



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 11 November 2020

REVISED EDITION

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

QUESTIONS

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[12.02 p.m.]

Former LGH nurse, Jim Griffin, was charged with heinous child sex offences in October last year. You have been aware of this deeply disturbing case for nearly a year. Why was an independent inquiry only established last month?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As I outlined yesterday to the parliament the safety of our children is the highest priority of this Government and, I would hope, the Tasmanian community. The Premier and I have announced an independent investigation into this matter. As I have outlined both to the parliament and also publicly the terms of reference for this investigation have been informed by expert advice. I am advised that the terms of reference are broad enough to give the investigator the scope she needs to be able to investigate these matters. I know that I, the secretary of the Department of Health, and the Premier are fully committed to ensuring this matter is thoroughly investigated and acting upon the findings of this investigation.

With regard to the matter of when information was provided, in terms of advice to the LGH around the suspension of this individual's working with vulnerable people provision, on that day I am advised the staff member was directed to not attend work, and access to the hospital and its information systems were blocked.

Pending criminal charges, the former secretary suspended the former staff member on 5 August. A further update was provided in October which included an outline of the suspension process. During this time, I assure the House that support was provided to staff. I am also advised that continuing support is provided. I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of current and former staff members and assured them that both the provision of support and also mechanisms to come forward either through the disclosure provisions or through the independent investigation will be thoroughly investigated and they will be protected through that process as they should be. It is important that people feel safe and encouraged to come forward and that they are supported when they do come forward. I make that point very clear to all those people in the community who are listening to this.

I am advised by the Department of Health that the appropriate steps were undertaken with regard to a disclosure process. As I have said publicly before, with the provision of further information, the decision, which was appropriate, was made by me, the Premier, and the secretary of the Department of Health to investigate this matter fully.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[12.05 p.m.]

The allegations made against former LGH nurse, Jim Griffin, are truly abhorrent. The emotional impact on Griffin's alleged offending is deep and has reached far across the country. What effort was made 12 months ago to identify alleged victims and their families to ensure they received the appropriate support?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I also state how abhorrent some of these allegations are and I know many have been deeply impacted. Personally, it is a very distressing situation.

With regard to the processes that have been under way, I am informed that there were various matters that were part of a police investigation, and I cannot comment on those. That is a matter for police.

I have been assured that the breadth of the terms of reference that have been provided to the independent investigator are sufficiently broad in relation to the scope across agencies, to be able to investigate any matter that she sees appropriate.

I am absolutely committed to this process. It is a very important process and it is important that we allow Ms Norton the scope to be able to conduct her investigation appropriately. I assure the member, and the House and the community, that this Government is committed to the findings of that and any further action that needs to be taken.

Launceston General Hospital - Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse Claims

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HUMAN SERVICES, Mr JAENSCH

[12.06 p.m.]

The allegations that many children were sexually abused by a nurse who worked at the Launceston General Hospital for 18 years has shocked Tasmanians. It has also been confirmed that same person was also employed at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre for five months in 2017.

As minister responsible for Tasmania's most vulnerable children, you would be acutely aware of the impact of abuse and trauma on a young person. Your Government's independent investigation has limited terms of reference and focuses on the systems within the Tasmanian Health Service only and not on cultural issues or individual actions or cases.

The Health and Community Services Union has joined the ANMF in calling for a commission of inquiry into this matter. A commission of inquiry would enable this matter to be properly and openly investigated with protections for witnesses and the power to collect evidence.

Will you do the right thing by the children in your care and previous detainees and establish a commission of inquiry that includes scrutiny of any alleged incidents at Ashley Youth Detention Centre?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I can confirm that we as a Government, me as a minister, and my department, Communities Tasmania, take all and any allegations of abuse or risk of abuse that may be there against children and young people very seriously, particularly if those are children in our care.

As you pointed out, I am advised by my department that Mr Griffin was seconded to the Ashley Youth Detention Centre for a little over five months from late 2017 in a position of nurse. I am advised that there is no record of any complaints made by young people or staff at Ashley Youth Detention Centre in relation to Mr Griffin.

All allegations are promptly reported to Tasmania Police if they arise. This includes any allegations that may be described as historical. The department undertakes careful and detailed assessment to ensure the immediate safety of children and young people in care or in detention. The department has a documented procedure to respond to historical or current allegations of abuse against employees of the department, including working with Tasmania Police. I will not speak further on matters that are the subject of current inquiries. However, our procedures ensure that when relevant, allegations are reported to Tasmania Police. We will participate in the inquiry as required, and always work in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

COVID-19 - Access to Vaccines

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[12.10 p.m.]

I acknowledge the presence of former member, Mr Brooks, in the House.

Premier, industry sources, as reported in the media, believe frequent travellers and those likely to be classed as lower priority for immunisation - such as the young and healthy - could be a source of profit for companies that have invested in research and production of COVID-19 vaccines. The Director of Oxford University Health and Economic Research Centre, Phillip Clark, said -

Government and pharma around the world need to be honest about whether citizens will be able to buy the vaccine privately to get faster access. While this is the case with most pharmaceuticals there are arguments for everyone being subject to the same rights of access, a little like wartime rationing.

To quote Dr Martin Luther King Junior -

Of all the forms of inequality injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.

Who will be prioritised and have free vaccines? Will people be able to buy vaccinations privately?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. The Prime Minister has said that the vaccine will be free for all Australians. He has made that point. We are working in National Cabinet on the rollout of the vaccine across jurisdictions, as I indicated yesterday. The federal health minister also noted that the initial rollout of the vaccine would target those in the front line, but vulnerable Australians as well. I spoke about that issue yesterday, noting we have one of the oldest and most vulnerable populations here in Tasmania.

This will need to be managed carefully as we work our way through it. I understand the vaccine that has been spoken about widely in the media is around 90 per cent efficacy at the moment. I noted yesterday the Australian Government has backed a number of horses in this race. At the end of the day we are seeing one early period of public discourse, which has interestingly - and probably not surprisingly - sent some share markets around the world into the stratosphere.

In response to your question, clearly, this will need to be managed very carefully. We will need to ensure the most vulnerable receive the vaccine first. As I have said previously, we are well-positioned in Tasmania because we have a large and well tested process for rolling out vaccinations. The Tasmanian population is one the most highly vaccinated in the country. We do not want people to receive this because they are wealthy. We want to ensure this is rolled out first to those who require it and are most vulnerable, and then there is a fair process to roll it out to the rest of the community.

Regarding cost, the Prime Minister has already made it clear that the vaccine will be free for all Australians who want to receive it.

Ms Ogilvie - Can you buy it independently?

Mr GUTWEIN - At this stage there is not even a vaccine to buy. We are a little in front of ourselves there.

Launceston General Hospital - Concerns raised by Doctors

Ms O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[12.15 p.m.]

Nearly two months ago it was revealed that doctors at the Launceston General Hospital had written to hospital management in an act of desperation. They described conditions at the hospital as the worst they had ever been, and revealed patients had died as a result of chronic bed block. I quote from their letter -

Our patients have died unnecessarily. They have died because we did not have appropriate space to treat and monitor them.

