

Thursday 30 May 2019

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

QUESTIONS

Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of the Auditor-General

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.03 a.m.]

Yesterday you refused to answer a very simple question related to the Auditor-General's damning report on the performance of Tasmania's four major hospitals in the delivery of emergency department services. Will you accept in full the 10 important recommendations in the Auditor General's report?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, we had an extensive discussion about this yesterday. I have given the Leader of the Opposition a very clear indication of exactly what the Government will be doing in regard to this. I have instructed my department to give urgent and comprehensive advice to the Government on these matters and all the recommendations. We will be working with all stakeholders at the Access Solutions meeting next month to address these long-term challenges.

There is urgency on my part. The Auditor General's report has come at a very useful time. I embrace the report. I embrace the recommendations. As I said yesterday the Government is progressing them. I am particularly attracted to the first three recommendations, on which the Auditor General has placed the most emphasis. The Leader of the Opposition can take it from my answer that it is my intention to accept the recommendations but I hope you understand that others need to also have input into the feasibility and timing of how we can implement those. The Leader of the Opposition can assist us because you are going to potentially be part of the solution, as will be a representative from the Greens.

I hope to work with the department and, next month, with Royal Hobart Hospital key staff. I hope to work with key stakeholders, including the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

There is a small amount of process work that I ask the House to appreciate that a responsible government should do. I would be wrong to react in a knee-jerk way and accept in full recommendations that were provided only two days ago. It would be seen for what it is, a reaction.

I intend to accept the recommendations. I am working through that with urgency, particularly the first three recommendations, which the Auditor-General advised are the most urgent.

Since I have been asked about this, and the politics unfortunately continues to be played, I will advise the House of exactly what the Auditor-General said. Others have been attempting to speak for him and his report. It is fair and appropriate that we have an honest account of the Auditor-General's report.

Mr Whitehead said that inefficiency across the system was partly due to capacity constraints, particularly at the Royal, which is undergoing redevelopment, but also because of long-standing weaknesses within hospitals impeding effective discharge planning, bed management and coordination between EDs and inpatient areas.

That is exactly what the college is also saying, hence the need for inpatient bed management reform.

He goes on to say in his public statement -

Successive reviews over the last decade have highlighted dysfunctional silos, behaviours, process barriers and resistance to change from some clinicians and administrators as the major drivers of these inefficiencies.

I will emphasise his next sentence -

These issues mainly lie outside of EDs but are within the control of hospital leadership teams and are yet to be addressed.

The concluding statement in his public media release, where he is seeking what I am seeking, that parties work together -

Mr O'Byrne - You have been doing it for five years.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr FERGUSON - If you are interested in solutions, let us listen to the experts. Mr Whitehead noted -

The Government had recognised these challenges and introduced significant reforms to the Tasmanian health system in 2018 aimed at improving governance and THS performance.

Mr Bacon - Was it not undoing your own reform?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr FERGUSON - He says -

As these changes are in the early stages of implementation, they cannot yet be reliably assessed.

Here is the call for working together. He concluded -

Urgent action was needed to leverage these reforms and further strengthen whole-of-hospital and system-wide leadership, coordination and accountability for addressing the long-standing barriers to improve patient flow.

I intend to accept the recommendations, but as a responsible government, we will be working with our experts, our invitees including the Labor member, the Green member and those people

who are working within the health system who actually understand where these inefficiencies and blockers lie and how we can free them up.

Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of the Auditor-General

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.09 a.m.]

Some of the Auditor-General's most damning criticisms were reserved for the lack of leadership in hospitals and governance churn in the health system.

The report states -

The significant churn in governance arrangements and leadership positions across the health system in recent years was regarded as a major barrier to achieving progress, follow-through and coordination.

It was you who dismantled local hospital leadership, shortly after becoming minister. It was you who appointed David Alcorn as the head of the THS and stubbornly refused to listen to concerns that he was contributing to the problem. On 14 July 2016 you said -

I refute any suggestion by the AMA that the proposed changes to the structure of the state's health system is unworkable. It is the broken system with regional barriers that has let Tasmanians down for far too long.

You were then forced to abandon the dysfunctional THS executive at a considerable cost to taxpayers and nearly 12 months later, the new governance structure is still not settled. Minister, you were the architect of the botched reforms that have plagued the system for half a decade. When are you going to admit to yourself and to Tasmanians that you are the problem?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Government has worked closely to give Tasmanians the health system that it deserves and we have made significant inroads.

Ms O'Byrne - Tasmanians deserve better than what's happening now.

Mr FERGUSON - The member who is interjecting left things in a hell of a mess; we acknowledge that. We took responsibility, we listened to the experts and we made a decision. This Government has taken collective responsibility for the collective failure by members opposite. That was the challenge we faced. By the way, the reforms we introduced in 2014 and the further reforms that we brought in 2018 have been universally supported at each important step, including from the Opposition, as I recall.

I want to debunk one point in the question. I cannot remember the exact words but the suggestion that we have taken away local hospital leadership is not correct. That is false. That is mythology that cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. In 2017 I made a very clear and public statement that we did not believe we got the balance quite right, hence the 2018 bill which I brought

to this House. It was the first bill that I introduced and every member signed up to that and agreed to it.

Lest the Auditor-General be verbally again by the Leader of the Opposition, I again note that Mr Whitehead has said publicly that the Government had recognised these challenges and introduced significant reforms to the Tasmanian health system in 2018, aimed at improving -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Please listen to the words of the Auditor-General.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms White and Ms O'Byrne.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Whitehead noted the Government had recognised these challenges and introduced significant reforms to the Tasmanian health system in 2018 aimed at improving governance and THS performance. That is rather complimentary; that the Government gets the challenge, gets the problem and is doing its responsible job to provide the right level of support. Importantly, he has added:

As these changes are in the early changes of implementation, they cannot yet be reliably assessed.

He concluded:

Urgent action was needed to leverage these reforms and further strengthen whole-of-hospital and system-wide leadership, coordination and accountability.

I hope nobody is arguing with that because on the one hand, it is complimentary that we have been moving in the right direction. The Government and I have accepted that we did not get the balance right in our first term of government. We have made significant improvements and I will not walk away from that. Neither should the Opposition, because we all agreed it was the right thing to move to one health system and in this very Chamber we have provided more empowerment to local hospital teams. It is with that in mind that I will continue on behalf of the Government and the Tasmanian people to support exactly those recommendations that lead us towards real solutions for Tasmanian patients to get access to our hospitals, not this petty political point-scoring exercise which is helping nobody.

Budget 2019-20 - Mental Health Facilities

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.14 a.m.]

In 2015 Coroner Olivia McTaggart held an inquest into the tragic death by suicide of six schoolchildren and recommended a dedicated inpatient unit be built for young people aged 12 to 25 who suffer mental illness or suicidality. Here we are, four years later and Tasmania is still without a dedicated acute youth mental health ward. Sadly, this week another coronial inquest is being heard into the death by suicide of another bright and beautiful young Tasmanian who travelled interstate because he could not get the mental health care in our state when he needed it. For your sixth budget in a row, minister, you have starved CAHMS of funding and failed to fund a dedicated

child and youth acute mental health inpatient unit. Instead, you have funded a general hospital ward but there is no certainty it will have the specialist mental health services and staffing it needs. What do you say to those parents today, who I know are writing personal letters to you and are battling on their own to keep their children safe?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, that is an appalling rewriting of the Budget. That is an appalling statement by the member -

Dr Woodruff - There is nothing in there; no commitment in black and white.

Mr FERGUSON - This Budget provides the very funding that will enable the opening of those dedicated inpatient adolescent units, not just in the south, but also in the north. I think Tasmanian parents and families, and I say this very assertively, are very poorly served by this negativity when the Government is just on the edge of opening those facilities, which have taken years to build. They are now on the point of delivery.

In the north of Tasmania we are currently building that facility for northern families. It is the first time that such a service has been -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. This is a very important subject and we want to hear the answer. I suggest that everyone be quiet.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I am passionate about this subject because every life lost to suicide is a complete tragedy. It is very regrettable to me, and I hope to members opposite, that these facilities have not been previously available in any region under any government of any colour. We are now building these facilities.

As a former school teacher, I have seen the damage done to families and young lives through the very sad incidence of suicide and self-harm, and it is reprehensible that people in the community continue to hear these messages that the Government is not providing these services when we are just about to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. So the minister can calm himself a little bit, perhaps he could point the House to that section of the Budget that funds an acute mental health unit for young people.

Madam SPEAKER - I appreciate that it is not a point of order. I am sure the minister will be able to point to it at some stage.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, that is an irrelevant point of order. The answer to the question that they could have asked is in budget paper 2, volume 1, Department of Health. It is there in black and white.

We are here to serve the Tasmanian people truthfully, and the Tasmanian families who are out there listening to these negative statements are being misled - and by the Leader of the Opposition

as well. They are being told that the Government is ignoring these cries for help. I want to say it is very sad that it has not been possible before now.

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, can I continue?

Madam SPEAKER - Yes. The minister will be heard in silence.

Mr FERGUSON - It is very sad and regrettable that these facilities have not been available before and there may be a time where it would be reasonable to have that political argument, but I will not have that argument today. I want Tasmanian families to know that -

Dr Woodruff interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Do you want the truth? Please listen to it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff - warning number one.

Mr FERGUSON - We are very passionate about this. The Premier and every member on this side of the House joins me in this. We are determined to drive down suicide rates in our state and especially for vulnerable families and young Tasmanians. I have the melancholy, if you like, bittersweet news to allow members to understand that we are pleased to see that the rate has been coming down. It is never good enough until it is zero, but we are also doing our part and I want Tasmanians to know -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I said 'in silence'.

Mr FERGUSON - I want the Tasmanian people to know that they cannot listen to those criticisms and take it as fact. It is not fact. The truth is that we are currently building the facilities for a dedicated inpatient adolescent unit in the south as part of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment. It is not just the physical space. We are also funding the beds. It is in the Budget. The same is true in the north for Launceston, with eight beds. I want to send that message of reassurance and I want members of the Opposition to stop saying things to Tasmanians that are not true.

Wages Negotiations - Australian Education Union

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.20 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Government's negotiations with the Australian Education Union?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The Government and the Australian Education Union worked collaboratively to develop a new teachers' agreement, an agreement the

AEU executive unanimously endorsed earlier this month on 10 May. This offer received overwhelming support from teachers, with 70 per cent of AEU members who participated in the poll voting to accept the agreement in principle. That is why it is disappointing that the AEU has now withdrawn their support.

In relation to the Government's offer, the AEU president at the time described it as a great offer for teachers and the AEU branch executive would be strongly recommending members to support the offer in an upcoming vote. This is an extraordinary and undemocratic backflip. You would have expected the AEU to respect their members' endorsement. If rejected tomorrow by the AEU, it will mean that major benefits for teachers that have been negotiated will be unfunded and cannot proceed.

These include: two hours less instructional time for primary school teachers, which is an issue the union has been pushing for some three decades; the employment of an additional 95 specialist teachers for primary schools ensuring students weekly access to classes such as music, art or physical education; introduction of a new pay level and new pay rises for advanced school teachers; and the ability for appropriately qualified teacher assistants to take-up positions under the teaching award entitling them to benefits including paid school holidays.

It seems the sticking points are the change in relief teacher pay-loading, which would equate to \$71 an hour for experienced teachers under the new offer, and concerns about attracting relief teachers, which the Government is addressing in the offer. We have proposed a permanent pool of relief teachers of at least 50 full-time equivalent staff to be placed in over-quota, hard to staff schools that cannot attract relief and will be able to pay relief teachers more. It is worth noting that relief teacher changes were included in the counter-offer put to the Government by the AEU on 6 May, which they proactively told media about and referred to as a 'circuit breaker'.

Tasmanians are entitled to ask how the Government is supposed to negotiate with the union movement when an offer unanimously endorsed by the AEU executive and then supported by the majority of teachers, 70 per cent, is then backflipped on. It is incredibly disappointing. We have negotiated in good faith. We had an agreement, unanimously endorsed by the AEU executive -

Mr O'Byrne - How many times have they had to walk in streets? How many times have they had to strike? How many times did you dock their pay?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne, warning number one.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Seventy per cent of the members supported this agreement in principle. Some of these areas of improvement, for more resources, less instructional hours, are areas the union movement has been fighting for some three decades. That is why it is incredibly disappointing. The teachers, the students and the schools lose out as a result of this backflip.

I urge reconsideration by the Australian Education Union. I reinforce that we want to work collaboratively with the Australian Education Union. We want to find more resources for our schools and we have as a result of the work we have done over the course of the last five years. There are 220 more teachers in our schools than in 2014 when we first came to Government. There are 231 more teacher assistants in our schools and 41 more administrative staff in our school system than in 2014. As we discussed yesterday in the matter of public importance, a very important resource of some 64 more-support staff in our schools.

We have always been willing to listen, particularly on workload issues and these hard-fought gains by the union movement over such a long period of time, including instructional hours and more teachers in our schools, and specialist teachers. I urge the union: these are issues you have been fighting for so please do not lose the opportunity. We do not want to lose it and our teachers and our students deserve better.

Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of the Auditor-General

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.25 a.m.]

In March 2016, a woman miscarried in a chair while waiting in the emergency department of the Royal Hobart Hospital. In response you announced Patients First, which you described as a 'comprehensive action plan to reduce the amount of time patients wait for treatment ...'. The Auditor-General's report notes the following -

The Patients First actions were viewed as well intentioned, but ill-conceived initiatives that in effect comprised 19 siloed projects that were imposed on the health system with little, if any, consultation.

Patients First was your initiative and is typical of your approach to grasping for short-term headlines rather than long-term outcomes. Are you willing to admit that Patients First was a failure, like nearly everything else that you have touched in the Health portfolio?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will leave the personal jab where it started. It shows that the petty politics continue to persist over on the other side. Recommendation 8 of the Auditor-General's report highlights that there are outstanding action recommendations from both my Patients First as well as the previous government's Monaghan reviews. It is a specific mention in recommendation 8 and what the Auditor-General is saying is move on and continue to implement those -

Ms White - A comprehensive action plan, you called it, to reduce patient waiting time in the ED. It didn't though, did it?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms White.

Mr FERGUSON - and review them and, where relevant, action outstanding recommendations.

This is a Government that really cares for Tasmanians accessing health care. We are concerned and I am. I see you shaking your head. I know you will be upset I have pointed that out but we do care. We want Tasmanians to have better access to health care.

As a result of the 2016 initiatives we then embarked on opening 130 additional beds including at the Royal Hobart Hospital, all intended to provide better access to care. One of the specific actions out of that, which the Leader of the Opposition continues to wilfully ignore, is that we expanded the emergency department. I do not have the number in front of me but we provided significant new treatment spaces. The reason we did that was because the staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital showed me some of the spaces they felt could be expanded into, we agreed to that and we are about providing better access to care. Members opposite, I hope there will come a day when

you will lay aside your blame game because you are helping no-one. There is an opportunity and the Government intends to seize it to drive further reform. The Government will always do what it can, everything it can, to improve our health system. That means expanding access.

If you only listened to what the Leader of the Opposition has to say, you would think the Auditor-General was trying to criticise the Government. He has not tried to do that at all. What the Auditor-General has been very clear about is that the Government has recognised the challenges and introduced significant reforms to the Tasmanian health system in 2018, aimed at improving governance and THS performance. What the Auditor-General is saying to me and you, Ms White, is that the issues lie mainly outside of EDs but are within the control of hospital leadership teams, they are yet to be addressed and there is an opportunity to deal with these internal efficiencies and potentially open up thousands of bed days not currently available but could be.

Ms White - You are the leader of the health system. You have been for half a decade.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - It will be with that mindset this Government takes the Auditor-General's report very seriously but we will not stop there and nobody should allow us to stop there. We will continue to open more beds. We are just about to complete the Royal Hobart Hospital, which has been promised for many, many years.

Ms O'Byrne - Just about?

Mr FERGUSON - That is right. We are just about to finish it and we will be moving into it as soon as we safely can. I answered this question yesterday and the Leader of the Opposition did not like my answer. I said we are honouring our commitments on time in opening more beds, the first of the new beds is funded from 1 July of next year.

Ms White - Middle of next year.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, but now you must also acknowledge there is a further line item in the Budget that holds out the opportunity through the Access Solutions meeting to open those beds even earlier. A responsible Opposition would welcome that. That is a good thing and the Government should do that. That is why we put it in the Budget. I ask you to acknowledge it. I ask you to be reasonable and be bipartisan about those opportunities.

In the meantime, the Auditor-General is not calling on the Government to open more beds. However, the Government is going to open more beds. I can see the discomfort -

Ms White - You make me uncomfortable.

Mr FERGUSON - The Auditor-General is urging further reform within our hospital teams. That is what we intend to do.

Hospitals - Implementation of Recommendations of the Auditor-General

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.31 a.m.]

The Auditor-General's report includes comments from you. You clearly had an opportunity to read the report, presumably some weeks before it was released two days ago. Exactly when did

you receive the report and did you take it to Cabinet to argue for more money to be included in the state Budget?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I never discuss Cabinet deliberations. That is not an appropriate question or something for me to speculate on. To confirm the statement I made yesterday, I have asked for further funding for the health system and I have further funding for the health system.

Health - Psychiatric Emergency Nurse Numbers

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.32 a.m.]

The Department of Psychiatry at the Royal Hobart Hospital is funded for 5.8 full-time psychiatric emergency nurses, or PENs, yet as of two weeks ago only 2.8 of those positions were filled. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation wrote to you two weeks ago about the significant pressure on the psychiatric ward because of ongoing bed block over the past two years and the distress this has created for mentally unwell patients who arrive from emergency having waited 24, 93 or even 123 hours. Attempts to employ psychiatric nurses from the mainland have failed. Nurses arrive to do a shift and decide to go home because of the understaffed and stressful conditions. In April there were three separate attempted suicides by patients in the emergency department. I understand there was another attempt last week because there are no acute mental health services available when needed. Given the desperate need for more PENs, what will you say to the ANMF and the staff it represents who hoped you would fund the staff needed to care for patients in severe mental distress?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, first I will deal with the facts and then I will address the policy question. I am aware of the assertion that has been made. I am advised that the assertions broadcast on the ABC were not correct. However, I will say that any serious incident, such as suicide attempt, whether it is in the community or in a public hospital, is always thoroughly investigated and an immediate response put in place to ensure patient safety.

Dr Woodruff - What assertions are you talking about? I have no idea what you are talking about.

Mr FERGUSON - I am not going to repeat them. The Government is committed to building a better mental health system for Tasmanians in line with our Rethink Mental Health plan, which has been warmly received by our stakeholders. We have one of the most capable chief psychiatrists in the country working for the Tasmanian people, who is my chief adviser. Dr Groves is my go-to when I am looking for policy guidance on how we can provide better support and assistance for people of all ages experiencing mental distress. I can assure the member that we take ANMF concerns seriously. I also -

Dr Woodruff - You have not asked them yet.

Mr FERGUSON - I am answering you at the moment. I am answering the question. The Government has employed psychiatric emergency nurses. They do a fantastic job.

We are not content to leave it there. We are doing more. The Government will build 27 additional mental health beds in the community at two new facilities. It is not just about the acute hospital. The Rethink Mental Health plan, which your party endorsed, includes step-up and step-down facilities, the right treatment, the right support in the right place at the right time. For many people we can intervene earlier without the need for an inpatient admission. We will build a new greenfield facility at St John's Park and we will rebuild Peacock Centre, which was burned down. These initiatives will reduce demand at the Royal Hobart Hospital and deliver more care in community settings where people are best able to recover.

Can we please remember the recovery message and remind people that they can recover and we will be there to support them?

We are not prepared to wait for those facilities to be built before we provide more support. Our Budget provides for it. In the 2018-19 Budget, we provided funding for an additional 10 beds at Mistral Place. We took advice on that. It was not the right approach to do, but we listened and took the advice. I went to my number one adviser on this and we found a better model. We have used the same resource and I think we have opened eight additional beds equivalent in the Hospital in the Home program. It will increase to 12.

Dr Woodruff - Half the staff are not there. What is going on?

Mr FERGUSON - That is not true. Your interjection is not true. I will just say that and move on.

My feedback from the chief psychiatrist and the staff of that service is that patients and families appreciate it. It has taken pressure off the Royal, which is good. Further to my earlier answer to Dr Woodruff's question on dedicated adolescent inpatient units, it is in the Budget, it is on page -

Dr Woodruff - It does not use the words 'mental health'. It is not for mental health. This is in inpatient flow over.

**Member Suspended
Member for Franklin - Dr Woodruff**

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, that is warning three and I think you need some time out.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of clarification, Madam Speaker, I thought that was my second warning.

Madam SPEAKER - I did say a second warning a little while ago.

Dr Woodruff - I did not hear you, I beg your pardon.

Madam SPEAKER - It does not make any difference. You have now had three warnings. I ask you to leave the Chamber until the end of question time.

Dr Woodruff withdrew.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, for those who are interested in knowing, it is in budget paper 2, volume 1, pages 104 and 105.

The Budget could not be clearer, together with our public statements. For all the work we have been doing with clinicians, it is obvious to anybody who is prepared to do the work and to be honest with the Tasmanian community, it is there in black and white, a dedicated 16-bed adolescent unit, page 104. That is for the south.

Ms O'Connor - It is not in mental health.

Mr FERGUSON - It includes mental health. That is exactly what stakeholders have been crying out for. We are building it now. The Budget provides funding for the beds. Page 105 and our public statements, together with this supports that. An extra eight beds on ward 4K, that is the dedicated adolescent unit.

Budget 2019-20 - Prisons Infrastructure

Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS, Ms ARCHER

[10.39 a.m.]

Can you advise how the Hodgman Liberal Government is investing in major new infrastructure for Tasmania's prison services and helping to create hundreds of new jobs in the local construction industry?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I welcome the question from the member for Braddon, Mrs Rylah.

This Budget is all about maintaining momentum and investing for growth. The 2019-20 Budget's record infrastructure spend includes major investments in new prison infrastructure as part of the Hodgman Liberal Government's plan to keep Tasmanians safe. These major projects will not only meet future capacity needs within Tasmania Prison Service but it will maintain the momentum and create new jobs in our building and construction sector.

As I have previously stated in this House, there has been a national trend of an increased number of prisoners. Tasmania has not been immune from this trend. There will always be a need to imprison serious offenders. That is why the Hodgman Liberal Government has committed to building a new purpose-built prison in northern Tasmania at an estimated cost of \$270 million to house approximately 270 prisoners.

As members would be aware, the expressions of interest process to determine a site for the new northern prison has now been successfully completed, with the identified sites being assessed for suitability and shortlisted. This year's Budget funds the first four years of work on this major project. The Government has committed to undertaking public consultation on the new prison site in the second half of this year and an announcement on the final location is anticipated in coming months once the due diligence process is complete.

This new northern prison is in addition to the new \$70 million standalone Southern Remand Centre on the Risdon Prison site. Early works have already begun on the site adjacent to existing facilities at the Risdon Prison complex. The Southern Remand Centre will be designed to house 140 remandees and is fully funded within this year's Budget. It is expected to be completed in 2021.

In addition, planning and design works are currently being finalised for the new Risdon Prison shared facilities project. The Hodgman Liberal Government's massive prison infrastructure agenda is part of our commitment to keeping the Tasmanian community safe. This infrastructure plan will also significantly boost the economy, with the new facilities creating thousands of new direct and indirect jobs, both in the construction phase and on an ongoing basis through the new correctional facilities with new correctional officers.

Additionally, we are committed to ensuring that Tasmanians have access to an effective and efficient justice system. As part of this commitment we are also investing up to \$15 million to substantially upgrade the Burnie Supreme Court. This significant capital investment recognises the importance of ensuring regional Tasmania has adequate public infrastructure and access to justice. The 2019-20 Budget reflects an achievable time line due to the planning required for the best outcome for users of this critical justice facility.

For Labor to claim that had they been elected they would have started construction by now demonstrates, at best, how completely lacking in credibility they are and, at worst, that they would be willing to put their own interests ahead of 50 000 people a year -

Mr Bacon - Coming from you! She'll be apples, don't worry about it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon, warning number one.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. They would be willing to put their own interests ahead of 50 000 people a year who rely on continued access to the courthouse in Burnie. A lot of the preliminary and planning work is being done to ensure this facility remains open whilst works are undertaken and to ensure continued access to justice for people on the north-west coast.

The Greens do not support this infrastructure in their alternative budget but at least they produced -

Ms O'Connor - In a lot of evolved jurisdictions they're actually closing prisons.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Ms ARCHER - At least they produced an alternative budget and had a go. They attempted to cost it. They have costings there, unlike Labor, who produced nothing - absolutely zip. I have to acknowledge that the Greens said they would defund the northern prison, apparently in total ignorance of the fact that we are almost at capacity and need to house prisoners, serious and repeat offenders, to keep Tasmanians safe.

Mr Shelton - Mr Morris's policy was to get them to sign a form and let them out.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Mr Shelton, I would not like to have to warn you but if you keep that up I will.

Ms ARCHER - Madam Speaker, not only is this reckless -

Ms O'Connor - The prison population was declining under a Greens minister.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, I ask you to refrain from interjecting. You have a warning.

Ms ARCHER - Not only is this reckless, it would mean the loss of jobs, not only the thousands of jobs in the construction phase but the planned additional corrections officers as well. Labor opposes our plans to build appropriate accommodation for prisoners and they failed to promise one single additional correctional officer during the last state election. The Labor Leader of the Opposition certainly did not commit to one extra cent in her budget reply speech earlier this week in terms of justice or corrections officers.

After six days of complaining about the Budget, this week was Labor's chance to at least prove they have an alternative plan to back up their incessant complaints, but once again they failed to deliver, proving they have no ideas when it comes to an effective and efficient justice system for all Tasmanians.

Auditor-General's Report - Receipt by Minister for Health

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.45 a.m.]

When were you first made aware of the contents of the Auditor-General's report? Was it before the Budget?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, there is natural interest from the Opposition to try to have a 'gotcha' moment. I do not have the date in front of me but I will get it and inform the House. No problem.

Mr O'Byrne - You can't recall when you first saw this?

Mr Bacon - It was so long ago you can't remember?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne and Mr Bacon.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I am not going to provide the Leader of the Opposition with a 'gotcha' moment on something that is so important. While you will be focused -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The minister has said that he will get that date for us. Can you ensure that is provided to the House today and not at some much later time?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I can only respectfully request the minister to do that. It is up to him.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I am the one providing the undertaking. I will seek to provide the date that I received the report for the purposes of comment to the Leader of the

Opposition. We have supported the Auditor-General on the way through this entire exercise. For the entire life of this project the Government has been there to support the Auditor-General in a constructive way. I can see that members opposite do not want to be satisfied on this point.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne. You are on warning number two. I will point out we nearly have the whole front bench ready to go out the door, so please be careful.

