

Tuesday 1 May 2018

FIRST SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

The House met at 11 a.m. pursuant to the proclamation of Her Excellency the Governor.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The Usher of the Black Rod was admitted and delivered a message from the Commissioners requesting the attendance of members in the Legislative Council Chamber. Members accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and, having heard the Commission read, returned to the House of Assembly.

MEMBERS SWORN

The Clerk laid on the Table writs for the election of the following members of the House of Assembly.

Elise Nicole Archer (Denison)	William Edward Felix Hodgman (Franklin)
Scott Bacon (Denison)	Jennifer Louise Houston (Bass)
Guy Barnett (Lyons)	Roger Charles Jaensch (Braddon)
Shane Thomas Broad (Braddon)	David James O'Byrne (Franklin)
Adam Richard Brooks (Braddon)	Michelle Anne O'Byrne (Bass)
Jenna Butler (Lyons)	Cassandra Stanwell O'Connor (Denison)
Sarah Jane Courtney (Bass)	Jacqueline Anne Petrusma (Franklin)
Anita Joy Dow ((Braddon)	Jeremy Page Rockliff (Braddon)
Michael Darrel Joseph Ferguson (Bass)	Mark David Shelton ((Lyons)
Peter Carl Gutwein (Bass)	Alison Standen (Franklin)
Eloise Rafia Haddad	Rebecca Peta White (Lyons)
Susanne Lynnette Hickey (Denison)	Rosalie Woodruff
Marinus Theodoor Hidding (Lyons)	

All members were sworn or made the necessary affirmation and subscribed to codes of ethical conduct and race ethics.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - I move -

That Marinus Theodoor Hidding do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Deputy Premier) - I second the motion.

CLERK - Does the member consent to such nomination?

Mr HIDDING (Lyons) - I do.

CLERK - Are there any further nominations?

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - I move -

That Susanne Lynnette Hickey do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

CLERK - Is that motion seconded?

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - I second the nomination.

CLERK - Is the nomination accepted?

Ms HICKEY (Denison) - It is.

The House proceeded to ballot and the Clerk declared that Ms Hickey had been elected.

Ms Hickey was conducted to the Chair.

Madam SPEAKER - I humbly acknowledge the great honour the House has been pleased to confer on me by choosing me to be its Speaker, an office which I will endeavour at all times to fill with dignity and impartiality.

We acknowledge the traditional people of the land upon which we meet today, the Mouheneener people.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment and inform you that Her Excellency the Governor will be pleased to receive you at Government House at 1.30 p.m. today.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That a deputation consisting of the mover and the seconder, and such other members as may think fit to go, do wait upon Her Excellency the Governor to notify Her Excellency the election of you as Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.35 a.m. to 3 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER

Madam SPEAKER - I have to report that, accompanied by a deputation of members, I have waited upon Her Excellency the Governor and informed Her Excellency that in pursuance of the powers conferred by section 24 of the Constitution Act, the House of Assembly has this day

proceeded to the election of the Speaker and has done me the honour to elect me to that high office but, in compliance with the other provisions of the same section, I have presented myself to Her Excellency as the Speaker, and I have, in the name and on behalf of the House, laid claim to their undoubted rights and privileges and prayed that the most favourable construction might be put on all their proceedings, whereupon Her Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:

To the Honourable Speaker and members of the House of Assembly:

I congratulate members of the House of Assembly on their choice of Speaker. I readily assure you, Madam Speaker, of my confirmation of all the constitutional rights and privileges of the House of Assembly, the proceedings of which will always receive my most favourable consideration.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Usher of the Black Rod was admitted and delivered a message from Her Excellency the Governor requesting the attendance of members in the Legislative Council Chambers. Members accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and, having heard Her Excellency's speech, returned to the House of Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 3.27 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

[4.32 p.m.]

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I have the honour to inform the House that as a consequence of the election held on 3 March 2018, the following events took place in relation to the appointment of the Government.

On 21 March 2018, Her Excellency the Governor received me to invite me to be commissioned to form government.

Immediately prior to that invitation, I formerly resigned my commission as Premier and, with that, the following resignations of ministers of the Crown: myself as Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Heritage; the Honourable Jeremy Rockliff MP as Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Primary Industries and Water and Minister for Racing; the Honourable Elise Archer MP as Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister for the Environment and Parks and Minister for the Arts; the Honourable Guy Barnett MP as Minister for Resources, Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Energy; the Honourable Michael Ferguson MP as Minister for Health, Minister for Information Technology and Innovation and Leader of Government Business; the Honourable Peter Gutwein MP as Treasurer, Minister for Planning and Local Government and Minister for State Growth; the Honourable Rene Hidding MP as Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management and Minister for Infrastructure; and the Honourable Jacqueline Petrusma MP as Minister for Human Services and Minister for Women.

I then accepted the invitation to form government and Her Excellency the Governor made the following appointments of ministers of the Crown: the Honourable William Hodgman MP as

Premier, Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, Minister for Trade, Minister for Parks, and Minister for Heritage; the Honourable Jeremy Rockliff MP as Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Infrastructure, and Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries; the Honourable Elise Archer MP as Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Environment, and Minister for the Arts; the Honourable Guy Barnett MP as Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy, Minister for Building and Construction, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs; the Honourable Sarah Courtney MP as Minister for Primary Industries and Water, and Minister for Racing; the Honourable Michael Ferguson MP as Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Health, Minister for Science and Technology, and Leader of Government Business; the Honourable Peter Gutwein MP as Treasurer, Minister for State Growth, and Minister for Local Government; the Honourable Roger Jaensch MP as Minister for Human Services, Minister for Housing, and Minister for Planning; and the Honourable Jacqueline Petrusma MP as Minister for Disability Services and Community Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation.

I wish to also announce the appointment of Mark Shelton MP as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and who is to be the Government's nominee to be Chair of Committees and Deputy Speaker. I am also pleased to inform the House that the Honourable Leonie Hiscutt MLC will continue as Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

I was honoured by the Governor's formal invitation to me as the holder of the commission to form a government and as Premier of Tasmania to proceed to form a government. I can assure all members of the House and the people of Tasmania that for the term of the Forty-Ninth Parliament, my ministry will use its renewed mandate as a majority government in Tasmania judiciously for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS

[4.35 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to Speaker of the House.

I am pleased to update the House on appointments within the Labor shadow cabinet. I have taken on the responsibility for aboriginal affairs, arts and creative industries, federal/state relations, tourism, hospitality and events, and trade and investment. The member for Denison, Scott Bacon, is shadow treasurer, shadow minister for community development, shadow minister for racing and gaming, and shadow minister for multicultural affairs. The member for Braddon, Shane Broad, has taken on responsibility for primary industries, fisheries and water, police, fire and emergency services, and resources. The member for Braddon, Anita Dow, has taken on responsibility for economic and regional development, employment, training and skills development, small business, and veterans' affairs. The member for Denison, Ella Haddad, has taken on responsibility for shadow attorney-general, justice, climate change, consumer affairs, and environment, parks and heritage. The member for Franklin, David O'Byrne, has taken on responsibility for energy, infrastructure and transport, local government and planning, and sport, and also Leader of Opposition Business in the House of Assembly. The member for Bass, Michelle O'Byrne, has taken on responsibility as deputy leader of the Labor Party, education and early years, equality and women, innovation and the digital economy, and the prevention of family violence.

I am also pleased to inform the House that the member for Franklin, Alison Standen, is the whip for the Labor Party.

Portfolios have been appointed in the upper House as well. I acknowledge my colleague, Craig Farrell, Leader of Opposition Business in the Legislative Council; the member for Rumney, Sarah Lovell, who holds the responsibilities for ambulance services, health and preventative health care, mental health and substance use; and the member for Elwick, Josh Willie, who has responsibility for child safety, corrections, housing, disability and ageing and youth affairs.

TASMANIAN GREENS APPOINTMENTS

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to publicly congratulate you on your election to the position of Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to announce the Tasmanian Greens shadow portfolios for this term of the Parliament, as well as to acknowledge the loss of Andrea Dawkins from the Parliament and our team. I wish Andrea all the very best.

I note that the new member for Bass, Jennifer Houston, is the first palawa woman to be elected to the Tasmanian parliament. I congratulate her for that.

Madam Speaker, in this next term I will take on the roles of leader of Greens business; aboriginal affairs; animal welfare; community development, which includes multicultural affairs, women, youth, seniors and LGBTI Tasmanians; education, skills and training; employment; trade and economic development; federal/state relations; forests; mining; human services; infrastructure; transport; population; parks, public lands and heritage; primary industries; sport and recreation; tourism; hospitality; Treasury; and workplace relations.

Mr Hodgman - A bit light.

Ms O'CONNOR - The thing is, Premier, that even though there are only two of us here, we are more than capable of doing the work.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - A bit of order, please, and respect for the member.

Ms O'CONNOR - My colleague, Dr Woodruff, the member for Franklin, will be the Greens whip and I am sure she will manage to wrangle the two of us in the Chamber very well. Dr Woodruff will also take on arts; attorney-general; building and construction; the very important portfolio of climate change - and I note there is no climate change minister in the Liberal Cabinet -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me.

Ms O'CONNOR - Consumer protection; corrections; energy; environment; health; justice; local government; planning; police, fire and emergency management; science and ICT; small business; and water.

CHAIR OF COMMITTEES - ELECTION

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the member for Lyons, Mr Mark David Shelton, be the Chair of Committees of the House.

There being no further nominations - motion agreed to.

ACTS ENUMERATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (pro forma) (No. 1)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Hodgman** and read the first time.

GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

Madam SPEAKER - I have to report that the House has this day been to the Legislative Council Chamber where Her Excellency, the Governor, was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament, a copy of which I have obtained for greater accuracy.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That Her Excellency, the Governor's Address be entered into *Hansard*.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Mr President and honourable members of the Legislative Council, Madam Speaker and members of the House of Assembly,

As the 28th Governor of this State, I welcome you to the first session of the Forty-Ninth Parliament of Tasmania, 162 years since responsible government began in Tasmania, with the first sitting of the bicameral Parliament in 1856.

Much like that momentous occasion, the State election on 3 March this year has delivered an historic outcome. In delivering a second term for the majority Liberal Government, it was the first time since the 1970s that any political party surpassed 50 per cent of the primary vote in consecutive elections, and indeed, the first time in over 100 years, that a conservative party achieved that result.

In another first for Tasmania, the new make-up of the House of Assembly has more women than men. In fact, Tasmania has become the first Australian State Parliament ever to achieve this, and it is a milestone of national significance and worthy of celebration.

The election also resulted in five brand new members for the House of Assembly.

The Honourable Will Hodgman, Premier of Tasmania, received an unprecedented personal endorsement, and is determined to lead my Government responsibly, in the best interests of Tasmanians. Moreover, in a fast-paced and changing world, the people of Tasmania put their trust in the Liberal Government to provide certainty and stability for their future - a duty my Government takes very seriously.

Tasmania is a vastly different place than it was just a few years ago. In many cases, the State is leading the nation, in business confidence, export growth, building approvals, international and domestic tourism to name a few. Economic conditions and employment growth are the strongest they have been in many years. There is no doubt that Tasmania as a whole is a more confident, more vibrant and positive place.

My Government has a strong resolve to see the State continue to move forward, to ensure that Tasmania's chance for prolonged and permanent growth is not squandered, and the State does not go backwards. Rapid growth, however, brings its own set of challenges. It was Abraham Lincoln who said 'You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today'. My Government does not resile from the challenges brought by strong economic growth; indeed, it welcomes the opportunities. It is acutely aware of the task ahead, with a long-term plan and policies to address Tasmania's growth and ensure that all Tasmanians, no matter where they live, can share in the benefits.

Despite the perceptible change in Tasmania, the issues that the majority of Tasmanians care about have remained comparatively constant. Tasmanians want to see a strong economy that delivers jobs and secures opportunities for their children and future generations. They want a government that will deliver quality health and education services, keep their families safe, and keep cost of living pressures down. They want a government that will provide a vital safety net for those most in need. They want a government that invests in the infrastructure that our growing State needs; and they want to protect our precious way of life.

Tasmanians have entrusted my Government with a duty to deliver on these core responsibilities, to govern Tasmanians with a steady hand and a sense of purpose, and to lead the State with resolve, compassion and integrity. In this term, my Government remains committed to further strengthen our economy and create more full-time, secure jobs for Tasmanians.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has recently confirmed that Tasmania's economy is one of the best performing in Australia, the third strongest in the country. Today, we enjoy record employment levels. There are 11 800 more Tasmanians in work than just four years ago, and Tasmanian businesses are the most confident in the country.

My government will continue to work to strengthen the Tasmanian economy, and ensure all regions of the State benefit from economic growth and new jobs, by reducing payroll tax rates for businesses and providing one of the most competitive tax regimes in the country for small and medium-sized businesses. Investment in flagship industry sectors, like tourism, agriculture and

fisheries, and resources, will continue in order to harness and solidify recent growth, creating more jobs and building a strong foundation for those sectors for years to come.

Growth in the economy and an increasing population brings its own set of challenges, with demand for skilled labour and an increased need and competition for housing, as more people move to Tasmania for jobs and lifestyle reasons. To meet the demand for skilled labour, my Government will give priority to ensuring more young people have the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship, through payroll tax rebates and targeted small business grants focused on growth sectors of the economy, such as building and construction, tourism and hospitality, and advanced manufacturing. New Centres of Excellence in Agriculture, Trades and Water, and Hospitality will ensure Tasmanians have the right skills for jobs in these important growth areas.

To meet the demand for housing, my Government will build on the first stage of its Affordable Housing Strategy, with an additional investment of \$125 million to increase supply, as well as a suite of incentives to help boost the supply of housing in Tasmania. Already, my Government has convened a Housing Summit and legislation to support a number of the outcomes will be introduced shortly. The market is also responding to demand for extra supply: the trend for dwelling commencements is up 29 per cent compared to just one year ago.

My Government is a firm believer in the power of education, and the opportunity it provides, not just for quality of life, but choice in life. Nothing is more important. During this term, Tasmania will see record levels of funding invested into the education system. That includes new teachers and other vital school staff. There will be more support for the early years, which are so critical to a child's development, and greater mental health support in our schools. For the first time, we will progressively remove school principals from staffing formulas, enabling principals to focus more on school leadership, with extra teachers in the classroom to allow this to happen, starting in schools with the greatest need.

New schools will be built, and other schools significantly redeveloped, in key regions of growth and demand. My Government will also continue its plan to extend all high schools to Year 12, ending once and for all the notion that school ends at Year 10, and giving students and families choice and the best chance to get ahead in life, no matter where they live. The plan for education builds on improvements made in the past few years including increased retention to Year 12, engaging families in education, and improvements in literacy and numeracy.

Over the past four years, there has been much work done to rebuild the health system, including record funding, additional hospital beds, more staff, and a real focus on addressing elective surgery backlogs. However, there remains more to do. Increasing demand on the health system is an issue affecting the entire country.

For Tasmania, this is another challenge of a growing population, coupled with an ageing demographic. My Government has listened to the concerns of Tasmanians and responded with an even greater investment in health funding over the next six years. To meet increasing demand, the focus will be on increasing capacity on the frontline, in our hospitals, with additional beds and health staff including paramedics, combined with a suite of new out-of-hospital services. These include new community mental health beds and support, alcohol and drug rehabilitation beds, and in-home or in-community management of chronic disease.

Keeping Tasmanians safe is a key priority of my Government. During this term in office, my Government will recruit an additional 125 frontline police officers, to meet the need for higher

levels of policing due to a larger population and a higher number of public events. A suite of legislative changes will be introduced, including stronger bail laws for individuals accused of serious crimes, or who are deemed to be at high risk of reoffending while on bail, placing the onus of proof on serious and repeat offenders to justify why they should be granted bail.

My Government will also reform Tasmania's dangerous criminal declaration laws to ensure dangerous criminals are not released when the courts and prosecutors believe they are too dangerous to re-enter society. Legislation will be introduced to abolish the outdated practice of releasing prisoners early via remission and to tackle family violence with a new offence of persistent family violence. New one-punch laws will also be introduced.

My Government is investing in the infrastructure our growing State needs for the 21st century and beyond, with around a billion dollars in new capital funding. Two new projects - one in the south and one in the north - will increase prisoner capacity at the Tasmanian Prison Service, including a new remand facility on the Risdon Prison site and a new prison in the north of the State, providing a safer environment for both prisoners and correctional officers. Alone, these multi-million dollar investments will see the creation of more than 4000 direct and indirect jobs during construction.

Perhaps for the first time in the State's history, traffic congestion has become a regular problem. To address it, millions of dollars will go towards new roads and road upgrades, addressing traffic hotspots and improving the safety of our roads, for Tasmanians and visitors alike, in all regions. My Government has also committed to more frequent public transport options to outer urban areas.

The next term of Government will see almost 1500 more affordable homes built over five years, new and upgraded hospital facilities around the State including in regional areas like St Helens and King Island, and investment in a wide range of sporting and recreational facilities and community amenities. The redevelopment of the Flinders Island Sports and RSL Club is just as important to that local community, as investment in Tranche 3 irrigation schemes is to farmers around Tasmania. It is important every Tasmanian shares in the billion-dollar infrastructure spend.

One of the most important jobs for any government is to ensure protection of Tasmania's lifestyle. Not many places are able to boast World Heritage wilderness at their backdoor, the cleanest air in the world, easy access to some of the world's best beaches and fishing and camping spots - not to mention our fantastic mountain-bike trails and walking tracks, our historic architecture and low-rise cities, and the freshest and internationally-renowned produce.

Tasmania's way of life is unparalleled. My Government recognises that the Tasmanian way of life is precious, and is determined to protect what makes our State unique; but also to ensure quality of life and affordable living, and to keep the cost of living pressures down.

Over the next four years, my Government has targets and plans to:

- invest in and future-proof our beautiful national parks and reserves, protect our pest and disease-free status that gives our State a competitive advantage, and safeguard our natural environment; and
- ensure zero net emissions, make Tasmania 100 per cent energy self-sufficient and break links with the National Electricity Market to ensure Tasmania has the lowest regulated electricity prices in the country.

During this term of office, there will be no new taxes imposed on Tasmanians, and cost of living increases for government services, on average, will be at or below the rate of inflation for the next four years.

Mr President and honourable members of the Legislative Council, Mr Speaker and members of the House of Assembly,

I mentioned at the outset that it has been 162 years since Tasmania achieved responsible government, having changed its name from Van Diemen's Land. The year was 1856, and the newly-elected bicameral Parliament sat together for the first time. On the auspicious opening of the first session of the Parliament of Tasmania, Governor Sir Henry Fox Young reflected on the issues of importance to elected members and Tasmanians. He spoke about public education and the establishment of new schools; infrastructure, including the construction of electric telegraphs and public roads and bridges; law reform and policing; and the sale of public land as rapidly as possible to Tasmanians wishing to become - and I quote - 'bona fide occupiers and cultivators'. It seems that some matters, especially those naturally associated with the growth of an economy, or a colony in this case, are enduring.