The Premier's first instinct was to attack these hard-working doctors and accuse them of playing politics. These doctors eventually did secure a meeting with hospital management, but to date very little has changed. The doctors have again been forced to write a letter to management as recently as last week, requesting a written response to the concerns raised in their first letter. I quote -

We remain concerned about the current state of the Emergency Department and the health of our community.

How can you justify the lack of urgency to address concerns raised by doctors at the LGH, including patient deaths due to patient access block - which is the worst in the country?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for her question.

I am not aware of the letter the member refers to. I will have my office check records to see if we have been advised of the letter, noting that it was to management.

Ms O'Byrne - It was a week ago if that helps you, minister?

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Ms O'Byrne, I appreciate your clarification. As I have stated, I am not aware of our office having received it but I will check our records. We may well have received it, in which case I will be able to respond more fully at a later time.

I take the concerns of the registrars - and indeed all our staff across our sites - very seriously. This is why we have continued to invest in our hospitals. It is why a number of initiatives have been implemented, and continue to be implemented, at the LGH.

Regarding the LGH with regard to our wider health system, it was only on Friday last week that I announced our Immediate Actions and Consultations Paper - Our Healthcare Future. This document examines what we are doing now, what we can do in the future and importantly, examines how we ensure we are looking at the best place of care for our community, to ensure we achieve the best patient outcomes across Tasmania.

We have boosted staff at the LGH over the last 12 months - more than 100 FTE's. We had a permanent patient flow team there. We have advanced diagnostic pathology there. We are continuing to implement the concerns of the registrars. We are rolling out our \$90 million infrastructure investment at the LGH through the Masterplan 2019 program. We are continuing to ensure that Access Solutions initiatives that have been successful at the Royal Hobart Hospital - such as Medtasker and pharmacy charting - are being rolled out across the other jurisdictions.

We are taking the learnings and we are rolling them out, to ensure we are supporting our clinicians across this site and to ensure that patients receive the best care.

Ms O'Byrne - What are you doing about it or are you just talking about it? Are you doing anything?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne, please.

COVID-19 - Support for Businesses

Mrs PETRUSMA question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[12.18 p.m.]

Can you please outline to the House why it is important to support Tasmanian businesses to help create jobs, rebuild confidence and help our community to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question and interest in this matter and wish her a speedy recovery in terms of her shoulder surgery.

It is important that tomorrow's Budget supports jobs, encourages investment to continue, and supports our community. The steps we have been taking right through this have been to ensure that is exactly what has - and will be - occurring. As a government we acted quickly, we acted decisively, and we used our island advantage to protect our community to save lives.

We had to do some very difficult tasks, and as we move forward there will be tasks we will continue to need to do, to ensure we can provide confidence to the Tasmanian community, especially as we head into bushfire season, which will be another set of challenges and emergencies we will need to deal with. It is important that we put in place and invest to ensure that we have ongoing capability in our COVID-19 response, with resources ready and available for the pandemic, but also to ensure that we can assist should other emergencies arise. Understanding that we are well prepared will send a signal of confidence to our business sector and underpin the traction of investment into our economy, our private sector and our community.

To deliver this ongoing capability, \$4.4 million will be invested and be a part of the Budget tomorrow to provide for an ongoing centralised COVID-19 coordination centre for the next 12 months in partnership with the Morrison Liberal Government. This funding will form part of a central provision in this year's Budget to assist in meeting uncertain or unknown costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting the ongoing management of our response to the pandemic.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on our way of life, our community and our economy, but we are gradually opening up and moving back to a more COVID-normal set of circumstances. It will be a COVID-normal life moving forward and we will continue to need to be vigilant and disciplined. Already we are starting to see, as we gradually ease our border restrictions, that Tasmania remains one of the safest places in the world.

When it comes to easing border restrictions, we have taken Public Health advice on the guiding factors which determine if states are low-risk, medium-risk or high-risk areas. On 26 October we eased restrictions with Queensland, the ACT, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory after they were determined low-risk jurisdictions, allowing those people into Tasmania without quarantine on the proviso that they had not travelled to a medium- or high-risk jurisdiction in the 14 days prior to travel, and then with an appropriate health check at the border.

At this time, New South Wales was determined a medium-risk jurisdiction and we allowed people to come into Tasmania from New South Wales to conduct their quarantine period at home. Last Friday, 6 November, Public Health determined New South Wales to be a low-risk jurisdiction and we eased our border restrictions to welcome people back into our state without quarantine from that state.

Victoria is our closest neighbour and home to many of our friends and families. It has been very hard for many people not being able to see them. I have family in Victoria as well. Importantly, I recognise today the work of Victoria - 12 days with zero cases is an outstanding result. Whilst their Premier has taken the brunt of a pretty ferocious public discourse, he has held the line and delivered 12 days of a zero outcome. After speaking with Public Health last night, and after 12 days without a new case, I can confirm that we are well on track to easing our border restrictions with Victoria. I am very pleased to announce to the House that from this Friday, 13 November, Victoria will become a medium-risk jurisdiction. The border will still remain up and they will still need to quarantine, but people from Victoria will be able to conduct their 14 days' quarantine at home or a designated residence if appropriate, rather than in a government quarantine hotel. Again, the glide path that we have been on with so many of our decisions begins with Victoria.

If Victoria's circumstance remains similar to where it is at the moment, noting Public Health's view that to open to a jurisdiction you need to have less than five unknown community transmissions, the expectation is that in two weeks from Friday 27 November, ahead of the earmarked 1 December date, we will be able to fully ease our border restrictions with Victoria and they will become a low-risk jurisdiction as well. However, we will continue to monitor the situation in Victoria over the coming weeks and will provide an update at the end of next week of the circumstance with Victoria as to whether on 27 November we may be able to open up to them as a low-risk jurisdiction.

I will have an update with Dr Veitch later today and he will provide some rationale and thinking behind that. It would be fair to say that steps that have been taken in Victoria, and without wanting to put the mocker on them, have worked: 12 days with zero cases. The view of Public Health of both the metrics they have set and their engagement with the Victorian CMO and his team is that Victoria is looking much better, has improved significantly, and as of this Friday we will start to ease border restrictions. Quarantine will still be required, but for those people with family over there, they will be able to return and quarantine at home.

Aboriginal Flag - Permanent Presence above Parliament House

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[12.25 p.m.]

It is NAIDOC Week and I am sure you will agree progress on justice for lutruwita/Tasmania's First People has been slow over the past 213 years. Aboriginal heritage protection is still often treated as an afterthought or, at worst, ignored in places like the Tarkine. Aboriginal Tasmanians are incarcerated at a massively disproportionate rate. Aboriginal children are being let down by our child safety system. Land returns have stalled. We do not have a treaty or dedicated seats for the palawa pakana people in Tasmania's parliament.

There have been some small, encouraging signs of change in the wider community. Recently the Clarence and Northern Midlands councils agreed to permanently fly the Aboriginal flag outside their chambers. As you know, NAIDOC Week is the only time of year the Aboriginal flag flies above Tasmania's Parliament House. In our private members' time today the Greens will move for change.

Every member of this place knows there is so much more to do to achieve justice for Tasmania's First People. Flying the flag here will not solve these critical issues but it would be an important step for recognition and respect. Will you and your Government today support our motion to permanently fly the Aboriginal flag over Parliament House?