Mr FERGUSON - Since the member has asked about the Budget I will again say to the Leader of the Opposition that the Government has funded further support for our emergency departments. Nothing will change, but the Leader of the Opposition refuses to accept two things. First, that the Government is providing extra funding in this Budget specifically to support key recommendations and outcomes from the access solutions meeting. The second thing the Leader of the Opposition will not accept is that the Tasmanian people demand, expect and deserve a bipartisan approach to these challenges, which we are offering. The Leader of the Opposition should cease the absolute zero result she is achieving for Tasmanian patients through the blame game.

The Auditor-General has complimented the Government for recognising the challenges and introducing significant reforms to the health system and calls for -

Dr Broad - Undo your reforms, I think it says.

Mr FERGUSON - No, the Auditor-General is not calling for the Government to undo the reforms, Dr Broad. You are another person now who is verballing other independent people.

I undertake to get the key date that the Leader of the Opposition wants for her attempt at a 'gotcha' moment. I will conclude on this point. Over here you have a united government that is committed to a better health system and is working together with more money in the Budget to support these challenges. Over here you have a Treasurer, a Premier and a minister who are up to the task, working together, not walking away from the Health portfolio but stepping forward into it, focused on better outcomes for our community, because that is what they deserve and that is what we will deliver.

Budget 2019-20 - Building and Construction Sector

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for BUILDING and CONSTRUCTION, Ms COURTNEY

[10.49 a.m.]

What is the Hodgman majority Liberal Government doing to maintain the extraordinary momentum in the building and construction sector?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The building and construction sector in Tasmania is booming and the 2019-20 Budget continues the Hodgman Government's focus on maintaining the momentum in Tasmania's nation-leading building and construction industry.

Ms O'Connor - You always read from a script. You can never do it off the cuff. You don't know your portfolio.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor - warning number two.

Ms COURTNEY - We know that the building and construction sector is a key indicator of the economy's health which is building great confidence throughout the state. The Hodgman Liberal Government has been working hard to ensure we have the right conditions in place to stimulate more construction, create jobs and boost the economy, not just in our major cities but in regional areas, often forgotten by the Greens.

It is encouraging to see that our continued investment in growth is hitting the mark and that Tasmania continues to lead the nation. According to the ABS, we continue to have strong growth in the numbers of building approvals, lending finance for new construction as well as residential construction commencements and completions. In March 2019, the average monthly number of dwelling approvals has increased by more than 24 per cent when compared to the previous year, with the value of all building work in Tasmania also increasing by 24 per cent. This was the strongest recorded growth in the nation.

Commencements for new houses grew 37.4 per cent in the year to December 2018, which was far higher than the national growth of 2.6 per cent. Over the year to March 2019, the total value of construction and building work done grew 15.3 per cent in real trend terms, which was the strongest growth rate in the nation and is in stark contrast to the 6.1 per cent decline we saw nationally. Over the same period, engineering construction work grew 20.6 per cent over the year to March 2019, which was also the strongest growth rate in the nation. In addition, it is reported that almost \$1.7 billion in building work was done in the year to March 2019, which was led by the residential sector with an increase of 42.2 per cent to a total of \$933 million in the value of work being done. These independent figures also confirm that the pipeline of work is still strong with over \$800 million of works yet to be done as at the December 2018 quarter.

This confirms we are on track to further increase Tasmania's housing supply and critical inter-generational infrastructure for both now and into the future. We know what this means. This means jobs for Tasmanians, jobs in regional areas, jobs for young people and jobs for people who want to move to our great state.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Through the Chair, please.

Ms COURTNEY - The Government is committed to maintain this momentum and supporting the continued growth of the sector and that is why this Budget contains a record investment of \$3.6 billion of infrastructure around the state. These infrastructure projects will create jobs which is why we have committed to address the skill shortages to meet these future demands. We are investing an additional \$2.9 million for TasTAFE, meaning we can train the apprentices to match skills training to our growing industries, particularly within electrotechnology, plumbing and welding.

We understand there is high demand for new housing, which is why we are rolling our multi-pronged approach to address housing stress and increase housing supply. The commitments that we are undertaking include: extending the \$20 000 First Home Owner Grant for a further 12 months; extending the first home owner duty concession of up to \$7000 on established homes; extending the duty concession of up to \$7000 for pensioners downsizing their homes; the land tax

exemption for former short-stay accommodation properties that have converted to long-term rental until June 2023; the land tax exemption for newly built housing made available for long-term rental until 30 June 2023; and funding \$125 million of our Stage 2 Affordable Housing Strategy, which will see a further 1500 new affordable homes built and create 900 construction jobs.

These initiatives are being welcomed by industry, they are being welcomed by communities and they are being welcomed by business. This is in stark contrast to what we have seen from the Opposition. There were no comments from Ms White in her commentary earlier in the week as to what they would do to commit to support our building and construction industry.

At least the Greens, no matter how kooky they are, came up with an alternative budget. I ask the other side - would they slash \$277 million from building and construction, as would the Greens? Would they slash the V8s, would they slash investment into marketing for tourism? We know what the Greens would do and we completely disagree, but we do not know what the other side will do. We implore the other side to come out and show how they would fund their commitments. We do not know where they stand on pokies and we do not know where they stand on racing. They are policy-void. There is no funding, there are no policies and there is no credibility until they bring down an alternative budget.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, Standing Order 48. On every Dorothy Dixier answer this week, questions have run to five-and-a-half and six minutes each, which is why question time is running over.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you very much. It is not a point of order and I will pay better attention next week.

Recognition of Visitors

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, we have full gallery today. We welcome everyone who has come along to see parliament in action and witness the wonderful behaviour we have here. I specifically welcome the Legal Studies students of the Legal Studies 3 course from Rosny College.

Members - Hear, hear.

Budget 2019-20 - Health Budget

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.55 a.m.]

Health stakeholders were unanimous in their view that the Budget handed down last week will do nothing to address the health crisis. They will be very alarmed to hear your comments yesterday and today that you received everything you asked for in the Budget. Are you seriously telling them you only asked for an additional \$11 million for Health next year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has gone from making one false claim in her question to two in a question. You cannot ever believe a thing the Leader of the Opposition says. That is what is very clear and people can come to their own view on that.

Mr Bacon - This coming from you. This is not the week for you to be saying that.

Member Suspended
Member for Clark - Mr Bacon

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon. That is your third warning. I am sorry, you need to have a break and we will see you after question time. Please continue, minister.

Mr Bacon withdrew.

Mr FERGUSON - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition, if she wants to talk about budget and health funding then she wants to have a look at herself in the mirror and see somebody who could not be bothered sticking around with the Health portfolio and who could not be bothered doing a costed alternative budget. We are doing the work. Despite this constant, petty point-scoring, blame game and cheap retail politics, you are still invited to the access solutions meeting.

Aboriginal Heritage Act - Review

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, Mrs PETRUSMA

[10.57 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the majority Hodgman majority Liberal Government's commitment to protecting Aboriginal heritage and the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his passion and commitment to protecting Aboriginal heritage in Tasmania. This week is National Reconciliation Week and as part of the week the Hodgman Liberal Government wants to recognise that Tasmania's ancient and unique Aboriginal heritage is of deep spiritual and significant importance to all Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities, as well as to their local, national and international communities -

Ms O'Connor - Except if it is in the Tarkine. You want to open up the tracks.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. This will be warning number three. The next one is out the door.

Mrs PETRUSMA - and plays a very important role in reconciliation efforts. This Government has a genuine desire to make a positive difference for Aboriginal Tasmanians, a positive difference that recognises a remarkable 40 000 years of Aboriginal heritage and culture.

In August 2017 this Government and this parliament made amendments to what was then the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975. At that time, six key changes were made -

1. We changed the name to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975;

2. We removed the racist 1876 cut-off date for what is considered Aboriginal heritage;
3. We significantly increased penalties for damage to Aboriginal heritage to be in line with penalties for non-Aboriginal heritage;
4. We introduced scaled offences, distinguishing between deliberate acts and acts that are reckless or negligent, in association with the removal of the ignorance defence and increased the six-month time limit for prosecuting offences to two years;
5. We established a statutory Aboriginal Heritage Council to advise the minister; and
6. We set a statutory time-line for a further review.

While the amendments were not large in number, they addressed some of the most outdated, racist and problematic elements of the act and were seen as a positive step forward. The requirement to review the act was also one of the important amendments we introduced and is the next important step forward in that process. The review of the act has commenced and is considering the effectiveness of the 2017 amendment and the operation of the now-named Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975 as a whole. The review includes close consultation with the Aboriginal community.

Since late March, I have met with key Aboriginal people and organisations including the Aboriginal Council, the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance to talk about the review process.

As always, we are also committed to genuine and meaningful consultation with all Tasmanians. We recognise that the broader community and non-Aboriginal stakeholders will also have views on the act and that is why the first stage of the review will involve an extended public consultation period of 16 weeks supported by the release today of a discussion paper and a series of face-to-face consultation sessions for various regional and organisational bodies. The extended six-week timeframe for public consultation is intended to maximise the opportunity for all Tasmanians to formulate their considered feedback on the act.

The next or second stage of the review will involve preparation and release of a consultation feedback report which will compile and summarise all the feedback received so far as well as additional targeted consultation.

The review is an important opportunity for all Tasmanians to have their say about how Aboriginal heritage is protected and managed in Tasmania. This Government is committed to contemporary legislation to ensure that Tasmania's remarkable 40 000 years of Aboriginal cultural heritage is properly recognised and has the protection it deserves. The review is therefore critical in informing the future of Aboriginal heritage legislation in Tasmania and that is why we welcome all feedback on whether the act is effective and meeting community expectations. The closing date for submissions is Saturday 21 September 2019 and we encourage all Tasmanians to have their say to ensure Tasmania's precious Aboriginal heritage is properly protected into the future.

Also in Reconciliation Week we are delighted to announce we will be providing funding of \$15 000 to Reconciliation Tasmania to support new reconciliation events across the state. This funding is designed to help promote greater understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal culture and Reconciliation Tasmania will use this funding to provide grants to Aboriginal organisations to host three regional festivals, two of which will be new events. One grant will be to continue to

support manggalargenna Day, which is celebrated at the Tebrakunna Visitors Centre at Cape Portland in the north-east on 7 December, and Reconciliation Tasmania will use the other two grants of \$5000 each to help local Aboriginal communities to establish new reconciliation festivals in the north-west and the south.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to maintaining the momentum to our Reset agenda with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. We are investing to grow social, cultural and economic outcomes and to promote greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture.

Budget 2019-20 - Health Budget

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr FERGUSON

[11.02 a.m.]

Last night it was reported on ABC News that an internal government document shows the health and hospital system will need to cut \$160 million from its budget. Can you confirm that you will make a cut of this magnitude at the same time the health system is in crisis and patients are dying in the emergency departments?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, if that is the last hurrah from the Leader of the Opposition today it falls very flat. Tasmanians will not be fooled by this continual negativity and talking down of the health system in Tasmania when everybody else outside of this Chamber is calling for working together.

The Treasurer has been very clear. There has been a significant hit to revenue for the state Budget, the Government has responded accordingly and the Opposition has been criticising us for doing so. In our Budget we are honouring everything that we have promised to the Tasmanian people and they will not be fooled by the Leader of the Opposition who now wants to go out with a different message which is not true. It has been transparently said by the Treasurer that he will be working with agencies to identify savings which will first and foremost focus on consultants, travel and transport, advertising and promotion expenditure. I will not allow the Leader of the Opposition - here we go.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45. Can the minister please confirm reports there will be a \$160 million cut to his budget? That was a simple question and he should be able to answer it.

Madam SPEAKER - I know that is not a point of order but I will allow the minister to answer in the best way he possibly can.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has asked the question the best way she can but she does not like the answer. To be very clear, the Government is committed to protecting frontline essential services. We will be continuing to hire more nurses, more doctors and more allied health professionals. The question is a speculative one and I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that the Treasurer has outlined the process that agencies will go through with Treasury and she should not run around and scare people when the Government is going to be increasing support and frontline services.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I know it is the last question, but could we have less chatter over here?

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, we will not do as the Leader of the Opposition, which is predictably later today to go out with some scary press release and again try to do a 'Mediscare'. But when she does, I hope she will say sorry to Tasmanians because she is too lazy to do an alternative budget and not willing to actually do the right thing.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms White, Ms O'Byrne and Mr O'Byrne.

Ms O'Byrne - Actually, it was me.

**Member Suspended
Member for Bass - Ms O'Byrne**

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, would you leave the Chamber until the end of question time? Ms White, I put you on a warning. Please wind up, minister.

Ms O'Byrne withdrew.

Mr FERGUSON - Today is the day that the Leader of the Opposition can be part of the solution. You have been a part of the problem, you have been part of the blame game, you want to do the petty point-scoring. Today could be the day that the Leader of the Opposition says, 'You know what? -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler. You are not normally one of the bad ones.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, have a look over here. We are a united government working together, working hard, prepared to accept the challenges and not run away from them, supporting each other and the Tasmanian community. Have a look at a government that actually understands the challenges and has even been complimented, or at least been remarked upon in a complimentary way, by the Auditor-General to reflect the Government has recognised the challenges and has introduced significant reforms. I do not know if it is within the capability of the Labor Party today to ever embrace the bipartisanship that they demand.

Time expired.

MOTION

Leave to Move a Want of Confidence in Minister for Health, Mr Ferguson

[11.08 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing orders to move a want of confidence in the Minister for Health in the following terms -

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent a motion of no confidence in the Minister for Health being debated forthwith.

I give notice that I shall move that the House -

1. This House has no confidence in the Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson MP.
2. Notes the damning findings of the report of the Auditor-General, No. 11 of 2018-19, Performance of Tasmania's Four Major Hospitals in the Delivery of Emergency Department Services.
3. Highlights a concern of an increase in ambulances ramped for greater than 30 minutes since 2012-13 of 239 per cent, despite an increase in overall ambulance presentations of only 20 per cent over the same period.
4. Notes that the rate of emergency department adverse events increased across all four major hospitals by around 60 per cent under the Minister for Health and that adverse events include avoidable deaths.
5. Points out with concern that mental health patients are languishing for up to seven days in the emergency department and that while they are waiting for a bed they psychologically deteriorate, self-harm, and attempt suicide.
6. Notes the minister continues to deny women access to legal reproductive health services in the public health system.
7. Notes that Tasmania's health system has been underfunded by around \$100 million per year as identified by the 2017 RDME consulting report titled An Analysis of Health Funding for the Tasmanian Health Service.
8. Recognises that health funding in the 2019-20 state Budget increases by less than \$11 million in the coming financial year before taking into account the cuts embedded in the Budget.
9. Notes that funding to staff new beds for the redeveloped Royal Hobart Hospital has been delayed until 2020-21.
10. Note that on two occasions in the last six months this House has voted to establish health round tables with key stakeholders and all sides of politics to examine solutions to the health crisis, and that the Minister for Health

has done nothing to progress those cross-party efforts and has deliberately ignored the will of this House.

11. Notes that in the five years he has been the Minister for Health the state of Tasmania's health system has gotten worse and he is unfit to continue in the role.
12. Further notes that the minister has demonstrated through his lack of action a complete disregard for the health of Tasmanians and for the well-being of his health workforce and that Tasmania should not be expected to suffer the consequences of his incompetence any longer.

Madam Speaker, this is an urgent motion that we will be seeking leave to debate, and to suspend Standing Orders so that it can be brought on forthwith. We will not be allocating time limits for this debate. It is too important. The reason we need to have this debate is that we no longer can stand by while people are dying in the hospital system and we take no action to fix it. This happens on all our watches. Every one of us is elected to represent our communities. If we do not stand up and hold this minister accountable, then we are failing them too.

I urge members to support the seeking of leave to support the suspension of Standing Orders so we can debate this motion of want of confidence in the Minister for Health because there is no point in having a round table next month if he is still a minister. This could give the Government a fresh start with a fresh minister to take the state forward and do something about the crisis in our health system.

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, this is no surprise. Another stunt from the Labor Party -

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is a stunt. We had a considerable lengthy debate of want of confidence a short time ago. This Government -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. Mr Bacon and Ms O'Byrne, I give you a warning. Let us get through this, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Let me be very clear. This Government has confidence in Mr Ferguson and the job he is doing as Minister for Health. It is a very challenging and difficult portfolio. Mr Ferguson has secured \$8.1 billion of investment over the next four years.

The Minister for Health has been very conciliatory and collaborative in his approach during question time today, and indeed throughout the week. He is wanting to hear from those opposite what their contribution would be to the challenges faced in our health system. A number of these challenges were outlined in the Auditor-General's report tabled this week. We do not shy away from those challenges and nor does the Minister for Health.

The Auditor-General's report and recommendations provide an opportunity to ensure that we improve our service delivery across our health system, particularly accident and emergency in our

four hospitals. That is why the Minister for Health has an Access Solutions meeting in a short period. He has invited the Auditor-General and the Opposition to make a contribution, as the Opposition between 2010 and 2014 made a significant contribution to policy development in the health system in those dark days. You will never forget the 2011 budget, when \$100 million was ripped out of health.

Mr Bacon - You have \$160 million about to come out.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A nurse a day as a consequence of that.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, warning number two. Ms Butler, your first warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As a consequence of that, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who was minister for health at the time, infamously sacked a nurse a day for nine months. That was the solution to the budgetary situation at that time. It did nothing to improve our health services across Tasmania. This is a challenging budget too, but we are continuing to invest in the areas of need across service delivery, education, health and public safety as well as many others: Housing for example. We manage those budgets, we grow the economy and we invest in essential services.

This is what the Health minister is doing - \$8.1 billion of investment has been secured over the next four years.

We have confidence in the Minister for Health. This is another stunt. We will have another discussion shortly in which I will also outline the reasons why we have confidence in our minister. He is doing a terrific job under very difficult circumstances.

[11.16 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, this matter should be debated. It is a matter of extremely significant public interest and public impact. The question we should be asking is: how much faith do the people of Tasmania have in this Minister for Health and this Government? How much confidence do people who are languishing in the emergency department have in this minister and this Government and its capacity to administer the health system?

I have no doubt that Mr Ferguson believes he is doing the right thing and doing his best in the portfolio, but we have had to listen for five years and six budgets to this minister blaming the previous government for issues in the portfolio. When you look at the data and the human story, the health portfolio is going backwards under this minister and this Government. Over the past five years it has become worse.

There are more people waiting for elective surgery than there were when the Labor-Greens government left. Now we have the report of the Auditor-General this week which is so damning and so confronting. I understand the Government's desire to try to put a shine on this cow pat and welcome the Auditor-General's report but you cannot possibly see this report in any other way than a damning indictment on this Liberal Government and this minister.

It says -

Demand for emergency care in Tasmanian public hospitals has steadily grown over the past nine years. The total number of presentations has increased by 15 per cent ... with most of this growth occurring at the RHH.

It talks about the increased risk to patients as a result of chronic under-funding and cultural problems at the Royal Hobart Hospital. Cultural problems require leadership.

One of the problems that this Government has. It is both the Minister for Health and the Treasurer who are reaping what they have sown. They promised the world. They blamed the past. The Treasurer said we are 'back in the black' and 'back on track' and this is a 'golden age'. Now we find out we are hurtling towards \$1.1 billion in net debt.

The Health minister said he would fix the health crisis. He has spent years in this place blaming previous governments and promising to fix the problems in the health system. They are far from fixed.

We were going to have a debate this morning - our Matter of Public Importance debate on child and youth mental health services. I am still waiting for the Minister for Health to point us to that part of the Budget that specifically allocates resourcing to adolescent mental health services. We have 16 beds in the general ward at the Royal Hobart Hospital, page 102 of budget paper no.2 vol.1. It is 16 beds for young people in the general ward of the hospital. It is not a dedicated adolescent mental health unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

We look forward to this debate. We hope that the Government gives it sufficient time. Dr Woodruff and I will be contributing and Dr Woodruff will be making a substantive contribution because this is a matter that everyone is talking about. We should suspend Standing Orders in order to have the substantive debate and then we can test the House's confidence in this Health minister.

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, we do not raise this matter and move this motion as a stunt, as the Government would say.

Members interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - It is very funny, is it? It is very funny because this is a minister who opens the palms and says, please, let us stop the blame game.

We want to talk about accountability and responsibility. The ministerial responsibility in this portfolio is to ensure things become better, not worse. We raise this matter again in this House about our want of confidence in this minister as a result of two things; the damning Auditor-General's report and the insipid response in question time by this minister over the last two days. We have raised questions that have been raised by the Auditor-General's response. We have asked the minister. We have given the minister days to tell us all how he intends to respond to this report and how he will take responsibility but we have seen nothing from this minister that gives us or the people of Tasmania confidence that he will act on anything coming from this.

This minister has had five years in this portfolio. He quickly says, stop the blame game and blames everyone else. Today in question time, he threw staff under the bus, quoting the Auditor-General's report and saying it is leadership at the hospital and it is not his responsibility. Minister, it is your responsibility. One of the key matters in the damning Auditor-General's report is the rate

of adverse events in the emergency department grew significantly between 2015 and 2018, increasing by around 60 per cent with most events occurring at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Launceston General Hospital. You cannot blame previous governments for this. You cannot stand here and say that you want to have a conversation.

How many times have we put on the table that we want to have a conversation about this? Rebecca White, the Leader of the Labor Party, wrote to the Premier in October last year outlining a series of ideas and suggestions and an offer to work with the Government. A month later we received a response from the Premier saying, 'we have got this', effectively claiming you have a plan. Well, you do not. The Auditor-General says you do not have a plan for you to claim the virtue of changes you are making as a result of your failed THS response and the David Alcorn cash-out, using taxpayers' money to pay out a bloke you said was going to fix the job and did not. To make a virtue out of fixing your stuff-up is outrageous.

We do this as a matter of urgency because this is all we can do to bring this issue to bear on behalf of Tasmanians. We have no confidence that this minister will listen, will respond and will act after the Access Solutions summit because he has had time and again to do so. He has hidden reports. The only thing different about the Auditor-General's report and the other reports is that this has gone public and he cannot suppress it. How dare he say that this Government is acting as a matter of urgency. You have had this report for weeks and done nothing and now you say you are acting as a matter of urgency, you have this fig-leaf defence, 'we want people to work together', you disparage the Opposition and blame us every day. You have had five years. You have failed. The Tasmanian people deserve better. This person cannot continue in the job and that is why we need to debate this matter as a matter of urgency.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Move Want of Confidence in Minister for Health - Motion Negatived

[11.24 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That so much of standing orders be suspended that would prevent a motion of want of confidence in the Minister for Health, of which notice has been given this day, from being brought on for debate forthwith.

The reason we have brought this on has been explained. Let me also go back to reports that the minister had before this Auditor-General's Report, which is the first report that has been made public and has exposed him. You do not have to look much further back than last year's report, which was the annual report that highlighted very clearly the problems we have in the health system. The annual report did not prompt the same urgent response as we are seeing from him now. Why is that? The same statistics are in the annual report as are in the Auditor-General's report but he did nothing.

I wrote to the Premier on 12 October and outlined 10 difference options the Premier could adopt that we feel could make a real difference in the health system. In that letter to the Premier, I asked for an urgent meeting and I said, I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest

opportunity. I never got a meeting. In response to that letter, the Government labelled it a stunt. They have the hide to claim we do not show them bipartisanship on an issue like this. The minister complains when our bipartisanship does not exactly reflect everything he says. If we do not agree with everything he says, we are not showing bipartisanship. This is the problem. The minister takes no responsibility for his role. He is not held accountable either by his colleagues or the Premier. If we do not move motions like this in this House, nobody is going to hold this minister accountable for his failures in this portfolio and people are dying. With news coming from report after report, story after story, staff member after staff member, it is not okay for this minister to come into this House and lecture us about the bipartisan approach he wants to take because the way he goes about it is simply not genuine.

We have asked for meetings, we have moved motions in this Parliament that have been ignored every step of the way and now he says, there is a meeting next month, you had better come along but you better not behave like that. You had better not raise any of these things that embarrass me. How embarrassing would that be? Please be quiet, please go along with things. Please ignore the people dying, please ignore the protests in the hospital, please ignore the patients who cannot access health care. Please ignore all of those things. Go along with my plan because it is going so well. It is not going well at all. For five years, he has been the Health minister and things are not going well.

Mr Bacon - It is down to you two and you are about a billion dollars behind.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Ms WHITE - The Auditor-General's report points out that in the five years he has been the Health minister, things have become worse. You only need to look at some of the headline figures. Most concerning is the 60 per cent increase in adverse events in the Emergency Department in three years, all while he has been the Health minister. There has been an increase in ambulance ramping of 239 per cent. In the same period, demand went up by 20 per cent. That is a disproportionate increase. It is because of the pressure on the health system and he has been the minister.

Madam SPEAKER - I have been asked to remind you that you are speaking on a motion to suspend Standing Orders, so you need to address that.

Ms WHITE - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The reason we need to suspend Standing Orders to urgently debate this motion is because people are dying, which is the point I am making when I reference these statistics. They are not only numbers, they are people's lives. The minister wilfully ignores the report handed down in the annual report last year, no urgent round-table was set up following that. He ignores the Deloitte report, he pretended it did not exist and he ignores the KPMG Report that showed \$100 million black hole. He ignored the RDME Consulting report that confirmed the \$100 million black hole.

The only time he has shown any interest in holding any kind of bipartisan approach to this is because he has been shamed into it because of the Auditor-General's report tabled and made publicly available. He has been exposed and he is embarrassed but I feel he should be more than embarrassed. He should be ashamed, he should apologise to the staff, to the patients and to the people of Tasmania and he should resign. He has to resign. We cannot go into another year with this minister at the helm. It is the lack of governance or leadership he has shown that has been

identified by the Auditor-General's Report. He is ultimately responsible. He is the leader of the health system and he is the minister.

We cannot have a meeting next month with the Minister for Health being Michael Ferguson and expect any different outcomes than we have seen for the last five years. We cannot, because what we have seen is a repeated pattern of behaviour by this minister; his wilful ignorance, his denial, his arrogant claim that he knows better than everybody else and he listens with a tin ear to anybody who puts a solution up that does not align with his own thinking.

The only way for us to deal with this matter is for the minister to be replaced with somebody who will listen, who will work constructively with those health professionals who will come to a meeting next month in good faith and want to work constructively on solutions. They do so out of frustration, because for the last five years they have had a minister in Michael Ferguson who has not respected them and has not listened to the advice they have presented to him from a clinical perspective. That is why we have patients ramped. It is why we have paramedics who are protesting. It is why we have nurses on the street. They are frustrated beyond belief.

