of 12 to 18 months in the short term; in the medium term, around 5 years and then beyond. I can't remember the beginning of your question, sorry.

Ms OGILVIE - Short and long-term horizon. Deliverables.

Mrs GREENE - Yes, that's right. How will we be kept informed?

Ms KELLY - Kept informed of the progress - there is a plan to develop a midterm review, but it might even be through the new council, that there's a request that we provide regular communiques out to the community, that might be something that they want to see and to address.

Ms OGILVIE - That actually is what I would intend to do, I have to say, and I think having a council really will help, that will be good, and the communications piece is obviously critical, so working with MCOT and others also to make sure we get the information out there is certainly a way to go, but again I offer in the spirit of collaboration in this beautiful parliament of ours, which is a minority government, please at any time if you seek information, do ask. We do try and get back to people as quickly as possible.

Ms BURNET - I note that there was no funding allocated for a counselling program for victims of racist attacks and hate crimes. This program was making a difference and with the spike of recent racially-motivated attacks in our community and those concerns raised by Mrs Greene, it is essential that people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are able to access appropriate support. Minister, can you explain why the funding was cut and whether the government will commit to refunding this program in the future?

Ms OGILVIE - Can I just ask you the name of the fund just to help me?

Ms BURNET - Well, it was a counselling program for victims of hate crimes.

Ms OGILVIE - Counselling programs for attacks and hate crimes. The Phoenix Group? No. Okay no, you have it, we are just checking for you. Just trying to get the information.

Ms KELLY - Was it the MSA funding?

Ms BURNET - Could be, yes.

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Ms KELLY - We believe that might have been a fixed-term program through the Migrant Resource Centre.

Ms BURNET - It quite possibly was, so fixed term, but I mean it's a really important service. What's going to take its place?

Ms KELLY - That's something that we can consider through the social cohesion funding that we've got, so we might take that one away.

Ms OGILVIE - Great. Yes, thank you, if you take that on board.

Ms BURNET - Yes. That makes it really hard for organisations to plan ahead, and if they've got something in train, wouldn't it be better to properly fund that in the first instance?

Ms KELLY - That's another really nice example around the council that we're establishing, and helping to inform priorities in that sector, and where representatives would like to see funding allocated and submitting through that budget process.

Ms BURNET - Thank you. My second question is around concerns raised by various multicultural community leaders around programs for victim/survivors of family and sexual violence, especially those on student and temporary visas; these are really vulnerable members of our community for various reasons and they may not always have employment, and it often falls to community leaders to support them out of their own pockets. Can you confirm whether your government would be open to providing funding for this, and if so, what would this look like?

Ms OGILVIE - I think that probably does fit in Ms Howlett's portfolio, which is Women and the Prevention of Family Violence. I think you raise a really important question, because I see that particularly the student cohort, I agree with you, there's the vulnerability piece there. Also, new migrants, language concerns, those sorts of things. I want to be very open to that question. I'm not sure that we do anything in our group or whether I should perhaps enlist Ms Howlett in the conversation on that.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. The family violence unit sits within the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well. That's something that, at a departmental level, we can raise and discuss through them, but as the minister said, it would be good to do it through the minister, too.

Ms OGILVIE - I agree with you. It's a double-edged question, because it has migrants and the family violence pieces. I'm really happy to take that idea up and commit to doing that.

Ms BURNET - It may be something that's funded in the next budget.

Ms OGILVIE - Absolutely. You have to put budget submissions forward. You've missed me having to say this many times today: we have a constrained budget environment, et cetera, but I'm imploring groups to put budget submissions in, particularly for important priority projects. I will be a very strong advocate.

Prof RAZAY - Minister, you are the Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs. What initiatives can you come up with to celebrate the traditions and customs of our diverse

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communities and cultures, for example, those that combine food, music, dance, and art? Honestly, let's take the initiative to have one or two days where we can celebrate all that. That will attract more tourists to our place.

Ms OGILVIE - I agree with you. That's fantastic.

CHAIR - Do you remember the question?

Ms OGILVIE - I could feel the question. I agree with you, and we certainly want to, as a government, support festivals and groups and organisations. A good example is with Diwali, which has grown - thank you, Hobart City Council. You were there during the growth of it, and now moving up into PW1 and a bigger-picture piece over there. Those sorts of festivals have the potential to not just celebrate the great culture of our state being warm and inclusive and showing that, but also the tourism components can be really big.

In working with the Indian community, who I know and love, they are saying to me that if we grow their festival, Indians will come specifically for the festival. I agree with that. That's part of the judgement about when and how we invest in celebration and events. I know the Nepalese community have their big event coming up, too, which is fantastic and heaps of fun.

We have a multicultural grants festival program opening in early December of \$40,000. It's not a huge amount of money, but it's something to kick things off.

I will give you another little piece of personal advocacy. What I see as well in our multicultural groups is a great need to teach, protect, and enliven the traditions of the groups. I will take the Greek community as an example. To do the traditional Greek dances, the students go to Greek Sunday school and learn the dances through dance classes, but the costumes are incredibly expensive. To have a properly constructed costume that is traditional, from Greece, is a lot of money. I've managed to get some commitments for those sorts of things. As minister for the Arts and Multicultural Affairs, there's a nice crossover there, and I would like to see, as we go forward, once we get through this constrained budget cycle, money into multicultural music, traditions, learning instruments - some of them are very expensive - and particularly traditional dress. I believe that is a nice layer that adds to the love all the families and local groups have, but when they perform, it elevates everything as well. If I had one passion project about what I would like to do in the next few years, it's very much on my radar.

Prof RAZAY - I think that's a great investment, because that's how you create connectedness in our community.

Ms OGILVIE - I'm still working on that one.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, the carers in our community are often unsung and quiet heroes. I can see the government has a commitment of \$239,000 in the interim Budget to provide to the peak body to develop our state's next carer action plan.

Can you please highlight any achievements under the current plan?

Ms OGILVIE - I have such a great degree of respect and love for the carer community, particularly the grandparents, the work people do is amazing. Quiet heroes. So, thank you very much for the question. I'd certainly agree that carers are the unsung heroes of our communities.

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The Tasmanian government recognises and celebrates the important contributions of the more than 87,000 unpaid carers to our state and economy.

I'd also like to gently remind us all that it was this government that formally recognised carers in legislation, in the *Carer Recognition Act 2023*, and that was a step forward. This act includes :

- A carers' charter;
- An expanded definition to include informal kinship carers;
- The establishment of a Minister's Carer Advisory Council; and
- Monitoring and reporting obligations for Tasmanian government agencies.

Our current plan, the Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2021-25, focuses on supporting access, encouraging participation and enhancing recognition of carers in our community. Action 2.3 commits the government to participate in the Carers + Employers workplace accreditation program. Accreditation was successfully achieved across the Tasmanian State Service last month, so that's very good. I congratulate the department on achieving this. This is the first time in Australia that an entire state service has been accredited under the Carers + Employers program. It's such an important step in ensuring carers in the workforce and community are recognised, valued and supported.

Under our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, we continue our commitment by doubling the funding for Carers Week to \$40,000 a year for three years, from 2024 to 2025 until 2026-27, and we are boosting peak body funding to Carers Tasmania to \$2200 a year for two years: 2024-25 and 2025-26.

As you mentioned in your question, in this 2025-26 interim Budget, we have committed a further \$239,000 for peak body funding for the development of the next Tasmanian carers' action plan. Planning has commenced on this new action plan and it will be released in the first half of 2026. In the spirit of collaboration, I welcome all inputs and ideas and suggestions in that.

Mr SHELTON - Grandparents becoming parents again.

Ms OGILVIE - I know. I hope I didn't overstep, but yes.

Ms HADDAD - I'll try and do these questions in one round.

Ms OGILVIE - Just do it; it's fine. We'll work it out.

Ms HADDAD - Minister, my questions go to the Equality portfolio and the government's commitments around LGBTIQ+ rights. I recognise that the Budget provides \$202,000 for the implementation of the LGBTIQ+ strategy. It would be good to know whether that's close to being released.

I recognise this is a relatively small amount of funding for a strategy to cater for people who are a pretty large proportion of our community - according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics it's about the equivalent to the whole population of Devonport. My understanding is that a more detailed LGBTIQ+ action plan will be released after the strategy, so my question

is, is the government planning to make a larger budget allocation at that time to ensure that the action plan makes a difference?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, it is a great question. I know your genuine interest and engagement in this area. I'll give you what I have and then if it hasn't quite got there, we can have more dialogue.

Obviously, we're committed to progressing equality in Tasmania. Our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future commits to continuing support for equality in Tasmania by providing \$500,000 over two years to support LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians. This funding has enabled our government to continue to work with Equality Tasmania, Working It Out and the whole-of-government LGBTIQA+ reference group who I've met with - that was great, great cupcakes - to finalise a new strategy and action plan. Drawing on extensive community consultation, the strategy is due for release in the coming weeks, we can involve you in that if you like, with the development of an action plan to follow.