Madam SPEAKER - If the Premier is happy to give an opinion from the Government that is fine, but it is actually a decision of the House.

Ms O'Connor - That is right.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor, for that question. Before I start, I thought Tim McCormack's Welcome to Country was outstanding this morning. The function this morning that a number of us were at was an outstanding function and I thank the organisers, broadly speaking, the churches of Tasmania. I do not mind saying that that was the first breakfast of that type I have attended. I must admit that my take away reflection was that I should have attended many more. I thought it was very positive.

Ms O'Connor - Are you filled with peace?

Mr GUTWEIN - You will find out in a couple of minutes, won't you?

Madam Speaker, noting the early advice on this matter from the Clerk and yourself, I say very clearly that I absolutely support the Aboriginal flag being flown above this place right through the course of the year and this Government would support that occurring. That it is a small but important step.

In the period since I have become Premier I have engaged with the Aboriginal community and have had many discussions with both Michael Mansell and Rodney Dillon to talk about the challenges we face. One of the things that I am determined to do, having grown up through the 1980s in Launceston -

Ms O'Byrne - What a time to be alive, Peter.

Mr GUTWEIN - It was a great time to be alive, Michelle, as you would well know.

One of the things I am determined to do as we work our way through this is that for the Aboriginal kid who used to live in Rocherlea when I was growing up, when I was 16, and has not had the best of lives since then, I want to make certain that the 16-year-old kid who is now growing up in Rocherlea or wherever it might be in this state has a much better life moving forward. This side of the House is going to work very hard to reset this relationship to ensure that we can turn the dial and improve better outcomes for that community as we work our way forward. I know that the minister is well engaged on those matters.

I am very pleased to receive that question from you today. It is a small step but it would be an important step and subject to the House agreeing this afternoon, and I am presuming we would need the agreement of the upper House as well, that the Aboriginal flag could fly above this place every day of the year, not only NAIDOC Week.

Members - Hear, hear.

Budget 2020-21 - Supporting Aboriginal Communities

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, Mr JAENSCH

[12.30 p.m.]

Can you update the House on how, in this NAIDOC Week, the upcoming Tasmanian State Budget is going to support the Tasmanian Government's continued commitment to reset the relationship with Tasmania's Aboriginal communities?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank my Braddon colleague, Mr Ellis, for his question and his personal interest in this matter and commitment to reconciliation in Tasmania.

We are in the middle of NAIDOC Week, a time to celebrate, reflect and learn more about the history, heritage and culture of our first Tasmanians. This year's NAIDOC Week theme reminds us that our First People have occupied and cared for Tasmania's land and landscapes for at least 65 000 years and that this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Mr JAENSCH - The Tasmanian Government is committed to resetting our relationship with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities through recognition, reconciliation and working together to achieve real outcomes. Aboriginal people are now recognised as Tasmania's First People in the Tasmanian Constitution Act. We have updated the Aboriginal and dual naming policy, we have strengthened the Aboriginal Heritage Act and we are reviewing it to strengthen it more.

We are reviewing the model for returning more land to Aboriginal people with the intent of returning more land to more Aboriginal people for their ownership and management as an essential part of the journey to reconciliation. We are working hard to address generations of silence and denial regarding Tasmania's Aboriginal history and living culture by bringing Tasmanian Aboriginal voices, language and stories into our schools. We need to do more to improve the lives of Aboriginal Tasmanians.

Today I am pleased to announce that the 2020-21 Budget includes funding of \$1.2 million across the Forward Estimates as part of our commitment to the Closing the Gap refresh initiative. This funding is our contribution to a national funding pool, matched by the Commonwealth, that will be reinvested here in Tasmania to build the capacity of Aboriginal community organisations, and to deliver services that result in better life outcomes for Aboriginal people.

This follows the historic signing of the new national agreement on Closing the Gap earlier this year by the Prime Minister, our Premier and the first ministers of all states and territories, the President of the Australian Local Government Association, and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations. The four priority reform areas of the agreement are -

- to formalise partnerships to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions which affect them;
- to build the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to deliver services and fund these organisations to deliver services, currently delivered by mainstream organisations;
- to expose racism in government institutions; and
- engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on significant changes to government policies which affect them and to share data and information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities.

The priority reform areas are underpinned by broad and measurable targets across education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters and languages, informed by engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, led by the coalition of peace in late 2019.

We will now work with Aboriginal organisations, government agencies and service providers on an implementation plan to set and meet Tasmania's targets as part of this national commitment, starting with themed Closing the Gap round tables around the state, commencing in the next few weeks.

These and other commitments in the 2020-21 Budget provide certainty and confidence our community needs right now and we will continue to work with Aboriginal community organisations to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal people.

I am very pleased, if I may have another moment, to be able to advise the House that having received advice from my department yesterday afternoon, I have now signed Aboriginal heritage permits for the return of the preminghana petroglyphs to the country from which they were taken in the states far north-west in my electorate of Braddon over 60 years ago.

Nationally accepted principles of repatriation are that materials recognised as spiritually and culturally important and/or that have been acquired in an unethical way should be returned to their rightful owners unconditionally. In accordance with these principles, the arrangements for the physical return of the petroglyphs to their final resting place will be made through agreements jointly developed between TMAG and QVMAG and the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania as the title holder of the preminghana site on behalf of all Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government stands ready to work with and support them as needed, to ensure that the petroglyphs are safely returned, protected and managed for the benefit of all Aboriginal people in Tasmania. Happy NAIDOC week, Madam Speaker.

Members - Hear, hear.

COVID-19 - Hospital Preparedness with Borders Reopening

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[12.36 p.m.]

You and the Premier have repeatedly assured Tasmanians that our hospitals are prepared to deal with new COVID-19 cases. With borders reopening to mainland states along with international repatriation flights and overseas seasonal workers it is more important than ever that clear protocols and safeguards are in place and that those protocols have been stress tested.

We have been contacted by an LGH staff member who has expressed concern that the COVID-19 protections are ad hoc and inconsistent across different wards in the hospital. They describe PPE being handed to people in the emergency department by a security officer who is not wearing PPE or trained in the use of PPE. They have said that theatre staff are only screened once they reach the reception desk on level 5, and I quote -

Every staff member must first come into the change rooms on level 4, mingle and talk to everyone there. They usually sit in the tea rooms for 10 to 15 minutes with other staff and then make their way up the stairs to level 5. Here they fill out their paperwork and take their temperatures.

Given the lessons learnt from the north-west outbreak and the way that the disease was spread between staff these revelations are deeply concerning. These issues have also been brought to your attention. What are you going to do about them?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons her question. As we move towards the glide path recovery that the Premier has outlined in this Chamber we continue to prepare within the health system. We know that COVID-19 remains a significant challenge and we need to look across the shores of different countries to see the significant impact that COVID-19 is having on health systems as well as communities.

With regard to our Tasmanian Health Service our preparedness has continued across all our sites. We have detailed escalation plans across each of our sites. The way that different wards are configured at each of the different levels of escalations is with advice from infection and prevention control specialists but also with engagement with local commissions. With regards to the specifics of different wards at the hospital I am happy to provide further detail to the member on any specific aspects, if you would like to write to me on that.