However, importantly, our first Governor also spoke about the fact that Tasmanian freedom had passed from name into a reality, guaranteed not by positive laws, but by what he called the enduring 'bulwarks of Free popular Institutions' - or in other words, a free democratic system of government fortified by the system of voting by ballot in an election.

Democracy is essentially the freedom to express views, and elections have been a fundamental tenet of democracy for the past 162 years in Tasmania, and will remain so.

On 3 March 2018, all Tasmanians were given the freedom to democratically decide on their government. My government received the endorsement of the people of Tasmania at that election, and has been given the honour and privilege of governing Tasmania with a common sense of purpose, and a plan and a vision for the State.

I leave you now to the discharge of your important duties, and I trust that divine providence will guide your deliberations and further the true welfare of the people of Tasmania. Thank you.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move -

That the following address be presented to Her Excellency, the Governor, in reply to Her Excellency's speech.

To Her Excellency, the Honourable Kate Warner AC, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the members of the House of Assembly of Tasmania, in the Parliament assembled, desire to thank Your

Excellency for the speech which you have been pleased to address to both Houses of Parliament.

We desire to record our continued loyalty to the throne and person of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and at the same time assure Your Excellency that the measures which will be laid before us during the session will receive our careful consideration.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate all members who have been returned and for their surviving the Hare-Clark process - welcome all members. In particular I congratulate and welcome all new members to the House.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr SHELTON - We live in a wonderful state. We live in a wonderful country and our democracy of course should always be protected. Tasmania is a strong and proud place today because the right leadership is delivering for Tasmania. We have a positive four years ahead of us because there is a majority government in Tasmania to provide the leadership Tasmania needs. I say that leadership is delivering because the Liberals are about opportunity - the ability to have a go and to back yourself. Profit, which those on the opposite side might think is a dirty word, leads to growth and the ability to employ others. Business investment in Tasmania is currently experiencing a purple patch. It is 14.2 per cent higher than last December.

We in the Liberal Party come from a diverse background. I am proud to come from the small northern town of Bracknell and to have been educated in local schools. I have gone on to become a mechanical technician, a TAFE automotive teacher, a mayor of the council, and now a member of this parliament. Having an interest in small business and farming gives me a broad range of skills and an understanding of what regional communities expect from a government. This diversity in skills is what makes the Liberal team so effective in delivering for Tasmania. I am proud to be part of the team that took our vision to the people in the election and was elected to deliver that vision. I know that together the Liberal team will work to build Tasmania's wealth, prosperity and to take Tasmania to the next level.

There are a great many things happening in Tasmania right now that deserve a mention in this place, such as the strength of the economy, jobs and more people employed or starting businesses. Many tourists are discovering Tasmania for the first time. There is a record spending in health. There are high rural commodity prices in most sectors and a continuing investment in irrigation. There are many other positive outcomes within the Tasmanian economy and the Governor in her speech mentioned others as well. We will ensure that this Government facilitates the need of businesses to grow, because the government is not there to create jobs. The government is there to look after essential services and to help business get on with what it does best - making a profit and employing Tasmanians. Helping, not hindering, is what this Government is about.

The Hodgman Government is strongly committed to supporting more young Tasmanians into work - to build the workforce that a growing economy needs. As part of our plan we will extend the successful payroll tax rebate scheme for apprentices and trainees to 2021, with a target focus on areas where there are identified skill shortages. We will support local businesses that invest in a trainee or apprentice. We also want to ensure that our industries have access to the skills and workers they need to grow areas of our economy, such as building and construction, advanced

manufacturing and tourism and hospitality. Legislation is now being drafted to extend the scheme to 2021 as outlined in our 100-day plan.

In our first term of government, more than 10 000 new jobs were created and we are determined to maintain the momentum and for more young Tasmanians to get the skills they need for a great job and a successful career. Our goal is to lower the youth unemployment rate to at least the national average during this term of government. This initiative will support an additional 3000 young Tasmanians into work. The Hodgman Government is strongly committed to maintaining the growth in our economy right across the state and supporting more jobs in our regions. Under our 100-day plan we will draft legislation to provide payroll relief for up to three years to any business that relocates to Tasmania and establishes its operation in a regional area. This policy is specifically designed to encourage businesses to relocate to Tasmania, to support regional jobs and to boost local economies. Attracting mainland businesses to regional Tasmania will directly benefit local jobs and investment in regional communities. The Office of the Coordinator-General will also work with local councils to develop the most attractive packages for relocation on offer across the country. While in our first term of government, more than 10 000 jobs were created. Our plan is to maintain the momentum and spread the growth and create more jobs and opportunities in our regional areas.

I want to talk a bit about hard work. My team and I managed to tell the good story of the Hodgman Government to the people of Lyons over the past four years through the election process. I thank all those Liberal Party members and volunteers who worked so hard during the campaign. In particular, I need to mention my wife, Merilyn, for her tireless work in allowing me to serve once more in this place. We all have families, children, grandchildren and loved ones. This position can be difficult on everybody. We must never forget or take for granted those loved ones who support us.

The strength of our economy is creating opportunities for all Tasmanians. In fact, at this point in time there are more Tasmanians in work than ever before. A total 11 800 jobs have been created since the Hodgman Government came to power in 2014. Where there are jobs, people follow. Tasmania has become the place to live, work and raise a family under a Hodgman Liberal government. With a strong economy comes growing pains, which we have seen in the form of traffic jams.

Agfest 2018 will commence on Thursday and runs for three days. I can assure members that with the numbers flocking to Agfest, given good weather and a fair breeze, there will be a traffic jam in Bracknell. We have seen traffic jams in Derby, Hobart and Launceston, and Agfest delivers a traffic jam for Bracknell. It is a marvellous thing to have the regions active and people flocking to Agfest. I can guarantee that if you need a feed at the Bracknell Hotel on Thursday, Friday or Saturday night, you will be struggling if you don't book early.

More good news is that the first of the 100 new Metro buses to be built in the north-west of Tasmania has rolled off the production line and will soon be hitting our roads as part of the single biggest public transport investment in Tasmania's history. The Metro fleet replacement program will help to build the reputation of the regions as an advanced manufacturing hot spot. This \$31 million investment to renew Metro's ageing fleet has opened the doors to new advanced manufacturing job opportunities in the north-west, with Elphinstone appointing 26 new employees as a result of the project.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has provided an additional \$18 million on top of the \$13 million already allocated to accelerate the bus replacement program. We expect the new buses to be rolled out at the rate of three a month and I am proud it is the Hodgman Liberal Government delivering better public transport for Tasmanians along with more regional manufacturing jobs.

Agfest offers businesses the opportunity to showcase their produce to thousands of people. The Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania has been running this event for 35 years. Agfest is run by a volunteer committee of around 30 young Rural Youth members and ex-members, with an average age of 24. The sole motivation of these young people is the desire to make a significant contribution to agriculture by staging the best possible event. It is an exhausting commitment, but one that provides immense satisfaction and a sense of pride. The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture is a new introduction to the 2018 Agfest this year. It is a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government to showcase and support the agricultural and food sectors and show how they are competitive and sustainable.

As I have mentioned, growing pains are a problem with any growing economy and I know this Government is putting in place additional infrastructure spend and the ability to overcome most of these issues we are facing. I look forward to working as the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development to strengthen the resilience of Tasmania's regions, not getting in the way, destroying jobs in the private sector like the Greens, but helping businesses to believe in Tasmania as a place to invest. The latest Sensis Business Confidence Index demonstrates that businesses in Tasmania are confident about where Tasmania is going. There is belief in Tasmania. It is equally the strongest in the country and I look forward to the continued confidence of business and the associated investment in Tasmania it will bring. Confidence will breed confidence.

It is not just businesses that must invest but young men and women willing to have a go, which is why, as a former TAFE teacher, I was pleased to hear when I visited my old workplace only a few weeks ago that they are on par for more than 100 apprentices over and above last year's intake to be enrolled this year. That is a fantastic achievement and businesses have stepped up employ young people.

Education is the key to a brighter future and I am pleased to be part of a government that highly values education, which can be seen in our plan to extend high schools to year 12. It has already resulted in an increase in retention rates at the extension schools and I look forward to even more of our young people staying engaged in education as we continue to extend all high schools to year 12 and build new high schools like the one at Brighton in my own electorate. The Government is also increasing support to our school farms which are a vital part of regional Tasmania.

I am happy to see many people coming to visit Tasmania. We must continue to ensure that there are quality experiences for them. The success of the investment into walking tracks such as the Three Capes is bringing tourists to Tasmania and I cannot wait to ride on a cable car with them, whether it be up Mt Wellington or Cradle Mountain.

Tasmanian tourism icon Russell Falls is now more accessible for people of all abilities following a major upgrade of the track at Mt Field National Park. The \$280 000 project demonstrates the Hodgman Liberal Government's ongoing support and commitment to the state's booming eco-tourism industry that supports thousands of jobs and attracts visitors from all over the world. Russell Falls is a spectacular glaciated landscape and boasts some of the world's tallest eucalypt forests. It is also one of Tasmania's 60 great walks. Situated in one of the state's oldest national parks, the 25-minute return walk to Russell Falls has been improved with a focus on access

for people with limited mobility. The track has been widened to 1.8 metres, which is wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass, and a bitumen surface has been added to improve the comfort of visitors and families with prams.

Our commitment to take tourism in Tasmania to the next level is continuing, with a new day shelter currently under construction at Mt Mawson.