Through the interim 25-26 state Budget, our government is demonstrating our ongoing support of the Tasmanian LGBTIQA+ community by providing \$192,000 for the year-one delivery of the strategy and action plan, and \$10,000 to oversee the strategy and action plan through the reference group. That will enable us to recommission the Telling Us the Story report, the largest-ever survey of LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians, guiding the implementation of our strategy and action plan and enabling tracking of our progress towards greater equality. The 2025-26 funding commitments build upon the work underway across Tasmanian government agencies to support LGBTIQA+ inclusion.

Our 2030 strong plan commits to the continued delivery of the successful LGBTIQA+ grants program for two years, which provides \$65,000 per annum to community organisations, tertiary institutions and local government to build the capacity of the LGBTIQA+ community, foster inclusion, respect and dignity for Tasmanians and enhance access to services and increase participation for LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians. Four projects in 2025 were awarded funding: Women's Health Tasmania, Glenorchy City Council, Palliative Care Tasmania, Women's Legal Service and finally we're providing \$10,000 per year in 24-25 and 25-26 for the small community grants administered by Working It Out to support LGBTIQA+ grassroots activity across the state. Did that get us there?

Ms HADDAD - I didn't quite add up all the figures as you went, but I wondered if that is all encompassed in that \$202,000 or is that beyond?

Ms OGILVIE - Let me see if we can get some information on that.

Ms KELLY - The 202 for 2025-26 is new funding, and maybe just if I could give a little bit of background. We decided in consultation with Working It Out, Equality Tasmania, and the reference group that doing the strategy first and then following up with the action plan would be a really good approach to doing this. The action plan will actually be signed off by the secretaries board, which consists of all the heads of agency across government. What that actually means is that the action plan will reflect the commitments of the agencies in terms of supporting LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians.

The other thing that is important to note as well, is that a number of the agencies have their own LGBTIQA+ action plans. For example, the Department of Health leads the way in

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this and they invest money through their action plan as well. That's something that, while looking at the key deliverables in the Budget, there is that money, there is other money within departments as well. Part of the development of that action plan will also be to consider other funding requirements as well, and as the Minister said previously, that will all be subject to the budget process. That consultation through that whole of government reference group Working It Out, Equality Tasmania will be really critical in that funding request.

Ms HADDAD - It's really good to hear. My second question is a different but adjacent topic: some time ago, the Premier released draft consultation legislation for a bill to ban conversion practices in Tasmania. It got pretty negative feedback from the community, specifically that it could have the counterintuitive, unexpected consequence of, in fact endorsing conversion practices and allowing them to actually occur more frequently in Tasmania. My understanding is that bill has been pulled, which is a good thing because we need a bill that's fit for purpose and will in fact ban conversion practices truly in Tasmania. I did ask the Attorney-General about this earlier in the week. He didn't have a timeframe for any new bill, and he said that it was just important to get it right. I agree, it is important to get it right because the first draft didn't. He also said that he hadn't seen any evidence that conversion practices happen in Tasmania - I can tell you that they do, and I told the Attorney-General that as well. They do happen here, they happen right now, not just historically, but they do occur in Tasmania. I'm sure that you would agree with me that they are dangerous pseudoscience practice, they inflict lifelong damage and harm on the people who are victim to them.

My question is, in your Community Services portfolio, will you be an advocate within Cabinet for a new bill to be drafted that truly bans conversion practices in Tasmania? Secondly, will you also recognise that they do occur in Tasmania? The Attorney-General told me that he would meet with advocates as I'd suggested, if you haven't had the chance to do that, I welcome your commitment to meet with advocates as well.

Ms OGILVIE - Very happy to meet with people, of course. I'm trying to reflect, over my decade here, I think I have met with advocates, with Rodney - I just recall a Zoom conference and can talk about that, but look, my door is open, of course. I can't control - the legislative agenda is really big and full, getting bills drafted and through timelines, I don't have line of sight over that, and I will never talk about what we say in Cabinet, but I'm really happy to speak with the Attorney-General around what his intentions are. Why don't I start with that, and I'm happy with to meet with anyone.

Ms HADDAD - Thank you. What I would let you know is at this stage, it looks like we could end up being the last state to act on this important legislative reform, and if that does happen, it runs the risk of Tasmania becoming, for want of a better term, a safe haven for these very unsafe practices, so it is really imperative. I know the legislative agenda is packed, but this is really important law reform that needs to happen, and it needs to happen soon, to avoid this really damaging practice to be inflicted on more Tasmanians.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you for letting me know.

Ms BURNET - Minister, this is something no doubt close to your heart: the Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service -

Ms OGILVIE - Very close to my heart.

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Ms BURNET - does essential work advocating for refugees and humanitarian entrants who have experienced severe trauma, violence or disadvantage, helping them to rebuild their lives and understand there are options in Tasmania, but despite this, they are among the lowest-funded community legal services in the state, and on a shoestring budget service over 1500 clients, but they don't have a Launceston office. Every week, they serve roughly 30 per cent of their clients based in the north. Considering that essential work, will the government consider setting aside funding for a Launceston office, to support the essential services provided to the refugee community?

Ms OGILVIE - Great question. I'm really happy again, to speak with the Attorney-General, he holds the purse strings in relation to that, just to see where his mind is at, but of course, as you correctly identified, yes, it is very close to my heart and for those who might be listening in, for many years when I was in private practice I would act pro bono for refugees. We had a lot of successes; it was hard work, but unfortunately, by the very nature of the work, it's quite specialised, particularly with migrants and visas, so you do need to fund it properly and make sure that you've got lawyers engaged.

I had a bit to do with setting up the refugee legal service originally, so I'd love to assist, and I hear your cry from the heart. The Launceston side of things I feel is also a gap, if I can take that on board. You would have my support philosophically, as to whether we can squeeze some more money out of someone or not, but again, how about a budget submission? They put one in -

Ms BURNET - We can write to them and suggest that.

Ms OGILVIE - I would do that. There's a little bit of extra support being offered regarding Department of Home Affairs and what they may be able to support as well.

Ms BURNET - Okay, thank you. This is something I have discussed with you and it's something that I have discussed previously with the Education minister - but anti-racism education in schools, we know that there are some terrible situations in schools in relation to racist attacks. What plans does the government currently have to roll out anti-racism education in schools to build empathy, understanding and inclusion, and, are you talking to Ms Palmer about that?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I just don't think I have specifically spoken with Ms Palmer about what Education does. I'm not sure if it's a curriculum issue or if it's a project into schools issue, but I'll just seek some advice.

The information I'm getting - I have a little update. In the action plan, DECYP have a plan in that for racial inclusion -

Ms BURNET - That's not anti-racism, though.

Ms OGILVIE - I think that's what we're calling the program. The second part was the mechanism for engagement between my office and Ms Palmer's office on this topic is through the Ministerial Council. DECYP will be on that council and that's where that discussion will be had.

The long and the short answer is, we haven't done it yet, but it is in line of sight.

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Prof RAZAY - We have a larger proportion of elderly people compared to the mainland and as our seniors get older, they often suffer from social isolation and, of course, poor mental health. Does our government have a program to assist older Tasmanians to connect with community activities to enrich their life?

Ms OGILVIE - It's a great question. COTA, which is the older people's organisation - I shouldn't say older people, but I'm their age, right? So it's me. That actually has moved into health funding - under the new federal minister for Ageing.

I will share some thoughts with you, however. Somebody said to me once, or I read, that as you get older, particularly families who've raised kids and the kids leave home, your world gets smaller. As you get older, it gets smaller. So that trip to the shop, et cetera, is a really important event for those who might be lonely. I'm really tuned into this. COTA is a really good peak organisation and we've been doing some work with them through digital inclusion as well - really, really important. We get people on their iPads. If they can do it, they can talk to the grandkids - I see you, Mr Shelton. In relation to that, harking back to the work I was previously doing with in the Corrections portfolio, we were working to rewire Risdon Prison to get iPads into cells, so that people in the cells could remain connected to their families.

I take the view that digital connection is good and we can start there because that's something government can influence. I think there is a scourge of loneliness. To be lonely is the worst feeling in the whole world, and it just would break my heart to think that we have people who are lonely. So, we come back to the beginning of this conversation around the importance of Neighbourhood Houses, of volunteering, of having hobbies they can afford, all that stuff, and social outlets and free events to go to - celebrating your culture. I think that's what this portfolio is all about, but there's never enough money, of course. That's my answer.

Mr SHELTON - It's great to see the government's ongoing commitment to the energy hardship fund. Can you please explain how this is working and helping Tasmanians meet the cost of their energy bills?

Ms OGILVIE - Cost-of-living pressures are being felt right across Australia, we all know this, including in Tasmania, where we know household budgets are stretched. Our government is focused on making life more affordable for Tasmanians by implementing measures to support those who are most in need.

We are continuing to support a range of programs to assist Tasmanians, including through food relief programs, financial support programs and the energy hardship fund. In the 2025-26 interim Budget, the Tasmanian government has committed to boosting the energy hardship fund with an additional \$150,000 per annum over four years. The fund is administered by the Salvation Army.