With regard to the hospital I am very confident that our staff have the PPE that they need. We know that we have taken the learnings from the north-west interim report and rolled those out across our entire system to ensure that we are continuing to embed our learnings across this. I take this opportunity to thank the staff in what has been an extraordinary year for them. They have worked incredibly hard under very stressful conditions and I commend the work they have done and the work they continue to do.

Ms White - Whilst you ignore their requests.

Ms COURTNEY - I know, Madam Speaker, as we continue in our journey through recovery of COVID-19, we all need to remain vigilant for the community and for our hospitals -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Can we have a bit of respect here, please?

Ms COURTNEY - which is why we have systems in place at each of our sites that have clear and specific triggers to be able to go up the escalation levels to ensure that we are responding. I can assure the House that I take these matters seriously. The safety of our staff is paramount because they are the ones on the front line who will be delivering care for Tasmanians -

Ms White - They are the ones writing to you very concerned.

Ms O'Byrne - You are ignoring their concerns.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms COURTNEY - both with regard to COVID-19 but also, as we are seeing, our hospitals delivering underlying care. It was only last week that I announced an additional \$45 million to elective surgery to make sure we are delivering the care that Tasmanians need.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to please remember where you are and remember the rules of engagement, which is not to interrupt the person speaking. The minister has the call and she will enjoy a minute's silence while she speaks.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that opportunity. I understand that with regard to visitor screening across our sites they are appropriate for the escalation levels that we have. We have seen a range of protocols embedded across our system. Indeed, we have capacity around surge as well as the way we do outpatient delivery.

The entire THS will continue to remain agile to respond to the threat that is there. We will continue to refine our plans to ensure that our preparedness is as ready as it can be. This is a very serious matter and we need to continue to make sure that we are preparing our staff and ultimately keeping our community safe.

JobSeeker - Changes to Payments

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[12.42 p.m.]

The Prime Minister has announced another cut to the JobSeeker payment down to \$715 a fortnight. This decision will rip millions out of the Tasmanian economy every week at a time when the economy is fragile and we have growing unemployment. These cuts will drive more people into poverty and further undermine consumer confidence. Do you support further cuts

to JobSeeker, and what have you done to stand up to the Prime Minister against these callous cuts?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for that question and his interest in this matter. To be frank, I thought the Prime Minister had actually extended it. I thought that they had previously announced that the extension currently in place would be until the end of this year, and that yesterday they announced there would be a further extension still with an increase until March.

It is a statement of fact that the original announcement on JobSeeker was until the end of the year, and yesterday there was an extension of it with still an increase in the payment. That is a statement of fact.

I make the point that in terms of the steps we have taken in Tasmania in respect of the way we have managed the virus, we have set a glide path to return us to normal. In terms of the steps that the federal government is taking, they are setting a glide path as well. Those on JobSeeker will still receive a supplement post the end of this year for the first quarter of next year.

In terms of the steps we are taking in this state and around the country, the investments we are making are designed to underpin the economy and support more jobs in the economy with a view to providing more opportunity for those on JobSeeker. I believe that in the main they would much prefer a job than to be on JobSeeker.

I make the point to the member who has asked the question that what we saw yesterday was an extension of the JobSeeker supplement in the federal Budget. In terms of the investment that will flow into this state and into other states and territories around the country, the intention is to bring the economy back. The intention is to support jobs and opportunity in the economy and so the federal government has announced an extension and has also kept a supplement in there. What happens post-March next year I am certain will be discussed early in the new year.

Ms White - What are you doing about it?

Mr GUTWEIN - I want to grow the economy and create jobs and unfortunately on that side of the House it appears you want to keep people entrenched on welfare for longer.

I want to have a strong growing economy that provides opportunity for all people rather than the whingeing and whining that goes on from over there. On this side of the House we will continue with the sensible steps we are taking to invest in our economy to create opportunity and to create jobs. That side of the House can sit there and continue to whinge.

Budget 2020-21 - Support for Veterans and Ex-Service Personnel

Mrs PETRUSMA question to MINISTER for VETERANS' AFFAIRS, Mr BARNETT

[12.46 p.m.]

Can you please provide an update on the Government's support for Tasmania's more than 10 500 veterans and ex-service personnel and how the State Budget will continue to support this very important part of our community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. At the outset I recognise Adam Brooks, former veteran and former member of the Royal Australian Navy, as I recognise all veterans and ex-service personnel today. On behalf of us all we stand and say thank you.

Mr O'Byrne - We know who you're backing in a pre-selection then.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - I am sorry I missed that but I gather it was not very good.

Mr BARNETT - It was an incredibly inappropriate interjection because today is Remembrance Day. I am recognising veterans and Adam Brooks is a Royal Australian Navy veteran and I have said I recognise all veterans and ex-service personnel in Tasmania and then the quip came in, so it was most unfortunate.

Madam Speaker, 102 years ago on the eleventh day at the eleventh hour the guns on the Western Front fell silent and the slaughter of the Great War ended. During that four-year conflict over 400 000 Australians participated, including over 15 000 Tasmanians, from a population of only 5 million. By war's end some 16 million lives were lost, over 60 000 Australian lives were lost and, sadly, an estimated 3000 Tasmanian lives were lost. In addition to that, some 50 million people across the globe died from the Spanish Flu. I commend to members of this House the excellent speech of Her Excellency Professor Kate Warner, the Governor of Tasmania, from the Remembrance Day service this morning in Hobart.

The scar left on our country was significant. We have memorials dotted all across the country that bear silent witness to the magnitude of the sacrifice made by even our smallest communities and towns across this state. The flower of a generation had been lost but Australians would continue to answer their nation's call and serve with courage and distinction in the decades that followed during the Second World War, Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, the Middle East, and so on.

In doing so, it has helped forge our national soul, the ingredients that make Australia great; the courage, the service, the mateship, the sacrifice. Alongside many of you here, I was moved by this morning's service. We acknowledge with gratitude those who have served and our responsibility to stand beside those who have returned. As a government we are doing everything we can to do that.

Our Budget this year will continue to support Tasmania's veterans and ex-service personnel through various funding programs, including the Veterans Active Recreation Program, the Teddy Sheean VC Memorial Grants, the RSL Tasmania and for the first time Legacy - both Hobart and Launceston.

After a COVID-19 induced delay, the Veterans Active Recreation Program had its first trek commence this week. The program involves outdoor recreation experiences for returned service personnel, and pathways into outdoor education and ecotourism. It is run by a local veteran-run organisation, Point Assist, with the first trek seeing eight veterans hiking along the Snowy Range in the South West National Park. I wish them well and I look forward to meeting them upon their return.

Alongside this initiative, the University of Tasmania is now undertaking the consultation phase of the feasibility study, jointly-funded with the federal government, into the potential for Veteran Wellbeing support services here in Tasmania. I commend that work, and encourage full consultation by the University of Tasmania with all those relevant groups. It will look at how a service model would provide long term benefits to veterans and their families, and also consider the appropriateness of this model for emergency service personnel in Tasmania. I encourage Tasmanian veterans and others to provide feedback.