We can no longer stand by and allow this to continue and that is why we have moved this motion. It is an urgent motion. It must be debated and it cannot be curtailed by a gag motion. The Government has to explain why they think he is the best person to continue in this job. They cannot avoid this. The community expect better of all of us. They expect us to do better than this. They expect the Premier to do better than have a minister like this in the responsible role he has as the Health minister when people are dying and they need not. He cannot even achieve more than \$11 million increase in the Budget next year. He could not deny today that there is a \$160 million cut coming the health system's way. He has comprehensively failed, we need to debate this motion and the minister should resign.

[11.32 a.m.]

Mr HODGMAN (Franklin - Premier) - Madam Speaker, I totally agree with the Leader of the Opposition when she says people expect better than this and they do. They expect better from an opposition coalition when it comes to what they would do to improve our health system. They expect better from an Opposition when they pretend to want to be bipartisan and work together on this issue, but it is all talk and no action. They do expect better than seeing this parliament used for political stunts day in, day out.

Mr O'Byrne - Don't bother. What about the 'don't come on Monday' letter?

Mr HODGMAN - We did this only a few weeks ago. It is, as the member who interjects says, all they can do. That is what Mr O'Byrne said, 'This is all they can do'.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr HODGMAN - It is a fair reflection on the lack of substance that this is, to use their own words, 'all they can do'.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I will be giving lots of warnings. I will not hesitate to throw people out but I am sure you would rather stay in here and fight this fight. Please use much more parliamentary discipline.

Mr HODGMAN - They said themselves this is all they can do. It is not. There is a lot more opposition parties can do to be constructive, to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. That includes having a coherent health policy, which you do not have. That includes preparing an alternative budget, which you are too lazy to do -

Ms Archer - Ten points. Now, is that a coherent policy?

Mr Bacon - Ten suggestions for you.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, Mr Bacon and Ms Archer, you do not have arguments across the Chamber. Premier, please proceed.

Mr HODGMAN - No policy, no alternative budget and nothing in the Leader of Opposition's budget reply speech to say what Labor would do differently. They are a shallow, hollow, substanceless opposition party that offers nothing. If it is all they can do, they are wasting their own time and ours with this motion that is the latest in a long list. People need to start reflecting on how opposition parties choose to spend their time.

The Greens will at least produce an alternative budget but Labor cannot be bothered. The Greens will at least propose sensible options for the way forward but Labor will not. Even today we hear the Leader of the Opposition making excuses as to why she will not be involved in the Health minister's forum in the coming weeks, when we have given her an express invitation to participate, to contribute, to be part of the solution and not part of the problem, but we know where the Leader of the Opposition would rather sit: right on the fence having a bob each way because they stand for nothing and they offer nothing. That is exactly what happens under this Leader. As her colleague from the Greens said, 'No-one knows what you even stand for'. All we know is that you stand for political stunts, obstruction, distracting us from the job of getting on with it and not wanting to be part of the job either.

Madam Speaker, this is a stunt and it is their latest in a long list under this Leader of the Opposition. The health challenge is well known to us all, there has been no denial of that and this is not the first time we have had a report confirm that there are ongoing challenges. It had a new focus and it was welcomed by Government, it contains a number of recommendations we will work through and take expert advice on as to their implementation. This Budget we have released does include additional funding and support, as all of our budgets have done, for health, to respond to increased demand and in areas where there is particular need. When we have received the advice of true experts in these matters, we have always responded wherever we can, when we can, because our budget is in a much better shape and because we have the capacity to do more.

These are the things we are doing and we have outlined at length in this Parliament in previous debates on this matter, whether it be no confidence motions, grievance debates or MPis, we have a long list of things that this Government has done to improve health care for Tasmanians, to help Tasmanians access health care more quickly, sooner, closer to where they live, and this Government has a significant track record of delivering. We have a lot more to do and that is why this Budget also ensures that we will be able to invest more, increasing capacity, making hospital beds available and ensuring more staff are employed. These are the things we are doing to help Tasmanians access

better health care, sooner. What are the Opposition parties doing to help? Nothing. All they are doing is moving no confidence motions in this place. It is not helping anyone.

It is also the view of health professionals that we listen to, which you demand we listen to, that you should be listening to because it was not that long ago that the Australian Medical Association Tasmania President said, 'Changing Tasmania's Health Minister is not going to change the realities of increasing demand and costs ...'. Rather than concentrating on failure in the system, we are more interested in trying to work with the minister and management to find solutions. Dr Frank Nicklason, Chair of the Royal Hobart Hospital Medical Staff Association said, 'It shows he's taken on board the concerns that have been reasonably expressed by the registrars', which was in response to Mr Ferguson doing so. Also, Simon Judkins, from the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine said late last month -

We need to agree on a strategy and we don't need it to be flip-flopping between one minister and another, we need to agree on what the longer-term strategy is and we need to implement it.

That is what we are doing. That is at the core of the meeting the minister is proposing, which will include all key stakeholders, all those who want to contribute to solutions and how we best implement them. The question is, will Labor participate? We have heard the Leader of the Opposition say that she will not, if the circumstances do not suit her. Sadly, that is a true indication of the lack of a willingness and it is all words and no action from this Opposition. Yes, they have political stunts. They are good at moving motions in this place but when it comes to stepping up and doing something, they go missing. We have every confidence in this minister. He is accepting responsibility, as we are. You do not accept any responsibility to do anything other than cause political stunts and distractions, which we will not be a part of. We are not going to give this reckless Opposition the green light to distract us from getting on with the job.

Time expired.

[11.39 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I cannot believe the Premier of this state said he will not allow debate of a want of confidence motion in a minister who has been proven by the Auditor-General's report to have failed in every single opportunity to resolve these issues. How dare this Premier say this is a political stunt. Do you have any idea where you are sitting? You are sitting in the Parliament of Tasmania and every single person who sits in this Chamber is responsible for the decisions made by this Government. Every single one of us is responsible for the people who are dying in our health system. How dare you say we do not have the right to have a want of confidence in this man. How dare you.

There are more people dying avoidable deaths in our hospitals than are killed on our roads. It is higher than the road toll under this minister. The auditor-general has said there has been a 60 per cent increase in adverse outcomes under this minister. This is not something that you can say is political. We all bear a responsibility to the Tasmanian people. When people die in our hospitals we do not go home and sleep well at night because somehow it is only Mr Ferguson's fault. All of us have sleepless nights over this.

How dare you say that this is not a matter for the parliament because we all bear the responsibility for your behaviour. If the only predictor of future behaviour is previous behaviour then we know there is a significant risk that when this meeting occurs in June the minister will do

what he has done every other time. He will say he sat down, listened and produced a report. Then we go back to where we were. That is why something has to be done.

There is not a person in this room or a person in Tasmania who does not want the best for our health system. This minister is unable to act when he is given advice to respond to experts. He will have the meeting, he will say the platitudes, he will do the press conference and that will be it. How do we know that? The only predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour.

Let us go back to January 2016 when a 95-year-old man was left lying on the floor of the Royal Hobart Hospital. The minister was going to act. Did we get a resolution? Did we get a better emergency department? No.

On 23 March 2016 a woman miscarried while sitting in a chair because there was not support for her in the emergency department. The minister was going to act. The minister said the platitudes. The minister did the press conference. Did we get a better outcome in our health system? We did not.

In August 2017 when we lost accreditation for psychiatric medicine, did the minister say, 'Maybe I am doing something wrong?' No.

We get report after report most of which the minister denies the existence of.

In November 2017, he said there was no report by Deloitte into health system concerns. When it is found in December, the summary shows that there is significant dysfunction. Is there a response from this minister that resolves that issue? No.

When a senior medical professional confronted the minister at a public event because that was the only way he felt he could have his voice heard, did we get a response from the minister, other than a press conference and platitudes? No.

In September 2018, when mental health patients are forced to sleep on the floor at the Royal Hobart Hospital, did we get a response? No.

On 18 September 2018, when Intensive Care Unit patients were placed in store rooms and had to ring little bells to get attention, was that an appropriate response to the crisis in our health system? No.

In September 2018, the AMA slammed the Minister for Health. In October 2018 the Premier, who stood in this House and said there was nothing for the Parliament to debate, there was no problem with our minister, admitted that Health was not good enough.

The Speaker in October 2018 said the minister needed a rest. Andrew Wilkie, a comrade of the minister, said -

I don't think Michael Ferguson is fit and proper and competent to hold any portfolio.

In October the parliament passed a motion calling on the Premier to convene health round tables. Did we get health round tables? Did the Leader of the Opposition get a response from the

Premier to her consistent request to participate in finding solutions other than, 'Thank you, we have this'?

The Government announced low-cost termination providers would be operable by November last year. Do we have them? No.

There have been hidden health reports which, when finally dragged out show time and time again that this minister has not been responding. We have no timeframe for abortion providers to do terminations in Tasmania. As of last month, we have another coronial investigation into the death of a man in the Royal Hobart Hospital. We have had letters from registrars warning that patients are dying because of access block. We now have the Auditor General's report; a report that this minister would have known about before the Budget. He clearly did not respond to it.

If the only predictor of behaviour is past behaviour then this minister is not capable of seeing us through this crisis. Being Health minister is a hard job. I am probably the only other person in this room who can say they recognise how hard this job is. However, there is also a point when you realise you are no longer capable of delivering solutions. He has torn up every opportunity to resolve this. He has treated medical professionals with contempt. He has refused to engage with suggestions and support from the other side of the House to find solutions. Every time he is under pressure he sets the meeting, he does a press release, but do we get a resolution? No. The minister must now leave the portfolio. If the Premier is not gutsy enough to fix it then this parliament must.

[11.46 a.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Speaker, we have just heard the height of hypocrisy. When you were the minister for health you closed wards and sacked a nurse a day for nine months. I remember 5000 people in Civic Square in Launceston. This is the height of hypocrisy, attempting to defend a stunt.

This Health minister has opened wards. He has built health facilities. He has the Royal Hobart Hospital back on track. In 2006 they started talking about a Royal Hobart Hospital rebuild. What had they done by 2014? Nothing. To quote Mr McKim when he was here, 'A big fat bagel'. Not one brick was laid and this minister has it back on track. If the measure of currency of a Health minister is employing more people in the health system to support Tasmanians, this Health minister has done an extraordinary job. More than 500 new nurses, more than 140 doctors, 100 allied health professionals, more than 60 paramedics.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, more than 500 nurses employed, more than 140 doctors, more than 100 allied health professionals, more than 60 paramedics, 130 new beds opened under this minister. On any measure he has been delivering what people would have expected of a Health minister.

Let us talk about the Auditor-General's report. That saved you lot this week. It is a report that says there is no additional resourcing required. It is not a resourcing issue. There are issues in terms of management and processes that need to be looked at. But what would you have had for your Budget response without it? What would you have had all week without the Auditor-General's report? Absolutely nothing.

Mr O'Byrne - You talk about stunts.

Mr GUTWEIN - And he chirps up again. The only bloke that was happy on that side when Ms White was bringing down her speech the other day was Mr O'Byrne, because it was rubbish. It was rubbish. It was vacuous, it was hollow. I mentioned hypocrisy when I first started speaking; they do not even have a health policy -

Madam SPEAKER - Treasurer, the matter is suspension of Standing Orders.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I am setting the context as to why this is simply a stunt. The Leader of the Opposition, with unlimited time on Tuesday to lay out her plans for this state, tacitly agreed with everything that is in our Budget, never laid out an alternative health plan or vision, only spoke for 30 minutes and demonstrated again how vacuous and hollow the Opposition is. I come back to our Budget. If you consider, when Labor were last in power in 2013-14, 28 per cent of budget expenditure over four years was spent on health. Under this Government, we have increased it every single year. It is now 32 per cent and we are in the top two states in the country in expenditure on health.

Ms O'Byrne - You are responsible for increased deaths in our hospital. You are responsible for people dying and they don't need to, people who should be saved are dying under your watch.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I could rhetorically ask how many were dying when you were sacking a nurse a day over nine months. How many people were affected when you were closing wards?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, this is enough. We will have some respectable debate or we will have none at all. I respectfully ask you to hear the Treasurer and hopefully he will wind up soon.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, the Government's investment in Health is \$8.1 billion over the four years.

Time expired.

[11.52 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, the facts stand for themselves. This is an urgent matter and everybody in Tasmania outside the House will understand the situation in the health system in Tasmania is in crisis. It has been confirmed by the most respected and authorised source, the Auditor-General himself.

We can no longer deny it. The minister can push away reports like KPMG and hide reports like Deloitte, as he has done. He has sat on reports that have been commissioned by the department for months, sometimes only having them released through an RTI process. This minister hides information and is particularly deceptive about what this Government is funding in this year's budget, to be more precise, what it is not funding. This minister, in addition to all the points the Auditor-General raised and I will refer to, has made it clear in parliament in his responses to questions today that he cannot be trusted to tell Tasmanians the truth about what he will not fund in next year's health budget.

It is clear the strategy of this Liberal Government for the last five years is to deliver a budget, this is the sixth budget, and pretend to spend money on child and adolescent mental health, which is not being spent. Year on year, it is rolled over. If ever there was one this would have been the budget to act, with the Treasurer having crowed that we are 'back in the black, the state is on track, now is the time to spend up big in health'. This is also on the back of the report completed by the Coroner four years ago about the desperate need for this state to have a child and youth mental health dedicated, multi-disciplinary, acute unit, which is still not in place. Right now, another coronial inquest is investigating the tragic incident of a young Tasmanian who had to leave the state because there was no acute and youth mental health unit available for that person.

This was the budget, this was the promise and this minister failed to deliver it. It is not good enough to pretend that 16 general adolescent beds in the Royal Hobart Hospital are the same thing as a dedicated, multi-disciplinary, acute youth and child mental health unit. It is not the same thing. I have spoken to people in the mental health sector and none of them have received any more information about a specific child and adolescent clinical specialist on that ward. What will continue to happen under this Government is the pretence. It is a smokescreen. It is all about numbers and this minister has misled desperate parents, who I received emails from and I have personal visits from, people who are desperate about the inability to obtain care for their children. These children have serious anxiety and depression that is tipping over spontaneously into an attempt to take their own life. They are put off for months, given visit times for multi-disciplinary teams, months in advance and told their child is about to turn 18 in six months' time and they probably will not be allowed a place at Clare House, and told to wait until the child is an adult so they can go into the psychiatric ward. How inappropriate is it for an 18-year-old, still a young person, to have to go to the psychiatric unit? It is not age-appropriate.

The Auditor-General's report makes it so clear that the delays, the duration of ramping that has gone up dramatically to 240 per cent, the longer waiting times in emergency departments that we have on record, are killing people and they are avoidable deaths. The Australian Medical Association says so. Dr Tom Mullens from the Launceston General Hospital said it again yesterday. These are avoidable deaths and this minister has failed to put the funding into the emergency department, failed to put the money into the hospital system, failed to put the money into the community sector for the step-down and step-up care that is required, talks big about the rethink mental health strategy but does not fund it and does not listen to people about the things that could be done that do not even require money.

That is what the Auditor-General points out over anything else; it is a cultural problem, a dysfunctional silo mentality that existed, predating this minister. The minister has had five-and-a-half years now to do something about it. It is not good enough. It is a disaster and his time is up. How can Tasmanians have confidence that he is going to do anything differently? He keeps saying, I am listening, I am putting the money in, but it is not happening. I know he is not listening because we have had conversations about things and they have fallen on deaf ears.

We can do it differently. The Greens produced an alternative budget yesterday and we show that you can direct \$16 million, as we have done, into emergency department solutions for the clinical specialists, for the psychiatric ward and for the PENs. You can do that. You can improve mental health by putting \$26 million, as we have done, into the child and adolescent mental health service, to youth, anxiety and depression staff, to mental health carers' funding, for funding to Flourish, to funding for specific staff in a dedicated, multi-disciplinary, acute, child and adolescent and young people's mental health unit, which this Government, this minister, has refused to prioritise.

We know these are the choices the minister has made. This Treasurer, this minister, this Hodgman Liberal Government have made the choice to put the health of Tasmanians last. The Premier said yesterday how outrageous of the Greens to defund V8 Supercars. We are proud to make those hard decisions when it is the life of people on the line.

Time expired.

The House divided -

AYES 12

NOES 12

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

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

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 12 Ayes and 12 Noes. My understanding is this requires a two thirds majority. Therefore it is negatived.

Motion negatived.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Child and Youth Mental Health

[12.04 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: child and youth mental health.

We know that 60 000 Tasmanians live in mental health distress every year. They suffer financial distress and social and financial impacts on their families and communities. I will talk about child, adolescent and youth mental health. The Tasmanian health system and funding for the Tasmanian community health sector is woefully inadequate. It is failing to respond to the situation young people and children are facing.

The Auditor-General's report looked at the situation in emergency departments. In that process it noted the cultural problems in the Department of Health and the Tasmanian Health Service as well as bed-block, the rising amount of ambulance ramping and the lengths of time people are waiting in the emergency department.

We need to look at the situation for children and young people in this context. So much of the focus is on adults, but children and young people in desperate need of care attend the emergency departments in our hospitals. When they do, there is no place for them to go that provides age-appropriate care, even once they have waited hours and sometimes days by themselves or with a parent or someone else who loves them.

I have been approached by a person who told me she had waited with her daughter for days in the emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital. There was no age-appropriate ward for them to be admitted to. There was no clinical specialist with expertise in young people.

Young people like that are discharged from hospital and have no place to go. They are on a waiting list to go to Clare House, if they are lucky. Most of them are offered a visit to Headspace or their GP. The advice given to the aforementioned woman as she left the hospital was to take her daughter home, make sure the knives are out of the drawer and rope and implements are taken away and to just try to keep her safe.

That struck fear into her heart. She loves her daughter very much. She went home and did not go to work for several months because she was the personal carer of her daughter. She was waiting every day for a phone call from a specialist with an appointment.

I saw the mother a few days ago. She still does not have support for her daughter in an age-appropriate way. She is still undertaking that regular care.

We can do so much better. While the minister and the Government talk about being on a journey towards community care and providing support, we are not seeing any evidence in real dollars and cents and real paid clinical staff, multi-disciplinary teams that create wrap-around care driven by psychologists at the centre with support from social workers, occupational therapists, GPs and all the other specialists needed. That wrap-around care is now understood by the federal Government and by health experts to be the best way to respond to a person in mental health distress.

I was reading through Olivia McTaggart's inquest into six young people who tragically took their lives four years ago. What struck me was the trauma that so many young people live through as a result of family violence and a failure of institutions to keep them safe and intervene at appropriate times. Many of the children experienced incidents across their life from the time they were babies all the way through to their middle adolescent years. The Greens understand that we can do more in schools and hospitals and that is why we have chosen to dedicate that money in our budget toward those things.

Time expired.

[12.11 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank Dr Woodruff for bringing on this very important matter as a matter of public importance today. This is an issue all of in this House need to take very seriously. Our young people with mental ill-health are really struggling to access the services they require. Work needs to be undertaken by government to embrace our young people. We need to start putting proper strategies in place to effectively deal with picking up our young people, especially our young people with mental ill-health, before their illnesses become major life issues for those people. The compelling evidence is that mental health support has to start in the early years and a future Labor government would appoint mental health workers - this is the announcement we made this week in relation to this - in every single state, primary and high school.

The youth network of Tasmania has stated that mental health was the leading issue identified by the Tasmanian Youth Forum on Health and Wellbeing encompassing anxiety, depression, stress and feeling overwhelmed and pressured. While participants were aware of limited available support options, access to appropriate services was a significant issue. Barriers included cost, transport, and the location of services. Youth sector workers identified barriers including lengthy wait times, availability of services in regional areas and a lack of integrated care pathways for young people seeking treatment or support. Research demonstrates that up to 75 per cent of major mental illnesses are presented before 25 years of age. This statistic suggests that greater investment in prevention, early intervention and initiatives specifically tailored to young people will reduce the demand for costly tertiary services. It will also save lives.

When I was a young person growing up in a rural community, a lad took his life. He was a close friend of my family and the impact that had on our small community was so catastrophic and it is still felt by all of us today. We still know the last place he was before he took that decision. We still think of him with great sadness but the problem is that was 25 years ago. That community is still a hot-spot and cluster-point for young people taking their own lives. We are still not addressing the issue.

Mr Ferguson - Careful.

Ms BUTLER - What are you suggesting I be careful about here, minister? This is the truth and it is time you stopped and listened to people. This is enough. Enough is enough. How many young people will it take before we properly invest into this and stop playing semantics? The electorate of Lyons has clusters of young people who take their lives and it is absolutely tragic. I know how tragedy affects a community. Having mental health workers in our schools as part of our communities will make a difference. Young people are often marginalised, stigmatised and neglected by this Government. I can confirm that this Budget has done nothing to engage them.

The youth unemployment rate in Australia is also a major issue but Tasmania is the worst. It is the worst in Australia. We have some of the highest youth unemployment rates in Australia and what are we doing about it? We are doing absolutely nothing. We know we also have some of the highest youth homelessness problems. The stress that that has on them really affects their mental health and nothing is being done about that, either. Do you know long it takes to see a psychiatrist if you are a young person in a rural community with mental ill health? It can take up to three to four months. It can take three to four months to even see a social worker, let alone a psychiatrist. That is how dire the situation is becoming.

We do have policies in these areas. We have policies we took to the last election because we see this as the key to looking after young people in our communities. We are really sick of watching young people's lives destroyed due to lack of effective strategy to engage them, due to lack of effective investment to manage the health resources they require. Why can't they access psychiatrists or social workers? Why can't they be bulk-billed and their GP refer them when they need the help? Why do they have to sit in an ED for sometimes six days in order to receive the treatment they receive? I remember one example of a lass who was sent home after her third attempt at suicide, a young person, an 18-year-old and she was sent home after having her stomach pumped. She was asked to catch the first bus home because there was no-one at home that could come and pick her up because they cannot afford a car. This is the reality of people in our communities. That lass walked up to the bus mall, caught the first bus home and there was not even a call to see whether she made it. This was her third attempt.

You cannot sit there and tell me your system is working. You cannot sit there and tell me nothing needs to change because it certainly does. These are young people's lives. Can you imagine the potential these people had and what they could have accomplished with their lives? Yet we let them down. We let them down as law-makers and legislators. Labor is committed to supporting better mental health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians and Labor will work together with the community and health professionals to help Tasmanians stay and be well or, if they need to access support, that mental health initiatives deliver the services they need. That is a policy we took to the last election. We also have another policy, psychiatric and emergency nurses -

Time expired.

[12.18 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have a few things I want to say and the first would be to be very careful about the language that you choose to use -

Ms Butler - Do not patronise me, please.

Mr FERGUSON - I will state an important message.

Ms Butler - Do not patronise me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I will state a very important public health message, which is be very careful about the language you choose to use in regard to this. I have made these mistakes myself in the past and I am sorry for that.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, you have.

Mr FERGUSON - I am sorry for that and I have apologised to the people concerned those years ago. I must take the opportunity to reinforce the importance about the language we choose to use in these contributions.

Ms Butler - You have wasted a minute of a very important issue scolding me like a schoolteacher.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - This is an investment of my time on this matter because it is too important to let it go. I have been guilty of this myself in the past. I do not know how many more times I need to make that point. We can learn and we are a strongly advised against using some language that can become a problem for some of our audience. I say that advisedly and I place that as a message as much to be helpful as a warning to members of this House because we have a public audience in this place. I do not want to hear about semantics. I want to reinforce the need for appropriate language and to ensure that people are not left with a feeling of blame when, unfortunately, those tragedies do occur. That is also very damaging. Language in relation to hot spots, places and methods are completely unacceptable.

I am glad that Dr Woodruff has brought up this matter of public importance. I hope to clear up some misunderstandings or some misgivings, despite my best endeavours this morning to address

the questions I was asked. I will place on the record that our history on mental health is not our future. What gives me a great deal of joy is to know that the key services Dr Woodruff has called for are going to come to fruition. The physical infrastructure, the fabric of the buildings that we need to provide these dedicated adolescent mental health services are currently being built, Dr Woodruff, in my home town of Launceston, in your home town of Hobart.

Dr Woodruff - It is the staff, minister.

Mr FERGUSON - I will get to that. I have been clear on this in the past and I ask you to either accept what I am saying or find how I could possibly be wrong by looking at the Budget yourself. You will be assured of our credentials on this. We are very proud of it. It is really important to us. I wish that the Royal Hobart redevelopment had got under way on time and finished on time. It would have been done three years ago. It is coming to fruition now. A big part of that is that K Block is designed and built with a dedicated adolescent mental health unit. That is key to addressing your concern.

I am working closely with the chief psychiatrist on this. He is my go-to adviser on the best way to build the service within the fabric that the construction company is building. We are well served by Dr Groves. He is a terrific clinician, highly engaged with both me and health professionals. It will be a dedicated adolescent mental health unit -

Ms O'Connor - Is this Launceston or Hobart?

Mr FERGUSON - Hobart. I am talking about K Block at the moment. I will come to Launceston if you like.

Dr Woodruff - It does not say that in the budget papers.

Mr FERGUSON - I am saying it and I have said it on many occasions.

Dr Woodruff - But why is it not in the budget papers? When is it going to happen?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - In relation to the adolescent unit, on the rare occasions that beds are not utilised by young mental health patients, I have asked that consideration be given for those beds to be used by other teenagers if needed. If an adolescent mental health patient then required admission, any non-mental health patients would need to be moved elsewhere. Its primary purpose is for youth mental health. That is what it is designed to be. That is what it is. It is not a general ward, as you chose to call it this morning. That is a false description. You should not say it again.

Dr Woodruff - Will it be staffed, minister?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - And it will be staffed. And on staffing -

Dr Woodruff - You cannot just call them in if someone turns up in the middle of the night.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. You are warned, Dr Woodruff.

Mr FERGUSON - There is resistance to listening to the facts. You are willing to ask the questions but are you willing to hear the answers? The Government has committed a major investment in staffing the unit. We are not going to build the building and walk away from an empty shell. The staffing, as I have outlined this morning, and I even drew your attention to the Budget papers, will include the necessary specialist medical and nursing staff to support patients in the new adolescent mental health unit. I missed a word - dedicated.

Dr Woodruff - Where does it say that?

Mr FERGUSON - I am telling you. I am saying it to you now. I have referred you to the budget papers. Watching you and hearing you, I detect that you do not want this information.

Dr Woodruff - I do. You know I do. I just want to be sure you are being honest and fair with people.

Mr FERGUSON - You would rather believe something else? This is all my advice. This is directly from the department. You are being reliably informed right now.

A final important statement that members should be pleased to hear, the model of care which is definitely outside my expertise is currently under development by CAMHS, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and will be ratified by the chief psychiatrist. That is what we are doing. It is in the Budget. The builders are building as we speak. The clinicians are designing the model of care as we speak. What should the Government be doing? Exactly as we have by providing the funding to staff those beds.