I'd also like to cheekily put in a plug for the great work of the No Interest Loan Scheme, NILS - they're fantastic people - which provide financial support and counselling, including helping Tasmanians purchase energy efficient appliances. We want people warm. This can include heat pumps, which, in turn, helps people save money on their bills. In the past 12 months, NILS has provided 335 loans for heat pumps, among many other items. The Tasmanian government has provided an additional \$2.1 million over three years to help NILS provide more loans to more Tasmanians. On top of this, we have also provided NILS \$2 million over four years to extend the successful energy saver loan subsidy program. I hope that helps.

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Mrs GREENE - Going back to funding contracts, right back to the start of our conversation today. The Coalition of Community Service Peaks, as part of their election wish list that they sent to everybody - and we've touched on a few of them today - one of them we haven't really talked about very much though, was item number 2. That was to, implement a funding review process at least six months before the end date of a contract so that they can make plans for the future. Has there been any progress on that, minister?

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I can help with that. The Tasmanian government, through our 2030 strong plan, is committed to delivering increased financial certainty for community service organisations. The community services funding review - the review that you spoke of - was established in 2023 to address three key government priorities aimed at supporting the sustainability of the community service sector, these being: reviewing indexation - we've spoken a bit about that today; progressing longer-term funding provision; and delivering an outcomes framework. The breadth of work to be delivered through the review is considerable and the key areas of work are all intrinsically linked.

In 2025, the review has focused on longer-term funding arrangements for community sector organisations which will provide funding certainty enabling organisations to operate with increased confidence and engage in longer-term sustainable planning practices. The Department of Premier and Cabinet is leading the work across Tasmanian government agencies to progress a whole-of-government model to implement longer-term funding arrangements. The model uses a multistage approach and seeks to support this complex project, taking into consideration the significance of implementing a project of this size and complexity across Tasmanian government agencies.

Stage 1 - and I will table the stage 1 list, which might be helpful. Stage 1 focuses on recurrent funding for community service peak bodies and has included the development of a consistent framework of definitions and criteria that are being used to assist the delivery of the project. Stage 2 is nearing completion with the Tasmanian government agency working with relevant peak bodies to enact longer-term funding agreements. Throughout stage 2 and beyond, there will be a focus on broader, recurrent funding across the community service sector and cross-agency considerations that must be addressed to effectively implement longer-term arrangements. In addition, and to finalise, scoping to progress the delivery of an outcomes framework, as we've heard, has begun and will form part of stage 2 delivery.

What I've given you there is a list that we tabled in the other place where we were asked to show which ones were first cabs off the rank. That's the phase 1 list that we are on the cusp of signing. I just thought that would be helpful to have it.

Mrs GREENE - Yes. I know you've mentioned that it will be stage 2 that the outcomes-based funding agreement and framework - how far away do we think that is?

Ms OGILVIE - I'll seek some advice.

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister. Stage 2 is really complex. I don't have the numbers in front of me, but I think, across the agencies in the community service sector, we have about 450 different contracts that we have to manage and work through in this regard. What we expect is that within the next 12 months, we'll make significant progress on this particular project, particularly because in Stage 1, we have worked on a number of the foundational

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elements of this around working out selection criteria definition around recurrent versus fixed term, those sorts of things, but we do expect that this project will take a number of years.

There's a reason why this project has taken time to get to even where we are at the moment, because it's a really difficult one, but certainly we're very committed to leading this project in Department of Premier and Cabinet and the agencies that we're working with are really committed to it as well.

Mrs GREENE - I do acknowledge it is a significant body of work and that brings me to my next question around efficiency dividends and essential versus non essential workers within DPAC is, are you well enough resourced, enough to deliver this body of work within the next 12 months because that's so important for our community services sector and also for you guys and your team?

Ms KELLY - Through you, minister, and thank you. The Department of Premier and Cabinet are considering the budget efficiency dividend at a whole-of-agency perspective. We're using a number of different approaches to that. One example is that we're looking at our accommodation, and we've actually seen a couple of significant relocations between buildings to save significant money within the organisation, which has been really positive.

We also have, as I imagine other agencies do, an establishment management committee and that committee isn't about necessarily just saying no, it's about putting that scrutiny over the positions that are vacant as we fill them to determine 'is this an essential role' and also 'can it be filled in another way'. So, looking at our priorities within the agency and determining whether or not we have staff that might be working on something that isn't as high a priority that we can move across to work on and it also provides really great opportunity for staff to move around into different areas and try different things, but it also means that we're managing our establishment in a really effective and efficient way as well.

Ms BURNET - Minister, this multicultural portfolio is really welcome from the multicultural communities and it's wonderful and congratulations on being the first minister. I want to get a clear understanding, and perhaps you might take this on notice, of how much is actually set aside totally in the Budget for multicultural communities and your portfolio. I want to try to get an idea as to what sort of comparative percentage it might be to other jurisdictions across Australia.

Ms OGILVIE - It is a really good question. The reason it's a great question is when you have a new sort of stand-alone area, working out what you've got in which areas for me has been a little, coming in fresh, having to get to the bottom of that. I think the answer is, we probably have some information, but I can't get the answer on how we stack up against other states and territories. We would have to take that part on notice.

There is a little bit of complexity about it and that's to do with that now having a standalone portfolio. If it is okay with you, we're happy to take that on board.

Ms BURNET - Thank you. Yes, I will write that down in a moment. I am curious to know about the Homestay program which was delivered through the Migrant Resource Centre that provides temporary accommodation for recently arrived refugees, was another program I understand that wasn't funded. Can you confirm why this was cut and whether the Government will look to it to re-fund?

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Ms OGILVIE - Thank you, appreciate the question and it's an area that I take a great interest in as well. My understanding is that it was also fixed-term funding, but I am advised that we will look at it again through the council. It's not by any means a closed door.

Ms BURNET - Is it ceased for the minute? The funding has ceased for the moment, again, really vital. We don't want to disadvantage communities that play a really important role in being embedded in Tasmania.

CHAIR - Thanks Ms Burnet. Mr Shelton.

Mr SHELTON - Following on from my previous question where we talked about what the government's doing for energy hardship funds, my question this time goes to the ongoing hardship and the cost-of-living challenges that we know are occurring out there in our community. I'm interested, can you please outline the government's food relief funding processes and so on?

Before you do that, a quick shout out to Helping Hands, a group that's on Longford, they do a fantastic job. I've had a fair bit to do with them over the years and they're all volunteers, they do a great job and volunteering in our regional communities as we talked about earlier on and a really good news story is the Rotary Club of Longford which took over the second hand shop and so they have all volunteers, they sell through the front shop and it's actually next door to my electorate office and I see people going in and out of there every day and over the last three or four years they've been operating, hundreds of thousands of dollars went back into the community. I know they've supported Helping Hands and so the Rotary Club are out there doing it.

It ties in with the whole volunteer thing, what communities are doing to help themselves. But of course, in my question, it's what's the government's doing as well that private volunteer sector.

Ms OGILVIE - Wonderful. I just want to also check in on time if I could? I think we are close.

CHAIR - We're finishing at 5.06 p.m.

Ms OGILVIE - Good, so we have time. Great question and love your personal anecdotes which make things quite real. We have and continue to recognise all of these challenges that happen with food security and any report of anyone going hungry is a really of deep concern.

Our government's goal is an integrated food relief sector that supports Tasmanians in need to access sufficient, safe, nutritious, quality food and access services that support long-term food resilience. That's why we've committed \$7.1 million over four years in the interim Budget which consists of \$400,000 for the place-based food pilots and \$6.7 million for food relief strategy and services.

The place-based food pilots was a project developed with Food Secure Tasmania, people might know it by its former name Food Security Coalition which auspices Eat Well Tasmania. The project covered three pilots: (1) Social supermarket and cafe model called Make It Fresh; (2) A hybrid model and place-based food hub in Launceston called Life; and (3) A mobile food bus to focus on regional and remote areas in Tasmania.

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While \$6.7 million has been allocated to food relief strategy and services, which will ensure that implementation of the new Building Food Resilient Communities: Tasmania's Food Resilience Strategy, the continuation of program and services that support the delivery of food relief, delivery of initiatives that focus on building food resilience in local communities, and development and delivery of community lead solutions to address long-term food insecurity and build food resilience in local communities.

In total we fund 67 organisations around our state to provide food relief to Tasmanians. This includes a mix of core, time-limited and competitive grants funds. This includes Loaves and Fishes to deliver food relief partner organisations - \$1.2 million in 2025-26, a combination of core and uplift funding plus \$200,000 capital investment food relief grant, plus \$50,000 capital funding to support the organisation's transition to a social wholesaler model. This is on top of the funding provided in 2024-25 for additional food relief and uplift funding and \$2.5 million provided for cold storage to enable it to become a food procurement and social wholesaler organisation. I went there, I went [inaudible] the cold storage - looks amazing.

Food Bank Tasmania: to deliver food relief to charities, community groups and individuals, \$380,000 in 2025-26 - combination of core funding and \$25,500 capital investment food relief grant and for Eat Well Tasmania to deliver educational training programs for organisations on nutrition, healthy eating and cooking, vehicle purchases to assist delivery, which was \$800,000 across 2024-25 and 2025-26 for the delivery of the place-based pilot initiative and address long-term food insecurity and build food resilience. This key action acknowledges that the solutions to food security lie with communities who understand their own distinct issues and opportunities - which is what you were talking about, Mr Shelton.