I acknowledge RSL Tasmania as the peak body in this state for our veterans. I thank them for their service, and their efforts to support their members and ex-service personnel across this great state. Tasmania has an estimated 10 500 members of the veteran community, and each one of those is important to us in this place and of course their families as well.

The aim of today is never to forget that sacrifice. It is said those red Flanders poppies that were among the first plants to bloom on the battlefields of northern France and Belgium during the war, are synonymous with remembrance ever since. I am pleased to see the poppies being worn today in this Chamber.

On this Remembrance Day, I encourage Tasmanians to reflect on the legacy of those who have gone before us to say thank you and honour that service and sacrifice. Lest we forget.

Jobs and Unemployment Figures

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[12.52 p.m.]

It has become a trademark of your Government to attempt to put a positive spin on economic data, but even you have not been able to spin Tasmania's appallingly bad job numbers. Over the past month, 5400 jobs have been lost, and the unemployment rate has skyrocketed to over 7 per cent. A total of 12 400 who lost their job as a result of the pandemic have not found employment. It seems like you are the only one with cautious optimism about Tasmania's worsening job crisis. Tasmania has the worst job results of any state, apart from Victoria - a state that suffered a hard lockdown for months. How do you justify Tasmania lagging so far behind the rest of the country?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for his question and interest in this matter, although it appears to be designed to spin the most negative connotations that he possibly can.

Mr O'Byrne - They are facts; they are jobs - 5400 jobs gone in the last month.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - One of the issues he - and the rest of that side of the House - does not seem to grasp, is that in the most recent confidence studies, Tasmania is the second-most confident jurisdiction in the country.

Ms O'Byrne - Say that to the 5000 who lost their job last month.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - Importantly, we have led the way in business conditions.

Ms O'Byrne - Have you lost your job? You should be very thankful - CommSec says it is alright.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - My point is that confidence leads to investment, and investment then leads to jobs. Through the course of this year since the peak in May we have seen two thirds of the jobs returned.

Members interjecting.

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

Mr GUTWEIN - Of the data I have, two thirds of the jobs returned.

Ms White - What about the ABS data?

Ms O'Byrne - Your data and ABS are quite different.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms White, and Ms O'Byrne. For goodness sake, the Premier is trying to respond now. Please be quiet.

Mr GUTWEIN - There is a cautious optimism in Tasmania at the moment. Last night a business informed me that they were around 40 per cent up on the same time last year. I have spoken to businesses in regional Tasmania that have said that one of their biggest challenges is getting more people back to work - not that they didn't have the jobs, but they could not find enough people to fill those jobs. We know the work undertaken by the minister for Agriculture concerning seasonal workers: approximately 6000 Tasmanians in regard to the projections of Tasmanians taking up that work. Up from 3000 to 6000 - still with around 3000 jobs to be filled. Again - opportunity.

We have taken steps through this, opening up sensibly and cautiously with a guide-path. Since the peak of the pandemic, around two-thirds of the jobs that were lost, have returned. Confidence studies show that Tasmania is a cautiously confident jurisdiction. People will understand from the Budget tomorrow that we intend to invest and to invest heavily. We intend to ensure that there are opportunities for Tasmanians, that jobs are available and, importantly, that we will support the existing jobs that Tasmanians have.

It would be fair to say that we are not out of this yet, but we are in a good place. I encourage that side of the House to be more confident. Rather than trying to tear things down, and trying to spin the most negative set of circumstances they can -

Mr O'Byrne - Those job numbers do not lie, Premier.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - The advice I have is that two-thirds of the jobs, since the peak, have returned. The Budget tomorrow will lay down a pathway moving forward. This side of the House will continue to invest and continue to focus on providing opportunity for Tasmanians.

Budget 2020-21 - Legal Services and Support

Mr ELLIS question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[12.57 p.m.]

Can you outline how the Tasmanian Government is creating jobs and boosting confidence in our community by supporting the critical legal assistance sector and ensuring Tasmanians in need have equal and fair access to justice?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his interest in this critical area, particularly in our community and our legal services community.

I acknowledge the exceptional work of everyone in Tasmania's legal community for how quickly they adapted and were able to continue providing critical services as COVID-19 restrictions prevented a 'business as usual' approach. I commend the legal assistance sector in Tasmania in particular, for continuing to provide free or low-cost legal services to keep the justice system within reach for Tasmanians requiring support and assistance during very challenging times.

They have done an incredible job throughout COVID-19 this year. This has been a particularly challenging and anxious time for their clients, and meant that they have had to quickly adapt to working remotely and on-line and this of course, includes the courts and our prison system.

Tasmanian Legal Aid, for example, between May and June 2020, provided over 14 000 telephone advice services, held 100 family dispute resolution and mediation conferences, provided over 1200 duty lawyer services and gave 1198 new grants of aid.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of ensuring access to legal support for those in our community who need it most. That is why I am pleased to announce that the 2020-21 State Budget will deliver \$2.6 million over four years to help the sector continue to support Tasmanians in need, building on the \$614 000 we provided the sector earlier in the year.

This funding will provide much-needed certainty and maintain core legal services under the Australian Government National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25 which commenced on 1 July this year. The agreement assists Tasmanian Legal Aid, Women's Legal Service, Tasmanian Community Legal Centres and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service to deliver legal services in Tasmania.

The 2020-21 State Budget also commits \$2.3 million over four years to Tasmanian Legal Aid's serious cases fund. This critical funding will assist Tasmanian Legal Aid reduce the backlog of complex criminal cases currently before the courts.

Our Government is also bolstering the Director of Public Prosecutions' recurrent budget of \$750 000 a year, which is \$3 million over four years, to help address workload pressures. This is in addition to the \$2.7 million we provided the DPP over four years in the 2019-20 State Budget. The DPP and his staff do an incredible job and it is my pleasure to announce this new funding for them today.

I am also pleased to announce that \$1.8 million over two years is being committed for videoconferencing and recording equipment for our courts. Technology is a critical part of our modern justice system and this capital funding will provide new or replacement videoconferencing and recording equipment in Tasmania's Magistrates and Supreme Court facilities as well as the Tasmanian Prison Service.

Our quick response to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to ensure these facilities are able to continue under difficult and challenging circumstances well into the future. Learning from what we could do during the height of COVID-19, this technology will also improve access to justice for Tasmanians and reduce the need to transport prisoners and remandees to and from court. New fixed videoconferencing equipment will be installed in the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court's existing videoconference-capable courtrooms will be upgraded. Additional videoconferencing facilities will also be provided at Risdon Prison.

These continued investments, never seen before in our critical justice and correctional infrastructure, will future-proof our facilities for many years to come, delivering on our promises to the Tasmanian community and planning for future generations.

In conclusion, our legal and corrections community deals with people in particularly and uniquely stressful and anxious times in their lives. I am proud that the 2020-21 State Budget is providing a critical boost to help these sectors continue to deliver important services as we rebuild and recover from COVID-19 and help make the Tasmanian community a safe and vibrant place to work, live and invest.

This is a budget for our times, creating the jobs and providing the certainty, confidence and safety our community needs. It is how we will recover and reinvigorate our economy and rebuild a stronger Tasmania. We are getting on with the job of improving access to justice for all Tasmanians and this is strongly reflected in these significant announcements being provided in this Budget.