[12.26 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, that was the clearest statement we have had from the Minister for Health on the situation in the child and adolescent mental health area of public policy. It is clearer than what we heard from the minister this morning during question time when he said that some of the new beds in the Royal Hobart Hospital will be mental health beds - some of them. I took note when you said that because we, through our questions, were seeking clarity. On page 104 of Budget Paper No 2, Volume 1, it says -

These new beds will be progressively rolled out from 2020-21, including 10 new Intensive Care Unit beds and a dedicated 16-bed adolescent unit. Clinicians will determine the final mix of services and beds.

We asked about that and you said, 'Some of those beds will be mental health beds'.

Mr Ferguson - If I said that, that was clearly an error on my part or a misunderstanding on yours. A 16-bed adolescent unit. I have clarified them all.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, minister. That is an enormous relief to us. It is a different issue from the matters that are raised in the Auditor-General's report. I have a terrible sense of déjà vu when we discuss in this place child and adolescent mental health. Lin Thorp in the Labor government at the time promised an adolescent mental health unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital. That never came to bear. Now it seems there is an investment in a dedicated mental health unit. Boy, do we need it.

As we have discussed in this place, young people are under enormous pressures that I do not think we were when we were their age. There is a fragility among our young people now which we need to recognise. There is increasing drug use among young people. It was raised this morning in the media by paediatrician, Dr Anagha Jayakar, who said -

We have a huge problem with substance abuse in young people ... and we have no safe, secure place for them to be able to detox, and the ward is not the right place and neither is Ashley [Youth Detention Centre].

This is an issue the minister is going to have to grapple with in this term of the Parliament - the increasing complexity of the mental health challenges children and young people are facing, the risks that are ever-present for children and young people and particularly adolescents who engage in risk-taking behaviour. We have all been there but adolescent mental health is a different picture now than it was even only a few years ago.

One of Coroner Olivia McTaggart's most powerful investigations was into the death by suicide of six young people in 2012. She talks about the underfunding of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and I would like the minister to detail the level of funding that is going into CAHMS. As Dr Woodruff detailed, we know that the waiting lists for young people to get into CAMHS is long and any time we have someone in a state of mental distress on a waiting list or waiting in the emergency department for hours and days, it is increasing the risks of harm to that person.

One of the key recommendations of Coroner McTaggart in this profoundly important and moving report is the recommendation that there be a dedicated inpatient unit for adolescents or young persons between the ages of 12 and 25, designed around the needs of that cohort, including for the treatment of those suffering from an acute state of mental illness or suicidality. Coroner McTaggart recommends that: CAMHS be staffed to the equivalent of best practice for such an organisation so as to provide an adequate service for children and adolescents with mental health issues to ensure there is no freeze in accepting referrals; eliminate a wait list for referrals; provide for clinical directorship of this service; allow access to a wider group of adolescents suffering mental health issues; develop a comprehensive early intervention program for the 0 to 3 age group and their families, including to identify those children at high risk and focusing on early intervention in the infant attachment period; and develop a school-based multi-systemic approach to developing mental health disorders for the 5 to 12 years age group.

There is a body of work here for the ministers for Health and Education and Training to do together, to make sure we have the psychologists and counsellors in our schools who are able to identify emerging problems in students, to work with those students and their families, to protect them from mental ill-health and to provide support where it is needed. We are concerned there is not enough resilience being taught to young people in our schools and we would like to see the two ministers work more closely together on that.

Time expired.

[12.32 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER - Thank you for your new-found confidence in our Health minister, Leader of the Greens. I am pleased that you are coming on board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to building a better mental health system for Tasmanians in line with the Rethink Mental Health plan and by working

closely with frontline staff, consumers, community organisations and key stakeholders. We are getting on with the job of rolling out our \$104 million plan to deliver more beds, more community support and acute and adolescent facilities for the first time ever, all within a more integrated mental health system. We are responding to the increasing number of patients presenting with mental health conditions and extra funding and more beds on top of other services and preventative initiatives already in place are being rolled out. This includes delivering inpatient adolescent mental health facilities at the Launceston General Hospital and the Royal Hobart Hospital, with the redevelopment of ward 4K at the LGH to feature single-bed rooms designed to meet contemporary adolescent mental health care requirements. The new adolescent ward at the Royal Hobart Hospital will feature a 16-bed unit with rooms meeting modern standards for adolescent mental health care.

The Government has already provided a significant funding boost for the CAMHS service. During the last term, we provided \$800 000 per annum to better support young Tasmanians and ensure they have the resources they need to recruit additional staff. This was the first funding boost CAMHS had received for years. This Government is making the investments, reforms and service improvements that our mental health sector has been crying out for too long. Currently, there are demand pressures on mental health services and that is why we are boosting services to ensure mental health care can be provided in the right place at the right time. This Government already has a proud record of investing more into mental health services for our schools and we always want to do more.

Last year, Mr Rockliff launched the first wellbeing strategy focusing specifically on mental health, backed up with \$17.8 million to address student wellbeing including mental health. This action plan specifically addresses key issues experienced by our children and students, such as resilience, depression, anxiety and cyber safety. This support comes on top of other significant mental health initiatives we have been delivering, including the reinstatement of the school nurses program following Labor's cuts and new funding for Speak Up Stay Chatty. Last year, the Minister for Health raised at COAG the matter of continuity of care for patients moving between interstate jurisdictions, which has resulted in chief psychiatrists around Australia prioritising this issue. Sometimes there are severe and complex cases that require interstate transfer on an individual basis. This always takes place in close consultation between clinical teams with the best interests of the patient first and foremost.

We want Tasmanians to receive the care they need when they need it. Our plan includes 27 new beds, a greenfield site, 12-bed facility, a rebuilt Peacock Centre and a mental health in the home service that will commence this month. This Government is making the investments, reforms and service improvements that our mental health sector has been crying out for, for too long. We acknowledge that there are still Tasmanians who are waiting too long for care and who have trouble accessing the care they need. This is why the beds we are building will improve patient flow and most importantly, keep more Tasmanians living with mental ill-health, out of hospital in the first place.

The brand new Hospital in the Home service has been set up so that patients can receive the care they need sooner, while we build a brand new, 12-bed dedicated mental health facility on a greenfield site at St Johns Park in New Town. This initiative and safe service model is used in other states around Australia and allows patients to receive hospital-level care while being accommodated in their own home, where they can feel safe and be close to their family. The service will reduce the current pressure on the Emergency Department, ensuring more Tasmanians living with mental or ill-health can receive the care they need in the right place at the right time. The immediate benefits will be felt by the Royal Hobart Hospital as additional bed options means reduced pressure on our staff and patients.

Our plan builds on top of the improvements we have already delivered. Six new step-up mental health beds at Tolosa Street, \$11 million for packages of care, securing the PEN service, record funding for RAW and ensuring the future of mental health facilities by purchasing Millbrook Rise, Mistral Place and Tolosa Street. We want to help Tasmanians to stay well in their communities and to stay out of hospital so we can continue to listen and work closely with consumers, carers and mental health professionals.

Matter noted.

SITTING DATES

[12.39 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health - Motion) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 11 June next at 10 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Auditor-General's Report - Receipt by Minister for Health

[12.40 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to add to an answer from question time as I committed to do. I am advised that the Department of Health was provided with a draft full report on 15 May 2019 allowing for provision of a departmental response and to enable the Department of Health to raise any issues regarding matters of fact about findings and recommendations. The Department of Health has worked cooperatively with staff from the Tasmanian Audit Office over the past year in preparation of that report. I was directly provided only with a summary of that draft report by the Tasmanian Audit Office at that time. I am advised that this is the longstanding standard practice for Auditor-General's reports.

The department in turn briefed me on the full draft report and provided me with a copy of that draft final report. The first time that I saw the final full report was, along with any other member, when it was tabled in this House and publicly released on Tuesday this week. I am also advised this is the same for the department; the full final report and recommendations were not available until they were tabled and released. To assure the House, we have sought comprehensive advice on the full final report and its recommendations.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)

Second Reading

Resumed from 29 May 2019 (page 84)

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to reply to the Treasurer's Budget speech, and I welcome the princesses who have joined us in the gallery to view their parliament in action. Welcome to your parliament.

I congratulate Treasurer Peter Gutwein on his sixth budget. We have made a deliberate decision to maintain the momentum in our growing economy by continuing the critical job-creating investment in the infrastructure our state needs, including social infrastructure. This Budget allows us to implement all of our commitments including in essential services across my portfolio areas and to deliver on our plan to grow the economy, create jobs and to support and protect our most vulnerable Tasmanians.

Children and young people are a key focus in my portfolios and I will start with them. The Hodgman Liberal Government is investing in children and young people to help them reach their potential. The 2019-20 Budget supports our plan to build for the future and give children, young people and their families the positive future they deserve. The Hodgman Liberal Government is continuing to deliver on our commitments to help and protect Tasmania's vulnerable children and young people with additional funding allocated in the state Budget.

Since 2016 the redesigned Strong Families, Safe Kids project has delivered a range of actions to improve outcomes for Tasmanian children, young people and their families including the implementation of the Strong Families, Safe Kids advice and referral line, the release of the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework, the development of the Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool and creation a range of new frontline and support roles within the child safety service. The 2019-20 Budget includes funding for the ongoing resourcing of the Strong Families, Safe Kids project in 2019-20. An additional \$2.3 million will assist in strengthening quality assurance processes, improve practice in investigation and response, delivery of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework outcomes and ongoing change management activity to embed the principles of the redesign within the operation of the child safety service.

We are committed to and are building a better out-of-home care system, which is essential to improving the wellbeing and future success of children and young people unable to live with their family. The reality is there are some out-of-home care children with very complex needs who require extensive periods of time receiving specialised care with highly intensive wrap-around services to be provided. That is why we are investing \$16.9 million to assist in meeting the growth in demand and cost of out-of-home care in Tasmania. This will support those children whose needs are extremely complex and therefore require much more individualised care and support services while the Department of Communities Tasmania looks at ways in which we can better support these children who need intensive specialised care and secure them better outcomes by looking into other care models both internally and interstate as well as a step-down approach to reintegrate these children back into their communities under more conventional care arrangements. This work will inform future funding needs in this area in future years.

Funding of \$112 000 is also being provided per annum across the forward Estimates for an additional resource to support strategic communication and media services for the Commissioner for Children and Young People. This funding is for an expansion in consultation mechanisms designed to capture the views and opinions of children and young people, to encourage and promote and facilitate the expression of these views and opinions and to empower children and young people to directly participate in decision-making processes.

The Budget builds on our investment of an additional \$24 million in funding to support the Strong Family, Safe Kids redesign employing more child safety officers and other frontline staff and assisting vulnerable children with very complex needs and out-of-home care. This is on top of the \$51.2 million in increased funding for out-of-home care and the redesign of Child Safety Services we committed to in our first term. Our new advice and referral line combines two services,

the former gateway service and the Child Safety Service into an integrated, single front door, staffed by qualified government and community-based providers, Mission Australia and Baptcare, that will link Tasmanians in need with a range of government and non-government services and programs when they or a child they know needs help to support the best interests of a young person. This will reduce the number of families entering the child safety system and I thank our Child Safety Service staff and the NGO staff from Baptcare and Mission Australia as well as the unions who have cooperated to build and then implement this major reform in child safety service delivery in Tasmania over the last year and it is already delivering results.

We are delivering on our \$16.7 million election commitments and our plan to keep our economy strong, to invest in health, education and the essential services Tasmanians need and to look after Tasmania's vulnerable children and young people.

In the critical area of housing, over the last four years under our first Affordable Housing Action Plan, the Hodgman Liberal Government has invested in more emergency homelessness support introducing the Housing Connect outreach team for the first time, which is on the ground right now reaching out and helping people who are in most critical need around greater Hobart and statewide. We have boosted the capacity of existing shelters for people who find themselves in homeless stress, including the Hobart Women's Shelter, and we have built new supported accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness in the south and in the north-west. We have built and we continue to build more houses, have released more land for affordable housing and we have assisted more families into affordable home ownership. All of this has been done with record state investment, not Commonwealth rivers of gold, generated by a strong economy and made available through strong budget management that lets us invest in priorities like housing. I am proud to be part of a Government that is able to do this when it is needed and is getting our priorities right.

We will not fix Tasmania's housing shortage by investing in social housing alone. We need more houses in the broader market so that supply increasingly meets demand and prices for renters and new entrants become affordable again. That is why this is a whole-of-government effort. It is not only a housing portfolio project. On top of our Affordable Housing Strategy, the Hodgman Liberal Government has driven investment in residential development through initiatives like: extending the \$20 000 First Home Owner Grant for an additional period; land tax concessions for houses made available for long-term rental; assisting with reductions in stamp duty payable on house and land packages; simplifying building regulations and application processes and the requirements for multiple permits; new legislation to rezone Government land for affordable housing and payroll tax rebates and grants for smaller businesses; and employing apprentices and young people to get these houses built.

I thank and acknowledge our Treasurer, Mr Gutwein, Ms Courtney and Mr Barnett, in their Building and Construction portfolios over the period, who have assisted to build these other levers that can help to drive the supply of more houses for Tasmanians, right now, when we need them, in addition to the work that my office and team, as Minister for Planning, who have played a major role as well.

That is why Tasmania is leading the nation in building approvals and that means supply is catching up with demand, which will mean less competition for housing in the market and fewer Tasmanian families in housing stress. No-one can say our building industry, our community housing providers and the Hodgman Liberal Government are not flat out building houses for Tasmanians but we know there is more to do. In recognition of continuing high demand for social

and affordable housing, our Government has allocated almost \$68 million in 2019-20 to boost the supply of new social and affordable homes. We recognise the need to plan for growth and we are working through our 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy to address housing stress and reduce homelessness in Tasmania.

To accelerate the building of more houses to address supply challenges, we are heavily front-ending our \$125 million housing commitment in stage 2 of our Affordable Housing Action Plan, with \$10 million of funding brought forward into 2019-20, bringing the total allocated in this financial year to \$40.5 million. A further \$27.4 million is added to that from Housing Tasmania's capital program, including the purchase and construction of new social housing to support the initiatives in our action plan. Bringing forward this considerable investment is only one of the ways we are building more homes sooner for Tasmanians in need.

This is where I need to point out some of the differences between the Hodgman Liberal Government's response to Tasmania's housing and homeless situation and that of Labor and the Greens. After labelling the housing challenge a crisis and an emergency and demanding more urgent action and resources from this Government every week over the last year, the best that Labor can offer is to hold an inquiry. In their budget reply speech this week, in terms of housing and the crisis they reiterate in here, day in, day out, they had no new policies, they had no proposals to allocate additional money to provide solutions -

Ms O'Connor - We do. Have you read our alternative budget housing plan, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - but they proposed to hold an inquiry later this year to consider the issues and how it all came about.

Ms O'Connor - We proposed to relieve Housing Tasmania of its debt.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - On the other hand, I acknowledge the Greens did produce an alternative budget. With their two members and their excellent staff, they produced an alternative budget covering most critical portfolio areas and I commend them for doing that this year, as they have before.

In the area of housing, what I cannot understand is and after, particularly Ms O'Connor's comment in question time this morning that our Government had grotesquely underinvested in social housing -

Ms O'Connor - Yes, for the entire first term.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - Why do the Greens - and I am genuinely interested, this is not rhetorical - but why allocate only \$50 million over the next four years?

Ms O'Connor - No, on top of what you have and the relief. The minister is misrepresenting us.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - The Greens' budget said the Greens would allocate \$50 million to build new homes over the next two years.

Ms O'Connor - There is an extra capital allocation of \$50 million, \$15 million a year when the state absorbs the debts, and then \$10 million a year for homelessness facilities.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Greens would allocate \$50 million for new housing over the next two years.

Ms O'Connor - Do you want me to stand and correct the record so that -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - At least the Greens have produced an alternative budget. I have read the media release and I have read the alternative budget, and the \$50 million investment -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Greens are being misrepresented by the minister -

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - It needs to be a point of order and not a clarification.

Ms O'CONNOR - The point of order is that the minister is misrepresenting us and we are spending, in our alternative budget, \$108 million on housing capital.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - That is not a point of order and you know it.

Ms O'Connor - The minister is being misleading.

Mr JAENSCH - The varying numbers the Greens will use to account for their commitment still -

Ms O'Connor - You haven't actually read it, have you?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - I have. It is still less than what is already in our Affordable Housing Action Plan.

Ms O'Connor - It is on top of it.

Mr JAENSCH - By comparison, I fear that they have it wrong.

Ms O'Connor - What, is an extra \$108 million getting it wrong?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - The Greens have it wrong and Labor has nothing. Tasmanians in housing stress can take heart that they are not in government at this critical time -

Ms O'Connor - Well, we built 2200 new homes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - While a Labor-Greens government would hold an inquiry and build \$50 million worth of housing, we have a plan and a budget to deliver it over the next four years, which will deliver 607 new social housing dwellings, 380 affordable serviced lots of land in high demand areas, 88 more units for homeless Tasmanians, 287 Tasmanian households -

Ms Standen - Why don't you explain why you changed your language?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Standen.

Mr JAENSCH - assisted to buy their own home, 200 private rental tenancies for families on low incomes, and supported accommodation for 418 vulnerable Tasmanians, plus continuation of the Housing Connect front door and outreach programs -

Ms Standen - You said 1400 new homes, so did your Premier.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Standen.

Mr JAENSCH - You had your opportunity in the Budget reply to lay out what you would do for housing, Ms Standen, and Labor had nothing.

Ms Standen - Sadly, I am not the minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - We will ensure continuation of the broader housing market stimulus measures that are driving the supply of new homes right across Tasmania right now. The contrast could not be greater and Labor and the Greens should seriously consider withdrawing their proposal to hold an inquiry and instead stand behind the plan and the budget we have put in place to deliver solutions for Tasmanians in housing stress.

In the area of planning, we are delivering on our commitment to deliver Australia's first statewide planning scheme. We are working closely with local government to finalise their local components of this Tasmanian planning scheme. The 2019-20 budget contains \$2 million over four years additional funding to complete this task that will help deliver more housing sooner, incentivise and support continued strong investment in Tasmania. The allocation will also fund completion of a number of strategic planning initiatives including delivery of a suite of statewide planning policies, development of a robust framework for maintenance and review of Tasmania's three regional land-use strategies and work to underpin the investment in the Hobart City Deal.

The planning policy unit in the Department of Justice and the commission are working directly with councils in finalising their local provision schedule with a target of having all LPSs submitted to the Tasmanian Planning Commission by June this year. Planning priority projects include our commitment to establish the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, the first of its kind in Australia, as a statewide planning scheme that will provide unprecedented certainty and consistency in the rules and objectives of the planning system everywhere in Tasmania. Priorities also include our commitment to deliver a suite of integrated Tasmanian planning policies to provide overarching strategic direction to our planning system and describe the planning outcomes we are aiming for.

There will be strategic planning work to support the activation of the Hobart City Deal and this work will underpin the \$1.6 million committed over the 2019-20 Budget and forward Estimates to establish both the Greater Hobart Act and implement governance arrangements to build strong relationships that promote strategic planning outcomes and service delivery that considers the impact on and benefits for the greater Hobart region. We are funding development of new planning rules that focus on medium-rise developments and gentle infill projects that provide attractive options for people looking to live close to work and enjoy more of what the city has to offer and other reform initiatives such as short-stay accommodation compliance and land release for more affordable housing including rapid rezoning under our new process, the Housing Land Supply Act 2018.

In recognition of the growing demand for transport infrastructure and services, we introduce new legislation to enable the development of a suite of Tasmanian planning policies. Formal preparation of the draft TPPs will commence soon and will include a comprehensive period of consultation with the public and reporting to me by the Independent Tasmanian Planning Commission. By working with the private sector and the community, we will develop these new TPPs and ensure the state is ready for its future. Looking ahead, the Hodgman Liberal Government remains focused on our plan to put in place our first statewide planning scheme.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Mr Deputy Speaker, continuing my response to the Budget: looking ahead the Hodgman Liberal Government remains focused on its plan to put in place Australia's first single statewide planning scheme. It is a central pillar of a fair and consistent planning system that provides certainty and clarity for all Tasmanians.

The final step in that process is the development of local provisions schedules by each of our local government councils, which they are all working towards. I thank our local government sector and the councils, their staff and planners in particular, for responding to my call for them to accelerate the completion of their local provisions schedules. The target is to have them submitted in the middle of this year so we can move them through the Tasmanian Planning Commission's statutory assessment process as efficiently as possible. The bulk of that work is completed or being finalised.

Some of the Budget's highlights for my electorate of Braddon include a \$31.58 million capital upgrade to the Mersey Community Hospital and \$9.76 million for stage 2 of the King Island Hospital redevelopment, backed by a \$4 million increase to staffing at the Mersey Community Hospital. It is wonderful that the Mersey is appearing at Budget time as part of the Tasmanian hospital system. We have just been through a federal election in which the Mersey was not one of the things in play, creating uncertainty for people in Braddon. Congratulations to Mr Ferguson, the Premier and our Government and the work we have done with the Commonwealth in securing the

commitment to return the Mersey to Tasmanian ownership and control as part of our single statewide health system.

We will spend \$1.95 million at the North West Regional Hospital improving maternity services and \$500 000 upgrading air conditioning. Two new ambulance facilities will be delivered - a new \$5.9 million station at Burnie and an ambulance training station at Smithton worth \$1.03 million. There is also a commitment, as we have heard, of \$2.4 million to provide new drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds at Ulverstone. For families with family members in the grip of drug and alcohol addiction it will be a great relief that there will be a specialist service available close to where they live, keeping our community safer and helping those people to get on with taking control of their lives again.

There will be \$35.72 million in road upgrades. The Bass Highway from Wynyard, where I live, to Marrawah will be the centrepiece of the roads program in the north west, while \$75.85 million will help make our north west freight roads, taking our export produce to the world, safer. There will be assistance with lifestyle improvements and tourism transport, such as \$16 million for the West Coast Wilderness Railway and \$4.8 million to help councils deliver the Coastal Pathway project linking Wynyard through to Latrobe. This multi-use shared pathway has been a dream for a long time and now has funding to be completed.

The Cradle Coast Authority will receive \$300 000 for its ability to contribute to the Government's strategic growth vision in the Cradle Coast region by connecting the development opportunities and prospects of our region to the local people and the economy. It will make sure all Tasmanians can participate in the growth the state is enjoying. I thank the Premier for leading us into that new policy area and making this a down payment on strategic growth in my region.

Tourism will be boosted with \$80.05 million being spent on the exciting, iconic and very necessary Cradle Mountain master plan and visitor experience, \$19.75 million for a new K to 12 school at Penguin, \$10.5 million at Devonport High School and a \$1.65 million upgrade to the Spreyton Primary School.

A new \$3.5 million child and family learning centre at Waratah-Wynyard will ensure kids there have access to early play-based learning. At tertiary level, \$15 million will go to the UTAS Burnie transformation, facilitating the university's move to its West Park site on the waterfront as part of the transformation of Burnie.

At Ulverstone, there is \$2.5 million to assist in the completion the new cultural precinct centre, being driven by the Central Coast Council. It will include the installation of a planetarium as part of the amazing drive of Brittany Trubody and the TASTroFEST Group and the passion of that community for exposing young people on the Central Coast to science education and connecting with the world. They bring expertise, technology, displays and visiting scientists from NASA, CSIRO, from our own new Australian space agency to interact with school groups and kids in Ulverstone. It shows what you can achieve.

I attended one of those events and spoke there. Of all the Australian land mass, we are the southernmost part of it. The atmosphere above us separating us from space is thinner than the rest of Australia. Therefore, we are closer to space than anywhere else in Australia, certainly the mainland. I am glad to see that investment proceed and see that magnificent transformative opportunity come to kids on the north west coast.

Our Budget has been well received. Here are a few quotes I will put on the record. Andrea Witt of Shelter Tasmania said -

Tasmania is confronting a housing crisis. To solve the problem, we urgently need greater investment in social and affordable rental housing and this fast-track investment in this Budget in capital is very welcome.

Brian Wightman, the Tasmanian executive director of the Property Council of Australia said -

The Hodgman Government's decision to allocate \$40.5 million from the existing four-year action plan is a timely response to housing stress.

Matthew Pollock, the executive director of the Master Builders Association, Tasmania said -

Master Builders welcomes the announcement to fast-track new funding for social housing and bring the total investment in 2019-20 to \$68 million. The only way to address housing affordability is to boost supply and this announcement means we will see more supply of affordable housing at a time when the community most needs it.

This additional investment into social and affordable housing is well timed to keep the momentum going in our construction industry.

Stuart Collins, executive director of the Housing Industry Association said -

The Tasmanian Government's recent announcement that it will extend the \$20 000 grant to first-home buyers has been welcomed by HIA. It is a positive scheme that addresses the rising problem of housing affordability and will help Tasmanians achieve the Aussie dream of owning their own home faster.

Our Commissioner for Children and Young People said -

The extra funding we have received will have as major impact on the way we communicate with our stakeholders.

The extra \$112 000 annually will enable us to capture the views and opinions of children and young people. It will also better enable the expression of those views and opinions and help to empower children and young people to influence decisions being made about their future.

Ms McLean said -

From an overall perspective, the Government's commitment for an additional \$2.3 million to fund the *Strong Families, Safe Kids Child Safety Service Redesign* was critical and a step in the right direction. We are now at a critical stage in the reform process where additional funding is required to continue to implement changes in the child safety system.

In conclusion, the 2019-20 Budget is about building on our long-term plan, to grow the economy, creating jobs, investing in essential services and infrastructure, hard infrastructure,

economic infrastructure and social infrastructure and protecting the Tasmanian way of life and the lives of vulnerable Tasmanians and I commend the Budget.

[2.41 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to response to the Government's Budget for 2019-20. The Budget clarifies that this Government is an impediment to growth in our beautiful state. We are now in net debt with over \$1 billion in borrowings. A billion dollars, that is \$2000 per Tasmanian and we still have no clear indication why.

Our health system is so underfunded and poorly managed that the Auditor-General has declared that patient care is severely compromised. Dr John Saul for the AMA stated in the last few days that the Tasmanian hospital system is in crisis and here we have the independent Auditor-General's report supporting everything they have been saying as doctors. The AMA and Dr Saul talked about their frustration as doctors with not being understood, not being heard, not being listened to and that is something that I feel as a local member for Lyons. It is a frustration when I am speaking constantly to Government members about the problems in the community, especially to do with health, because I am either given lines of propaganda of how everything is great or I am put back in my box or spoken to in a very patronising way as if I do not know what I am talking about. I do know what I am talking about. I am one of the people talking to people on the ground every day and I can tell you that people are really struggling and it is our job as local members to make sure we represent those people. That is what each chair in this room is about. It is about representing the people in our communities.