We also fund food vans - Vinnies' Loui's Van in Hobart, Launceston City Mission's Snag Chat in Launceston, Gran's Van in Devonport and Latrobe. Each are receiving \$120,000 in 2025-26. Each organisation was also successful in attaining a capital investment food relief grant - Vinnies of \$210,555, Launceston City Mission \$21,835, and Gran's Van of \$250,000 - whilst Vinnies and Launceston City Mission also received \$10,000 each under the Community Food Relief Grants Program from a total grant funding pool of \$500,000. This program funded a total of 55 organisations across the state.

It should also be noted that the federal government has significantly boosted food-relief funding by 25 per cent from 1 October, and this includes \$20 million over five years to the national bodies of Foodbank, SecondBite, OzHarvest and Good360. A state-by-state breakdown is unknown.

In October, I announced \$2.5 million in community food-relief capital investment grants, which is providing funding to 24 organisations across for infrastructure upgrades, renovations, outright purchase of food relief, premises, and installation of inbuilt commercial cooking or storage solutions.

Further to this listed above, funding is also provided through the Department of Education and Young People for the School Food Matters school lunch program and Variety Tasmania's School Breakfast Club.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister, but we do have to move on to probably the last couple of questions.

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Mrs GREENE - I will stick to workforce in the last couple of seconds or minutes we've got - I think 31.8 FTE in community services within DPAC. Through the efficiency dividend and vacancy control, have there been any vacant positions that have not been re-advertised at the same band level?

Ms OGILVIE - I will seek some advice on that.

Chair, if I may, I actually have to give table this clarification for a question that I had upstairs, and I ought to do that before we close out, I think.

Ms KELLY - Our FTE establishment is currently 23.3 FTE, and that change is largely due to that transfer that I mentioned previously around the grants and programs unit. The 23.3 also includes staffing for the Tasmanian Community Fund, as well.

Mrs GREENE - Is it still five FTE, I think?

Ms KELLY - I think at the moment they've got four. That sort of sits wholly with the TCF as opposed to working on things like the food and so on.

I think your question was around vacancies. We do have a small number of vacancies at the moment, and we're following the process that's been established within the department to consider those vacancies and determine the best way to fill them. As I said before, it's been a really good process, because we have had the opportunity to have some staff transferred into our area. But at the moment, we do have a couple of positions where the recruitment is under way at the moment.

Mrs GREENE - I'm wondering around the transparency when positions - if perhaps if they're not going to be advertised to get the same band level -

Ms OGILVIE - Oh, is there any mechanism, how does that work?

Mrs GREENE - Or, if people are transitioning into other areas and are potentially leaving a gap - or maybe not, if work is being re-prioritised. What's the transparency around that?

Ms OGILVIE - I'm very happy to refer that question. Before we do - I know we're short on time - I just wanted to also thank you so much, both of you, for coming and spending all your time, I know we're running up against it, and also to the committee. It's been a great experience. Maybe you have the last word, now.

Ms KELLY - Thank you, minister. In terms of transparency, there's a committee that meets once a fortnight to talk through those positions. That committee is managed through our HR unit. We work within with our directors and our senior managers around those roles and have discussions around those roles and have discussions around people that might be suitable fit for the positions.

CHAIR - The time for scrutiny has now expired. The next portfolio to appear is Arts and Heritage, please stop the broadcast.

The Committee suspended from 5.06 p.m. to 5.08 p.m.

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CHAIR - The scrutiny of the Arts and Heritage portfolio will now begin. I welcome the minister and other witnesses to the committee. I invite the minister to introduce persons at the table, names and positions, please, for the benefit of Hansard.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. We have, from the Department of State Growth, Dr David Sudmalis; we have Brett Stewart, Deputy Secretary of Creative Industries, Sport and Visitor Economy, Department of State Growth; we have Jason Jacobi, Secretary of Department of Natural Resources and Environment; we have Will Joscelyne, General Manager, Heritage Tasmania; and we have Melissa Ford, Director, Heritage Tasmania. Thank you for joining us.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. The time scheduled for the Estimates of the Minister for the Arts and Heritage is one hour. Would the minister like to make a short opening statement?

Ms OGILVIE - I would, thank you very much, Chair and committee members. Great to be here today to talk about our government's ongoing investment into Arts and Heritage. The Arts is a beloved sector here, that is integral to what it is to be Tasmanian. In 24-25, Arts Tasmania supported paid work for more than 3300 artists, arts workers and cultural workers and was on track to support more than 476,000 attendances at arts and cultural events around the state by the end of the financial year.

Additional funding in the 2025-26 Budget in the Arts portfolio includes \$4 million of operational funding, over four years to enable the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) to continue to position our state as a globally significant cultural centre.

The 25-26 Budget also includes funding for existing initiatives such as Youth Arts Grant Funding Program; \$5.2 million invested in Ten Days on the Island; the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Theatre Royal, to deliver engaging experiences for audiences around the state.

Screen production pilot incentive scheme: in screen, the Tasmanian government's support for the screen production industry led to tremendous success in 23-24 - well done, team - and 24-25, particularly through increased support of video games development, which is such a good area for young people in particular. The government is vastly increasing support of our burgeoning video game sector with the \$500,000 Level Up Tasmania fund continuing to be invested through the 25-26 period.

I'm also keenly aware of the importance of the Heritage portion of this portfolio. I don't want to put a dampener on the meeting, but I just have been given some news which I think I ought to share with you, that there has been a fire at the Low Head Pilot Station, and we've lost the Coxswains Cottage. I'm so sorry to have to share that, but I think it's important that I do so quickly. We will see what happens there.

Our built heritage is an important part of the Tasmanian brand and culture and makes a valuable contribution to our economy. Each year, the Heritage sector contributes an estimated \$976 million annually, to Tasmania's gross state product; \$93 million into the building and construction industry; more than 5000 direct and indirect jobs across the state; and attracts around 448,000 heritage-motivated visitors annually. To continue to maintain and benefit from our built heritage assets, we must invest in them by supporting conservation works and opportunities to activate underutilised sites. We've also invested in this sector with the Built Heritage Grant Scheme - I've been very, very proud of that. In the second funding round,

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41 projects across the state shared in \$1.3 million of grant funds and round 3 is now open, please everybody get your projects together and please apply. Offers are up to a further \$1.3 million of grant funds for projects across the state.

Alongside the Tasmanian Heritage Council and other heritage observers, we continue to ensure the heritage fabric of our state is protected and valued for generations to come. I rest my case.

Mr MITCHELL - Minister, under your watch as Arts minister, minister Ellis has cut all subsidies for arts, screen, fashion and creative media courses at TasTAFE, resulting directly in the redundancies announced today, of 18 staff who will lose their jobs two days before Christmas. Minister, what advocacy have you made as Arts minister, to minister Ellis and to the Premier to reverse this decision?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. I certainly have had many conversations and I'm a firm supporter of the arts, I think that it is a very difficult situation. I've reached out specifically to the arts sector as well, to ask them about if we were to contemporise courses, how could we do that, and what would they look like. I'm of course speaking as Arts minister, not TAFE minister, and I know that my team have been doing a lot of work on this.

A changing arts and creative industries ecology does require a contemporary means of delivering education and skills across the sector. It's really regrettable that the creative courses identified are subject to revised cost requirements, which is what we're seeing at the moment. We remain committed to our cultural and creative industries. Tasmania's art sector is highly successful and a much valued part of what makes us such a special place.

Arts and design training that supports our successful arts sector and assists students into the roles is my goal. We are working on a solution and making plans to consult with the sector, including key arts organisations to articulate the vision. A new vision for courses that support our vibrant arts sector and to collaboratively prepare for an alternative delivery model for contemporary arts courses.

I do know the landscape in courses is interesting, I know there's digital courses, there's courses at the university, particularly creative sector pathways, which are supported through the University of Tasmania (UTAS), primarily delivered at the Hedberg, part-funded by the Tasmanian government. The Tasmanian government, through Arts Tasmania, who we have here today, who can speak to this as well, and Screen Tasmania in particular, provide opportunities for non-accredited professional development through paid attachments, residencies and other workplaces.

The long and the short of it is, as Arts minister, what I'm saying is we're going to step up and we're going to work with the Arts sector - there's a little bit of funding that we can use to do that - to identify, design and hopefully deliver contemporary arts courses in the nature of the ones that have been lost from TAFE.

What I want to be careful to say is I don't think they will be identical. I want to see the latest, the best and the most contemporary courses, and when you think of an organisation and which has the latest - such as the Hedberg. If you were studying sound engineering for example, that's where you want to be, because they have the latest equipment, the latest technology.