In the year to December 2017, 1.26 million visitors came to Tasmania, according to Tourism Tasmania December 2017 snapshot. Tourists continue to bring more money into the Tasmanian economy. Visitor expenditure increased by 8.4 per cent to \$2.326 billion. There was just over 1 million interstate visitors to Tasmania in the year to December 2017, up 1.2 per cent from the previous year. For the year to December 2017 international visitors increased by more than 18.4 per cent to 279 000, compared to the year ending December 2016. There was a 39 per cent increase in visitor nights and an increase of more than 11 per cent in average expenditure during their stay.

In 2016, tourism directly contributed about \$1.4 billion to the Tasmanian economy, an increase of 22.2 per cent on the previous year. The total contributions of tourism to Tasmania's gross state product was equal highest in the country. Providing mature environmentally responsible tourism experiences is important and the Government will back business to do that.

Having successfully restored police numbers after Labor's savage cuts, Tasmania's police now total 113 additional officers. We will continue this important growth in police numbers. The Hodgman Government committed to increasing numbers police numbers by 125 in the 2018 election. These additional police officers will be used across the state. Regional areas should expect their fair share of the additional officers.

I draw the attention of the House to the shameful fact that those opposite have opposed mandatory sentencing for serious sexual offences against children. It is most disappointing that they continue to oppose these measures, which 74 per cent of Tasmanians support. It is particularly galling, considering we have a mandate to implement these measures.

Eighty years ago, in Launceston, the St Giles Society was founded. Madam Speaker, I will be looking forward to hosting them with you this year in parliament. Their contribution to supporting Tasmanians with disability is well known. I appreciate all the work they have done for all Tasmanians, in particular a little grandson of mine.

Firearms on farms are tools of trade, needed by farmers to undertaken crop protection and livestock management. I have discussed making a profit previously. It is a good idea to make a profit. It is not a good idea to allow that profit to be eaten by wildlife. Some species are in plague proportions throughout our state and farmers need to be able to control them. I look forward to the memorandum of understanding between the Government, the Tasmanian Police and TFGA.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate everyone on their re-election. Our democracy, freedoms and lifestyle are important to all of us. I appreciate the fact that everyone comes to the Chamber for the right reasons.

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Speaker, I rise to formally second the motion and support the Address-in-Reply to Her Excellency as this Government sets the course to take Tasmania to the next level.

The election on 3 March was a decisive endorsement of the Hodgman Liberal Government's long-term plan for our state. The people of Tasmania placed their confidence in us four years ago and clearly appreciate the direction we are heading. I congratulate Premier Will Hodgman for his strong personal performance and thank him for his leadership, vision and friendship.

Reflecting on Her Excellency's address we are proud to live in a wonderful democracy where every Tasmania voter is given the opportunity to have their say at the polling booth.

I thank the people of Bass who overwhelmingly supported the Liberal team of Peter Gutwein, Michael Ferguson, Bridget Archer, Simon Wood and myself - 58.81 per cent of voters in Bass voted Liberal, which is a clear endorsement of how hard the Government has worked to build a strong future for northern Tasmania. I congratulate Peter and Michael on their convincing re-elections and also congratulate Bridget and Simon for their votes, which highlight the quality of our candidates and the very hard work they put in. I also thank Bridget and Simon for their unwavering support to return a majority Liberal government.

It was a proud day when the Premier asked me to join Cabinet as the Minister for Primary Industries and Water and the Minister for Racing. The response from constituents, stakeholders, colleagues and family and friends has been overwhelmingly positive. I am very humbled to be entrusted with this important responsibility.

Primary industries help define Tasmania. It is an exciting environment with both tradition and innovation. There is no bigger supporter in parliament for the farming and fishing sectors than the Liberal Party. It is important to appropriately and obviously acknowledge the extensive work of Jeremy Rockliff who has set the standard for primary industries ministers to follow. Under Jeremy's leadership we set a course for a future of innovation. In our first term of government we backed our ambitious plan to grow the value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050 with a comprehensive agrifood plan delivering a range of practical initiatives to support agricultural growth. As a result, in 2015-16 the gross farm gate of agricultural production grew by 3.3 per cent to almost \$1.5 billion. We are focused on growth because a strong agricultural economy delivers jobs and opportunity across all regions.

I am excited about the state of Tasmanian agriculture, horticulture and seafood and look forward to building on the good work this Government has already achieved within these sectors. Tasmanian agriculture continues to grow in spite of recent and significant challenges, including droughts, floods and low dairy prices. I look forward to working with industry groups, agribusiness, farmers and fishers to achieve the best Tasmania can be.

In my travels as minister already, meeting with industry leaders, farmers, growers, fishers and agribusiness, I am impressed with their optimism, confidence and unrivalled passion about the future of their industries. As some of you know I established, owned and have operated a vineyard in the Tamar Valley for close to a decade. This has given me first-hand insight into the collaboration, energy, enthusiasm and dedication of the men and women who span primary industries. I have a clear understanding of the challenges that can face farmers and also the important role government plays to encourage industry investment, support research and innovation and ensure trade opportunities exist. My vision is to see Tasmanian farmers, fishers and their families and rural and regional communities prosper.

This Government is a strong supporter of differentiating Tasmanian produce as unique, safe and high value. This can be in promoting new opportunities like hemp and new crop and pasture

seed industries, or building on our traditional strength like red meat, dairy and wool. I value the role of agribusiness and the importance of promoting private sector investment in primary industries whether it is rural supply services, processes or agents.

I look forward to working with the Premier in his new trade portfolio to create further demand and new markets for Tasmanian products. Our Government's clear plan is to develop new export and trade opportunities, selling more of our agriculture and seafood products to the world, promoting our valuable brand and facilitating investment in local agribusiness. At the same time we will continue to work with farmers and producers at the supply end, because when it comes down to the business end it is all about ensuring productive and profitable farms because they create jobs, support sustainability of regional areas and deliver quality products to market.

I am also excited about the role of smaller producers in Tasmanian agriculture in developing innovative agrifood businesses which value-add to our produce, linked to our agritourism and strong food brand in Tasmania. Agriculture is a vital part of our state's future, employing more than 7000 Tasmanians. Proportionately, agriculture is worth more to our economy than in any other state. We have some of the most confident farmers in the nation, and I want to keep it that way. This is why we have committed \$150 million on the next phase of our comprehensive agrifood plan. Our plan is extensive because a commitment to rural and regional Tasmania and protecting the right to farm is at the heart of everything we do. We are improving the long-term agricultural outlook by cutting red tape, growing investment, growing markets and investing in irrigation, skills and research and development.

Our research and innovation agenda is indeed strong, focusing on increasing support for our own Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture so that Tasmania can continue to lead the world in cool-climate agriculture and our farmers have the practical tools and technologies they need to be productive and profitable. With much of our primary industry capacity in the northern half of the state, it makes sense that our DPIPWE staff are where they can be best utilised to those who need it and use it most - our farmers, fishers and rural community. That is why we plan to move 100 positions to Launceston and Devonport.

We recognise the great work done by our Landcare and Natural Resource Management groups across Tasmania. That is why we will put the 'land' back into Landcare by doubling funding for Landcare Tasmania, establishing a new \$2 million Landcare action grants program, establishing a \$5 million weed action fund and providing more funding for natural resource management. We will allocate \$4.5 million to work with farmers and processors on practical strategies to improve farm productivity and profitability throughout the supply chain in the red meat, dairy, wine, fruit and vegetable, wool, honey, hemp and organic sectors.

We understand the importance of water surety to our farmers. Not only does it transform agriculture but it gives farmers security for their existing enterprises and the confidence to invest further. That is why we have committed to build on our irrigation network through an additional \$70 million towards a rollout of tranche 3 irrigation schemes. Tranche 3 has the potential to provide a massive boost to water availability by 50 per cent, delivering an additional 50 000 megalitres to Tasmanian farms. We will also work with farmers, irrigators, rural communities and stakeholders on the Tasmania rural water use strategy to guide our future water management arrangements.

We are planning for the future and working with and for the new generation of primary producers because the future sustainability and, indeed, vibrancy of the sector is predicated on our people. To support the next generation, a very important achievement in our last term of

government was to return agriculture to the curriculum in schools and we are now going to build on that achievement. I am excited about the \$5 million commitment to establish an agricultural centre of excellence in the north-west. This centre of excellence will be based around Burnie's Freer Farm and provide the ability to gain qualifications, such as certificate II and associate and bachelor degrees in qualifications in agriculture, natural resource management and agribusiness.

As we plan for the future we are always mindful that, like any industry, Tasmania's agricultural sector is not without its challenges, as evidenced by the recent fruit fly incursion. We are determined to eradicate fruit fly from Tasmania and protect our pest-free status, which provides access to key markets such as China and Japan. Our own experts in Biosecurity Tasmania have been working alongside stakeholders and industry representatives implementing a range of actions for the detection and eradication of fruit fly. The actions have included baiting, spraying, trapping, inspecting, monitoring and planning, complemented by an extensive community awareness campaign. The fruit fly assistance package is available and we have made it clear that our priority is working with local growers and the Commonwealth to protect our pest-free area status and return to full access in key markets as quickly as possible.

Today I acknowledge the work of those dedicated people combating fruit fly in Tasmania. Throughout the last month I have witnessed firsthand the work being done to protect our produce. Visits to the incident control centres in Launceston and Devonport have given me a further understanding of how the incursion is being managed and the importance of government working in collaboration. I have met members of the trapping and baiting teams and two at the entomology lab. It is a fine and well-organised team working in our state's best interests. I have met with industry representatives and many growers impacted by the incursion, and on each occasion I am left with the impression of how well they are supporting each other. There is a strong sense of industry leadership and personal vision, so to all those involved I thank you.