Beige and ignorant is how I defined the Budget. There is nothing to combat some of the biggest pressures the state is currently experiencing. People are dying avoidable deaths waiting for health services. Tasmanian Auditor-General, Rob Whitehead, found that ambulance ramping across the four hospitals between 2012-13 and 2018-19 had increased by 149 per cent despite only a 20 per cent growth in ambulance presentations to EDs over the same period. I noted seeing complaints about being ramped written on the windows of ambulances in this House recently. If that is the measure that ambos are going to let the public know what is really going on you can understand why they are so frustrated. With statistics like this, you cannot call them dishonest statistics. These are the real thing. This is actually what is going on.

It is really important that we do not just put politics above doing the right thing and saving a person's seat in a particular electorate. It is about making sure we do the job that we are meant to do. The duration of ambulance ramping has also increased with the offload delay exceeding the 15-minute target, growing by 197 per cent and exceeding 30 minutes by 239 per cent. The Royal Hobart Hospital was bed-blocked 93 per cent of the time between June 2018 and January 2019 with patient safety severely and routinely compromised almost once every four days on average. That is incredibly stressful for those patients and their families and for the poor workers who are having to endure a workplace like such. These are people who have taken oaths to protect, to put people's health at the forefront when they are undertaking their daily tasks and a lot of them are going home knowing they have not been able to fulfil that because they are being placed in impossible situations. It is an obligation of our health minister under the Westminster system to manage a health system. That is how we are set up. It is all of the government's responsibility but that is the Health minister's job; that is the job they are required to do.

The Launceston General Hospital spent more than 70 per cent of time over the same period at the highest possible level of escalation in a state of almost constant gridlock. I have spoken to people who work as nurses at the LGH. They cannot even book any leave for themselves because

gaps in staffing have not been replaced. These are people who are working in extremely stressful situations and they have been constantly contacting local members. I do not think that there would be anyone in here who would not have had that conversation. We cannot plead ignorance any more.

With these findings, I am flabbergasted at the underwhelming investment in preventative health. Health is chronically underfunded and was only provided an additional half of 1 per cent in this Budget. We are in a middle of a health crisis. The crisis is real. Tasmanians are dying. Patients are dying due to bed block at our hospitals. With all the spin and propaganda, the minister seems exhausted but not from managing the health portfolio. He is exhausted from fighting to keep his head above water. They are not fixing the issue and the crisis has deepened. There is no increase in investment to preventative health. For example, the people who run the needle exchange program in Lyons have been forced to skimp and save and have not had an increase in funding for many years. This preventative program saves lives. One community house that runs a needle exchange is required to buy their own sterilised water to give to the consumers as the department will not even fund sterilised water to give to those customers. Giving sterilised water to customers is considered the best practice policy and this is only one example of the rationing we see all over our state.

We have limited drug rehabilitation spots available and some of the highest readings per head of population for substance abuse in this country. This area of preventative health is not properly resourced. There is scant investment into this area, especially in this beige Budget. I do not know if any members on the other side of the room sat with grandparents who have grandchildren who are addicted to ice. They do not have any money left because they have been constantly trying to help their grandchildren and they are constantly coming to see whether we can somehow have them bumped up the list, for their grandchildren to go into rehabilitation. They know if they do not they will either go back to jail, and that seems to be what happens because they reoffend, or they die. That is what normally happens unless they are given those proper supports. We need to make sure we invest properly into that because it is heartbreaking sitting down with the parents and grandparents of those addicts. We need to be doing a lot better in that area.

There is still no women's shelter in the Lyons electorate. Community-based support funding has not been increased. Health workers, social workers and other health professionals are stretched across huge areas and they cannot meet the demand. The elective surgery waiting list has increased to 9043 people. According to TasCOSS, the proportion of people deferring access to GPs due to cost is 8.7 per cent, visiting a doctor, waiting for an appointment. The percentage of people seen within four hours from presenting at the emergency department of the Royal Hobart Hospital is 54 per cent. Wait times can be stretched to six days, especially if you have mental ill-health.

Research demonstrates that up to 75 per cent of major mental illnesses are presented before 25 years of age. The statistics suggest that greater investment in prevention and early intervention and initiatives specifically tailored to young people will reduce the demand for costly tertiary services. It will also save lives. At its worst, mental ill-health manifests in youth suicide and Tasmania has the highest per capita youth suicide rate in Australia. Having mental health workers in our schools as part of our communities will make a difference.

Young people are often marginalised, stigmatised and neglected by this government and I can confirm that this budget has done nothing to engage them. The youth unemployment rate in Australia increased to 11.5 per cent in January, from 11.2 per cent in December. The youth unemployment rate in Australia averaged 13.41 per cent from 1978 to 2019. We now know that south-east Tasmania has a 17.8 per cent rate of youth unemployment. It is ranked the sixth most

at-risk area in Australia. Tasmania overall has the unenviable rate of an average of 15 per cent youth unemployment, noting that this does not include the percentage of young people who are marginally attached to the labour force. The true rate is much higher.

I have already read the list of the Tasmanian suburbs and communities listed as having significant youth unemployment concerns on a national level in this House before. I will read them out again, with the indulgence of the House. They are: Hobart, Collinsvale, Glenlusk, Tea Tree, Old Beach, Honeywood, Risdon, Otago, Grasstree Hill, Campania, Colebrook, Bagdad, Bothwell, Apsley, Arthurs Lake, Cramps Bay, Broadmarsh, Brighton, Bridgewater, Elderslie, Dysart, Dromedary, Heritage, Herdsmans Cove, Granton, Gagebrook, Lake Sorell, Kempton, Jericho, Interlaken, Miena, Liawenee, Lower Marshes, Mangalore, Melton-Mowbray, Pontville, Wellington Park, Coningham, Snug, Howden, Margate, Cygnet, Franklin, Geeveston, Woodsdale, Oatlands, Levendale, Magra, Lachlan, Lake St Clair, Hamilton, Glenora, Evandale, Bushy Park, Boyer, New Norfolk, Plenty, Maydena, Nugent, Orielson, Sorell, Dunalley, Boomer Bay, Eaglehawk Neck, White Beach, Nubeena, Port Arthur, Koonya, Dolphin Sands, Cranbrook, Buckland, Runnymede, Swansea, Little Swanport, Orford, Triabunna, Rheban, Avoca, Rossarden, Elizabeth Town, Chudleigh, Deloraine, Mole Creek, Meander and Liena.

Each one of us in this room represent young people from each one of those places and it is important we all do what we can to engage those unemployed young people in our areas. We do not only look after the wealthy people or the people with good literacy, we look after everyone in our communities and we seek out those young people. It is very important we do that. What is needed is more investment in Tasmania's youth, their health, their shelter, their ambitions, their ideas, their economic futures, their place and their connections in the community, to get them work-ready to transition from education and training into the workforce.

The climate strikes showed tens of thousands of young people who were protesting knowing that they are being left a stinking, great environmental mess to clean up. I suspect what many of them do not realise is that the environment will not be the only mess they will be left with. This Government has done nothing to create jobs for the unemployed and the under-employed. They have not provided real wage growth opportunities for all Tasmanians. The Tasmanian economy is being held back by this Government's inability to meet the demand. It is time to wake up, as Mr Tucker would say, and meet the call that the world is demanding from us; we must be robust. We need real leadership, progressive economic policy, especially in building and construction. Under this Government we have lost more than 2000 apprenticeships.

Labor is actively listening to industry through the Building, Construction and Infrastructure Industry Advisory Council and other key stakeholders across the building and construction industry. We are grabbing the bull by the horns. We are consulting with property developers, builder's social and affordable housing, representatives from roofers, plumbers, electricians, industry stakeholders and suppliers. We are listening and acting. The resounding message from stakeholders is that the Government has not provided enough avenues to link industry and potential workers. We have some of the highest youth unemployment statistics in the country and we still cannot source, train or employ enough apprentices to meet the demand. What has been done over the last five years by the Government to address this void, the void between potential employees, training skill shortages and industry? That is the problem. Why has the Government not moved mountains to ensure that Tasmania's young people are engaged, employed, thriving, contributing to their communities, working and learning? Young people are one of our greatest resources. They are our greatest resource.

I am excited by the announcement made by our leader, Rebecca White, that Labor will offer up to 5000 students an opportunity to gain qualifications in key areas that will grow our economy. One of these areas is building and construction. Currently, the building and construction industry cannot meet demand. The average waiting time to engage a builder is up to 18 months. The cost of building per square metre has almost tripled in the last five years. These are the statistics we heard from the Government today. The Tasmanian Master Builders' Association has welcomed the announcement that a Labor Government would provide free TAFE courses for students in the building and construction industry, 'The industry has outpaced growth in the training system for several years which is creating skills shortages in the trades. '.

This would be a significant boost for young people looking to enter the trades and the businesses who employ them but it is also important that TAFE has the capacity to deliver training for these new students. Currently, capacity constraints in the training system must also be addressed if we are to achieve these targets. The construction industry employs more apprentices than in any other and has been a major source of new full-time jobs over the last few years. To keep the momentum going and ensure we capitalise off the current building boom, it is important we have a training system that can deliver and provides the opportunity for Tasmanians who might be considering a career in the building and construction industry.

I was pleased to see the extension of the First Home Owner Grant of \$20 000 through to the 30 June 2020. However, the scheme is somewhat flawed by the industry not being able to meet the demand. This is why Labor's initiative to provide free TAFE for students in this sector is so vital. Another issue is the capacity of Tasmanians to save enough money to buy into a market in the first place, even with a grant, it is a dream for many that do not have anywhere to sleep. The brutal truth about housing policy is that home ownership is falling fast in Australia, especially for the young and the poor. Fewer than half of 25 to 34-year-olds own their own homes today. Home ownership amongst the poorest 20 per cent of that age group has fallen from 63 per cent in 1981 to 23 per cent today. At this rate almost half of retirees will be renters in 40 years' time.

For young Tasmanians without access to the bank of mum and dad to provide a deposit or a guarantor, the average time it takes to save for a deposit is 10 years. For Tasmanians in rental accommodation, according to Anglicare, only 6 per cent of rental properties are affordable and appropriate for income support recipients in Tasmania. Shelter Tas stated that there are 14 600 households, almost one quarter of those on low incomes, experiencing housing stress in the state. Homelessness can be ended by providing access to appropriate, affordable and secure housing, along with the support needed to help people stay housed.

Housing underpins economic growth. Housing is vital infrastructure and a well operating housing market is a prerequisite for productivity and social cohesion. A workforce that is stably and affordably housed is a pool of people able to save for retirement and invest in the future, including education for their own children. There is very limited information in the Budget which shows any real solutions or regard for homeless people in our state.

The Government does not want the economy to boom. They are holding back the economy on purpose by continuing to cap wage growth at 2 per cent. Since July 2017 wages growth has moved backwards. When you take wages from the pockets of workers they do not spend. About 60 per cent of the Australian economy is made up of household consumption. We need to increase the basic wage. We need to make sure everyone is paid properly. Wages must be logical. We must be able to pay workers. Business confidence in Tasmania cannot be optimum until wage growth is addressed. The Government needs to lift the cap on public sector workers. I am very disappointed

that the Government has not lifted the 2 per cent wage cap from the 29 000 public sector workers in Tasmania.

We know that low wage growth is a significant issue in our state. Low wage growth affects all workers as the public sector is mimicked by the private sector, as the public is by far the larger employer. It is common regional economic theory. This Government is hampering both economic growth and the fiscal wellbeing of the Tasmania economy by capping wage growth at 2 per cent for public sector workers. According to figures from the ABS, medium income is lower in greater Hobart than in any other capital city in Australia. Tasmanian workers earn less per week than workers in any other state or territory.

The average weekly ordinary time earnings for a working Tasmanian adult was about \$1377. That is \$206 below the national average. I wonder if this is a direct and intentional economic strategy by this Government to keep the Tasmanian economy treading water while we catch up to the economic demand the world is asking us to supply. Or am I being too presumptive? Am I giving you more credit than you deserve? We are now in net debt. The Government has lost touch with the people of Tasmania. Why else would you starve a workforce of their wage entitlements and hard earned wages? Why would you hold back a state by maintaining a wage cap and keeping wage growth and productivity down?

Nominal wage growth is meant to track with the CPI and labour productivity. Three quarters of slowdown in wage growth is due to CPI and productivity. CPI growth has been around 1 per cent lower in the past four years than the previous 15 years. The longer the wage cap remains in place the larger the cost of the foregone consumer spending, which offsets reductions in state revenues creating the spillover impact on to private labour market outcomes. You are creating an economy that favours the few, the wealthy few. The gap between workers earning high wages and low wages is becoming greater.

Your wage increase capping has also created different rates of wage growth in different work areas. An uneven distribution between industries is creating an imbalance. You also cut penalty rates, reducing the wages of workers. A strong economy is reliant on real wage growth. Public sector wage growth, at 2 per cent is holding back the Tasmanian economy. The distortions in real wages caused by the Hodgman Government through its austerity measures is now affecting the rest of the economy. How can a Government that claims to be in a golden age, that talks about delivering a surplus, be capping 29 000 Tasmanians' wages due to austerity measures? It just does not make sense.

In short, the state's public sector wage suppression reduces consumer spending and suppresses true productivity growth in the public sector.

The Government's extraordinary interventions removing nominal wage bargaining rights from a significant and influential section of the state labour market have contributed to the unprecedented stagnation of wages in the overall state labour market.

This Government has manipulated the wage growth sector. Our productivity modelling is dampening and holding back our economy. It is also causing a massive division between the haves and have-nots. This is combined with the systematic underfunding of essential services and it is making it even harder for those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

I invite any member of the Liberal Government to spend a day in the shoes of constituents in some of the areas of our state affected by unemployment, homelessness, disability, poor health and rental stress. Come and spend a day in the shoes of the constituent who I spoke to a few days ago who has been handed a tent to live in for her and her intellectually disabled son, who she cares for. They have been homeless since December. Come and spend a day in the shoes of the constituent who works at Coles collecting trolleys who will never own his own home, lives in private rental, and is saving for a car to get to work. This kid is also studying accounting at university part-time because he is determined to buck the trend, and the statistics. He will work twice as hard as kids born into privilege to achieve these dreams. That is unnecessary and unfair. Come and spend a day in the shoes of a person who couch surfs, who cannot get an appointment to see a specialist, let alone treatment for a painful illness. The growing inequality in our state has not been addressed in this Budget.

On a more positive note, I was pleased to see the continuation of a Labor Party innovation - irrigation. The liquid gold the Government refers to was created by brilliant Labor minds many moons ago. It is important to pay credit where credit is due. There is nothing worse than someone accepting accolades for someone else's innovation and hard work.

The Lyons electorate has some of the richest farming lands and fabulous irrigation, with the agricultural industry contributing \$1.5 billion into the Tasmanian economy. Irrigation is a David Llewellyn innovation. It is a Labor innovation because it is forward thinking and long term. I am pleased that irrigation investment will continue. The Labor innovation to drought-proof our state will be continued. Irrigation is a key piece of infrastructure which the Labor government built. Irrigation is a key driver of Lyons and Lyons is the economic driver of our state. I was also pleased to see the Government reprioritise \$700 000 for a quad bike safety plan.

I am concerned the Government is underfunding the plan and not meeting the recommendations put forward in the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons submission to the inquest into the deaths of seven riders of quad bikes in Tasmania. The budgeted amount might not be enough to implement the full recommendations. I am concerned but it is a positive step and well overdue. The submission calls on compulsory helmet wearing for all quad bike riders, whether an operator or passenger, at all times, on all roads, together with the adoption and development of a suitable standard for quad bike helmet design for the requirements for off-road riding. The recommendations called for all available strategies to prevent children under 16 riding quad bikes, including prohibiting use of both adult and child quad bikes alike, restricting sale of child size quad bikes and mandating child-resistant starting mechanisms.

In Tasmania we are going for anyone under six. The surgeons recommended no-one under 16 should be on quad bikes. More discussion on that would be good, but it is a great start and it will save lives. The submission refers to the need for improved stability, dynamic handling and roll-over crash-worthiness safety for both workplace and recreational quad bikes. The college recommended implementing an Australasian new quad bike assessment program. A key aspect to the success of quad bike safety management is industry, partner development and implementation of an Australian standard for quad bikes. The Government has pledged to deliver and develop a public quad bike safety awareness and education campaign using media and social media. I welcome this.

The Government has also extended the Safe Farming Tasmania program to include a workplace farming safety rebate to encourage farmers to install roll-over and crash protection devices on quad bikes. This will save lives and is a great move. I will be watching closely to ensure the Government

does develop a consumer code of practice under the Australian Consumer Law in Tasmania, which will require sellers and re-sellers of quad bikes in Tasmania to provide consumer safety information before they purchase a quad bike.

After many years of lobbying I was delighted to learn that the Government has managed to secure federal funding for the Bridgewater bridge and we have been given a start date. I did a spate of doorknocking around Bridgewater after the announcement and I can tell you that the community does not really believe the bridge is going to be built. There have been so many 'we are gunna' over the years that they found the whole thing quite funny. It is a bit of a joke in the community, 'Oh, did you hear they are going to build our bridge?', and everyone starts laughing their heads off.

Mrs Rylah - At least they gave you a completion date.

Ms BUTLER - Yes, there is a completion date but I do not think the community will believe it until the first sod is turned. There is not a plan, a model. We come out with a new one every year and I have been dealing with the families whose homes were acquired -

Time expired.

[3.11 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am proud to rise to speak on the Hodgman Liberal Government's sixth Budget and our record of strong budget management. I congratulate our Treasurer on the construction of the 2019-20 Budget.

In the last five years we have focused on laying a solid foundation for growth and prosperity. Since first coming to Government, the Hodgman Liberal Government has led with vision, foresight and courage and it is a bold budget again this year because we have the conviction that we will create lasting value for Tasmanians. That means we are diligent and tenacious in our focus on our people and unearthing the infrastructure needs that will drive our economy and help our people over the long term, intergenerationally.

We are continuing to deliver on our election promises in the 2019-20 Budget and are putting even more funding into essential services and infrastructure in this year and over the forward Estimates. This Budget is about maintaining the momentum we have generated and investing for growth, investing to create growth this year and to support the creation of 10 000 more jobs over the next four years. As Dr Paul Blacklow, an economist at UTAS, said recently -

To hoard now in fear of the future would risk putting the state economy into recession and reverse the health and education gains.

We will not do that. We will build on our significant achievements, unlike Labor, who sent our state into recession in their last term. Thanks to the Government's strong financial management, Tasmania is a much better place than under the Labor and Greens governments and the people of Braddon have not forgotten what that was like. The recent election result was proof they had not forgotten.

Let me remind the House: when we came to government there was an economic train wreck in Tasmania. Prior to the 2014 election, the Labor-Greens alliance had been sacking a nurse a day for nine months, spent the public servants' superannuation, drained the dams, sacked over 100 police, threatened regional schools with closure, shut wards and closed beds, under-funded

infrastructure upgrades in schools, social housing and had not even laid one brick on the Royal Hobart Hospital despite having known since 2006 that there was an urgent need to expand beds and staff to meet the predicted demand.

They had decimated TasTAFE with their Tasmania Tomorrow experiment. Their destruction of education had not stopped there, with obvious evidence statewide. In several schools I visited in 2014, to give a couple of examples, I was shocked at the presence and prevalence of asbestos in schools, exposed electricity wires in the hallway at Latrobe High that I, and I am not tall, could have reached with my hand. School infrastructure, primarily in high schools, had been left to rot or students to freeze, like at St Marys District High School. What a disgrace.

Tasmanians were leaving the state in droves and rusted-on Labor voters chose to vote Liberal for the first time because of the sell-out in the forest industry and the lockup of our mines on the west coast. Further, the Labor-Greens government was borrowing to pay wages and operating expenses. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you and I know from business, that is a total and utter financial disaster. Borrowing to cover operating expenses does not create assets. Paying interest on borrowed money only ever works if you are creating assets from which income and growth will be generated. Labor and the Greens were borrowing to send Tasmania into the financial abyss and everyone knew it.

Today, six years later, we have come a long way. Our communities are more confident and growing. There are more people employed, 1700 more in Braddon. We are educating more children and for longer, lifting our attainment and retention rates, lifting our literacy levels and giving our people the ability to get better jobs, to compete in the jobs market, and to be confident in the skills and training they receive in this state. By contrast with Labor, when there were headwinds, they spent the public sector superannuation account of over \$1 billion and drained our dams, leaving the state's power generating capacity in a perilous state. They failed to invest in infrastructure and our people. They were appalling money managers as well as heartless, sacking public servants and closing schools.

We will maintain the momentum we have generated. We are investing for growth and we will take a precautionary approach, demonstrated by the lowest net debt in the nation. I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer on the choices we have made. We are moving forward, upwards and onwards, with our vision of a strong, resilient state that offers great education and great road and port infrastructure. We will become the battery this nation needs in renewable energy. We will drive excellence in health delivery and we will support those in our state who are vulnerable.

Our choice has been to gear up, borrow to grow and underpin our economy. Last year, Tasmania's economy grew at 3.3 per cent, its highest rate in a decade and our gross state product was over \$30 billion. On a per capita basis, our economy is growing the fastest in the nation at nearly double the Australian average. This Budget forecasts this growth to continue and remain above trend at 2.75 per cent next year.

However, Tasmania continues to face the generational and demographic challenges of our population and we do not back away from these facts, as to do so would be to strand people, their hopes, their aspirations and their dreams, in this wonderful place we live. We will not do that. Instead we will face the three intense local headwinds head on. These are poor education attainment levels, an unhealthy population and an aged population relative to the mainland states. In recognition of these significant challenges to our people, we are strategically planning and investing and we will continue to balance our books without increased taxes for Tasmanians. We recognise

that we need to unlock the potential of all our regions and this will not happen by stalling or putting on the brakes. We will need to ensure that the public sector is as efficient and effective as possible and we will be seeking a modest efficiency dividend of 75 cents out of every \$100 that is spent.

Tasmania is also buoyed at this time and the Hodgman Liberal Government recognises these opportunities for our export orientated and our visitor economy. Recently added to these opportunities was the resounding victory of the Morrison Liberal Government. The positive reaction to this win was seen in the huge rebound of the share market on the following Monday. Investors are returning to Australia. That is very good for Tasmania.

For Tasmania's economy, the continuing low Australian dollar buoys our economy and has to be capitalised, as does the low and falling interest rates. The RBA Governor, Philip Lowe, in his address on Tuesday last week gave a very blunt message regarding the RBA considering lowering rates at their next meeting in a fortnight. The 10-year bond rate in the last few days has dropped significantly. This 25-point reduction, while it will be helpful, will be unlikely to motivate businesses, small or large, to borrow money to invest in new production or equipment, or to drive output and employment growth. An interest rate cut of 0.25 per cent is not sufficient to maintain the momentum in Tasmania's economy.

In the housing market in Tasmania, the problem with achieving further growth and building the supply of more houses, despite the very high figures of building approvals in recent times, is the availability of credit rather than the price of credit, so a rate cut is unlikely to make investors reappear unless the rules on credit change. I strongly encourage the Morrison Government to consider this for lending in non-capital city locations.

Even though the reduction of interest rates will help, it will be marginal. More stimulus and borrowing should occur. That borrowing will be most cost-effective if it is done by the institution that can borrow at the lowest possible rates. That is the Tasmanian Government.

To keep up the momentum in economy we need to boost our spending by borrowing for the like of the record \$3.6 billion in infrastructure projects. This allows us to spend our current income across a record \$8.1 billion in health services and hospitals to meet the increasing demand and \$7.1 billion over four years for education and training, or in the housing sector and to meet our operating expenses.

Quorum formed.

Mrs RYLAH - The new capital can go towards extending our First Home Owner Grant and bringing forward \$10 million to the \$40.5 million we are spending in the first year of the \$125 million in the second Affordable Housing Action Plan in this Budget.

We know the Morrison Liberal Government will deliver low- and middle-income owner's tax relief of \$1080 per single and \$2160 for a couple. The vast chunk of these rebates will be spent and will act as a powerful local stimulus, helping retail sales and giving another boost to consumer confidence. This will be good for our retailers and their staff and the hospitality sector.

One of the Government's core commitments to Tasmanians is to deliver budgets that are balanced and in surplus across the forward Estimates. That is why we have fixed the budget mess left behind by Labor and the Greens. This year we will deliver our fourth surplus in a row. Surpluses will continue over the forward Estimates for the 2019-20 Budget period.

Despite revenue downgrades in 2018-19 from decreased distribution from the national GST pool, decreased stamp duty receipts and the devastating summer bushfires, our forecast surplus will be \$41 million.

To deliver services while reinvesting in essential services our people need and the intergenerational infrastructure, is a clear demonstration of our ability to get the balance right. These principles are central to our fiscal strategy, which meets the long-term principles of managing the state's finances responsibly. We are investing for the future, ensuring we have cash reserves so we can deal with unexpected events as they occur. We will build a robust balance sheet of modern and well-maintained assets.

At the same time we are providing additional funding to address demand pressures in vital service delivery areas as well as continuing to drive economic growth and job creation. The choice we have made is to stay the course and increase our investment in the infrastructure the state needs for the future.

The 2019-20 Budget delivers a balanced set of books, makes record investments in health and education, protects the most disadvantaged, while underpinning our economy by investing today to delivery infrastructure we need now and for tomorrow.

We are ensuring that we have thriving regional communities across the state and that all Tasmanians benefit from a strong economy, which will create even more jobs than the 13 000 we have created since coming to government and making Tasmania's businesses the most confident in the country.

Apart from \$3 billion in job creating infrastructure, which included housing, health, school roads, rail and bridges, police and ambulance station upgrades, prisons and irrigation, there are job initiatives, such as \$6 million for the strategic growth framework targeting growth in regional communities, youth employment and the long-term unemployed. As the Premier said, this is an approach that is new. There is a lot of optimism in the state and we want to harness it. We will tackle the youth employment challenges and those of the long-term unemployed as well as the unique challenges faced by those people living in our regions. We want to lift the prospects of all Tasmanians wherever they live, whether their challenge be their education or accessing the skills they need, or whether it be in their health and wellbeing. We have a lot more to do in that regard and we will be targeting better transport networks so local people have more opportunity to improve their education and skills and the chance to work in the places where they live.

This is a new approach for a Tasmanian government and many around the world. It will take time for all levels of government and for the non-government sector, for business and for the community service sector to implement a range of initiatives that are better coordinated to achieve these objectives. The Hodgman Liberal Government has commenced this work. It is essential for us to support a better quality of life for Tasmanians. We will align our 10-year infrastructure plan and industry consultations against current and future workforce predictions, ensuring the right skills and training programs are in place, so local people have the best chance of having a local job in the place they call home.

This will happen by applying a whole-of-Tasmania lens across the decisions and policy making to make sure it meets our strategic growth commitment that everyone benefits from the investments in growth and a strong economy. There is also \$2.9 million for TAFE to address current and predicted workforce shortages and to deliver a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demand over

the next three to five years in industry sectors wanting skilled employees such as building and construction, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, energy, mining and so on.