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I wish I'd had more time to take a more measured approach to this work, but we are where we are. That's been my response. I know you're genuine in your desire to support the artists and so am I. We have a hugely successful film sector. I want more people to go into that, and our industry wants that as well. What is the best course to enable locals to do that? I would be very sad if our students had to travel interstate to do that because we'd lose them. I just wanted to share that with you. It's a very frank and straight answer. I do have the team here who's been working on it and happy to share that with you.

Mr MITCHELL - We will see how we go with that. I don't want to take up too much more time. Minister, I hear the passion that you're talking about and, and I'm sure it's coming from a genuine place - and about wanting to work on solutions. There's this disconnect, I think between yourself and the Skills minister about the importance of the creative arts sector. In the economy and in society generally. Minister Ellis has made the assertion that certain areas, including screen and media are,

not necessarily delivering great student outcomes and they're not delivering great outcomes for our economy

Given your introductory remarks about the strength of what the arts is providing to Tasmania, do you agree with those remarks?

Ms OGILVIE - I think you've said it yourself. First up there is a disconnect, I have to take a different view, I'm running these sectors. What we do in the arts is just magnificent and Tasmania does incredible things with a very small budget, very small island economy budget. I don't like calling it the industry, it's a sector, we have the music part, we have the art part. I was out last night at the Henry Jones Art Prize, emerging artists coming through. We've got our games sector with these kids are doing incredible things and they're selling their IP into LA and Seattle and they're working from here, bringing their royalties home. The future for Tasmania is digital. A key part of that is the arts, and I want to make sure that our kids are hooked into those jobs of the future, particularly the creative ones.

Now everybody knows my love of fashion. I've been unleashing it a bit more recently, but love fashion, that fashion course is really important. I want to see those courses continue. Do they have to be done in the same way as we've always done them? Let's have a conversation about that. But unless we have fashion courses, design courses, who's going to do the costuming on our film productions? It's all part of an ecosystem and perhaps if you're not in it, it's harder to understand it.

Mr MITCHELL - I'm going to use my third question. The difficulty I have in processing this is that you're a Cabinet minister, you sit around the table with other Cabinet ministers and the Premier. You're at the heart of power in the state. We've just delivered the incredibly sad news about 18 dedicated teachers losing their jobs two days before Christmas, and these are people who went to a redundancy meeting today and were told, 'Look, this is bad news so you can go home this afternoon', and they said, 'No, we have kids in the classroom who we have to teach.' Their worlds have shattered around them and they're thinking of the kids. You're at the heart of power in the state, and I hear what you're saying, that you want to find solutions, if we lose fashion; we can't afford to lose fashion. Who will do it?

Ms OGILVIE - That's just an example.

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Mr MITCHELL - Yes, but it's all coming too late. Why hasn't this work been done? Why hasn't this recognition occurred before now, before these teachers and the students are being put through the grinder? Why is it happening now?

Ms OGILVIE - Firstly, I am so sorry for the people who are in this position. It is really heartbreaking. I've been through a redundancy process. It's heartbreaking and hard. So, firstly I wanted to say that and just acknowledge with deep empathy what's happened. The question is about the timing of things. I too feel it would have been helpful for me if I'd had a bit more time to circle the wagons around what we need to do, but sometimes the best-laid plans of me to build the sector and what we want to do happen more quickly than you want.

I will also say, and I'm just not here to make excuses for anyone, but TasTAFE is an independent organisation. I went through that restructure. I don't control it. I don't control it. What I want to say to everybody here is, I'm pretty sure we're on the same page about the need for these courses. I implore you to work with me and with our arts sector and the people I have at this table to plan a way forward, and what I see is that we need to do the work, and I see a vision for activating the Hedberg, the Theatre Royal, perhaps the art school in a way that gets students and teachers in these courses in particular.

I know there is a couple that are not on this list in the Arts. I'm not saying they're not worth it as well, but we are here in the Arts portfolio. I can't do this by myself, so I'm really imploring everybody to come on board. Let's work out a model that will work. It's obvious they're not going to be delivered by TAFE, so I'm here to work out a solution and I would love your help with that.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, I'd like to start with Heritage and specifically the Cenotaph. As you know, the Cenotaph is listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register because it has, and I quote:

Historic cultural heritage values because of its prominent landmark within Hobart.

Perhaps, it's through you minister to the Heritage Council, but, of course, the Heritage Council made a submission to the Tasmanian Planning Commission where it raised a number of concerns and flagged information that would help the Heritage Council - both the number of visual renders that it identified needed to be done. It identified a whole range of emissions from various reports and raised main areas of concerns and said at this stage that the Heritage Council does not consider the design mitigation measures and the iconic architecture will necessarily be sufficient to offset the likely adverse impacts. Did the Heritage Council get answers to all of its questions through that process, and did it change its view at the end of the day?

Ms OGILVIE - Again, a long preamble. I will do my best. The Heritage Council's representation agreed with the issues raised in the draft and final integrated assessment report that the multi-purpose stadium would have an impact on the heritage values of the Cenotaph. In its representation, the Heritage Council recommended a landscape plan be developed by a suitably-qualified heritage landscaper for screen planting to minimise the view lines from the Cenotaph to the stadium. This recommendation is reflected in Schedule 4 of the draft order.

The Heritage Council met with and consulted with RSL Tasmania to understand its concerns while formulating the Heritage Council representation, and suggestions that the Heritage

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Council should have advocated for the protection of the Cenotaph from the proposed development are inconsistent with the council's regulatory obligations under Tasmania's resource management and planning.

Mr BAYLEY - With respect, my question was about whether the questions that it raised in its representation were addressed: the various visual renders, the omissions from the report, et cetera.

Ms FORD - Through you, minister, the Heritage Council, in providing its submission to the draft report back in May, did identify - it basically agreed with the findings - well, they weren't findings, the views in the draft integrated impact assessment report. Then it proceeded to make some recommendations around mitigation in its submission. What then happened is they did not attend the hearings and invited the planning commission to put written questions to them.

The chair of the Heritage Council at that time was about to leave. In fact, she left on 30 June. The hearings were after that and there were no further written questions put to the Heritage Council. Its view was its submission to the draft report had covered the things that it was concerned about, and it had provided a range of recommendations to mitigate the impact if the decision was to proceed with the stadium.

Mr BAYLEY - Was the information requested that would assist the Heritage Council delivered?

Ms FORD - I'm not sure what additional information you're referring to.

Mr BAYLEY - Additional photo montages.

Ms FORD - Yes, sorry. That was part of the material released in the hearing.

Mr BAYLEY - The omissions in the reports, it lists a whole range of different omissions in the reports in relation to The Goods Shed, the Engineers Building, the Cenotaph, and other issues.

Ms FORD - It was not of the view that it needed to provide further advice to the panel unless it was specifically asked for. It was satisfied that its submission had been provided back in May. To finish that off, those recommendations around conditions formed the basis of conditions that inform the draft order.

Mr BAYLEY - Thank you. Minister, the RSL was obviously very clear. They wrote to the upper House just last week:

RSL Tasmania is not anti-development, but we are steadfastly pro-remembrance. We believe progress must never come at the cost of values, heritage and identity that define Tasmania.

Similarly, in some ways the Planning Commission picked up on that. It recommended that the project should not proceed, and it said explicitly:

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The panel does not accept that because the proponent chose this site for the stadium, the stadium's size, shape, or functional requirements should be given precedence over the heritage values and cultural significance of the Cenotaph.

As minister for Heritage in charge of protecting this heritage, what do you say to people who want heritage prioritised over a poor site selection, let's face it, a poor site selection that had no genuine input into it. What do you say when they're seeing heritage values sacrificed because of this development, and you are supporting it against the expert advice?

Ms OGILVIE - I think you and I are probably never going to agree about the stadium no matter which impacts we're going to reflect on. We will just say that's a bit of a baseline. In relation to heritage, our team has done the work, and I think I spoke last night as well on this topic too, and identified some of the heritage issues on the site itself, outside of the RSL, that had been worked through also. The reality is that this government has made a decision to move ahead with the stadium. I'm part of the government, we are locked in. I will do everything I can, much like the TAFE issue, to work with what I've got to do the best I can do in the circumstances in which we have arrived.

Mr BAYLEY - Is there anything in the Budget that is aimed at addressing any of the heritage issues associated with the Cenotaph?

Ms OGILVIE - My understanding is that those are conversations between the RSL and the Macquarie Point Development Corporation. I think that's where the Budget sits. Am I getting nods? Yes.

Mr BAYLEY - In terms of the heritage values of the Cenotaph, as Heritage minister, is there anything in the Budget that seeks to mitigate or address the impacts that will come?

Ms OGILVIE - No, because those heritage values and that question is a conversation between the RSL and the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, because that is where the funds sit. It sits within the corporation itself. What I am always happy to do is to try and negotiate or assist with a dialogue between the two parties. If there are things that can be done, I'm really happy to help do that. That's what I did to assist the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as well. Legitimate, genuine concerns can sometimes be met with good solutions. I did read out, I think in the text, a little bit about the plantings and those sorts of things. I'm really happy to help. It's a matter of finding a solution to an imperfect situation.

CHAIR - Professor Razay.

Prof RAZAY - Thank you. Honourable minister, there has been an increase in graffitiing of infrastructure and assets in towns and cities which require significant resources of local government and private businesses to remove.