Make Yourself at Home Travel Vouchers

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[1.03 p.m.]

Just a third of Tasmanian travel vouchers have been redeemed with less than a month until the scheme comes to an end. Earlier this week you confirmed that 12 524, or just 30 per cent, of the state Government's Make Yourself at Home travel vouchers have been redeemed so far. More than 41 500 vouchers worth \$12.5 million were issued.

The visitor economy has been hit hard by the pandemic and this money needs to get out the door and into the economy to keep workers employed and the doors open for business. You would be aware that some of the biggest job losses across our state have come from this sector,

which has been the worst affected with recent ABS data showing a 14.8 per cent reduction in jobs since March.

Will you acknowledge that a large part of the visitor economy is food and dining and will you support the sector by allowing people to use their travel vouchers to enjoy a meal, helping our farmers and our hospitality venues and making sure this money supports jobs in the sector right now?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Regarding the travel vouchers, the reason we targeted accommodation was because that would encourage Tasmanians to move around the state and spend time in different regions and different areas of the state. By all accounts, certainly anecdotally - in fact nearly 14 000 of the vouchers have been requested for redemption - we are seeing that people are travelling and have travelled. Unless the Leader of the Opposition believes that people will go on a 48-hour trip across the state to stay a couple of nights somewhere and not eat or drink, I can assure her that people are spending on food and beverages as they travel.

Already around \$16 million has been spent and has been presented as part of the receipts that people have been providing regarding being able to claim their voucher. Around 25 per cent of that, more than \$4 million, has been spent directly on food and beverages, and that is only what we are capturing. I am certain there are other expenditures people have made as well. The voucher is working and has increased the expenditure on food and beverages as well at a time when that is required.

The voucher scheme runs out at the end of this month. Then people will have 30 days in which to redeem the voucher. We will get a clearer picture regarding the full extent of the use of the vouchers over the next four to six weeks and then we can make a decision as to whether there are funds left over.

Again, I come back to the principal aim of what we outlined, and that was that by targeting it on accommodation and attractions, it would encourage people to move around the state. In so doing we know that they will eat and drink whilst they do it and will spend on food and beverages. That is exactly what we have seen.

Time expired.

POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT ACT (REPEAL OF BEGGING) BILL 2019 (No. 49)

Bill returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

Motion by **Mr Ferguson** agreed to -

That the message be taken into consideration at a later hour.

MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Appearance of Ministers before Legislative Council Estimates Committee

The Clerk read the following Message from the Legislative Council -

Resolved that the Legislative Council, having appointed two Estimates Committees, reflecting the distribution of Government ministers' portfolio responsibilities, requests that the House of Assembly give leave to all Ministers to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Council Estimates Committee in relation to the Budget Estimates and related documents.

Motion by **Mr Ferguson** agreed to -

That the message be taken into consideration forthwith.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, this motion allows the Legislative Council members to attend the presentation of the Budget tomorrow in our Chamber. I am sure we would agree that they are completely welcome. There needs to be an order to accommodate them regarding numbers. We need to allow them on the Floor of our Chamber. I am going to say at this moment in the debate that I look to the Clerk to discuss with you, Madam Speaker, and your counterparts in the other place to think about how we are going to socially distance those people. I am advised that we should be able to accommodate those who wish to attend. I move -

That we agree to that message.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Budget Speech 2020-21 - Attendance of Members of the Legislative Council

[1.11 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I have two motions to move, the first of which I will move now, and the second I will ask the House to consider after a brief pause to discuss with colleagues across the Chamber.

The first motion is formalising our side of the arrangements for the Budget.

I move -

- (1) That the House of Assembly requests that all members of the Legislative Council attend in the House of Assembly Chamber following the first reading of the Appropriation Bills (No.1 and No.2) 2020 for the purpose of listening

to the speech by the Premier and Treasurer in relation to the Tasmanian Budget 2020-21.

- (2) That the Legislative Council give leave to the Minister for Racing and Minister for Sport and Recreation to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Estimates Committee of the House of Assembly in relation to the budget Estimates and related documents.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[1.13 p.m.]

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

That the House be suspended and that you leave the Chair for 10 minutes at the ringing of the bells.

The House suspended at 1.13 p.m. until 1.34 p.m.

MOTION

Establishment of Estimates Committees

[1.34 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I thank you and other members for their patience and for anybody watching the webcast and wondering, we just had a period of negotiation between the parties around some of the individual allocation of time.

Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move a notice without motion in relation to the establishment of Estimates Committees.

Leave granted.

Mr FERGUSON - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the Government business take precedence from such time as the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2020 are introduced to the House until the House has dealt with all business associated with the Budget.

Ms O'Connor - Is there another step coming?

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, there is one more coming in relation to the Estimates times.

Motion agreed to.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I now move the motion that has been circulated. I have distributed a copy with some amendments, which I will read into the record for the member's benefit. The changes that have been negotiated just now are an imperfect attempt to accommodate members' wishes, particularly from the Greens, who I know will speak for themselves.

The change from the originally circulated motion reallocates half an hour of time from the Human Services portfolio to the Environment and Parks portfolio on Wednesday 25 November.

Second, a switch of the order on Wednesday 25 November in relation to minister Archer's Arts and Heritage portfolios. They will be reversed. The times remain the same.

In conclusion, or if you like in moving this way, I thank members for their contributions. I understand not everybody will be entirely in love with the final structure, but it is the Government's attempt to facilitate the traditional Estimates process.

It is my and our Government's attitude that it is for the Opposition to take the lead role in setting or requesting amendments to times and the crossbench members, including the Greens and Ms Ogilvie, would want other changes from the Government's point of view. We look to the Opposition to be the lead on that. You should negotiate with them and I accept upfront that there has been a view by Ms O'Connor that I could have been clearer on that point in my email.

Ms O'Connor - You said to get back to you, just to be really clear. You invited me to get back to you.

Mr FERGUSON - I know that you will speak and I accept that point. However, it has been my longstanding practice to encourage members of the crossbench and the Greens parties to always negotiate with the Opposition. The Government does not want to suffer an accusation that in some way we have prevented the official Opposition with the official shadow spokespeople in their portfolios from having the scrutiny that they want in the allocation of those 63 hours. Naturally others will have other things to say, but I now move that motion.

Madam Speaker, I move - That -

- (a) all stages of the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2020 shall have allotted a maximum total of 97 hours as follows:
 - (i) up to the Second Reading: Maximum 16 hours;
 - (ii) in the Estimates Committees: Maximum 63 hours; and
 - (iii) in Committee of the whole House and Third reading: Maximum 18 hours;
- (b) on the Second reading, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have unlimited speaking time and other Members speak for not longer than 30 minutes each;

- (c) when the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2020 have been read the Second time in the House of Assembly, the Bills be referred to Estimates Committees A and B of the House of Assembly.

Such Committees may not vote on, but may examine and report upon the proposed expenditures contained in the Bills by no later than 1 December 2020, with such expenditures being considered on an output by output basis, including Grants, Subsidies and Loans and the Capital Investment Program.