Our ability to manage this situation is because of our strong biosecurity system, our dedicated Biosecurity Tasmania staff, the partnerships in place with farmers, growers and throughout the supply chain, and the vigilance of the wider Tasmanian community. This is vital for protecting Tasmania's reputation for quality primary produce and our natural environment. We are committed to ensuring our biosecurity system continues to respond to the modern challenges of Tasmania's place in a global marketplace a world of increased trade and increasing visitor numbers.

We invested more into Biosecurity Tasmania year-on-year, and as part of our agrifood plan have committed another \$3 million to help protect Tasmania. This includes investing \$2 million for truck and machinery wash-down stations, providing \$510 000 to expand Biosecurity Tasmania's collaboration with industry groups and farmers to manage risks and support on-farm strategies, and providing \$480 000 for an additional biosecurity officer for both Flinders and King islands to support landholders tackle weeds, pests and other issues affecting agricultural production.

The Government is passionate about Tasmania's seafood industry and sustainable commercial and recreational fishing. The Hodgman majority Government will invest \$26.1 million to further support our wild catch and farmed seafood sector. This sector is worth more than \$900 million to Tasmania and supports thousands of jobs, particularly in regional areas. Tasmania uses science-based fisheries management, so to further support this our world-class Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies will get an increase to \$14 million over five years to provide additional industry relevant research and development to support new sustainable fisheries opportunities.

To reduce red tape and increase efficiencies we will also invest a further \$5 million to further digitalise the Fisheries Integrated Licensing and Management System, ensuring it has the capacity for real-time data transfer, which will further reduce red tape and improve quota management. We will work with the abalone industry to divert 2 per cent of the current royalties to establish an abalone industry reinvestment fund to support projects to help tackle the invasive *Centrostephanis rogersii* and also to help increase abalone stocks through measures including larval seeding.

We are extending the east coast rock lobster translocation program, which is helping to rebuild rock lobster stocks on the east coast by commercial and recreational fishers. We know some in our shellfish sector have had a tough time of it following the outbreak of POMS and we are continuing to support the industry as it recovers. In addition to a significant support package provided to growers, the Government has invested \$1.2 million into the upgraded Analytical Services Tasmania to become a world-class laboratory. Many tests can now be done locally. We have also worked with industry on the new Shell MAP, the new shellfish marketing access program.

I want to stress how important a sustainable salmon industry is to our state. With an annual revenue of nearly \$730 million and supporting an estimated 5200 jobs, our world-class salmonid industry continues to grow sustainably, is managed through strong, independent regulation, and is supported by the community. The Hodgman Liberal Government has significantly strengthened the environmental regulations to support sustainable growth and in December last year launched the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan. Our continuing vision for the industry is to deliver increased tangible benefits through sustainable growth and as a driver of productivity and innovation in our state's economy.

We want the industry to deliver more jobs and economic growth for regional areas in particular. We want our salmon industry to be the most environmentally sustainable in the world by continuing to improve environmental performance through innovation driven by industry, alongside appropriate environmental monitoring and regulation. We want it to remain an industry that Tasmanians are proud of.

The Government also understands the important role that recreational fishing plays in our community. The Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing, TARFish, is a peak body representing recreational marine fishers and we will provide \$620 000 to the organisation over four years to support its important advocacy work. Just as recreational fishing is a passion for many Tasmanians, it also helps support many of our regional communities. This is why we will implement a number of practical actions to improve accessibility of our water ways and make it easier for Tasmanians to fish. Among other initiatives, we will provide \$2.2 million over three years to expand and enhance parking facilities and identify overflow parking opportunities at key sites around Tasmania, such as Coles Bay, Swansea, Burns Bay at St Helens, and Pirates Bay at Eaglehawk Neck.

This Government will freeze the existing inland trout fishing licences at 2017-18 prices for the next four years because we will always be focused on reducing costs for Tasmanians. We are also funding Anglers Alliance Tasmania and other practical initiatives to encourage more people to fish our world-renowned trout fishery, see our stunning environment and to capitalise on Tasmania's place in the angling tourism market.

I might be Tasmania's new Racing minister but I have long understood how the racing industry is a significant contributor to the Tasmanian economy and important for the social fabric of our community, particularly in regional areas. At race meetings across the state over the last month I

have had the pleasure of meeting some of the more than 5000 Tasmanians who are either employed or participants in the racing industry. In our first term, the Hodgman Liberal Government's plan for Tasmania's racing industry has delivered strong results under the leadership of my colleague, Jeremy Rockliff. I will continue to build on this hard work going forward. Over the last four years our Government has worked to help the racing industry achieve sustainability, resulting in Tas Racing recording consecutive profits for the first time. This has created an environment that promotes investment and growth in the industry. Stakes are now higher than they were in 2014 when we took office and Tasmania's magic million yearling sales have delivered record results.

We are also focused on increasing and continuing to work with animal welfare and racing integrity. My vision for the industry going forward is to capitalise on the achievements of our first term to ensure the racing industry can continue to grow sustainably and be competitive. My priority is to work immediately to progress the policies our Government took to the election. This includes boosting prize money to the owners of winning, locally-bred horses by funding \$2.1 million over the next six years towards thoroughbred and harness breeding programs. This incentive to increase breeding of race horses in Tasmania will create new jobs within breeding, racing and associated primary industries and increase Tasmania's presence in the national breeding market.

I know that prize money is the life blood of the racing industry and now that the industry has been placed on a sustainable footing, our goal is that Tasmanian stakes will continue to increase by at least 16 per cent by 2022. I recognise that community racing clubs, supported by hard working and committed volunteers are an important part of Tasmania's way of life. That is why we will establish a capital grants fund of \$250 000 per year to assist community racing clubs across the state to fund infrastructure and maintenance needs that fall outside of Tas Racing's existing infrastructure plan.

Animal welfare and racing integrity will remain an important focus with new steward cadetship positions established in the Office of Racing Integrity to attract and retain new people in steward positions and further strengthen integrity functions. Funding will also be allocated to assist in greyhound rehoming efforts which are demand.

As I focus on continuing to take primary industries and racing sectors to the next level, I could not do this without the solid support of those who put me here, the voters of Bass. My vision is to build a future for northern Tasmania where young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential, where families and communities can prosper and business can succeed. I want to encourage Tasmanians from all walks of life, to participate and contribute to their communities, to help make our state even better.

Throughout my time in public life, I have had the privilege to meet with so many community-minded people and the organisations that they are involved with. It is one of the most inspiring and rewarding aspects of our roles as MPs to have the opportunity to engage so broadly across our community. I thank the many people who selflessly contributed so generously to my re-election. I would not be here today, indeed I would not have made it through the last four years without my dedicated staff. I cannot think of enough superlatives to describe their positive attitude, work ethic, professionalism and sense of humour. To Karen, Helen and Fletcher, thank you.

I also thank my campaign team for the many hours it contributed to support me. To Rowena, Mel, Laura, Roger, John, Elizabeth, Pat, Davina, Jo, David, Elizabeth, Louise, Kay, Toby, Ray, Nick, Ian, Nicole, Vanessa, David, Bram, Lyn, Daryl, Paul, Warren and Meghann, the ground could not have been covered and I would have lost my sanity a long time ago without your support. A

special mention needs to go to Baz: the campaign would have ground to a halt without you. To the men and women of Bass, thank you. I absolutely commit to serving our community to the best of my ability. I said in my inaugural speech that it was the people of northern Tasmania who gave me a sense of place. I do remember this every day.

I congratulate new members and returning members to the House. While we may not agree on some things, I hope we can work to ensure the best outcomes for our beautiful state. I also pay tribute to those in the previous parliament. My friends and fellow Liberals Matt Groom, Nic Street and Joan Rylah for their unwavering contribution to public life. Your support and friendships have been and continue to be very important to me and to my returned colleagues. I look forward to continuing to work with you in a constructive and positive way to deliver meaningful outcomes to our beautiful state.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Sessional Orders - Adoption

[5.29 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business)(by leave) - Madam Speaker, I move the following sessional orders be adopted:

- (1) After Standing Order 18, insert the following Sessional Order:

18A Extension of Day's Sitting

- (1) A Minister may, at any time, but not so as to interrupt another Member while speaking, move without leave and without notice - 'That for this day's sitting, the House shall not stand adjourned at Six o'clock p.m. and that the House continue to sit past Six o'clock p.m.-
 - (2) Such motion supersedes the Main Question, if any, before the Chair.
 - (3) The Question of the extension of the day's sitting may not be amended and debate thereon shall not be allowed for more than twenty minutes, and in speaking thereon, no Member may exceed five minutes.
 - (4) Upon the resolution of the Question of the extension of the day's sitting, Debate on the Main Question, if any, shall resume as if uninterrupted.'
- (2) Standing Order 42 be amended by leaving out paragraphs (a) to (d) and inserting the following new paragraphs:-
 - '(a) Private Members Business will have priority from 2.30 p.m. till 6.00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

- (b) Private Members Business which has been on the Notice Paper for the period required by the Standing Orders may be called on by a Member of the group which has been allocated time pursuant to the following schedule: -

2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	Government Private Members
3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.	Opposition Members
5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	Other Members

- (c) the Member calling on an item in Private Members' Business may, in doing so, state that at the conclusion of that time for the debate on that day, the matter be voted upon.
- (d) at the commencement of the time allocated for a group's Private Members' Business, the Whip or any other Member of that group, may indicate to the Speaker that its time be waived, in which case, the House shall immediately proceed with Government Business for that allocation of time.'
- (3) After Standing Order 48, insert the following Sessional Order:-

'48A Minimum number of Questions

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 47, the Speaker shall ensure that a minimum of questions without notice to be asked shall be seven by the Opposition, four by the Government Private Members and two by other members.'