What funds or programs are available to give young people an opportunity to feel included in the creative community, inspire and redirect their energy and creativity into art?

Ms OGILVIE - What a great question. This might be a very good question for Dr Sudmalis, if he's available, to give us the benefit of his wisdom and experience.

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Dr SUDMALIS - Thank you, Professor. Arts Tasmania delivers a number of programs specifically geared to what we consider the youth cohort, and that is up to 25 years of age. We also deliver a complimentary strand for emerging artists, which is an individual who might be of any age, but within the first five years of their practice.

We also have a range of capacity development programs for Tasmanians who are looking to progress their professional life into the arts. One of these is a building blocks program where Tasmanians undertake a program of capacity-development in public art. Not just the art form making, but also the significant planning and logistics that go around a piece of public work.

We also support a range of organisations to work with young people. In my humble opinion, I commend the work of the Story Island project to you, which works in schools and has a singular focus on literacy through storytelling. It is a particularly enlightening, enriching, ennobling program that I commend.

I also suggest, Professor, that the Tasmanian Youth Orchestra occupies a similar place with regards to music performance, ensemble and practice.

There are many examples that Arts Tasmania expend its energies in working to bring the benefits of artistic practice and engagement to young people. Similarly, in the screen space, the Attachments Program places young Tasmanians, or those Tasmanians looking to upskill, onto funded programs to develop skills and training on the job, further spreading that benefit and hopefully a much longer-term career pathway in the creative industries.

Prof RAZAY - Can I make a short comment? The City of Launceston last year has supported street art festivals so they can choose a laneway to let the youth express their art creativity.

Ms OGILVIE - Fantastic. It might be something we can work with that city council on.

CHAIR - Mr Shelton.

Mr SHELTON - Thank you, Chair. Minister, one thing you mentioned was Level Up Tasmania in your initial opening address. My question is, Tasmania launched the first Tasmanian video game showcase last year in Hobart called Level Up Tasmania. Could you elaborate on whether this is a one-time event and what other supports are in place for the gaming sector?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. You can see how much I'm smiling because we love launching something that then turns into a massive success very quickly. Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase was a bit of a pilot that we ran. I'm proud of the support the Tasmanian government has provided across our burgeoning video games sector, which is filled with kids doing amazing things.

I'm especially pleased that you mentioned the 2025 Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase. It was the first of its kind in the state, and it was a smashing success. The Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase was held from 27 to 29 September in Hobart. I am pleased to announce the dates of the 2026 event, so yes, we're going to do it again. The next Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase will take place between 17 and 19 April 2026 at Princes Wharf No. 1. It will be a hugely fun filled weekend celebrating Tasmanian-made video

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game and game developers. The government vastly increased support for the industry, also through an election commitment dedicated to games development in 2024, which has been invested through 2025-26.

Funding of \$500,000 was established to create the Level Up Tasmania fund, which is delivered through Screen Tasmania's game development and industry development programs. This yielded a record 17 applications lodged from Tasmanian developers for that program in 2024-25. We're really pleased to continue that work in this budget. Initiatives such as the Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase are all helping our local developers be seen on the world stage. The state government is delivering for Tasmanians by supporting professional development which is critical to the industry.

I will add, as a personal note, I went to the Level Up Tasmania Video Game Showcase. It was so much fun. There were so many families there with kids, particularly young fellas who are very good at programming, all dragged along by their long-suffering parents, but I think they enjoyed it very much. I, of course, was relegated to the 1980s corner of Princes Wharf No. 1 where they had a solo Pac-Man game that I played for most of the day.

Mr MITCHELL - Minister, I remember Space Invaders myself.

According to the recent interim Budget, Screen Tasmania's overall budget has been cut. Which areas of Screen Tasmania's budget do you consider unworthy of support?

Ms OGILVIE - Screen Tasmania is a fantastic organisation. Let me confirm whether we have details on that. Thank you, Brett.

Mr STEWART - Thank you, minister. There are a couple of previous commitments that the government made, temporary commitments and uplifts that are coming to an end. So that's reflected in those numbers. Certainly -

Mr MITCHELL - Can you articulate what's coming to an end?

Ms OGILVIE - I think we're getting some numbers for you.

Mr STEWART - We can provide that detail for you. The general approach with temporary initiatives is that once they start to come off, we would then present the minister with options for consideration and future budget rounds. David will be able to give you -

Mr MITCHELL - While David's searching, my understanding - and I'm happy to be proven wrong - is that this is not a case of having a certain amount in a bucket and the amounts in the bucket are moving. My understanding is the bucket is getting smaller.

Mr STEWART - It's the Island Screen Incentive, in particular, that is going to come off in future Estimates. We would certainly be looking to position something with the minister for consideration in that space.

Mr MITCHELL - But currently unfunded? There's no funding allocation to something else that can do that?

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Mr STEWART - It's currently funded. It comes off in the forward Estimates, which is why those numbers look as though there's been a decrease. Certainly, that will be considered as part of future budget process.

Mr MITCHELL - Minister, will the third season of *Bay of Fires* go ahead?

Ms OGILVIE - Great question. I think this also is a Dave question, if I may?

Mr MITCHELL - And while you're searching for that, I will ask the third part of it to save time. Will the third season of *Bay of Fires* go ahead and are there any barriers to stop the series continuing such as funding, staffing, anything else that you might be aware of?

Ms OGILVIE - We will see what information we can get for you.

Mr MITCHELL - Thank you.

Dr SUDMALIS - Thank you, Mr Mitchell. At this stage, Screen Tasmania has not received an application from Archipelago Productions for *Bay of Fires* Season 3. My understanding is that Archipelago Productions is still in a series of negotiations with other financiers who need to come on board to enable and to leverage funding from the Tasmanian government.

Mr MITCHELL - Do you have a timeline as to when you expect that you might have a decision to make?

Dr SUDMALIS - It would be in the 2025-26 financial year and we would, as we always do, put in a request to government for additional funds to meet the cost of something that is so over and above the ordinary allocation to screen.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, you mentioned the conversations you had with the TSO. I will get to that later, but I am interested in conversations with other tenants in that neck of the woods. When it comes to historic, cultural heritage, the building of the stadium will have a significant impact on the Hunter Street buildings - the IXL building, the Jam Factory and, indeed, the arts school. Have you had conversations with the owners? I will come back to the arts school later, but -

Ms OGILVIE - We are the owners of the arts school.

Mr BAYLEY - I know you are of that building. Have you had conversations with the owners of those buildings about the impacts and how to address their concerns?

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly, I have been in dialogue with many people. I do understand that there is a concern about in Hunter Street how the car park in front of the Henry Jones is closed. It used to be an open street. There is some consideration of whether that should be opened. I've certainly been asked to think about that, which I'm happy to do.

I do know that there is general concern about the cultural precinct and how it might all work, particularly with crowds, et cetera. I also understand that work is happening with Macquarie Point with the flows of people and traffic. As I say, I'm not the minister for Macquarie Point. What I have done is pull together a meeting of the leaders of our cultural

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organisations, the ones that sit in that precinct. We had one meeting. I'd like to reconvene that to have that dialogue -

Mr BAYLEY - Who was part of that, sorry?

Ms OGILVIE - TMAG, Salamanca Arts Centre, Hedberg and Theatre Royal. I think I've included everybody - TSO as well. Really recognising that the neighbourhood and our cultural precinct, which is such a tourism drawcard as well, needs to be heard in this conversation. We've endeavoured to do that.

Mr BAYLEY - What do they say, out of interest?

Ms OGILVIE - Well, it's interesting, I'm happy to go into it. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, in particular, was interested - and I liked this idea very much - in getting works out of storage and displaying them in a new environment within the stadium or within the precinct.

One of the huge challenges we have in the arts, you would appreciate, is there's never enough money and many of our arts organisations are in historic and heritage buildings. When there is money, it's the roof that needs to be fixed first. We have a museum and art gallery that is replete with amazing stuff, but most of it is in storage and only brought out for exhibitions. I would love a situation where we see kind of like an art bank, where we're able to bring artefacts and things out of storage and put them in other environments. I know you don't like the stadium, we won't agree on that, but imagine if the stadium had potential to be an extension of the art gallery, so that we could have objects and display things there - that would be helpful. That's the first one.

In relation to others, we're in general agreement around the challenges of not wealthy arts organisations in old buildings and that is something that I have been turning my mind to, whether we can find other ways of dealing with that. I love the art school -

Mr BAYLEY - Can I ask about the art school then in relation to the lease. I know you can't tell us about the terms necessarily, I'm not sure, but what's the security of the art school down there and what's the government's intention with that building long term? When I say long term, I mean 10 to 15 years and beyond. Is it to remain an art school and a centre of creative arts?

Ms OGILVIE - That's actually the university's call. I'm not sure if the building actually doesn't sit in my portfolio, but my understanding is there's something like a 30-year lease left on it. I'm seeking clarification.

Mr JACOBI - Through you, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - The university owns it.

Mr JACOBI - Yes, it's university - well, it's only recently extended the lease, as far as I understand it.