Continuing the successful payroll tax rebate scheme for tourism, building and manufacturing, supports the employment of around 4500 young Tasmanians as apprentices and trainees. We have allocated \$20 million in regional tourism attraction lines to increase visitor spend and stays in regional communities. This means regional jobs. There will be \$107 million for the Pipeline to Prosperity or tranche 3 irrigation to take our agricultural sector to the next level. We are spending \$2.5 million on the defence strategy to harness our share of the sea of defence spending by developing our brand and businesses in this space. Our very significant defence sector is growing in the north-west. The west coast will share in the \$4.1 million partnership between TasCOSS and TCCI to jobs in four communities, including the west coast.

There is \$20 million to build Tasmania's next iconic multi-day hut-based walk, and hundreds of more jobs for frontline workers including nurses, nurse graduates, doctors, allied health professionals and other health staff. We have provided resources for 222 extra full-time equivalent teachers and 231 FTE teacher assistants, school support and professional staff. Correctional officers, biosecurity officers, child safety officers, are a part of our record spend on essential services. To ensure all Tasmanians benefit from Tasmania's strong economy, we are providing relief for low income earners with \$303.3 million in concessions for energy, local government rates, water and sewerage.

Let me turn to my electorate of Braddon. This Budget commits \$157.5 million to assist in meeting the cost of construction of two new TT-Line vessels; \$18.05 million is committed to the Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience Master Plan with the Morrison Government. A further \$56 million will be provided for the Government to progress the design and approval for the Marinus Link Second Interconnector national infrastructure project. Together, there will be thousands of jobs in construction and operation in Braddon and statewide, in housing, windfarms, mines, timber manufacturing, port development, water and sewerage upgrades.

There will be upgrades of \$32.72 million for the state roads in Braddon. Something I strongly lobbied for was the major upgrade of the Bass Highway between Wynyard and Marrawah. It is funded and will be delivered. There is also the Murchison Highway, which Labor abandoned after Jim Bacon departed, for which we are delivering. We are keeping the commitment we made to safer access to the Boat Harbour School and Rocky Cape junctions.

There will be continuation of the Mersey Hospital upgrades with a further \$31.58 million going out for tender last weekend. This upgrade will see the creation of modern and efficient clinical spaces in a range of crucial areas, all designed to provide and enhance patient care and better health outcomes at the Mersey, as well as \$4 million for the staffing upon completion. We have provided \$29 million to fund the staffing of the eight-bed acute medical unit at the North West Regional Hospital, \$4.48 million for the new Community Rapid Response or Hospital in the Home service that I know will be very warmly welcomed on the coast. The Burnie and Smithton ambulance station upgrades are worth \$6.93 million, with \$2.4 million committed to fund additional drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds in Ulverstone. We have provided \$9.6 million for stage 2 of the King Island hospital redevelopment, and \$1.95 million for maternity services at the North West Regional Hospital. A share of the \$320 000 has been put aside for pregnancy support, for education to enable women to understand what support mechanisms are out there, the facts and how they can access affordable support with more services in the north-west.

We have \$19.75 million to fund the next stage of the development of the new K-12 Penguin District School. We support redevelopment of our school farms and the creation of the agricultural centre of excellence, Freer Farm in Burnie, with \$5 million. We are supporting the building of new facilities at Spreyton Primary, costing \$1.65 million. There will be brand-new child and family learning centre in Wynyard, with \$3.5 million provided. We are also supporting the relocation of a hundred DPIPWE staff to the north and north-west which continues at a cost of \$2 million and is warmly welcomed after the success of the MRT integration.

A further \$3.5 million each will be provided to upgrade the Dial Regional Sports Complex and Circular Head Community Wellbeing Centres, with \$2.5 million for the new Ulverstone Cultural Precinct revitalisation, which goes significantly to the work of the Central Coast Council and Brittany Trubody. I note \$775 000 is offered as part of the Circular Head Regional Economic Development Working Group commitments to Dutch Mill with production, building and expanding in the product offering. A further \$16 million will be provided to west-coast Wilderness Railway upgrade to boost capacity. There will be \$435 000 for remote area firefighting teams, which means a lot to the towns of Tullah, Zeehan and at the Sundown. The importance of funding our northern border protection on King and Flinders Island is strongly supported by the TFGA. We have increased funding biosecurity by 50 per cent since coming to Government, demonstrating we take Tasmania's biosecurity seriously, at a cost of \$2.6 million to secure our borders.

This Budget is all about maintaining the momentum and investing for growth. At its heart is a significant investment in job-creating infrastructure our growing state needs for the future. This Budget invests heavily in intergenerational infrastructure that sets Tasmania up for the future but at the same time tackles our challenges head on. That means roads, schools, hospitals and housing as well as key economic infrastructure such as water, sewerage, irrigation, ports and rail. This infrastructure creates jobs and will help to deliver essential services. It gets the balance right.

I consider it a wonderful piece of good fortune that I live in this great state. It has come a long way since 2014: now vibrant, confident, far more diverse, streaking ahead in technology, innovation and a Tasmania that Tasmanians are proud of once more. It is the strength of the economy that means that we can afford to invest for the future to lift everyone no matter their location, their age, their health or their education. This is a Budget of inclusion and it provides the pathway to deliver our plan. I commend the Budget to the House.

[3.37 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a Budget that clearly shows the priorities of this Government. Those priorities do not include people doing it tough. The Budget will slash funding from essential services such as education and health despite the ongoing health crisis. This will be a disappointment to many Tasmanians. In many ways this is the Budget of growth and promises.

A year ago, I sat in this Chamber and listened to the Treasurer as we were told the state was on the verge of a golden age. Tasmanians were told they would reap the benefits of economic prosperity and good budget management. Tasmanians were promised that services would be improved and infrastructure delivered and all this while the budget generated a surplus and the state remained out of net debt. At that time, it seemed like a fairy tale, all too good to be true. Certainly, the golden age did not ring true for people sleeping rough under Hobblers Bridge, living in caves in the gorge, or in makeshift shelters in the Punchbowl Reserve.

These claims must have been hard to believe for the patients stuck in hospital department waiting rooms and ramped in ambulances outside. These claims of a golden age showed little regard for thousands of Tasmanians looking for work, seeking more hours of work or unable to afford a course to gain the skills they required for employment. The heralding of a golden age with spoils for all was nothing more than empty words for all the public servants, child safety officers, social workers, teachers, nurses, paramedics, firefighters and park rangers who were told they did not deserve a pay rise that kept up with the cost of living.

Now the fairy tale is confirmed. Only a year after the heralded golden age Tasmania is to be plunged into net debt and cuts made to essential services. How can this be anything other than incompetence? Tasmanians could be forgiven for thinking there is a disaster unfolding before us. This Government has been gifted the best economic conditions in more than a decade, yet Tasmanians have gained nothing that matters. It is obvious the good times have been squandered and opportunities lost. All that the people will see are broken promises. This Government had within its grasp the opportunity to fix the housing crisis and house the homeless. It missed it.

The Government had within its grasp the opportunity to fix the health crisis and stop people dying needlessly. It missed it. There is nothing in this Budget for Tasmanian job seekers. The state's unemployment rate is the worst in the nation. The people of Bass will know all about missed opportunities as the housing crisis worsens, winter closes in and more and more people line up for emergency housing that simply does not exist. As waiting times for ambulances get longer, ramping continues and bed block at the Launceston General Hospital has no resolution.

This Government's financial incompetence will see the Budget head into net debt for the first time in 15 years. This is the Government's billion-dollar broken promise. Worst of all, future generations of Tasmanians, our children and grandchildren, will be forced to pay for this gross mismanagement. It will not be a Liberal Government that has to clean up the mess and pay off the debt. After half a decade of this Government and a so-called golden age, TasCOSS data shows that across the range of indicators, Tasmanians are doing worse in 2019 than they were when the Liberals won Government in 2014.

More and more families are putting off seeing the doctor due to the out-of-pocket expenses. It is reminiscent of the dark days before Medicare, when access to medical attention depended on money in your wallet. Large families like mine dreaded the situation where all the kids got sick at once. Elective surgery waiting lists are longer. Sick Tasmanians are waiting hours and sometimes days to be seen in emergency departments, with only around half being seen within four hours. I have heard numerous stories from those waiting in the emergency department: the young woman who cut her hand in an accident and passed out from blood loss in a chair in the waiting room; and the mum of three who was misdiagnosed and sent home with Panadol after she had a stroke. There are hundreds more with no end to the suffering in sight.

The number of unemployed Tasmanians has grown to 26 800. These people want more hours of work but cannot get them. There are a growing number of homeless, around 1600 on any given day, too many of whom are children. Support services are overwhelmed and overstretched and unable to meet the need. It is all well and good to tell these people to call an 1800 number to get assistance but there is simply not the emergency accommodation available. Many temporary measures, such as placing people in motels and hotels are now closed off to them. Housing support workers have regularly refused accommodation for their clients. I was told by one worker that if the organisation they worked for owned its own motel, it would be full every night of the week.

There are now more than 3200 on the housing waiting list. The average time it takes for a person to be housed is now 56 weeks. That is more than nine months longer than it was in 2014.

There has been a 25 per cent increase in the number of children in out-of-home care. More than 1300 are on care and protection orders. This is symptomatic of a system in crisis. One cannot help but wonder how the health and housing crisis and an over-stretched Child Safety Service has impacted on outcomes for these children and families.

While there is \$16.9 million for out-of-home care listed in the 2019-20 Budget, there is nothing listed in the forward Estimates. This is an almost \$50 million black hole, yet we know that out-of-home care will be an ongoing cost for any government in any year.

The Budget has neglected 18 disability service providers that support more than 90 000 people living with a disability who are not eligible for the NDIS. Although they are directed to ILC grant funding there are several factors that make that challenging and unsuitable for the work these services do. Many constituents have approached me deeply concerned about the uncertain future of the disability support services they rely on. Tasmania has the highest rate of disability of any state in Australia. This includes the highest rate of autism, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. The rates of disability in Tasmania are only likely to increase.

More than 10 000 people are eligible for support through NDIS, but there are still about 90 000 Tasmanians living with disability who are not eligible for NDIS but who rely on organisations providing disability support services. While the NDIS has proved to be life-changing for some, there are more in our community who are not eligible, who will never be eligible for the NDIS and who this Government is failing. These Tasmanians living with disability still require support for their daily living to participate in the community, social and economic life.

Unfortunately, after 30 June 2019 the future funding to 18 disability service organisations who provide vital services for people living with disability, their families and carers, is unknown. This leaves those who are ineligible for NDIS without certainty. These organisations do not exist without a reason. They were born of need and operate for their client's wellbeing. Many of these organisations rely on core funding from the state Government to operate. Others receive very small amounts of state funding that only cover their overheads, such as insurance costs for their volunteers. Many of the people that these organisations service are not eligible for any other support because of the nature of their disability.

Under the bilateral agreement with federal government, this Government has a clear and undeniable responsibility to provide services for Tasmanians living with a disability who are not eligible for support under the NDIS. While there is money on the table for disability support services, none of the organisations at risk know as yet what funding, if any, they will receive. This causes uncertainty for both the organisation and their clients.

This Government and this Budget are failing many Tasmanians. As the Labor leader outlined in her speech on Tuesday, the Government is even failing to meet the targets it set for itself prior to the last state election. It promised Tasmania would have the healthiest population in the nation by 2025. The latest ABS health survey published in March shows Tasmania has the highest rate of cancer, stroke heart disease and vascular disease, the highest rate of back problems, the highest rate of osteoporosis and the equal highest rate of asthma in the country.

It shows that over 70 per cent of Tasmanian adults are overweight or obese, again the highest in the country. Smoking rates have hardly improved since the Liberals came to Government. The commitment by the Government to make Tasmania the healthiest state in the nation by 2025 is impossible to reach. The Government fails to invest thoroughly in preventive health. This is yet another broken promise. We are in the grip of a health crisis. Long waiting times in emergency departments with chronic bed block are a feature of it, as is the extended wait for elective surgery.

Doctors, nurses and paramedics are all telling the Government that people are dying unnecessarily in emergency departments and on waiting lists. Ambulance waiting times are the worst in the country. We will never know how many die waiting for an ambulance to arrive. People cannot get access to specialists when and where they need to. In some cases, the waiting lists are long. In others the specialists are not available in the public system.

The housing crisis continues. The Government promised to build 900 affordable new homes by the middle of this year. Here we are, with only 281 delivered and not much hope of reaching that target by the deadline.

There does not seem to be a plan to address the desperate need for emergency accommodation with hundreds of people sleeping rough every night. The Government promised to bring the unemployment rate down to the national average. Tasmania's unemployment rate today is currently 6.7 per cent compared to 5.1 per cent nationally. Youth unemployment is 14.3 per cent, which is well above the national average of 11.5 per cent.

About 3800 full-time jobs have been lost in Tasmania since the last election. This year there are also 4500 fewer women participating in the workforce. Women retire with less superannuation and are more likely to end up in poverty as they age.

We have an ageing population. This Budget does little for older Tasmanians. It is positive to see the announcement of \$850 000 in funding for continued work to prevent elder abuse through the development and implementation of elder abuse prevention strategies. In Tasmania it is estimated that, despite acknowledged under-reporting of elder abuse, between 3000 and 5000 older Tasmanians aged over 65 experience elder abuse.

It is clear that much more needs to be done. The next stage of the elderly abuse strategy is something to look forward to and hopefully it will include the capacity to work toward introducing safeguarding legislation.

Stakeholders working with older people have also raised concerns about the need for greater public housing and health investment, particularly in preventative oral health and highlighted the risk of poor health outcomes for older women due to greater financial and housing insecurities, particularly in the rental market. Increasingly, older single women are at risk of homelessness, a situation exacerbated by the ongoing housing crisis. Despite our ageing population there is very little for older Tasmanians in this Budget.

The Budget that was handed down last Thursday is a disappointment for many Tasmanians and filled with broken promises. We now have \$1.1 billion worth of net debt that could take a generation to recover from. It includes \$450 million worth of cuts to essential services such as education, health and perhaps even child safety and family violence would be affected. Who knows which other services will face cuts? Around 1500 positions across the public service will need to

go to meet this. There are also raids on government businesses, delayed infrastructure projects and systematic underfunding with essential services.

The Treasurer claims he is taking the state into debt to fund infrastructure but there is little concrete evidence of that. Only a year ago the Government promised to deliver \$2.5 billion infrastructure programs without going into net debt. This year the infrastructure budget has nothing new to offer but we are facing \$1.1 billion of net debt. There is a broken promise. In reality, there has been a delay in the delivery of a number of promised infrastructure projects. A number of school construction projects have been delayed including Legana Primary School, Devonport High, Penguin School, Sorell School, Cosgrove High, Southern Support School and Tarooma High.

I note that \$34 million has been taken out of the Budget for the new northern prison. How could the Treasurer claim this is the infrastructure budget when key promises have been delayed? The cold, hard reality is that the Budget is blown and this Government is borrowing against the future, leaving debt for the next government to pay off. Despite claims that the interest payments on the debt are manageable, it will cost \$100 million over four years to service. This is \$100 million less for health, for housing, for child safety, for education and other essential services.

The seeds of this disaster were planted in the 2018 state election. Labor repeatedly flagged during the campaign that the Government's \$2.7 billion in election pork-barrelling was unaffordable. Every year this Treasurer overspends and every year he has been saved by GST windfalls. There is no such save in this Budget. The surplus is an illusion. The Treasurer claims the state is not spending more than it earns but that is not true. The budget papers show the cash deficit is \$340.6 million next year alone, and even this is dependent on taking \$450 million from the public service. That adds up to around 1500 public service jobs. It is the erosion of essential services that Tasmanians rely on every day, and 1500 less people in a public service that has already been cut to the bone.

As the Labor Leader said in her Budget reply, being in government is a privilege that allows you to make people's lives better. It is an opportunity that has been squandered by this Government. There are many people whose lives are not better after five years of this Government. The Government's legacy will be no different than that left by every Liberal government before; essential services in crisis and net debt that will cripple future generations. Tasmania has been here before. It took the Labor government eight years to pay back more than \$1.5 billion of debt that was left by the Rundle Liberal government. Labor built the state's cash reserves to over \$1 billion, which helped insulate Tasmania against a global financial crisis. Even after losing \$1.5 billion in revenue the then Labor government managed to keep the state out of net debt. Tasmania has not been in net debt for 15 years, until now. The Liberal Government inherited \$200 million worth of cash and investments from Labor in 2014 and they have managed to turn that into \$1.1 billion in net debt and the Treasurer says he is proud of this Budget.

There is so much suffering in Tasmania, so much that could be done, so much missed opportunity and so many broken promises. Is the Treasurer proud of the health system so starved of funding and resources that patients wait for hour after hour in crowded waiting rooms and are treated in corridors, in armchairs and on trolleys, where surgery waiting lists have grown and bed-block is chronic? Is he proud that the Budget does nothing to assist young Tasmanians to obtain the skills they need to find a job and earn a living, or proud of the record homelessness and that the housing waiting list has 3200 applicants on it, which is 1000 more than when the Liberals took office?

There are significant problems with this Budget and the Government must fix them. The Tasmanian people need essential services and this cannot wait for the next government to fix. Adequate health funding cannot wait. Resolving conflict with public servants and paying wages that keep up the cost of living cannot wait. Winter is here. There is snow on the mountains and a record number of Tasmanians are sleeping rough. Solving the housing crisis and addressing homelessness cannot wait. Improving access to skills and training employment opportunities cannot wait. Adequate funding for child safety and family violence cannot wait. Looking after the old and the vulnerable cannot wait.

There is very little in this Budget for Tasmanian families struggling with the cost of living. There is very little to reassure the aged pensioner facing a cold winter and feeling scared of the cost of heating. There is very little for the job seeker, and very little comfort for the family who have spent six months on the housing waiting list and is living in a shed. There is very little for those dependent on our health system. There is very little good news in this Budget at all; simply a lot of missed opportunities and broken promises. This is the Budget of broken promises.

[3.56 a.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, it is an honour to contribute to the Budget and to represent the people of Lyons. It is an honour and a privilege to be here and I know we all feel that way. We all must acknowledge that delivering a Budget, talking about it and taking it to the public is about the Tasmanian community.

I have the opportunity now to respond to the sixth Budget of the Hodgman majority Liberal Government. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Treasury Department on all the work that goes into preparing a budget. Working on the budget is no mean feat. It is a huge project. This Budget is about infrastructure and building Tasmania's future. The Hodgman Liberal Government infrastructure program will deliver Tasmania's infrastructure for the 21st century, helping to drive future economic growth and improve services for all to benefit and to benefit the whole community.

The Budget delivers on jobs across the state. It delivers on opportunities for families and communities and optimism to everybody. The Budget maintains momentum and invests for growth. The very reason why the Government is going into net debt is to fund the infrastructure that Tasmania needs and deserves. We are seeing all other jurisdictions use debt to fund infrastructure and that is exactly what this Government is doing. The Budget includes an unprecedented \$3.6 billion investment into intergenerational infrastructure including \$2.8 billion into agency-funded infrastructure and nearly \$800 million into Government businesses and TasWater infrastructure.

Despite there being significant write-downs to Budget revenue because of the importance of maintaining a momentum in our economy, the Government has chosen, as the Treasurer has indicated, to change up a gear when it comes to investment in infrastructure. As a motor mechanic, that is a great analogy. This Budget increases our investment in intergenerational infrastructure in health, in education and in housing. It puts intergenerational investment into the infrastructure of roads, rail, bridges, water and sewerage infrastructure and our parks and tourism assets to secure our way of life and the future of our economy right around Tasmania. This infrastructure spend will support the creation of 10 000 jobs.

Labor talks about debt and investment as dirty words. From a business sense, the investment opportunity that exists now, with interest rates where they are, will maintain the momentum and

ensure the next step forward in Tasmania. The state's economy is booming. This Government has chosen to go along with that and create the infrastructure needed for future generations.

Labor might argue that some of this has already been done. I argue that one of the reasons we have to do it is that in the past, particularly the last periods of the last government, not enough was spent on infrastructure. They found themselves in an economic situation where the recurrent costs were taking most of their annual expenditure. Therefore, they did not spend enough on infrastructure.

Mr O'Byrne - It is just not true. Brighton Bypass, Brighton Hub, East Tamar Highway.

Mr SHELTON - I was just going to say they invested in two major programs since I have been here in this Chamber: the Brighton Hub and the Brighton Bypass. While very good investments, when all the money was going there, they did not build the hospital and the Midlands Highway was becoming a goat track. That is why money had to be spent on the rest of the Midlands Highway.

Mr O'Byrne - Do you know that the Brighton Bypass is a part of the Midlands Highway? And you know the 10-year strategy is actually our strategy?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr SHELTON - The rest of the Midlands Highway -

Mr O'Byrne - You know we put that in the forward Estimates for us?

Mr SHELTON - I mentioned that the Brighton Bypass was part of your big spend.

Mr O'Byrne - We planned it. The 10-year plan is actually our plan.

Mr SHELTON - While we are talking about the previous Labor government, I will mention that a couple of members have risen to their feet in this Chamber and talked about how they are good budget managers. There was a debt at the end of the Gray era, that Jim Bacon and Paul Lennon took up. It was overcome when John Howard, a Liberal Prime Minister, introduced the GST and handed millions of dollars to the state.

The premier, Jim Bacon, and Paul Lennon put some money away. They had surplus budgets and they put the money into a superannuation account. Over five or six years they accumulated about \$1.3 billion to \$1.5 billion in the account. The account was there to offset the superannuation liability of the public service. What happened when the Labor Government got in trouble with finances at the end of the GFC? They took the superannuation of the Tasmanian public servants out of the bank. A quick calculation on that money at 10 per cent comes to \$150 million a year that we would have received from that. You probably could not have achieved that over the last four or five years, but a 6 per cent or 7 per cent return on the money would have still given the Government about \$100 million to offset the superannuation of the public servants. If that program had been continued, the amount of money sitting aside could have got to \$2.5 billion. It would have been a huge offset. Because of that money being spent, the superannuation cost to this Government is around \$300 million a year. That is \$300 million that we could be spending on health or other infrastructure or schools that does not exist.

That is just one area. I can remember the Gillard-Rudd days, when they brought in the carbon tax. The Hydro, because of its generation of power through hydro-electricity, received carbon tax money. Hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government came into Hydro Tasmania. Labor and the Greens also spent that propping up their budget. It is possibly about \$3 billion you do not acknowledge when you start talking about your budget management.

Our economy is strong and growing at the fastest rate in a decade. On a per capita basis we have the fastest growing economy in the nation. Since we were first elected, almost 13 000 more Tasmanians are employed and the unemployment rate is down by 0.9 per cent since we first came to Government. Over the Labor-Greens time in government, 10 000 jobs were lost.

Tasmanian businesses are some of the most confident in the nation. Business conditions are some of the strongest in the nation. The Government's policies, as rated by small and medium businesses, are the most popular in the nation. State final demand grew 4.5 per cent in the December 2018 quarter in trend terms compared to the December 2017 quarter. It is the second strongest state in the country, just 0.01 per cent behind Victoria. Medium to small businesses across Tasmania are the main drivers of our economy, and the main employers.

The gross state product was recorded at 0.33 per cent in the 2017-18 financial year. This was Tasmania's fastest growth in a decade and the fastest per capita in the nation. Tasmania exported \$3.76 billion in value over the year to March 2019, up by 6.6 per cent on the previous year. In March 2019, the trend value of retail trade was at near record levels of \$544 million. It grew 2.8 per cent compared to March 2018.

As a result of our strong economy, our population is growing again. Tasmania has recently been growing at twice the long-term average. Our economy is growing above long-term trends. These things will not continue if we fail to provide the infrastructure needed to accommodate that.

Tasmanians want better schools, better hospitals and safer roads. This investment is doing exactly that. We all talk about our children as the future of the state and providing better schools.

Before I talk about providing better schools I will relate a short story about the Public Works Committee. It has been touring around, sometimes to public schools. Despite very good teachers doing all they can, the reality is that many schools do not come up to contemporary standards. We must invest in those because we know that our children learn better when they are comfortable in their environment. To create an environment in which they can excel is critical, as we know.

Today, we have discussed hospitals. Hospitals are critical. We know the pressure on hospitals is huge and we have invested more money into hospitals and we continue to do that every year. The Greens will probably, in the alternative budget, cut roads funding because they do not agree with cars being on roads and they want to reduce that. The reality is that these investments we are making are making the Midlands Highway safer, they are making our accesses on and off the highway safer. They are creating a situation in which people can commute more safely compared with the past. There are some economic efficiencies to be gained by having a spine up through the middle of the Midlands Highway, which creates efficiency in transport, because we know that all our goods now come in through the ports of Burnie and Devonport. All the imported commodities Hobart consumes have to come down the Midlands Highway. Efficiency in transport is critical to the future of this state.

We are funding major infrastructure programs and a number of small ones but they are all very important projects. A great example of this infrastructure is, as the Braddon members have mentioned, and I have had the pleasure of going to the west coast and going on the Wilderness Railway, the \$16 million investment into the upgrade of the iconic West Coast Wilderness Railway. It is critical to our tourism brand, it is critical to regional Tasmania being on the west coast and vital to our tourism brand. That is vital infrastructure.

A further example of spending on tourist roads is the \$58 million over four years and \$7.5 million over the Great Eastern Drive. That has been a fantastic program, with some promotion of what we have always known is a fantastic drive, to all the travellers that come over on the *Spirit* to drive the east coast on the Great Eastern Drive. As it is a part of Lyons I travel it quite frequently and, to any other locals who live in that part of the world, it is sometimes frustrating to be caught behind a slow vehicle or a caravan. We do need to invest in infrastructure because we do not need people becoming frustrated on the road. It is a critical piece of infrastructure and that investment is being done.

As to GBEs and Tasmanian Irrigation, the importance of irrigation to Tasmania cannot be understated in its effects on our economy and what it brings into the state overall. Last year, approximately \$1.6 billion worth of income came from agriculture. I need to declare an interest because my brother and I own a property at Bracknell and I am proud to be part of the primary industries here in Tasmania, seeing great work done by the farmers. They are driving efficiency and they need help and transport is part of that.

The Budget includes \$170 million over four years for the Pipeline to Prosperity tranche 3 irrigation project delivering additional water security to Tasmanians across the landscape. Meander Valley was the first and the Meander Dam was the start of it. When you look at Google and the circles and patchwork of irrigation all around Tasmania, you gain an understanding of where there is irrigation; there is less chance of being severe drought. Unfortunately, we do not have enough of it on the east coast and the tranche 3 investment is going to add better irrigation infrastructure across the state.