- (4) Standing Order 76 be amended after paragraph (3), by adding the following new paragraph:-
- '(4) On Tuesdays and Wednesdays priority shall be given to the Opposition to raise a Matter of Public Importance and on Thursdays priority shall be given to Members other than the Opposition. Government Private Members shall only be given priority on every second sitting week.'
- (5) Standing Order 129 be amended by adding new paragraph (2) as follows:-
- '(2) A Member who has moved a substantive motion, or has moved an Order of the Day, may move the adjournment of the debate pursuant to paragraph (1), but such motion shall not be taken to be the "reply" prescribed by Standing Order 128.'

As is the practice at the opening of each Parliament, there are a number of sessional orders required to provide for the efficient and effective functioning of our House. The sessional orders as circulated and drafted set out the allocation of matters of public importance debates, and the times assigned to private Members' business debates each week.

As has been the longstanding practice, these proposed sessional orders allocate a minimum number of questions -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order. I am not sure that we have seen a copy of the sessional orders and the minister said they have been circulated. It might be an oversight.

Mr FERGUSON - They have been circulated and I am happy to have also shared the remaining copy that I had.

As has been the longstanding practice, these proposed sessional orders allocate a minimum number of questions to specific members of the House. Without us agreeing to a sessional order on minimum questions, the House would revert to the Standing Orders, which provide for a question time of one hour with questions allocated at the discretion of you, Madam Speaker, based on well understood conventions of this parliament.

On all these matters the Government proposes to retain the arrangements entered into during the previous parliament, which worked well. The Government regards these arrangements as a fair and equitable allocation of debate time, noting that it is a four minimum, which does not do anything to circumvent members' rights which are provided for in the Standing Orders in any event. It is also a guarantee that all voices, including those that do not have party status in this place, have the ability to be heard.

There are two other matters which the Government has included and has consulted with members opposite in proposed sessional orders which go to an attempt to further improve the housekeeping and management of business before this House. This builds on the practical improvements to the Standing Orders that your predecessor, Madam Speaker Archer, and the Standing Orders Committee commended to this House and which were agreed to.

The first relates to the mechanism for the extension of the sitting times of the House. As has been the practice in the last parliament, the Government attempts to give as much notice as possible that the House would likely sit past the normal 6 p.m. adjournment time. In most cases this Government's practice has been - and we intend to continue - that that advice be provided the evening prior and formalised by the House shortly after question time. Often that has been in other formal business. The Government intends to continue that practice to give notice of the business and other matters relating to the next day's sitting after the adjournment of the evening prior.

However, there have been instances where due to a slower than expected progress of other unforeseen circumstances, and noting as well that we must be mindful of the business of the other place, a decision to extend the day's sitting is at times made later in the same day. The proposed sessional order aims to improve that mechanism and provide greater time for the House to deal with the substantive matters that it needs to attend to rather than debating what are, essentially, housekeeping arrangements. I would like to inform members that on a number of occasions when that has been needed, this House has actually spent more time debating whether or not parliament should sit later than 6 p.m. than was needed past 6 p.m. For reference, during the previous parliament we spent nearly seven hours debating this very matter, and I am sure members would agree that that is seven hours which could have and should have been spent on matters of importance to most Tasmanians.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - You did not even get the circulated brief. I think you should listen to the member opposite.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr FERGUSON - It would always be my intention to discuss with other members of this House, in particular the Leader of Opposition Business, the intended extension of sitting hours prior to moving that motion. Our intention here is about making sure that we have the most efficient and effective use of parliamentary time and resources.

The second provision similarly goes to improving the housekeeping mechanisms of the House by clarifying the ability of a minister to adjourn debate on a government bill without being taken to have commenced their summing up and therefore in that scenario would close off any further contributions on that same bill, which would not be desirable. This proposal will allow a minister to adjourn the debate but still allow other members to make a contribution once that bill comes on again for debate at a later time. A hypothetical scenario could be wanting to adjourn a debate which is in its committee stage and could potentially take up to 140 minutes of the parliament's time to adjourn that debate and get on to some other item of business, which is something the proposal seeks to work around.

These proposals have previously been presented and circulated to other members of this House. I commend them to members and hope to receive their support in so doing.

[5.35 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I flag that we wish to move an amendment to the sessional orders that have been put forward, primarily because they are exactly the same orders that relate to the allocation of questions in the last term of the parliament when the Liberals won a majority and had 15 members and swaggered in here staggering drunk on power and awarded themselves four Dorothy Dixier questions. We had to listen to the galling regurgitation of self-promotion in this place for extended periods during question time. We now come in with new sessional orders and they are exactly the same as they were last time around.

What the Leader of Government Business fails to understand this time, and failed to understand in the previous term, is that the parliament is a place for scrutiny. Government members and ministers have the resources of government at their disposal. They have whole agencies to promote their work. You do not need to come into question time and ask four self-congratulatory Dorothy Dixers because you are afraid of scrutiny from the other side. That is what is four DDs is about.

Mr Bacon - To be fair, you don't have four people to ask them.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - How is your day going?

Mr Gutwein - Better than you - I can count.

Ms O'CONNOR - My day is going pretty well, thanks.

Mr Gutwein - You had five when you were in government.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, we did not.

Madam SPEAKER - I am calling this House to order. I would like to point out that whilst I am supportive of robust debate and do not mind a little bit of banter, I am not going to be presiding over a House full of schoolchildren. I had my parents here today and was going to be very proud to point out that I was in a parliament of grown-ups, so I expect you to behave and respect each other.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your counsel. The point I was making is that there is no justification whatsoever for the same sessional order relating to questions as we had in the last term of parliament. Ironically, when a backbencher got up to ask a minister a Dorothy Dixier question, for example, 'Can the Premier tell us how terrific he is?', we got an honest answer, unlike the questions that came genuinely seeking information.

There is no justification in a proper functioning Westminster parliament for the government of the day to ask itself four Dorothy Dixers in question time, because those are questions that are asked on the public purse. You do not need parliament to promote your work as ministers or as a government. You have public relations departments in government agencies and you have entire agencies at your disposal to publicise your work.

Question time in this place is when members who are non-government members seek information from ministers. This is about scrutiny, accountability and transparency. I know those three words make you squirm a bit on the inside. We saw that in the past four years, but you do not get to come into this place and put in place the same sessional orders that we had last time and not have to deal with justifying yourselves.

Madam Speaker, I therefore move -

That paragraph (3) of the sessional orders be amended by leaving out proposed new sessional order 48A and inserting the following new sessional order 48A:

48A Minimum number of questions.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 47, the Speaker shall ensure that a minimum of questions without notice to be asked shall be eight by the Opposition, two by the Government Private Members and three by other members.

I have circulated these amendments both to -

Mr Ferguson - We got it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, of course you have it and Labor also has a copy. We have circulated these amendments.

There is a very good argument for accepting this amendment. You cannot justify four Dorothy Dixers. If we had to count the number of times you spent asking yourself self-congratulatory questions last time and we docked that against our hourly pay rate, you ripped off the people of Tasmania. You ripped them off because you spent more time self-congratulating than you did answering questions in this place.

Mr Brooks - It is not what the community said at the election.

Ms O'CONNOR - What did the community say at the last election? The community said that you let Government be bought by the gambling industry with around \$5 million or \$10 million. What the community said is that you deserved to lose two seats. Even though \$5 million to \$10 million went into your campaign, you scraped into government by one seat. Arrogance, sold your souls, and then you walk in here with these sessional orders? You are kidding.

We move that this sessional order be amended. It is a relic of another time; that is the last term of the parliament. We know that the Liberals thought they were a bit heavy handed when they came in last time, but nothing has changed.

I support this amendment and I hope that others in this place, who are interested in protecting the Westminster traditions of scrutiny, accountability and transparency, also support this amendment.

[5.41 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, the ability of the parliament to ask questions of the government of the day is vital to upholding accountability and transparency of decision making. This parliament has one hour a day to ask questions of ministers and the ability to seek answers on matters that concern the citizens of Tasmanians should not be limited by government members asking themselves feel-good questions and protecting ministers from scrutiny.

In the interests of open government and transparency, I support this amendment and the Labor Party supports this amendment to allow the Opposition to have one more question each at question time and increase by one the questions asked by others, and to reduce the number of questions the Government members get to ask correspondingly.

With a larger opposition this term, compared to last and a smaller government compared to last term, the sessional orders should change to reflect the new make-up of the parliament and the desire of the Tasmanian public for more open and accountable government.

I remind members that these sessional orders, when they were first changed in 2006 by a former majority Labor Government, gave the government of the time three Dorothy Dix questions. It was not until 2014, when the Liberal Government was elected, that sessional orders were changed to give the government of the day, four Dorothy Dix questions. Perhaps with the membership of 15 on the government benches they can make that argument. Now with a reduced number of members on government benches, they can no longer make the argument that four Dorothy Dix questions can be logical or sustained.

There is a precedent in this House that when there has been a majority government in the past, they have had three minimum Dorothy Dix questions that they were able to ask as part of sessional orders. What we are asking with this amendment is for the sessional orders to change to reflect the

changing nature of the makeup of this parliament, to grant one extra question to the opposition, one extra question to others and to reduce the numbers of Dorothy Dix questions for the government correspondingly.