Mr BAYLEY - For 30 years?

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Mr JACOBI - I believe it's for a significant period of time.

Ms OGILVIE - I am open to all sorts of dialogue. If people are able to identify what will make them happy and what will help, as the Arts minister, I'm happy to do that. Again, I say, totally recognising that we're in an imperfect situation.

Prof RAZAY - Music plays an important role in bringing joy to people and increased connectedness. I am fortunate to have learned music only seven years ago and the amount joy I get from it is enormous. Do we have an initiative to support seniors and people who cannot afford learning music? For example, I joined the UTAS community music program. I feel we have initiatives to encourage physical activities like swimming and all this. Can't we have an initiative to encourage people to learn music?

Ms OGILVIE - I couldn't agree with you more. Again, it's all about funding and capacity, but I can say - first I will confess - clarinet? Saxophone?

Prof RAZAY - Alto saxophone.

Ms OGILVIE - Alto saxophone, oboe, various others, drums. I have been a member of the Tasmanian Youth Orchestra and it holds a special place in my heart. I always like to confess that because I don't want to be accused of doing favours for things, but David Sudmalis might be, through you Brett, if I could, in a good place to talk about how important our music strategy work is and has been and how much agreement we have in this realm?

Dr SUDMALIS - Thank you, minister, and thank you professor. I'm also a - how can I put this? - an unreconstructed musician, who finds himself working in the great halls of government.

Earlier this year, the Tasmanian government, through the auspices of the minister, Ms Ogilvie, commissioned a review into the state of music, its strengths, its opportunities, and the things that need to be addressed as a priority to ensure viability. Mr Paul Mason, formerly the director of Music at the Australia Council for the Arts, undertook that work on government's behalf. Government has not yet released that report, but we are slowly and methodically working our way through the recommendations. Some of which are relatively simple to enact. For example, an audit of Arts Tasmania's programs that support musicians and looking at ways we can do better with the funds that we have to support targeted initiatives, in this case, with regards to music.

There are a range of other very interesting things that the report highlighted. First, and this will come, I suspect, there's no surprise, that Tasmania has many musicians that don't class musician as their principal source of income or profession. If we consider it in a concentric circle, we have a level of highly qualified, highly engaged professional musicians who make their living exclusively through music. Then there is this enormous group of people who are completely engaged and have a level of skill that approaches professional skill, who have a source of income outside of music that supports their endeavours in music. That's an important component of the music ecology that deserves some attention. Not unlike the group of colleagues that you mentioned through the UTAS community.

Prof RAZAY - People think that learning music is hard, but it's amazing. If you put time -

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Member - It is hard.

Prof RAZAY - No, practise, practise, practise and it doesn't matter how old you are, you can learn it.

Ms OGILVIE - It's good for the brain.

Mr SHELTON - Minister, you mentioned the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, which is the state's leading natural and cultural heritage organisation and custodian of the state collection. Can you please provide an update on how we are supporting one of our greatest cultural assets?

Ms OGILVIE - I like the words you used there. Custodianship is really important because the collection does need to be looked after generation to generation and I like the idea that it connects us to our past. It's really important. It's such a special place. I remember going there as a child and school excursions as well.

Our Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is a combined museum, art gallery and herbarium - people sometimes forget the herbarium piece - which safeguards nearly 1 million objects representing the physical evidence of Tasmania's natural and cultural heritage and Tasmanian identity. TMAG is one of the state's top 10 most visited attractions. It is worthwhile pointing out that TMAG is much more than a single museum; it operates from several sites in Hobart - the city site comprised of a whole city block with some of the oldest colonial public buildings in Tasmania; the Rosny Collections and Research Facility, which houses collections, specialist laboratories and professional workspaces to enable the collections to be researched and cared for; and the Moonah facility, which provides warehouse and workshop capabilities to enable collections, storage, preservation and exhibition, construction and staging space.

Now, this Tasmanian Herbarium building at the University of Tasmania is down at the Sandy Bay campus. I recently had the pleasure of visiting the herbarium and inspected some amazing specimens. This site provides collection, storage, scientific laboratories and professional workspaces for the curation and care of the botanical collections.

The Markree and Narryna house museums and outbuildings which provide exhibits and deliver public programs. TMAG also has collections on the west coast, at the West Coast Discovering Centre at Zeehan, Mt Lyell offices in Queenstown and the Australasian Golf Museum in Bothwell.

The 25-26 Budget also allocated \$13.235 million to support TMAG. In this budget, we've allocated an additional \$4 million to TMAG for over the forward Estimates, to enable them to address critical operating risks and to progress to a more sustainable operating model. This is in addition to the \$2 million of extra funding allocated to the 23-24 state budget to address priority works on TMAG buildings - buildings again, obviously - to ensure continued public safety in and around TMAG. An additional \$2 million funding over four years was allocated in the 24-25 state budget for an asset maintenance, to help TMAG address compliance issues and ensure that the state collection is managed and protected for all Tasmanians.

Now, I'm really pleased to share some exciting news, there is a really wonderful new TV show set to air on ABC in 2026, which features TMAG. It is a comedy quiz entertainment program series, based on the State Collection. So, we're going to be on the airwaves again. It

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will be filmed in the main gallery in coming weeks. Screen Tasmania, thank you so much, provided project development funding of \$25,000 to this project. I'm absolutely thrilled to see our hard-working creative sectors intersect in this way, and I spend a lot of my time getting people to try to talk to each other. This is a fantastic way to showcase our incredible state collection and raise Tasmania's profile in the national and international stage. So, please look out out for the show next year.

Mr MITCHELL - Thank you, minister. I was a bit worried that you were going to say that that show was about the 'minister plays the oboe' documentary.

Ms OGILVIE - Your ears would bleed; I wouldn't do it to you. Dangerous. I'm going to put you in my band Mr Mitchell, watch out I'm recruiting.

Mr MITCHELL - Minister, the Australian Convict Sites Strategic Management Framework Agreement is a legal agreement between the federal government and member state governments. Under that, the state government has a legal obligation to ensure that all the UNESCO World Heritage convict sites that are not your own, you have an obligation to treat them equally with your own World Heritage sites, such as Port Arthur. I think you can see where this is going, with Woolmers. Minister, Woolmers has just been awarded \$400,000 from the federal government, why are you refusing the request from the federal Heritage minister, Murray Watt, that the state government honour its legal obligations, under the UNESCO obligations, to match that funding?

Ms OGILVIE - With everybody's indulgence, we do have the person who can answer this question. Will, if I could ask you to start and then if we don't get to the final bit I can add the last piece.

Mr JOSCELYNE - Certainly, minister, thank you. It might be useful if I just briefly recap some of the history of the nomination.

Mr MITCHELL - Briefly should be the operative words there, thanks.

Mr JOSCELYNE - Certainly. If you go back to 2008 when the site was first part of the serial listing, there were 11 sites that comprise a single property listing. Woolmers and Brickenden comprise one site; Woolmers is half of the full one of those sites. At the time, the Australian Government led the nomination process; and as part of nominating a process for World Heritage listing, you're required to complete quite a comprehensive dossier of information covering the values of the property that you believe would achieve World Heritage listing. Also, how those things will be managed and sustained going forward, and that includes financial matters. That nomination very clearly identified that Woolmers was responsible for funding the operations of that site. It also clearly stated that they did not receive recurrent government funding to support operations at the time, but they did have access to grant funding to support conservation works.

The decision of the World Heritage Committee noted this is an issue as well. They particularly highlighted that Brickendon-Woolmers were unique in some regards being privately owned, and also that at the time of the listing the condition of the properties was actually assessed as poor - at the time it was actually listed.

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Mr MITCHELL - I know you have more detail, I do apologise but time is brief. Given your comprehensive answer, are you satisfied that you are meeting your legal obligations under the UNESCO obligations regarding Brickendon and Woolmers?

Mr JOSCELEYNE - Short answer, yes, and there's two parts to this. There is no explicit obligation to fund recurrent operations of the site. There is clearly an undertaking to meet an obligation to conserve the site as part of the serial listing, to provide protection and conservation support. Protection takes the form of the law. The EPBC Act, *Historic Cultural Heritage Act* and even LUPAA as part of providing the planning and protection framework for the properties, and that is an obligation in and of itself towards supporting the obligations of the state party, which is the Australian Government.

Then the ongoing provision of grant funding is clearly part of meeting that obligation and that has been a significant contribution to the site in the last 10 years. In the last 10 years, \$2.4 million of state government funding has been provided to Woolmers to support the foundation. A similar amount, including the most recent funding from the Commonwealth government, has been provided. Essentially around about the same ratio of Commonwealth and state government funding since 2017.

Mr MITCHELL - I don't want to belabour the point because I know we're running out of time and Mr Bayley will not thank me if we use up all the time. I will ask one more question. Minister, why did NRE repeatedly ignore feedback from Heritage Tasmania Launceston staff on the proposed office relocation, and why did it take CPSU lobbying members of parliament to get the Premier to intervene? Have you met with Launceston staff in your time as minister and if so, when?