The following Ministerial portfolio units are allocated to House of Assembly Estimates Committee A -

Date	Minister
Monday, 23 November 0900 - 1300 Premier (4 hours) 1400 - 1800 Treasury (4 hours) 1800 - 1830 Climate Change (0.5 hour) 1830 - 1900 Prevention of Family Violence (0.5 hour) 1900 - 2000 Tourism (1 hour)	Hon. Peter Gutwein MP
Tuesday, 24 November 0900 - 1000 Finance (1 hour) 1000 - 1300, 1400 - 1500 Infrastructure and Transport (4 hours) 1500 - 1700 State Growth (2 hours) 1700 - 1730 Science and Technology (0.5 hour)	Hon. Michael Ferguson MP
Wednesday, 25 November 0900 - 1030 Human Services (1.5 hours) 1030 - 1300 Housing (2.5 hours) 1400 - 1430 Aboriginal Affairs (0.5 hour) 1430 - 1630 Environment and Parks (2 hours) 1630 - 1730 Planning (1 hour)	Hon. Roger Jaensch MP
Thursday, 26 November 0900 - 1200 Primary Industries and Water (3 hours) 1200 - 1300, 1400 - 1430 Resources (1.5 hours) 1430 - 1500 Veterans' Affairs (0.5 hour) 1500 - 1700 Energy (2 hours)	Hon. Guy Barnett MP

House of Assembly Estimates Committee B -

Date	Minister
Monday, 23 November 0900 - 1300, 1400 - 1600 Health (6 hours) 1600 - 1800 Small Business, Hospitality and Events (2 hours) 1800 - 1830 Women (0.5 hour) 1830 - 1900 Strategic Growth (0.5 hour)	Hon. Sarah Courtney MP
Tuesday, 24 November 0900 - 1230 Education and Training (3.5 hours) 1230 - 1300, 1400 - 1430 Disability Services and Community Development (1 hour) 1430 - 1530 Trade (1 hour) 1530 - 1600 Advance Manufacturing and Defence Industries (0.5 hour) 1600 - 1800 Mental Health and Wellbeing (2 hours)	Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP
Wednesday, 25 November 0900 - 1130 Attorney-General and Justice (2.5 hours) 1130 - 1300, 1400 - 1430 Corrections (2 hours) 1430 - 1600 Building and Construction (1.5 hours) 1600 - 1630 Arts (0.5 hour) 1630 - 1730 Heritage (1 hour)	Hon. Elise Archer MP
Thursday, 26 November 0900 - 1130 Police, Fire and Emergency Management (2.5 hours) 1130 - 1300, 1400 - 1430 Local Government (2 hours) 1430 - 1530 Racing (1 hour) 1530 - 1630 Sport and Recreation (1 hour)	Hon. Mark Shelton MP Hon. Jane Howlett MLC

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES - HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES

- (1) Estimates Committee A consists of the following Members:
The Chair of Committees (Chair);
Mr Ellis (Deputy-Chair);
One member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Ms O'Connor.
- (2) Estimates Committee B consists of the following Members:
Mr Street (Chair);
Mr Tucker (Deputy-Chair);
One member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
Dr Woodruff.

- (3) Members of the House who have not been appointed as Members of the Committee, may participate in proceedings by asking questions, but not more than two in succession; and may not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purposes of a quorum.
- (4) The Chair of a Committee has a deliberative and a casting vote.
- (5) During sittings, substitute Members may be allowed.
- (6) If a vacancy occurs in the membership of a Committee, the Speaker may nominate a Member in substitution, but in so doing has regard to the composition of the Committee as appointed by the House.
- (7) A Committee may proceed with business despite a vacancy in its membership.
- (8) The quorum of a Committee is a majority of the Committee.
- (9) If at any time a quorum is not present, the Chair will suspend proceedings of the Committee until a quorum is present or adjourn the Committee.
- (10) Any time lost for lack of a quorum shall be added to the time allocated to that session.

SITTING TIMES

- (1) Each Estimates Committee meets only in accordance with the abovementioned timetable adopted by the House or as varied by the Chair.
- (2) Estimates Committees may sit only when the House is not sitting.

OPEN HEARINGS

All hearings of the Estimates Committees are open to the public.

PROCEEDINGS OF AN ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

- (1) Consideration of proposed expenditures in an Estimates Committee follows as far as possible the procedure observed in a Committee of the whole House.
- (2) A Committee will consider expenditures on an output by output basis, including Grants, Subsidies and Loans and the Capital Investment Program.
- (3) A Committee may ask for explanations from a Minister relating to the outputs.
- (4) The Minister who is asked for explanations may be assisted where necessary by officers in the provision of factual information.

- (5) Officers may answer questions at the request of the Minister but shall not be required to comment on policy matters.
- (6) Time limits of one minute for a question and three minutes for an answer shall apply in Estimates Committees.
- (7) Questions may be asked on a ratio of three Opposition, one Green and one Government, or in such form as the Committee determines.
- (8) A Minister may advise an Estimates Committee that an answer to a question, or part of a question, asked of the Minister will be given later to the Committee, where possible that Committee sitting day.
- (9) A Minister may provide additional information to a Committee about an answer given by or for the Minister.
- (10) Additional information -
 - (a) is to be written;
 - (b) is to be given by a time decided by the Committee; and
 - (c) may be included in a volume of additional information laid on the Table of the House by the Committee.
- (11) If any Member persistently disrupts the business of an Estimates Committee, the Chair-
 - (a) names the Member;
 - (b) if the Member named is a Member of the Estimates Committee, suspends the sitting of the Estimates Committee until the Chair has reported the offence to the Speaker; and
 - (c) if the Member named is not a Member of the Estimates Committee, orders that Member's withdrawal from the sitting of the Committee until the Chair has reported the offence to the Speaker;

as soon as practicable, the Chair advises the Speaker who then gives notice that the Member of the Estimates Committee be replaced.

- (12) If any objection is taken to a ruling or decision of the Chair -
 - (a) the objection must be taken at once and stated in writing;
 - (b) the Chair, as soon as practicable, advises the Speaker who makes a ruling on the matter; and

- (c) the Estimates Committee may continue to meet but may not further examine the output then under consideration.
- (13) Television coverage will be allowed, subject to the same conditions that apply to televising of the House of Assembly.

HANSARD REPORT

An unedited transcript of Estimates Committee proceedings is to be circulated, in a manner similar to that used for the House Hansard, as soon as practicable after the Committee's proceedings.

REPORTS OF ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

- (1) A report of an Estimates Committee is presented by the Chair or Deputy Chair of that Committee to a Committee of the whole House, such reports containing any resolution or expression of opinion of that Committee.
- (2) When the reports of the Estimates Committees are presented they may be taken into consideration at once or at a future time.
- (3) The following time limit applies to consideration of reports of Estimates Committees on each portfolio unit on the question 'That the proposed expenditures be agreed to and that the resolutions or expressions of opinion agreed to by the Committees in relation to those expenditures be noted.'

One Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or Member deputised by the Leader - 20 minutes, any other Member - 10 minutes. A maximum period for consideration of 2 hours for each Minister.

- (4) When the consideration of reports of Estimates Committees A and B has been completed, the question is proposed and put forthwith without debate "That the remainder of the Bills be agreed to."
- (5) When the Bills have been agreed to by the House, the Third reading of each Bill may be taken into consideration at once or made an order of the day for the next sitting day.