The Government has an opportunity right now to demonstrate it has listened to the community and its concerns about their desire for enhanced transparency and about enhanced disclosure of how decisions are made, and improve the accountability of the Government by agreeing to these amendments to the sessional orders in the interests of a practical demonstration of open government.

[5.44 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, it is always good to hold an open mind. I have listened very carefully to what Ms O'Connor, the Leader of the Greens, and the Opposition Leader have had to say and I am far from convinced.

The first message I would like to offer through the chair to the Leader of the Opposition, is Leader of the Opposition, you lost the election. You lost government. You lost the opportunity to restore the Labor Party's fortunes in the face of the community and you had the third lowest vote in the 100-year history of the Labor Party.

Ms White - Would you like to meet my new members?

Mr FERGUSON - Having made that comment, the member who moves the amendment has lost one third of her members and is no longer recognised in the Standing Orders.

Ms O'Connor - I retained my soul and my integrity.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - There have been some poor recitations of history here. First of all, the Leader of the Opposition, who lost the last election comprehensively, needs to be reminded that it was when the Liberal opposition, the same size as this current Labor Opposition, was granted how many questions by the then Labor-Green government? I wonder if the member would remember. I wonder if the member cares to remember.

Ms O'Byrne - As a government we had three.

Mr FERGUSON - It was six.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. You are testing my patience. We will exit this Chamber if you keep this up. Respectful debate, please.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, it is the case that when the appalling Labor-Green government was defeated and the Hodgman majority Liberal government was installed, the then Labor opposition was just seven members. So pound for pound, the opposition, the Liberal opposition of 10 had six questions a day. The Liberal government agreed the then Labor opposition, with just seven members, should have seven questions. That is an extra question to what we were given by these people who are now having a big sook. Let us now spend a moment on the last time that Labor and the Greens were in power together. There were not four, not three, there were six questions that the Labor-Green government gave to itself.

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - All this hissy fitting going on from members opposite has to be seen for what it is. Is it forgetful memory or a willingness to lead themselves down a path of false history?

It is not unreasonable nor unexpected for any member of a party or a pseudo party to try to gain more minimum numbers of questions. The truth remains.

Ms O'Connor - We are talking about the Westminster system here.

Mr FERGUSON - The truth remains that Ms O'Connor at the 2014 election lost party status and the government preserved the right of Ms O'Connor to ask, every sitting week, six questions guaranteed and, if time permitted within the hour, the Speaker would grant even more. Now, one third of your members have evaporated -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. This is my final warning or we will be suspending this House or certain members.

Mr FERGUSON - No one should be deceived. Despite the fact that Ms O'Connor has lost one third of her membership, the Government is proposing that she get exactly the same number of guaranteed minimum questions every question time. I do not see what is so bad about that from the point of view of a member of parliament who does not even have party status.

We recognise that particularly for the Opposition, question time is a vital time for Government scrutiny. So, despite the fact that when Labor was last in power they only gave the Liberal opposition six guaranteed questions a day, we held them at seven and we are proposing to keep them at that. If it were the case that the House could not agree on this, if we could not carry this, then it would be the Standing Orders as they are currently written which would persist. That would be no guaranteed minimums. Is that what you want? I think not.

This is not so much about me or the Government having to prove how fair and reasonable we are being. That is not what this is about. It is about ensuring that the parliament and every single member of this House, including Liberal members, have as much a claim on questions on behalf of their constituents as the Labor or Green members. Just as much claim to be able to represent their constituency, to ask questions of ministers, and you are trying to deny Liberal members the opportunity to do that.

In explaining why we are not supporting this amendment, it should be clearly demonstrated that this proposal by Government is to ensure that members have all their rights protected and make a clear point that what Ms O'Connor is doing and what the Leader of the Opposition is now doing in yet another demonstration of Labor-Green deal making that they cannot help themselves. They want to again cook the books and artificially inflate the numbers of questions everyday that they should be able to ask. The fact is that the member has all of her rights preserved and the standing orders do not diminish the fact that if time permits and if the House gets through more than that minimum number of questions, there can be even more.

[5.50 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, may I seek some advice from you? Are you calling yourself Madam Speaker or Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - I think Madam Speaker is probably appropriate.

Ms O'BYRNE - Just checking. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I do want to pick some of the commentary by the Leader of Government Business, having been the Leader of Government Business during the period of 2010 to 2014. I am sorry if my voice does not project too much at the moment, but in order to remind the member opposite about what occurred, the Government had a minimum of three - and this started around 2009 - questions that we were allowed to ask ourselves. The opposition had a minimum of seven, but the Speaker would always err on the side of the opposition and granted them at least usually around seven, so the standard number of questions increased. More questions were asked in that period of time, but what was really crucial is that the government of the day only had three questions. It was very rare that we would get that extension to the fourth question.

The reason that we did that - the reason that we held it to that - was that the scrutiny of government does matter. There is only one hour a day where you genuinely get to ask ministers direct questions and you generally are supposed to get answers. The questions from our own side, when you are in government, are of course to highlight government policy of your day, and there are, as has been said, many opportunities to do that. The member who just spoke says clearly we gave questions to the Greens and therefore you had a number of Dorothy Dixers. The member clearly does not remember the questions from the former member, Kim Booth, and from Basil which were never Dorothy Dix questions, I can assure you, and were often very difficult - in many cases far more difficult - to answer than the ones that were coming from this side of the House.

The point of the debate today is that in a time -

Mr Ferguson - Oh Basil, you're such a cutie.

Mr Brooks - He was a government parliamentary secretary. Seriously.

Madam SPEAKER - Member for Braddon, you have interjected many times this afternoon and I am getting quite annoyed.

Ms O'BYRNE - The point of the debate today - and wherever it ends up - is that question time is about scrutiny and in a time when we know that the public debate -

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Speaker, point of order. Just for clarification, is this a point of order for the member from her seat or is it a speech where the minister has -

Madam SPEAKER - It is my understanding that the member is speaking to the amendments.

Mr JAENSCH - She said 'point of order'.

Madam SPEAKER - I did not hear a point of order.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am speaking to the amendment. I asked for a point of clarification of the Speaker in terms of the appropriate address that she wanted in the House.

Madam Speaker, there are significant debates in the community at all levels of government about appropriate levels of scrutiny and transparency. I think that an act of this parliament that delivers a really concrete demonstration of greater scrutiny where the Government does remove the amount of questions that it asks itself for glorification would be a significant vote for the Tasmanian people that this parliament intends to be transparent. That is the reason we are quite supportive of the motion that has been put by the member for Denison, Ms O'Connor.

Madam SPEAKER - Any further discussion? No. The question is that amendment be agreed to. Those of the opinion say aye; to the contrary, no. That was a split vote. Do we need a division? I am not supporting the amendment, so I think we need a division.

Mr FERGUSON - If I may assist the House: my understanding is that I have moved a motion; Ms O'Connor has moved an amendment. The Government on the voices has called no and I believe members opposite have called yes. I await your ruling as to which voices you are awarding.

Madam SPEAKER - The Noes have it.

The House divided -

AYES 12

Mr Bacon (Teller)
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Haddad
Ms Houston
Ms O'Byrne
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White
Dr Woodruff

NOES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Brooks (Teller)
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hidding
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 12 Ayes and 12 Noes. I therefore have to use a casting vote. In accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

[6.01 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - I will now move an amendment to the Standing Orders. This amendment relates to the capacity of every member in this place, whether they are a member of a party that is recognised by people in this place as a political party or not, to properly scrutinise legislation. I understand that there will be no support for this change but I think it is a point worth making. In the last term of parliament, because of this regressive standing order where speaking rights on the Greens when we were trying to scrutinise bills were limited, so on any clause you could only ask two questions for a maximum of 10 minutes. That meant that instead of saying, 'My question to the minister on clause 2C(e) is what is that going to mean for people who need a home?' and then sit down, we felt that because we only had two cracks at any clause we would have to take the full 10 minutes and it became really unproductive for the parliament's time.

If we had a particular objection to a bill we would use every opportunity within the restrictive Standing Orders as they were to scrutinise each clause, which meant a minimum of 20 minutes from one Green MP on a clause in a bill. It gets back to the primary purpose of a Westminster Parliament, which is to properly scrutinise legislation to make sure the legislation we send to the other place is the best it can be, and to make sure that if the legislation needs improving it is improved in this place through a rigorous scrutiny process.

I have not seen in other parliaments where there is such restrictions on members to scrutinise the clauses. There may be many examples of this, but I think ultimately it wastes the parliament's time. I therefore move -

That paragraph (4) of the Standing Orders be amended by inserting the following new paragraph:

Standing Order 115, section (1)(b)(v), be amended by omitting 'four' and inserting instead 'two'.

Mr Ferguson, the Leader of Government Business in the House - as he did for the previous four years, I might note - really enjoys telling the Greens MPs in this place that we are not a party. My word, we are a party. The Tasmanian Electoral Commission recognises us as a party, our thousands of members and supporters recognise we are a political party, and we are the only political party in this place that will stand up for Tasmania's environment and the communities who want to defend it every single time. Mr Ferguson, I expect to hear you over the next four years give us a lecture on how we are not a party but it is wishful thinking on your part. We are not going away, we are not going anywhere; we will be here every day defending this island, its environment and the communities that are sustained by it.

I move this amendment to the Standing Orders knowing exactly what is going to happen to it, but it is an amendment that would improve the functioning of this House because it would mean that on legislation where there was a problematic clause, we could ask six questions on a clause instead of two of 10 minutes and we might actually get to the bottom of the clause and make some improvements along the way, rather than feeling resentful and therefore having to speak for the full 10 minutes twice on every clause because of how oppressive the Standing Orders are in this place for members who do not belong to the duopoly.