Ms OGILVIE - I don't think I've met with them personally, but I've certainly had some engagement. To answer that quickly, your question was actually more about the broader move question.

Mr JACOBI - It was not relocation per se of the Launceston-based Heritage staff. It was really a reconfiguration of the existing building that they were accommodated in. It was a very basic operational reconfiguration. There was nothing in the proposal that in any way displaced them or caused them to be unable to perform the services and functions that are required of their positions. We consulted with them on that proposal. It was very straightforward. The decision of the Premier is his decision at the end of the day to not proceed with that.

Mr BAYLEY - Minister, I agree with Mr Shelton on this, that TMAG was the state's leading organisation. That's one thing we agree on, Mr Shelton. I'm really interested to explore the TMAG critical operating risks issue. You flagged earlier the leaking roofs and the like. I had the pleasure of going to TMAG last Friday, the Hobart current and an artist talk. If I may let me pass you a couple of snaps that I took. As I walked out the door, literally a bucket on the floor catching drips and the plaster of the roof is coming in. Can you talk us through the TMAG critical operating risks budget line item, what is that covering? When it comes to things like leaking roofs, and I am informed that Rosny is far worse, indeed, than TMAG in the city in terms of - and these are facilities that are holding our state collection.

Can you talk us through the critical risks? Is that dealing with this kind of issue and, if not, what is the ask of TMAG to address these issues?

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Ms OGILVIE - It's a good question. Mary is here, so we it's an important question. We might ask Mary to come to the table.

Mr STEWART - Perhaps I can start while Mary's coming, through you, minister. The infrastructure issues that you've raised, Mr Bayley, are critically important, but they have been addressed through some budget allocation which is actually separate to the critical operating risks that you mentioned.

Mr BAYLEY - In this Budget or the 2024-25 Budget you mentioned before?

Mr STEWART - The previous Budget, yes. This is more about addressing the issues that both the department and the board of trustees - and a shout-out to the board of trustees while I'm here they do an amazing job -

Ms OGILVIE - They do.

Mr STEWART - on behalf of you, minister, of course. The department has been doing some work with the board of trustees, and Mary and her team, to identify what we need to do to get TMAG on a sustainable footing as a more modern, contemporary offering as a museum. Some of those things are around systems, around the online presence of the collection, so it's more about actually reforming TMAG's operations rather than addressing some of the infrastructure risks, which is also being done, but through a separate budget allocation. I will let Mary give you a bit more detail.

Ms OGILVIE - We would like to hear from Mary. Thanks.

Ms MULCAHY - Thank you for the question. For the last few years and quite a few years, TMAG has had an operating deficit so this funding will help us with that. As the minister and the deputy secretary mentioned, what we're trying to do is create some efficiencies and move TMAG to a more sustainable footing. That's the operating risks that are funded through this Budget. The two previous allocations of capital works, so the 2023-24 received four years' worth of funding, \$2 million, and that's particularly for building and building maintenance. For example, at the moment we're currently in a tender process around the sandstone on the Customs House building.

One of the challenges we have with really old buildings - and the bucket that you saw - is that often water comes out where it hasn't gone in. Literally, since I've started, we've been trying to work out where that particular leak actually happened. That's actually part of the challenge with it: trying to work out where the ingress of the water is coming in, because it isn't always where it comes out. There's quite a bit of work that's being done over a long period of time: similar thing happening at Rosny. It's a membrane roof and it's really difficult; it acts like a sponge so where the water comes out isn't necessarily where it goes in. It's not quick fixes, I guess.

Mr BAYLEY - With the \$2 million over four years, what was the budget submission of TMAG to address these capital issues at the end of the day?

Ms MULCAHY - When we were given the funding in 2023-24, we basically highlighted - so we've got a strategic asset maintenance plan which was developed in 2019 and that outlines where the risks are around the building and the maintenance, so it triages or

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prioritises where that funding would go. On the basis of that, recognising and identifying where some of these challenges are, particularly around things like the leaks at Rosny, that budget submission went through and we were successful in that \$2 million. Then the following year we received another \$2 million over four years, which is around asset maintenance. There's a bit of overlap with the building, but it's potentially things like what we need to do in order to keep the collection safe that's not just building and maintenance. That's what that bucket of money is for.

CHAIR - Mr Bayley, through the minister too, please.

Mr BAYLEY - Sure, sorry through you, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, very quickly, we have to qualify something we said, just so it's correct.

Mr JACOBI - I want to clarify the comment I made earlier about the Launceston staff mood. I wanted to be clear that there were two stages, or two components, to that. Originally, there was a proposal to move the staff from the city to our Prospect/Mount Pleasant facility site. Again, they were consulted extensively on that proposal, but the decision was not to proceed with that. That then led to a reconfiguration of the existing St John's offices which again they were consulted on and has now been completed.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you.

Mr BAYLEY - Thank you, minister. Through you, while we have Ms Mulcahy at the table, I have a question about, I guess, justice for Aboriginal people. Obviously TMAG issued a profound apology four or so years ago, that was very welcome, and has returned numerous human remains. I would like to ask whether, what has been returned in terms of human remains, is the extent of the human remains that are in the TMAG collection, and whether there are any outstanding requests for other cultural items? Obviously, human remains is not a cultural item, and there would be a request for that, but other cultural items held in the TMAG collection, and if there are outstanding requests, which I understand there are, what is the hold up in returning those items?

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you. Mary is the right person to answer this, but I will give you a couple of words before we hand to Mary. Coming into this portfolio, this is one of the areas I did a deep dive into straight away, knowing its importance, and of course, also appreciating that the repatriation of human remains globally is a major challenge for all museums. Mary will speak to that as well. I want to make sure people understand we've been working on it, and we are trying and endeavouring to do the right thing and to work collaboratively. Thank you, Mary.

Ms MULCAHY - Thank you, minister. TMAG has repatriated about a third of all human remains that were in the collection. The remainder are really difficult: a lot of them, the provenance is very hard to determine. For example, our First Peoples art and culture teams are working really closely with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in working on the human remains to understand where they came from. We have to be really clear on the provenance of them before we can hand them back. I believe we handed back three sets of human remains in the last two years. What's left in the collection is incredibly difficult. There isn't a lot of information with it, but we've got that really close collaboration. We're working with the community.

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The outstanding request at the moment is for repatriation of the Greens Creek petroglyph. We've been working with the Aboriginal Land Council; we've been talking to Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania in trying to understand what we need to do to repatriate that; the board is absolutely supportive of it. Part of the challenge has been whether or not we need to do a full consultation in the way we did for the Preminghana petroglyphs.

Just before the election was called, those conversations with those groups and with our Tasmanian Aboriginal Advisory Council, they believe that the consultation we've done with those representatives of community was probably enough, but then the election was called, so we actually need to go back and re-engage with that.

Our understanding is that we probably need to put the permit in to actually request the repatriation of the petroglyph back. It's quite challenging because it's quite a small piece and it doesn't come from Aboriginal land, so it can be picked up and easily moved.

Mr BAYLEY - Not like the Preminghana ones, yes.

Ms MULCAHY - It's not as easy as giving those really - no, not like the really big couple-of-tonne ones, right? It's quite a complicated - it's complicated anyway, but it's extra complicated because they are they're so small. We also have another petroglyph from Sundown Point which we'd also like to give back to community, and that's part of those conversations. We only identified that a couple of years ago.

Mr BAYLEY - What about the smaller cultural items, like the made items, for example, the necklaces, the spears, the woven baskets and the like?

Ms MULCAHY - To my knowledge we haven't had any requests for repatriation of those. Some members of community believe that if TMAG gave back everything that's in the collection, that wouldn't be appropriate either. It's a complex conversation with community about what would be appropriate.

Mr BAYLEY - The Aboriginal community itself is looking to establish a cultural centre and a keeping place, and you need an appropriate facility to take these kinds of things on board and some of the rules around institutions. I implore you, minister, to keep working hard in that space.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes. I was going to mention that. Well, we are, and I just thought one last bit, Mary, that I think is very helpful, perhaps, to know is around international repatriations. That also is very important. Could you perhaps sketch that out?

Ms MULCAHY - There's a couple of things: the federal government funds all the state museums around repatriation and so we get some funding every year. That's internally within Australia. So that funds some of the work around the repatriation of human remains, for example, back to the Aboriginal community in Tasmania, but also cultural belongings we've got from other Aboriginal communities around Australia. Again, it's really complex and often communities come here, visit, go home and then we need to work out how to return them to them.

Internationally it becomes even more complicated. We've been working with museums overseas. We had the exhibition *taypani milaythina-tu*: Return to Country, and we got objects

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back on loan, initially for two years, which is the constraint around the protection of cultural objects on loan: there was a two-year limit. We've got an unprecedented extension of that for another two years so community could spend time with them. The idea was to work with the community, for them to ask for those objects to be repatriated back, because it's not the role of TMAG to ask for that, it's for community to ask that. We have repatriated material back, particularly to New Zealand. Where those opportunities arise, and we were asked, the board is very supportive

CHAIR - The time for scrutiny has expired.

The Committee adjourned at 6.11 p.m.