It was mentioned by a previous speaker that Mr Llewellyn started this latest round but Mr Llewellyn took over from the irrigators that were around at the time. Irrigation has always been a part of Tasmania's agriculture out of the rivers in the past and people have always put dams in. The benefit of dams is there are better waterways and there is more water in reserve. The commitment of this tranche 3 money will make this irrigation footprint a statewide endeavour.

TasWater is another big spender of money and investor in infrastructure. Another \$180 million over four years will be invested to improve our water and sewerage infrastructure, which will see a total of \$300 million invested by our state over the next 10 years. Those programs will be put in place to update our water infrastructure and move them. The Launceston dual system upgrades are critical and that money has to be spent to have benefits for our environment. This is funding that will improve the water and sewerage outcomes and support major projects such as: the removal of the waste treatment plant at Macquarie Point, and nobody would disagree with that; the Launceston wastewater and sewerage combined system and in Lyons; and a system at Freycinet for a wastewater system in the Coles Bay area.

Mr O'Byrne - That is not going to happen in this Budget.

Mr SHELTON - It is in this Budget.

Mr O'Byrne - No, is it not.

Mr SHELTON - Which one of these projects would Labor not do? They talk about the infrastructure spend. I will read a list of infrastructure spend later on.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Allow Mr Shelton to be heard.

Mr SHELTON - If they are going crook about our infrastructure spend, they have to identify which projects they do not agree with. It comes down to TasRail. Do you agree that spending money on improving below-rail infrastructure for TasRail is a good thing? We need to put as much road traffic onto rail as we can. It is important to have efficient transport systems. We are investing, along with the Australian Government, a total of \$256 million over the next four years to build the capacity of the rail network.

We are supporting upgrades in the resource industry, investing in programs to manage traffic congestion in Hobart and on public transport systems to make greater Hobart, Launceston and Tamar Valley more efficient with transport projects. We are funding upgrades to support our resource industries. We will put more investment into programs to manage traffic congestion in the greater Hobart and Launceston areas. The Budget brings forward \$1 million to commence feasibility studies on alternative traffic routes through Hobart including considering whether a by-pass, tunnel or a mix of both is required. The Tasman Highway from Hobart to Sorell is set to have some money spent on it. We are upgrading the airport roundabout and fly-over.

Mr O'Byrne - Are you? Have you started yet? You announced in in 2014.

Mr SHELTON - We are upgrading it and it is in the Budget, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr O'Byrne - Five years.

Mr SHELTON - I would not be talking about years, if I were you. I can recall the Labor government saying they were going to build a Bridgewater bridge. It is in this Budget, the numbers are in there.

Mr O'Byrne - You have put in a submission to the federal government for funding. How much have you done in five years?

Mr SHELTON - The Budget begins to deliver, as I said, on the Bridgewater bridge, Tasmania's largest ever transport infrastructure project, at \$576 million with expected completion in 2024. Investments this year will include: the Midlands Highway upgrade at Spring Hill; Midlands Highway upgrade from Melton-Mowbray to Lovely Banks Rd; the Hobart airport fly-over and interchange upgrade; Arthur Highway overtaking lanes -

Mr O'Byrne - You cannot re-announce it four times.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr SHELTON - east of Sorell; the Sheas Creek Bridge replacement; Bruny Island road sealing down the main road of Bruny Island; Richmond Road and the new Cambridge link road and the

upgrade in three different sections on the Richmond Road; and the West Tamar Highway traffic solution - the first project to include upgrades at junctions and make the roads safer for bikes between Brisbane Street and Legana. The strengthening of eight bridges across the state through a combination of freight access bridge upgrade program.

East Tamar Highway: a new roundabout at the Mowbray connector. Great Eastern Drive, as I have already mentioned, more passing lanes and junctions for safety. The Esk Main Road shoulder sealing and works east of Fingal and west of St Marys. The East Tamar Highway intersection upgrades at Goderich Street and Gleadow Street. The Bass Highway upgrade at the junction of Boat Harbour. The Bass Highway, a safer access to Rocky Cape Hall. Again, the West Coast Wilderness Railway, steel sleeper replacement and tranche 2 of the freight upgrades. The Huon Highway at Sandfly intersection and safe works. The brilliant work that was done over the past couple of years at the Summerleas intersection down at Kingston is a great example of what can be achieved and how you make roads safer for pedestrians.

A number of other projects that are on the list or there to be done are: the Highland Lakes Road - there is only \$100 000 there but I choose that one because I wanted to highlight the great work that has been done over the last couple of years with the sealing of the Highland Lakes Road. For anybody travelling from the west coast or from Deloraine onwards and heading south, it is now very economical to slip up through Deloraine, up the Highland Lakes Road, and all the way through to Bothwell and down to Hobart. It is shorter to come that way. It is only 100 kilometre road so the time difference is not much.

Mr O'Byrne - It would be funny if you delivered on the four-lane Midland Highway that you promised back in 2009.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne. Please be quiet.

Mr SHELTON - Fantastic investment, Mr O'Byrne. It is a tourism road for all those travellers that come to the state and come to Hobart and put in their GPS that they want to go to Cradle Mountain and get headed up through that part of the world, in the past -

Mr O'Byrne - A beautiful part of the world.

Mr SHELTON - It is a beautiful part of the world, there is no doubt about that. In the past it has been gravel road.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Shelton, through the Chair, please.

Mr SHELTON - It is a wonderful drive. As long as you do not take it at night and have to dodge all the wildlife.

Mr O'Byrne - No dodging, that is unsafe. You just slow down.

Mr SHELTON - It is a lovely drive through there and now it is all sealed and a fantastic outcome for that part of the world. It is a term: 'dodging' wildlife. You understand. Fantastic outcome.

Another project that has been on the books for a number of years, which the Break O'Day Council has highlighted, is the upgrading of the Binnalong Bay Road to overcome flooding and access issues to that east coast area. There are a number of other upgrades.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is getting on with the job of building infrastructure for the 21st century. We are choosing to use debt to fund it just like every other jurisdiction around Australia. We will continue to have one of the lowest debts in the country. The Government makes no apologies for that to fund the infrastructure that Tasmania needs and deserves for our future. This infrastructure underpins the economic growth and prosperity of the state.

There are some other areas that we do need to talk about. I want to highlight some of the other areas. Irrigation, as I have mentioned, is critical to the prosperity of agriculture and agriculture provides much of the income that the state sees. From an economic standpoint, we need to be as efficient as we can be because these farmers are out there doing their bit and competing with countries that have much lower wage structures than we do.

On health, I have a little announcement to make. I have spent a bit of time of late at the Royal. It is a pity there are not many people in the Chamber, but I wish to advise that Merrilyn and I welcomed our seventh grandchild, who was born at 30 weeks a couple of weeks ago. I need to highlight the fantastic assistance and work of both the LGH -

Ms Archer - Tate Reginald. Have I stolen your thunder?

Mr SHELTON - Yes. And our aero-medical services. Tate Reginald Willis, not a Shelton, he is a Willis, but half a Shelton. But born at 30 weeks and as a grandparent, and as a parent, who has grown up in a family where most babies are eight, nine and 10 pounds, he was four pounds. So the fantastic service from the LGH, transferred to Hobart, been there for the last two and a half weeks. A wonderful job and I commend all the people involved.

Time expired.

[4.26 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I am proud to speak to the Tasmanian Greens fully costed long-term vision for Tasmania, our alternative budget for 2019-20. Yesterday, the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, Cassy O'Connor, presented our budget in full and I will spend my contribution time today providing details on the portfolio areas that I am responsible for. Madam Speaker, the vision of the Greens is for a future that is healthy, resilient and prosperous for all Tasmanians, where the natural environment is protected and each person feels included, recognised and respected in the society that they live in.

We know that Tasmania can be a beacon to the world for sustainability, creativity and fairness. This means that we need to show both heart and courage as leaders. We need to be prepared to see past the short term and also to recognise that investment in the wellbeing of individual people is an investment in the future wellbeing for all Tasmanians. This is a time of a global climate emergency which has been recognised by numbers of national parliaments around the world and an increasing number of hundreds of local councils.

As a community we have to prioritise strong climate action. We can bring down emissions. We can adapt to a rapidly changing climate. We can create new career pathways that Tasmanians can look forward to working in. On this critical measure, in particular, we pay a special focus in

our budget. I will describe how we can act to reduce the soaring unemployment rates in Tasmania where we have one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. In the south-east the unemployment rate amongst young people is 17 per cent. There are a growing number of young people, families and older single people who are finding it harder and harder to rent, let alone to buy a home. This is having a knock-on effect in regional communities where young people are not able to leave home and cannot find a house in urban centres like Launceston or Hobart in order to take up employment there. Essentially, they are stuck in regional towns when they would otherwise want to move into Hobart or Launceston to take up jobs.

At the same time, we know that both patients and staff in all the state's four major public hospitals are under intense and intensifying pressure. We have had this confirmed by the Auditor-General in his scathing report into the management and the funding of the Tasmanian Health Service Emergency Department just this week.

The under-investment in public health comes at a significant disadvantage to people and it contributes to disadvantage occurring in other areas than their own individual health, their families for example who have to take time off work to look after them.

The Greens alternative budget prioritises high quality health, housing for all, and education services. We make a clear choice to deliver better social infrastructure over road and bridges. We know how it is possible to tackle the housing crisis, to increase the supply of secure affordable and energy efficient housing.

The Greens have always recognised that strengthening our democratic institutions and the human rights of every citizen in an equal society will make for stronger and for more diverse and resilient communities. This alternative budget is a statement of our values and our values are clearly reflected in the detail I will speak to now.

This was the hottest summer we have experienced in Tasmania's history and the fires threatened communities for weeks on end and ultimately burned 6 per cent of the Tasmanian wilderness world heritage area. We are still feeling the escalating and volatile climate. People want reassurance that our government recognises the climate emergency and is prepared to act and protect them. They do not want excuses or prevarication any longer. As the Fijian Prime Minister Bainimarama said only this month, 'Cowards don't make history. It is up to governments to muster the will, the creativity and the sheer courage to do it'.

When Liberal came to government five years ago, they immediately axed the climate change ministry and the climate action council. Following that, they have delivered six budgets, year on year and state of the state addresses each year with no meaningful action to curb carbon emissions or to prepare our community for the increasingly volatile climate conditions. Last week in parliament, this Liberal government voted down a statement to recognise the reality of the climate emergency, which was one directly based on a motion recently passed by the United Kingdom and Irish parliaments.

We have had more than five years of climate denial from this Government and the effect is showing. It is through the leadership only of young people who have come together through the 'school strikes for climate' movement and more broadly the persistence of the Greens that we now have the urgency of the climate emergency building pressure on governments, on members of government, and on politicians to take the action we need.

I am speaking to the Greens' alternative budget 2019-20 but it has a companion document which was released only a few weeks ago. That is 'A Future for all of us - how we can make Tasmania a global climate leader by 2030'. This was released by the Tasmanian Greens, by Senator Nick McKim, and work done by Dr Ben Parr in May this year. It is a blueprint for how we can achieve the aim of being a global climate leader by 2030.

Tasmania has had the benefit of having a strong thinker in the previous leader of the Tasmanian Greens, Christine Milne, and later the Leader of the Australian Greens. It was she who first did the intellectual thinking and came up with the brand which has ultimately become part of Brand Tasmania which we hear from members' lips in the House on a regular basis. That is Clean Green Tasmania. It was her thinking and the thinking of the Greens Party that came up with the idea of a clean and green state.

We have gone one step further. Tasmania can be a clean, green global climate leader. We have an amazing opportunity to do this by virtue of our history and our particular geographic position. We are an island and we can take initiatives toward self-sufficiency that are much more difficult to do on the mainland of Australia and in other continents. We have a temperate climate and we have an amazing wilderness world heritage area that is of universal value for all humans.

We are a small, very connected and flexible community, which means that we have the capability of responding rapidly to great changes. We are also intrinsically interconnected, we are part of our families and communities and whether we like it, one of the beauties of Tasmanians is that we understand that when the next extreme event comes, whatever our political voting persuasions, we will all be there together. We will all be there together when the next bushfire comes or the next great flood or storm comes because we care about the people around us in our communities. Our job is to show leadership and take the forward action to give people the resources to prepare them mentally and emotionally for the coming future.

We have an amazingly diverse and rich topography with rainfall patterns and microclimates that give us an opportunity to provide for diverse, adaptive responses and to trial different approaches in farming and in other land-based industries. It also gives some opportunity for plants and animals to be able to adapt to different microenvironments; if we give them the ability to do that by providing connectivity in the landscape and corridors for animals to move and birds to move between different microclimates.

We are also the birthplace of the global Greens movement and that is something that, as a member of the Greens, I am very proud of because it gives us a unique opportunity to listen to the science, to act now and to act early in responding to climate change. The Greens recognise that we need to radically reduce our carbon emissions and our alternative budget reinstates a minister for climate change and the climate action council that was defunded in 2014.

We would also establish a joint standing committee of both Houses of parliament so that climate change will continue to be a focus that is taken very seriously and reviewed on a regular basis by both Houses of parliament. We would spend an extra \$2 million a year on the Tasmanian Climate Change Office and put \$1.5 million a year into a climate adaptation fund, which would be grants for all local councils and to research institutions to undertake work on how we can adapt across the state. We would establish a climate resilience audit to undertake an audit of all state-owned infrastructure. Our budget also appoints a chief scientist to oversee government policy with a view to ensuring that the government's response to the climate emergency is grounded in the latest evidence including evidence from the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change, the global work that is being done as well as the best examples of responses around the world and the exciting research that has been conducted in Tasmania by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, the University of Tasmania and IMAS.

Our budget ends all native forest logging, which is essential to preserve the state's very necessary carbon sinks as well as to protect the wonderful biodiversity of our forests. We do support plantation forestry. We would also fund multiple methods of carbon sequestration across farming and land management including supporting on-farm emissions reduction funds of \$8 million and a carbon farming fund of \$8 million, providing renewable support for farmers to be able to increase energy efficiency on their farms, also \$8 million.

With the dry El Niño that is forecast for the coming summer and with extreme weather events that can no longer be described as exceptional, this budget recognises the costs of responding to these extreme events are expected to soar year on year into the future. With that in mind, we have listened to the firefighters in Tasmania and the national fire chiefs who made such an impassioned statement a couple of months before the federal election for action from all governments and political leaders. We have listened to them and we would invest in an extra 20 remote area firefighters. We would also fund the trial of two very large air tankers to fight bushfires that threaten homes and the wilderness.

We have been deeply concerned to make sure that regional communities across Tasmania have the resources they need to plan for better bushfire protection and fuel reduction. That is a concern about the ability of people at the individual household level as well as the community level. We cannot only rely on written information or web-based information as the mechanism for people to understand how to protect themselves, protect their properties or when to leave during bushfires. This is an essential tool but it cannot be the only one, especially given the very high levels of illiteracy in Tasmania generally and in regional communities. The Greens put extra resources into the Tasmania Fire Service and make them available to local councils so that people are able to know the risks and to understand how best to respond. We support people on the front line, those people who toil in the harshest of conditions, protect us from fires and clean up after the storms and floods when they happen. Our budget tops up funding to State Emergency Services each year by \$2 million.

Our budget also supports the necessary and inevitable transition from fossil to renewable fuels. We prioritise an extra \$130 million in funding public and electric transport options. We will invest \$13.4 million into a public transport authority. That will be tasked with ensuring that Tasmania has a statewide, coordinated, simple ticketing system and to make sure there is the continuity of planning between the regional and urban bus systems that bus users so desperately want. We will make sure that Hobart has a light rail and we have invested \$36 million into kickstarting the construction of the northern corridor. We will also put an extra \$4 million investment into the Derwent ferry system to take cars off Hobart's congested roads and to really bring down carbon emissions in Tasmania. We need an electric car disruption. We have committed \$21 million toward the roll out of electric buses and we would lead by example and electrify the ministerial and Government fleets.

We will support local councils with \$8 million in matched funding to help them build more pedestrian infrastructure and cycleways that will also reduce emissions, contribute to improving people's health and create more liveable cities and regional communities. As well as matched funding with councils, we will direct an extra \$30 million across the forward Estimates into

cycleways and pedestrian walkways and that will also include our commitment to the Battery Point walkway.

The Greens would invest \$3 million a year in energy efficiency upgrades to low income households. These are the people who are hit hardest by climbing power bills. Instead of taking the money from schools that they raise through their renewable energy solar panel systems and the other forms of renewable generation that some savvy schools have invested in, we would return those savings directly to individual school budgets each year and provide \$6 million in a commitment to improving energy efficiency in schools and also into other government buildings. Responsible governments prepare for the future and the Greens recognise there are massive transitions occurring in the employment, communication and energy sectors worldwide, as well as in the global climate system. Our budget prioritises planning to position Tasmania for tomorrow's opportunities as well as to be ready for the challenges ahead of us. We want to protect our island's many values that are the source of our clean, green and global leader brand. That is what the Greens are aiming for.

We have a growing population in Tasmania and our settlement and land use patterns need to accurately reflect the demands of the climate emergency. The Tasmanian Planning Scheme has to prioritise environmental protection, public participation in the processes of development, and it has to value our shared public places and reserves. The Greens alternative budget establishes to support a good planning support system, the office of the chief engineer, the state demographer, and it reinstates the state's architect, which was cut by the Liberals five years ago. These offices will make sure that Tasmania is equipped with the expertise we need for future planning and to provide us with quality and independent advice. We would also institute real statewide policies that would sit across the Tasmanian planning scheme and we would undertake the work of comprehensive biodiversity mapping recommended by the Tasmanian Planning Commission three years ago but was not taken up by Mr Gutwein.

We would ensure that Tasmania has an integrated framework for future developments that works for the people, where they live and protects our environment, especially by considering the connectivity of landscapes and of the necessary restriction of settlements within them. We provide additional funding to those bodies that undertake independent assessment that are essential for bulwarks to some of the limitations of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, being the Tasmanian Planning Commission, and we provide an extra \$3 million across the forward Estimates to support the work of the delegates in the Planning Commission. We also fund additional money to the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal and to the Environmental Defender's Office which essentially runs on public and philanthropic donations for the essential work it does in providing independent advice for people in the community about development and their impact on the environment and on individual communities.

The Greens understand that individual health and wellness is the basis of a healthy community, which our investment priorities reflect. The Auditor-General's report into the state's emergency departments' services confirms that Tasmanian hospitals are so full that patients cannot get in the front door. As the Auditor-General so poignantly detailed, when acutely sick people arrive at emergency departments they wait many hours for acute care, and the risk of harm to them because of the excessive waits has increased substantially over the last five years. In order to tackle the rising demand for emergency services it is critical to properly fund the preventative health services that can, in the first place, help keep people well for longer and avoid them having to visit emergency departments or go to hospitals at all.

The Government dropped the ball on reducing very high rates of smoking, alcohol and drug use and poor nutrition, which afflicts Tasmania at rates far higher than the rest of the country by almost all measures. Their promise in 2014 during the election campaign that Tasmanians would have the best health by 2025 has evaporated and I have not heard that phrase being used in this place for a number of years. We have had no meaningful change in the funding outside of the acute health sector since 2014 on any significant measure in preventative health, and we have not seen any of the systemic reforms that we need to smoking legislation, to put downward pressure on junk food advertising or to increase alcohol and drug education, for example. We invest \$23 million into community preventative health services and these include an extra \$2 million a year to the Population Health Unit for the very important work they do and \$1 million a year into our Community Preventative Health Fund for grants for particular purpose projects.

We continue the funding to Epilepsy Tasmania, which only continues to be funded by the Government this year, and to the Stroke Foundation. We also provide money for a drug rehabilitation facility and to staff that facility, \$9 million over the forward Estimates, because we understand that it is essential to provide people with proper treatment when they need it so that they can reduce the dangerous use of drugs or alcohol. That is clearly, according the evidence of the increasing impact of both alcohol and drug misuse in Tasmania, a major area of funding that needs more money directed toward it.

We also recognise that when people need an emergency service they need to have help immediately. We have listened to the doctors, nurses and registrars who wrote to the Tasmanian Health Service executive a month ago in their Access Solutions Paper. We have funded the extra clinical specialist they recommended; \$6.6 million over the forward Estimates for registrars, general medicine, emergency specialists, paediatricians, obstetricians and gynaecologists. We have also prioritised funding for 10 psychiatric and 10 emergency department nurses and would give them the self-defence training funding and the protective equipment the emergency staff have said is so important to keep them safe in the workplace.

The levels of mental ill-health in Tasmania, including rising depression and anxiety, amongst young people is deeply concerning. One of the findings from Coroner Olivia McTaggart's inquest into the tragic suicides of six teenagers in 2015 was that there must be a dedicated inpatient unit for adolescents or young persons between the ages of 12 and 25, and that it needed to be designed around the needs of that age group, including the treatment of those young people who are suffering from acute states of mental illness or suicidality. She also recommended the centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services be staffed to the equivalent of best practice so that they can provide adequate services for children and adolescents and to make sure that there was no longer the practice of freezing the acceptance of referrals or eliminating wait lists when they became too long.

We have listened to the people who have been in touch with us on a regular basis over the last couple of years and the Greens Budget commits \$12 million for 30 child and adolescent mental health staff, 30 extra staff, to be funded. We have listened to young people and their parents talking about high rates of anxiety and depression in the community among young people. We would provide \$2 million for extra staff across the forward Estimates for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, with specific focus on anxiety and depression in young people. We would put another \$4 million into providing clinical support and direction for the development of youth anxiety, depression protective services.

These issues can be prioritised. The minister has given an assurance that there will be a dedicated acute child and youth mental health unit in the hospital. However, we have not seen any evidence in writing. We have funded that in our budget so we would put the money into the child and youth acute unit staffing that is required. We have dedicated \$3.3 million towards that particular work.

The extra \$26 million that we have directed into mental health services will mean that young people do no longer fall through service cracks. They can have age-appropriate care with multi-disciplinary wrap-around services that focus on protection as well as risk identification.

Improving mental health for children also means investing in mental health in schools. We funded 50 extra full-time speech pathologists in schools, which doubles the current number in the public health system. This means pathologists will have adequate time to work with the students who need personal support. Our budget invests \$8.6 million extra in school psychologists and \$6.6 million in extra school social workers.

We understand the anxiety about climate and the distress that young people experience at the massive changes that are occurring in the global climate and among human societies. We would fund the establishment of a climate resilience program in the public education system. This budget acknowledges things that Tasmanians care about the most. We are very proud to have it fully costed and available for the community to take advantage of.

Time expired.

[4.57 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, how great is our Treasurer? This Treasurer has intestinal fortitude. It would not be an easy decision to take this Budget into net debt, but it is a decision that needed to be made. How would Labor cut to pay for the public sector wage increases they want? Where would they cut to reduce the \$1.1 billion net debt?

Mr Bacon - How are you going to cut? Where is your \$450 million?

Madam SPEAKER - Mr Bacon, order.

Mr TUCKER - I listened to the Opposition Leader with her budget reply speech and her comments were very interesting indeed. I will repeat a comment that she made.

Two years ago, when I became the Leader of the Labor Party, I shared a saying from my time growing up on the family farm in Nugent. My parents taught me to always feed the animals before you feed yourself. That means putting the needs of others before your own.

Mr Bacon - You should attack the other parts, not this. I mean it is a bit pathetic.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr TUCKER - I have worked in the farming game all my life, for over 25 years. My family have had employees who have worked for our family for over 50 years. It is unheard of these days but I put this down to the saying which I will now correct the Opposition Leader with and the

meaning behind it. The saying is, 'You always feed your animals first, your employees second, and yourself third'. The meaning in this saying is especially relevant in drought times.

Mr Bacon - We are not all big bosses.

Mr TUCKER - The meaning in this saying is especially relevant in drought times.

Mr Bacon - Will you lay them off?

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Mr Bacon, I am going to ask you to leave.

Mr TUCKER - We are in a dry spell at the moment with the drop in GST revenue and other revenue. A significant drop of \$500 million. As a farmer relating to this saying, the first course of action is to do a feed budget, that is work out what you have in feed reserves, what stock you have and their needs. What you look at next is what you have in financial reserves. Then you have to make the tough decisions, whether to borrow money on a low interest rate, sell the farm or worse still, do nothing and starve everyone.

This is not a time for unjustified pay rises or for dropping down a gear. Our economy is one of the fastest growing in the nation. Tourism is booming. Our construction sector leads the country in first-home buyers, approvals, commencements and completions. Businesses in all sectors across Tasmania have confidence to invest, are thinking big, planning for expansion and creating jobs. Today our economy is providing more opportunities and a brighter future for Tasmanians.

This Budget is about maintaining that momentum and investing for growth. This is a bigger picture budget, a budget built on investment in our future, for our children and built on investing on our infrastructure. The 2019-20 Budget includes a record \$3.6 billion investment into job-creating inter-generational infrastructure that will support future growth, attract investment and create jobs. Our record-breaking infrastructure program includes \$2.8 billion in agency-funded social and economic infrastructure. This massive commitment is all about job creation, driving our economy to support future growth that will enable us to invest in the essential services that Tasmanians need.

This Budget delivers record investments into health, education and looking after the most vulnerable. We will deliver more and better services for all Tasmanians. We will hire more nurses, doctors, teachers, paramedics and police officers. We will invest more into the hospitals that provide the health services that we need, and we will invest more into the education of our most precious resource, our students and our people.

This Budget increases our investment into inter-generational infrastructure in health, education and housing, in roads, rail and bridges, in water and sewerage infrastructure, in our parks and tourism assets to secure our way of life and the future of our economy. That will mean the state will carry a manageable level of net debt.

The Tasmanian economy is strong, diverse and growing. We have created nearly 13 000 jobs. Last year, Tasmania's economy grew at 3.3 per cent, its highest rate in a decade. Our gross state product was over \$30 billion. On a per capita basis, our economy is growing the fastest in the nation, at nearly double the Australian average. Our tourism sector is vibrant and booming, with visitor numbers and spending continuing to grow. Our housing and construction sector leads the nation. Our population is growing at its fastest annual rate in nearly a decade: almost three times faster than only a handful of years ago.

It was not always this way. Labor and the Greens have spent the last week attacking our Budget. They have forgotten what our state was like under their watch. Let me remind you, during the Labor and Green years our daily newspapers constantly reminded us about dire situations the state was in.

Mr Bacon - It is a real talent to bankrupt the state.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Bacon.

Mr Bacon - Is there no interjecting at all now. Is that what you are saying?

Madam SPEAKER - Yes, none.

Mr TUCKER - 'Brace for a thousand more job cuts, says union' in May 2012. 'Private sector funds dry up, job losses', 2010. 'Storm clouds build on the jobless front', May 2012. 'Vanishing workforce', January 2011. 'No backward step as Giddings cuts', June 2011.

Before we came into government, the state's economic position was dreadful. Our unemployment had risen to 8 per cent. Confidence in our business sector was at its all-time low. The state was riddled with debt and anti-development and Tasmanians were leaving the state in record numbers. Tasmania has come a long way from the dark days under Labor and the Greens but we need to maintain this momentum by investing for growth.