[6.05 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - I thank Ms O'Connor for her proposal but I saw her coming so I have some notes prepared. I know this has been a matter the Greens members have pursued since they lost their party status at the 2014 election when their numbers dropped below the party threshold that had been previously agreed by this House - I do not know when - which is four members and is set out in standing order 115.

Standing order 115 makes a global allocation of time limits which apply to everybody in this House except by exception. Second, it provides that in committee of the whole House, every single member, unless otherwise expressly provided for, gets two opportunities to question a minister in the clauses. The Standing Orders are clear that the increased speaking provisions are there to assist opposition scrutiny of government legislation. As I read it, it is a specific provision extended to the Leader of the Opposition, who has an unlimited opportunity to scrutinise government legislation when that legislation has reached the clauses stage.

As I read it, the Leader of the Opposition, as is customary, more or less deputises that ability to his or her shadow ministers, ensuring that the relevant shadow minister can exercise that same opportunity to thoroughly scrutinise government legislation, as oppositions do, without being restricted to two questions. It is not a right extended to Liberal backbench members in the Government, for example. It is not extended to anyone else other than the Leader of the Opposition and, difficult as it may be for Ms O'Connor to hear this, the leader of a recognised party consisting of at least four members.

Ms O'Connor's amendment seeks to not increase the number of opportunities ordinary members of the House have to scrutinise and ask questions in the clauses, not at all. She is not looking to be concerned for any other member, for example, a member of the opposition who is not the shadow minister. In your amendment you are just trying to drop what the party status threshold is from four, which you lost at the 2014 election, to what number? Oh, it just happens to be the number you have, two. That is what is really going on here.

It is self-evident that you would want to do that. We understand that, but for your own argument about being effective and useful and good use of everybody's time, every single member of this House is provided a number of speaking opportunities. For the reasons I have outlined on this occasion, the Government will not be supporting that amendment.

[6.09 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand here for the first time with you as the new Speaker of the House, so congratulations.

The Tasmanian Greens are a recognised party. It is ludicrous to say otherwise. In this instance, we are talking about the functioning of Parliament and the role of this House and every member in it to scrutinise the legislation that comes before us. It is not sensible to make a comparison with a government backbencher and a member of the Labor Party or the Tasmanian Greens in terms of scrutinising the legislation that comes to this House from the Government. They are all members who are capable through the Government's own internal processes, backbenchers, to make comment on bills before they come before us. The question here is the ability of the Greens and the Labor opposition to be able to scrutinise and to make reasonable changes. This is about being able to have a conversation and improve the quality of the legislation. In the last four years of parliament time and again I stood here with a 10 minute period of time and put up win-win proposals on clauses and never a word, never a sentence was changed. That is a decision for the Government to make, whether they are trenchantly opposed to making any changes on a point of face-saving. The issue is the waste of time of parliament when it involves standing up and taking the full 10 minutes just for the sake of saying one or two lines which was often the case with complex long bills where there were simply small changes that were being proposed and they did not need to spin out into long periods of time.

As the Leader of the Greens has said, it is difficult not to want to take the full amount of time when it is so constrained. It is a matter of being able to have the conversation and scrutinise the bills that come before us on behalf of the people we represent and the issues that they are concerned about.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Role of Speaker

[6.12 p.m.]

Madam SPEAKER - I thank honourable members for their good wishes on my election as your Speaker. I now wish to make a short statement to the House.

Today the parliament, by secret ballot, elected me to the position of Speaker of the House of Assembly. I am honoured to have been chosen as the second female Speaker of this House, following in the footsteps of the Honourable Ms Elise Archer, now the Attorney-General of the State of Tasmania. I hope to be able to emulate her promotion of parliament and her fairness and support of all members. I will also be looking for more free-flowing debates in the House.

Today I have advised Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, that I will support the Will Hodgman majority government on the floor of the House for matters of supply and confidence.

In all other matters I will consider my position based on the merits of the argument and what is in the best interests of the people of Tasmania. This advice has also been formally provided to the Honourable Will Hodgman, Premier of Tasmania. Successive Speakers of this parliament have striven to discharge their duties with impartiality. As a rule, Speakers have been sufficiently detached from government activity to ensure what can be justly claimed to be a high degree of impartiality in the Chair. I plan to follow this policy and, as a result, I have advised the Premier that I will not be attending any meetings of the Parliamentary Liberal Party.

Members are entitled to expect the Speaker's functions will be carried out with impartiality. At the same time, I am entitled to expect support from all members of the House, regardless of their party. I am going to make this short statement today so that everyone understands in going forward what will occur.

The Speaker of the House of Assembly must maintain, in an impartial, non-partisan manner, the order and security of the House and restrain unruly or unparliamentary behaviour. I must also maintain the integrity and independence of the parliament and safeguard its authority and protect its members, which includes close involvement with the Standing Orders and Privileges committees of the House.

As well, I must undertake official duties for the Parliament, for example, to transmit approved money bills to Her Excellency, the Governor, for royal assent and represent the Parliament during VIP visits.

I intend to be an independent Speaker. To assist that independence the Speaker does not have a vote in the normal parliamentary process. Instead I have a casting vote which is used to decide an issue that has been deadlocked on an equal vote of the House. I will listen quietly and intently to the debates in the Chamber and then decide my position.

To conclude, I say to honourable members that I am looking forward to being an independent Speaker in an exciting and vibrant parliament that will work in the best interests of all citizens of Tasmania as is its charter. I thank the members for your indulgence.

MOTION

Committee Memberships - Appointment

[6.15 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - It was my intention to move a motion as set out in the program. I have had circulated an alternative motion in relation to committees. I just wish to clarify that has been provided. I am happy to read it out. It might be better if the House were to take it as read. I am getting that indication.

Madam Speaker, I now move the motion which has been set out and which I tabled with the Clerk:

Standing Committees

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

The Chair of Committees;
Mr Brooks; and
Ms Butler.

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

The Chair of Committees;
Mr Brooks; and
Ms Standen.

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

Mr Bacon;
Mr Brooks; and
Mr Hidding.

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

The Chair of Committees;
Mr Hidding; and
Ms Houston.

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

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees;
The Minister for Health;
Ms Haddad; and
Mr O'Byrne
be of the Committee (S.O. 325)

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

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees;
The Leader of the Opposition;
The Minister for Health; and
Mr O'Byrne.
be of the Committee (S.O. 324)

Sessional Committees

7. That the following Members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Library:-

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees;
Dr Broad;
Mr Brooks;
Ms Dow; and
Mr Hidding.
(S.O. 323)

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

The Speaker;
The Chair of Committees; and
Mr O'Byrne.
(S.O. 323)

[6.16 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Denison - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, we will not be voting against this motion but I do want to point out to the House that we are no longer on the Integrity Committee of the Tasmanian Parliament. I take this opportunity to say a couple of things.

The first is that it was substantially as a result of the advocacy of the Tasmanian Greens, initially Peg Putt as Leader, and then Nick McKim as the shadow justice and attorney-general spokesperson for the Greens, who pushed hard to establish the Integrity Commission. The parliament in 2008 established a joint select committee inquiry into an anti-corruption and ethics body in Tasmania. I might have only just been elected at that time and I had been a member of Save Ralphs Bay and made a submission to that inquiry. We established through an act of

parliament in 2009 the Integrity Commission, which is an extremely important body, when it is operating effectively, to ensure that there is a lens applied to public office in this state, that standards of ethics are upheld by public officials, and that there is an education program on ethics across our community.

Plenty of questions have been asked, particularly during the campaign, on the effectiveness of the Integrity Commission in dealing with matters of misconduct, corruption, impropriety of the people who are public officers or public officials. We believe that the Integrity Commission has the powers but it needs to use those powers effectively. We believe the Integrity Commission is exactly the body to have a look at the amount of dark money that flowed into the Liberal Party to help them win an election.

I acknowledge the work of Peg Putt, Nick McKim and Dr Woodruff, who has been our representative on the Integrity Committee from the time she was elected on a recount after Senator Nick McKim went to Canberra. I acknowledge it because it is in the legislation.

We are no longer entitled to a spot on the Integrity Committee but I believe it will diminish the work of that committee not to have a strong Greens voice on it. It will weaken the effectiveness of that committee because we are the party that has pushed to make sure that the Integrity Commission has the powers and that the five yearly review met at least some of the recommendations of the Integrity Commission. We were the party that pushed for the crime of misconduct in public office to be put onto the statute in Tasmania. We are the only jurisdiction without that crime. I want to record it as a matter of regret that you do not have Greens on the Integrity Committee any more. We will be back, but if not for the work of the Greens in the Tasmanian parliament and in the public debate on this issue I very much doubt whether we would have an Integrity Commission because it was then Premier David Bartlett who worked with then Greens Leader Nick McKim to make sure we did have an Integrity Commission. The Greens have played a critical role in this. I wish the Integrity Commission all the best in its work and I hope it accepts the referrals that have been made to it about the gambling industry's purchase of government for the Liberals, but we will be keeping a very close eye on the work of the committee to the greatest extent we can and will continue to advocate for the Integrity Commission itself to fully exercise its powers in the interests of all Tasmanians.

Motion agreed to.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - On your indulgence, Madam Speaker, I thank members for their contributions in those earlier discussions and ask that we all work together to make sure the House continues to serve our community.

TASMANIAN HEALTH SERVICE BILL 2018 (No. 3)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Ferguson** and read the first time.

The House adjourned at 6.22 p.m.