Our strong economy is the engine room that generates that revenue. This enables us to invest record amounts into essential services that Tasmanians need. While growth in our economy continues to outpace the nation, there are headwinds forecast for the national economy and we must insulate ourselves against that.

The choice we have made is to stay the course and increase our investment into the infrastructure the state needs. The level of infrastructure investment over four years is unprecedented in the state's history, but so is our population growth now more than double our long-term trend; so too is our growth in interstate and international visitors and so is the growth in exports and our construction sector. Tasmania's growing business, agriculture, aquaculture and export economy needs efficient roads to meet their growing freight demands.

With growth in population we also need to ensure that Tasmanians can get to school and work on time and access all parts of the state safely. Central to our \$2.8 billion infrastructure package is a mighty \$1.6 billion for roads and bridges. The Budget delivers better roads around the state including the Tasman Highway from Hobart to Sorell and the completion of the Perth bypass. Lyons is a great benefactor of this Budget's road infrastructure spend. The Budget begins the delivery of the new Bridgewater bridge, Tasmania's largest ever transport infrastructure project at \$576 million, with expected completion in 2024. We have \$111.7 million being invested in the Midlands action plan for further major upgrades to the Midlands Highway, which will include finishing the Perth Link Roads Project. We allocate \$17.1 million toward overtaking lanes and other safety upgrades on the Great Eastern Drive and \$4.5 million to extend the Great Eastern Drive along the Binnalong Bay Road, something I am very proud of. These upgrades will provide a safer journey for all Tasmanians, interstate and international tourists who travel from Launceston to Hobart.

Our export economy, agriculture and business sectors are major winners of the highway upgrades. More efficient roads result in more efficient means to transport goods interstate and to export markets. Michelle Harwood, Executive Director of Tasmanian Transport Association said -

The continued commitment to improvements to roads, bridges, rail and infrastructure for key freight corridors is welcome for our industry and those industries we serve.

With my electorate office being in Sorell I have experienced firsthand the traffic issue faced by businesses and residents in the fast-growing south-east region. The \$25.85 million investment into the south-east traffic solution will tackle traffic problem spots along the Sorell-Hobart corridor. New projects underway in this coming financial year include the Hobart airport flyover interchange upgrade, Arthur Highway overtaking lanes east of Sorell, and a traffic solution strategy implemented at Midway Point roundabout. Speaking on behalf of the residents of the south-east region, the Sorell Mayor, Kerry Vincent, said that he welcomes and appreciates the Government's efforts to continue to finance infrastructure projects in the south east.

Mental health is a key priority of this Government. The Budget continues our plan to deliver 27 more mental health beds and an additional \$1.7 million for an equivalent mental health hospital in the home service. As a farmer I have witnessed firsthand the mental health issues affecting individuals, families and communities in regional Tasmania. I welcome the Government's budget commitment of \$920 000 to Rural Alive and Well. These funds will support RAWs mental health outreach programs and initiatives for rural Tasmania.

In regard to health, the Liberal Hodgman Government has not let the people of Lyons down. In the 2017 budget the Liberal Government announced it would fully fund the \$12.1 million to complete the new hospital in St Helens. On 16 May I had the privilege of officially opening the brand new \$12.1 million St Helens District Hospital with Mr Ferguson. This purpose-built facility on Annie Street has been designed to cater for the current and future needs of the St Helens and greater east coast area. This new complex is an example that the Liberal Government delivers on their health promises in Lyons.

Our ambulance and emergency services personnel are often the frontline to vital lifesaving health services, especially in regional communities. The Budget provides \$20 million for our ambulance service to continue the roll-out of 42 paramedics in regional areas, and a \$4.5 million boost over six years for the Ambulance Tasmania state operation centre. The people of Lyons will benefit from the Budget's ambulance and emergency services infrastructure investment with \$2.82 million for the upgrade to the Campbell Town Ambulance Station, \$1.78 million for the Midlands Multi-Purpose Centre at Oatlands and construction of a new \$11.5 million emergency service hub in Sorell.

Research has consistently shown education to be an important contributor to an individual's social and economic outcomes and, through this, has economic benefits at state and national levels. Quality schooling is key to economic growth. That is why this year's Budget will deliver record education expenditure of over \$7.1 billion over four years, an increase of \$349 million compared to last year's budget. For the last six years, the Hodgman Liberal Government has implemented quality education policies resulting in Tasmania having world-class educational programs. The Government is continuing its six-year plan for education, with an additional \$145 million to hire more teachers and support staff. We understand that education occurs throughout a person's life

and the 2019-20 Budget includes \$8 million for free preschool for three-year-old children from disadvantaged or vulnerable families.

We have committed \$2.9 million over two years to ensure our skilled workforce is able to meet industry demand. This funding will provide for increased pre-vocational training to support the construction industry addressing workforce shortages and to train more nurses. We are maintaining our momentum and continuing our plan to extend all high schools to year 12 by 2022. These nation-leading education policies provide a platform for a successful educational outcome for our children, youth and future skilled workforce. A world-class education deserves world class facilities.

A growing body of research has found that school facilities, especially classrooms with flexible instructional space, can have a profound impact on student education outcomes. Our Budget is investing in improving student outcomes by investing in school infrastructure. This infrastructure investment will create classrooms that cater for the educational needs of Tasmanians today and into the future. That is why the Liberal 2019-20 Budget will invest \$194 million into educational infrastructure. This Budget commits to crucial investment in educational infrastructure in Lyons, with \$25.5 million for a new K-12 Sorell School. That means an up-to-date school facility to cater for educational needs of the growing south-east region. A further \$1.9 million will see our little Lyons residents of Molesworth Primary School with upgrades to their facilities, to keep investing in skills and training to make sure the people of Lyons are getting the right skill and training that meet industry needs.

The Liberal Government is investing \$3 million in the Sheffield School Farm redevelopment and \$4.3 million into the Jordan River Learning Federation School Farm redevelopment to help meet the required skills in Lyons' growing agricultural sector. In Sorell, \$3.5 million is allocated for the much-needed new child and family learning centre. This centre will provide a range of early years services to support the development of children from birth to five years in the south-east region.

One of the state's key drivers of jobs and investment is Tasmania's small businesses, which make up around 90 per cent of our businesses and employ nearly half of our workforce. The Government has developed a new five-year Tasmanian Business Growth Strategy in collaboration with the TCCI and the Tasmanian Small Business Council to help grow our businesses and support the establishment of new ones. Targeted initiatives, such as the Small Business Grants Tasmania Program and the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme encourage businesses to take on more apprentices and trainees in key industries such as building and construction, tourism, hospitality and advanced manufacturing. Local job opportunities provide young apprentices and trainees the skills they need to succeed for the rest of their lives while allowing them to stay where they want to be, right here in Tasmania. Every Tasmanian should have an opportunity to participate and benefit in our strong economy, no matter where they live.

We are investing \$6 million in a whole-of-government approach to develop and implement the Government's strategic growth framework. This framework allows for new initiatives that will help bridge the gap between those who are fully engaged with our growing economy and those individuals and areas of the state that need a little more support.

Our plan has been to make Tasmania the safest state in the nation. We are committed to protecting Tasmania's way of life and keeping Tasmanians safe. The Liberal Hodgman Government has rebuilt police numbers, adding 113 police officers after years of the Labor-Greens government

slashing police numbers. We have committed an additional \$20.1 million to hire 125 more police officers around the state.

In Lyons there will be \$4.2 million to complete the Longford Police Station, and \$4.5 million for the New Norfolk Police Station. This will mean better police facilities and services to keep people in Lyons safe. We will also allocate an additional \$14.4 million to support our courts and related legal services. The Government will continue to fund community legal centres and the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania. We will provide \$3.3 million over four years in additional funding to offset the reduction in funding from the Australian Government. A further \$16.8 million will be allocated to the Tasmania Prison Service to address rising demand. The Budget invests \$170.6 million into our law and order infrastructure. In Lyons \$45.3 million has been provided for the new northern prison, which is expected to cost around \$270 million. There will be consultation with communities about identified sites in 2019 and 2020. A major design and upgrade of the Ashleigh Youth Detention Centre has been allocated \$6.86 million.

We must work to continually strengthen Tasmania's biosecurity system against the risks that will threaten Tasmania's agricultural production, environment, market access and brand. We will invest \$10.5 million over four years to strengthen Tasmania's biosecurity border. Nearly \$4 million will be spent from the Biosecurity Emergency Response and Research Fund.

Tasmania has become the must-see destination for interstate and international travellers. More visitors spending more are coming here more than ever before. Tourism in Tasmania directly and indirectly contributes around \$3.03 billion, or 10.4 per cent, to gross state product. It supports 38 000 jobs in Tasmania, or about 15.8 per cent of total Tasmanian employment. This Budget is investing in our state's greatest assets - our natural beauty. The Government is investing \$151.7 million to support tourism, recreation and cultural infrastructure, with much of this investment occurring throughout our regions. There is \$20 million allocated for the regional tourism attraction concessional loan scheme to support the development of attractions in regions.

In Lyons we are blessed with many magnificent natural tourism locations. The Liberal Government values the importance of tourism for local businesses and economies in Lyons. In the far south-east corner of Lyons lies the spectacular Tasman National Park and the Three Peaks Track. In this Budget, \$3.2 million has been allocated to complete stage 3 of our newest outstanding walking track and \$80.5 million will be invested in the Cradle Mountain master plan and visitor centre. This iconic gateway to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is one of the jewels in Lyons' tourism crown. Cradle Mountain underpins Tasmania's brand as a global destination for nature-based tourism. This significant investment will see the development of the gateway precinct on crown land just outside the national park, which will cater for the growing tourism numbers while improving visitors' overall experience to this significant world-class tourism area.

The 2019-20 Budget outlines our plan for the next four years. It will underpin a strong economy to support businesses large and small, attract investment and create more jobs. It maintains the momentum and invests for growth. With all Labor's negative boo-hooing about the Budget this week, Labor might like to take on board the comments made by one of its own. Former state Labor member for Bass, Brian Wightman, endorsed our Budget. On 23 May in a media release, acting as the Tasmanian executive director of the Property Council of Australia, Mr Wightman said -

The 2019-20 state Budget's significant investment in infrastructure is necessary to meet the challenges of our growing state and leverage the opportunity for a more prosperous and liveable Tasmania.

Maybe Labor should stop being negative just for the sake of it and join me in congratulating our Treasurer for having the intestinal fortitude to deliver a Budget that will benefit Tasmanians for generations to come.

[5.21 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to sum up the debate on the Budget this evening. I thank all members for their contributions. Some, I have to say, I enjoyed more than others. Some had more content and intent than others.

The 2019-20 Budget is about delivering the Hodgman Liberal Government's long-term plan for the future of Tasmania. It sets out what we will do for the next four years and beyond and details how we will pay for it. It demonstrates that we are continuing to deliver on the election commitments that returned us to office in 2018. It shows that we are maintaining that momentum and that we are investing for growth.

We will invest a record \$8.1 billion into health to improve the health and well-being of Tasmanians and to address demand pressures. I am pleased that the Minister for Education and Training is here. We are making a record investment into education and skills of over \$7.1 billion to ensure that the next generation of Tasmanians can lead productive and rewarding lives. The \$3.6 billion that we are spending on infrastructure is the highlight and the heart of this Budget.

This investment will deliver more hospital beds, it will deliver new and upgraded schools, new irrigation schemes to add value to our agricultural industries. It is truly intergenerational. There is not a better example of intergenerational investment than investment in water and irrigation infrastructure. In 100 years, those dams will still be delivering water to farmers to grow crops and to irrigate their farms. It is one of the best examples of a partnership between the private sector and two levels of government - state and federal - in this country.

The Budget will deliver more affordable housing, better water and sewerage infrastructure. There will be \$1.6 billion worth of investment in roads and bridges. It will make it safer and easier to get from home to work and back again and, importantly, to school. It will improve our transport productivity, especially in those growing areas, such as Brighton or Sorell or Kingston, where there is demand for housing and where there is land available. When you discuss with the mayors the challenges they have in ensuring growth continues, one of the key things they raise is transport infrastructure. When coupled with new schools and better health facilities in those areas we will be able to bring more houses onto the market, there will be more investment and it will provide more affordable housing for Tasmanians. The investment into roads and bridges is more than just an investment into roads and bridges. It is an investment into enabling infrastructure.

Contributions from members have been varied, some more positive and with greater content than others. I will touch on the Greens alternative budget. As mad and as kooky as they are, they have a go and they are prepared to draw a line in the sand and explain what they stand for and what they will not pay for to ensure they can fund those things they see as important. I do not agree with much they bring to the table but they do have the courage to bring forward an alternative. I say to them, there is nothing to be frightened of as far as roads and bridges. The vast majority of people drive on them and they are enabling infrastructure. They will improve our productivity and will

ensure we can provide more affordable homes and services, as long as we have appropriate roads and other services available to them in those three very fast-growing suburbs here in the south.

It surprised me to see they were going to cut a little under \$300 million, \$277 million out of the roads and bridges budget. There is a range of savings they have applied - I am sure a number of these would not be of surprise for members on both the Government and Opposition benches - that they were going to make savings from ending native forest logging. They want to defund the V8 Supercars. They do not like investment in parks. It surprised me they were going to cut and completely defund Tasracing. That industry provides more than \$100 million worth of economic activity for the state, employs a lot of people in regional areas and supports a lot of families. It surprised me they were prepared to end Tasracing. Setting that aside, they have laid out their alternative, they brought it forward and we now understand what the Greens stand for.

It surprised me that Labor did not bring forward an alternative budget. This was their opportunity to outline those aspects of our budget they did not support, wanted to change or where they felt additional investment would be required. Looking back through the commentary in notes I have taken and what I heard during the course of the week, to say it appears we received tacit approval for our budget would be an understatement. In opposition, we would outline our priorities and how we would pay for them and we provided an alternative to every budget leading up to coming into Government. It meant that we had to make some difficult choices and explain where we would fund those things that were important to us.

As to Ms White's contribution earlier this week, it was 30 minutes of nothing. It was 30 minutes of lost opportunity because nobody is any the wiser with regard to what the Labor Party stands for, what their policies are, what they would fight for, how they would fund it and what they disagreed with in our budget. That does say a lot about where the Labor Party is at. There is a lot of shouting and a lot of noise but complaining is not a policy and whingeing is not a platform. That appears to be all we have heard in this past week.

I want to speak about some initiatives for my own electorate. I have had the opportunity to make a significant contribution to this debate in respect of the Budget speech, which I delivered last Thursday. There are some matters in my electorate I would like to raise because they are important as both Treasurer and as local member. I am very pleased that the Elphin Sports Centre will have work done on its roof. That is a sport centre that has 5000 people attend it on a weekly basis. It is the major indoor sporting centre in Launceston and it has served that community well for many, many decades. It is run by a group of local volunteers and they do a fantastic job. It is a state Government asset and, in investing for growth, we will be investing \$400 000 to put a new roof on that facility. I understand it is sorely needed on the basis that they had to turn kids away in the last fortnight because of heavy rain.

There is a volunteer group out at Scottsdale, the Northbourne Park Association, who have managed a very good retirement village for many years. We are jointly investing in additional infrastructure with them, which will open up around 80 new retirement lots. That will stand the north-east is very good stead. It will be a significant building project in the heart of Scottsdale. It is a very good example of Government providing enabling infrastructure with support from the Commonwealth Government, because they were fortunate enough to receive a grant, which will underpin what will be significant, in the tens of millions of dollars' worth of investment, in that regional town.

LGH work has been undertaken with the Health minister and there is currently work happening on the corner of Charles and Howith streets. This will improve outcomes for the people of Launceston and the region across the north. I commend the Health minister in ensuring that project can continue. He has been sensible to ensure there is additional car parking, which will make many people in Launceston feel much better. Having used that hospital - my two children were born there - in trying to find a park I have found there are busier periods than others. I am pleased that work is being undertaken.

As to enabling infrastructure, Launceston and the Tamar Valley traffic is becoming busier and this Budget will fund work to increase the Charles Street Bridge capacity, which can be a choke point. For people coming from the western side of the city, from the West Tamar, through the city and out to the East Tamar, it is a particularly difficult route. It is often at capacity during busy times of the day. Work is ongoing in planning the second Tamar River Bridge. That work will be progressed and undertaken to gain understanding of the best location, the right terminology is the geomorphology, as to where the bridge might cross that river.

There are some very positive things in the Budget for Launceston and in my electorate of Bass. Mr Rockliff, the Deputy Premier, will be moving on with the Mowbray Corridor and the new roundabout at the bottom of Mowbray Hill, which will be a very welcome addition to the road network in Launceston. That is a very busy intersection and will be very much welcomed. Furthermore, there are also improvements planned for Bridport and Waterhouse Roads as well as to Launceston's gateway out to the airport.

In speaking about the Budget this week, I am pleased with the way that it has been received but there are voices that do not support what we are attempting to do. I hope we would have the opportunity to work with people. One of the key aims of this Budget is to ensure we underpin our strong economic growth, the 13 000 jobs that have been created and the 10 000 that are projected to be created. I hope that people can understand the significant investment into infrastructure is designed to ensure our economy continues to grow, we continue to service our growing population and that we generate the revenues we need to invest record amounts into Health, Education and Training and looking after the most disadvantaged.

Our investment into affordable housing continues with the suite of measures in housing affordability included and funded in this Budget. I commend Mr Jaensch, the Minister for Housing, for the work he has done. He will have additional funding this year, 2019-20, \$67 million in total, to invest into affordable housing and a further \$10 million has been brought forward into the 2020-21 year to increase the investment in that year. On top of that, we have First Home Builders Boost. If you are building your own home, \$20 000 is available to you to help get that building out of the ground. If you are buying your first home, you will receive stamp duty relief up to 50 per cent of the value of home up to \$400 000. If you are downsizing, we cater for 50 per cent of the stamp duty and you can receive this relief. This will open up more stock in the marketplace to ensure we have more available supply for those who need properties.

I want to touch on some of the commentary. It was good on Friday last week, it is a long day doing breakfast, lunch and dinner around the state discussing the budget, and I thank Michael Bailey and the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce - TCCI - for their engagement and involvement in that process. I am pleased we can play a part. I am also pleased with the TCCI's view. He said that what we have here is a budget that keeps the economy moving, it keeps infrastructure moving, it keeps people working and brings more people into work. The Burnie Chamber of Commerce representative stated -

I think the Treasurer has done a good job to deliver another surplus after having GST and stamp duty revenue cuts.

The Cradle Coast Authority welcomed the Government's investment in roads, health, tourism, education and other areas of importance to the Cradle Coast. Robert Mallett from the Small Business Council said, 'I think the Tasmanian Budget is a fantastic budget'. I agree with Robert because the investment we are making into roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, affordable housing and our tourism infrastructure will create lots of opportunities for businesses both large and small. From the point of view of Mr Mallett's membership, they will have an opportunity to involve themselves in the investment flowing through this Budget.

Luke Martin, and I do not think you can get a better acknowledgement from an industry spokesperson, said on behalf of the Tourism Industry Council, 'Easily the best tourism budget in Tasmanian history.'. The MBA, Master Builders Association's Matthew Pollock welcomed the increased commitment by the Government to support growth in the building and construction industry. Brian Wightman, I have a quote and good on you, Brian. He made a number of points -

The 2019-2020 State Budget's significant investment in infrastructure is necessary to meet the challenges of our growing state and leverage the opportunity for a more prosperous and liveable Tasmania. This budget is easing congestion, and supporting the immediate supply and affordability of Tasmanian homes.

I do not have those couple of sentences Mr Tucker seemed to have to hand. He was very supportive of the state Treasurer and the Liberal Government but I will check *Hansard*. It has been said, it now exists and I thank Mr Tucker for bringing that to our attention. I am sure Brian will take it in the good humour and the vein it has been given. He was a very good member of parliament and whilst he sat on this side of the House and I was on the other, I always found him to be a gentleman to deal with and I am certain he applies himself in that role with the -

Mr Bacon - Enthusiasm.

Mr GUTWEIN - same enthusiasm, diligence and application he applied when he was in this House. With those comments I will wind it up and thank members once again for their contributions.

We have a week of Estimates in front of us and a further week of parliament and I look forward to the debate continuing. I thank members for their contributions.

Bill read the second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2019 (No. 22)

Second Reading

[5.42 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer - 2R) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The second Appropriation Bill recognises the unique role of parliament and independent statutory offices in Tasmania's parliamentary and democratic system. It appropriates \$34 million from the public account in 2019-20, \$33 829 million of this amount is appropriated for operating services and \$171 000 is appropriate for capital services. I commend the bill to the House.

[5.43 p.m.]

Mr BACON (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to give a brief contribution on the second Appropriation Bill in terms of parliamentary services and independent role of parliament as the Treasurer announced. I have a few comments to make about the Budget and I have a couple of questions for the Treasurer regarding funding for parliament.

A new initiative was announced by the Speaker on Tuesday of this week regarding the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, along access for members of parliament who are not members of the Government to a resource toward drafting private members bills and amendments. If the Treasurer could give some detail around exactly how he believes that will work, how the Government sees that working and how the process to deliver that has come about, it would be very much appreciated.

This is a budget of smoke and mirrors, as the Treasurer seems to do every year. This year it has gone one step further to include a \$1 billion broken promise when it comes to net debt. Before the election the Liberal Party's glossy brochures said they would keep the state net debt free. Now we are talking about \$1.1 billion of net debt. The Treasurer has been at pains this week to say that he has made choices. It is a strange choice to make to break a \$1 billion promise, particularly when we are in relatively good economic times. The Treasurer talks about headwinds in the national economy and the international economy. If you can get us to \$1.1 billion in debt in what are good economic times, what is the future of the state when the golden age is over?

The striking thing is that the Treasurer said time and time again this week that he is not going to make apologies for making that promise. It is an unfortunate way for the Treasurer to act. There has been about \$500 000 000 in revenue write downs. If the Treasurer could apologise for breaking that promise and explain to the Tasmanian people why he has been forced to do that, it would go a long way to improving the perception that the Budget is a truthful document and that the Treasurer is telling the full truth about the state of the Budget. If only he could get up in his summing up and apologise for breaking that promise. He did not just break the promise, he broke it by \$1 billion. That is more than enough for an apology from the Treasurer.

If we could we get some detail on the Parliamentary Counsel position and an apology from the Treasurer for breaking that promise by \$1 billion then it would be a good Thursday evening in the Parliament.

Recognition of Visitor

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Before you get to your feet, Treasurer, I welcome the past President of the Australian Senate, Stephen Parry.

Members - Hear, hear.

[5.48 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank members for their contribution on this bill. I will touch on some of the commentary and will take as commentary some of the matters raised by Mr Bacon.

Mr Bacon knows full well that the state lost more than half a billion dollars in GST and stamp duty receipts. I presume Mr Bacon is as well informed as most people are in terms of what is occurring in the national economy at the moment.

It is quite obvious that the big engine rooms of New South Wales and Victoria are in trouble. You only have to look at the budget that was delivered by Tim Pallas earlier this week in which Mr Pallas introduced a suite of new taxes, not on foreign investors as we look to it, or on betting companies or corporate bookmakers but he has introduced new taxes on Victorians. He has done that because they have lost billions of dollars in stamp duty revenue. The housing market in Victoria and New South Wales has collapsed by close to 15 per cent and more in some suburbs. That is sapping consumer confidence in Victoria and New South Wales.

Spending is lower and therefore the size of the GST pool is lower. Therefore, we have received less GST.

The volume of sales in our property market has held up strongly. It has started to flatten and in some areas fall away. Real estate agents would argue that is because they cannot get enough stock onto the market, but for whatever reason, the volume of sales has slowed and come back off its peak. Prices are still holding up, but the market shifted. From the south of the state the market has moved to the north and north west of the state where house values are lower than they are in the south. Stamp duty receipts have been affected. We have written down revenues.

Noting that it will take time for Victoria and New South Wales to see a bounce in confidence, the Government has decided that rather than maintain or cut back on our infrastructure spend we have invested more, more than \$200 million into the general government sector, close to \$500 million through our government businesses. We want to ensure that our economy remains strong.

We have a growing population. That growing population is demanding services. We have growing international and interstate visitation. We have more people on our roads so we need safer roads. Now is not the time to pull back on the investment we are making. Now is the time to ensure that not only do we provide the intergenerational infrastructure that future generations of Tasmanians will need, we invest now because that will underpin our economy. It will provide the services and facilities we need and generate the revenues we need to continue to invest record amounts for health and education, and looking after the most disadvantaged.

Mr Bacon knows that. I make no apologies for the structural settings that we have applied in this Budget. This is about underpinning the economy and underpinning the future prosperity of Tasmanians. That is the choice that the Government has made.

There is a \$150 000 in Legislature-General to provide and support drafting services for members of parliament. Everybody in this place agrees that having some form of drafting service for members of parliament makes sense.

The Budget clearly says there will be a consultation with OPC on the best way for that money to be managed and to provide the support that members of parliament require. In the upper House when they move amendments, and it has been a longstanding convention, they have received access to OPC, usually the same drafters that have prepared the Government's bills. That makes sense because there is continuity.

What has been agreed is that the Clerks of the lower and upper Houses will consult with OPC about the best way to structure this and then the Government will receive their advice and we will put it in place.

Mr Bacon - Is there a time frame?

Mr GUTWEIN - As quickly as possible. My intention is that we will have those discussions in coming weeks. I give the Speaker her due for this. She has been very keen to see this provided to members. There is no doubt everybody believes this is a good thing and a sensible thing to do. It will improve the quality of the legislation and debate on the bills that are brought before this place, and the amendments.

We will consult with OPC and then Government will receive advice on how best to ensure that this service can be delivered.

That being said, I thank members for their contribution and look forward to seeing you at Estimates next week.

Bill read the second time.

MATTER OF INDULGENCE

Adolescent Mental Health Services

[5.55 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Health) - I rise to speak on indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, to add to the record, to clarify a contribution I provided earlier to the House regarding adolescent mental health services.

I have been advised that during Ms O'Connor's contribution on the MPI today I appear to have indicated that all 16 beds on the new adolescent ward in K Block would be for mental health patients. I confirm and reiterate my assurance that there will be designated mental health beds on that ward as part of the dedicated mental health unit which is a safe and secure facility. However, not all 16 beds will be for mental health patients.

The model of care and exact numbers are subject to current consultation with clinicians, and, as I have said, signed off by the chief psychiatrist to ensure that it is safe and provides the care that young Tasmanians need. I also reiterate that all 16 beds have operational funding in the Budget as I have previously stated.

Secondly, on behalf of the Deputy Premier, I have been asked to table the Rail Safety National Law South Australia Miscellaneous Amendment Act 2019 for the house.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.