[1.38 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, this has been a very poor process. As a result of the poor process, the Tasmanian Greens have not been able to advocate for more time to be allocated to critical portfolios that are of deep and enduring concern and interest to the Tasmanian people.

When Mr Ferguson emailed through the schedule, he did invite us to get back to him personally, which we did yesterday. We pointed out, for example, that last year in Estimates there were five hours in total allocated to Environment and Parks. That was cut this year to a total of two hours for Environment and Parks. While other members in this place, apart from the Greens and probably Ms Ogilvie, are not particularly deeply concerned about the Environment and Parks portfolios we sure are, because tens of thousands of Tasmanians care

to have a clean, natural and healthy environment, and they care deeply about our public, protected areas.

While the Government might point to Labor - and I will get to Labor in a minute - for the way the schedule has fallen into place, it was a decision of Government to cut Environment and Parks scrutiny from five hours to two and then Labor, of course, shaved another half an hour off the Environment and Parks scrutiny. This is a slap in the face to every Tasmanian who gives a toss about the place that we live in, the state of our environment and our public protected areas.

It is so insulting. There are on the record here, through the petitions that have been signed, thousands and thousands of Tasmanians who have expressed concern about the state of the environment, about the privatisation of parks.

Of course, in those scrutiny sessions, it will be the Greens again who are advocating for those people and their concerns because both the major parties in this place are contemptuous of those portfolios and we are seeing this here today. The Greens are supposed to be grateful because Labor's budgeted on half an hour. So, we have another half an hour for the entire Environment portfolio which is completely separate from the Parks portfolio and so now we are up to two hours for Environment and Parks. In fact it is about the same, a little bit less, more than what is allocated to Building and Construction for example.

We have also gone from three hours allocated last year to the Resources portfolio, which people also care about and take a great interest in, to one and a half hours, halving the time of scrutiny for Resources which, of course, is where the Greens are able to ask questions about the devastation happening in Tasmania's old growth and high conservation value forests.

How insulting when we are in the middle of a climate and biodiversity crisis that we are given the crumbs of a 30-minute scrutiny session for Climate Change. It is only the single most significant existential threat humanity has ever faced - and we will have half an hour. I sure hope Labor has the grace in those portfolios to allow us to do our work for the people we represent in Environment and Parks and climate, and just backs off on some of their banal questions in those portfolios.

The most damning and telling change that Labor made to this proposed schedule was to cut the Finance portfolio scrutiny in half from two hours to one hour. Why would that be? Gambling. That is where the Gaming Control Act sits. It sits with the Minister for Finance.

Mr O'Byrne - Is there a conspiracy behind this?

Ms O'CONNOR - We hear Mr O'Byrne pretend it was not a consideration. Sure. We do not believe you because you back flipped on pokies five minutes after the last state election.

Ms White - We lost the election.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, you sure did lose the election and your deserved it.

We are partly in this position because the Liberals, the party of small government, have 36 portfolios. We have a Cabinet of - what is it? Eight or nine now. Nine. A Cabinet of nine with 36 portfolios. That is ridiculous. It is pointless to have a portfolio that no-one in this

place understands, let alone I think the minister who has been given responsibility, and that is Strategic Growth. Why would you make a Minister for Strategic Growth? It is a huge part of the problem. We have gone from, last year, four hours for Infrastructure and Transport, a critical portfolio, down to three hours.

Mr Ferguson - No, it is four.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is it four now again? Did you take it back? I had not seen that sudden change.

We have a new portfolio of Climate Change which has been allocated just half an hour; a new portfolio of Prevention of Family Violence, again 30 minutes for scrutiny of that. A new portfolio of Strategic Growth, which is just still mindnumbing. I cannot understand what the point of that portfolio is. A new portfolio of Mental Health and Wellbeing: an excellent decision to establish that portfolio.

Here we are. Primary Industries and Water last year, four hours; three hours this year. Building and Construction - one of the few portfolios that has had an increase in time from last year where one hour was allocated to it and this year will have 1.5 hours.

Ms Butler - It is very important.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is very important, says Ms Butler. Of course, it is very important but the most important thing we should be dealing with is climate change.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. Dignity in the House.

Members interjecting.

Ms O'CONNOR - Climate change - do not give me balance. That is what the neoliberals have been saying for decades, ever since they started stuffing the planet in earnest.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, order.

Ms O'CONNOR - I will just end on NAIDOC Week. This year, the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio is also reduced to 30 minutes for a portfolio where there is so much unfinished business, so little action on the part of government to improve the lives of Tasmania's Aboriginal people and we have cut scrutiny on that portfolio from a miserable hour to an even more miserable half an hour.

This is the poorest Estimates schedule I have seen in my 12 years in the parliament. The reason for that insignificant part is because there are 36 portfolios. There are too many portfolios allocated to just nine ministers. They have been created for largely political reasons. The consequence of that has been an absolute dogs' breakfast of an Estimate schedule where critical portfolios have not had the time allocated to them, where the Greens will again be marginalised when we are advocating for people who are totally left behind by the Liberal and

Labor parties: people who really care about the environment, who do not want to see their parks privatised, who want to see meaningful action on climate change, and who do not want to have poker machines in pubs and clubs in Tasmania.

This has been a stitch up. Of course, we will be in there asking the questions that we always do. I encourage members - if you think that our fury about this schedule is unjustified, have a look at the 2019 and 2018 Estimate schedules for comparison. Yes, we did not have a Minister for Climate Change then but last year even the Government knew that Environment is a separate portfolio from Parks and allocated two and a half hours to each of those portfolios, which mattered deeply to the people of Tasmania, including I am certain, many people who would usually support the Liberal and Labor parties.

We will be in there again doing our work within the constrained circumstances of an unfair allocation of questions and hard-line chairing that came in when the Liberals came into government. Any member of this place who was not there at the Estimates table back in the day when either Labor was in government, or Labor and the Greens, I need to tell you that the crossflow of questions and answers was much more free flowing; it was much more of an exploratory conversation to extract information; it was much more interesting to viewers; a bit more challenging for chairs, no doubt, but we have now such rigid control on the Estimates process that it has been all but entirely sanitised.

The irony of it is that it was the Liberals when they were in opposition who had total free rein at the Estimates table. I was there - total free rein, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, questions and answers. In this regime we have a constricted and deliberately constrained process for the Estimates table.

It is about control because there are people in this Government who are control freaks. You should not do that to an Estimates process. It needs to be the freest possible exchange of questions and answers. Instead it is rigid, unproductive and it does not elicit the information that it should.

We will tolerate this Estimate schedule because we have no choice. Again, it will be Dr Woodruff and I who are in there asking the questions from people who really care about the State of Tasmania, its environment, their public protected areas, the need for action on climate, and the need for us to remove poker machines from pubs and clubs.

[1.51 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I feel the passion. It is an important topic. It is helpful to -

Ms O'Connor - All the peace of the prayer breakfast has gone out of me.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, all the peace has gone. Some good points are made in that it is a very heavy schedule. There are two Estimates Committees, and there is cross over in relation to minister and shadow ministers. I love my role as an Independent but the fact is I cannot be everywhere at once at all times. Much like the Greens, what a funny old world it is. I will be working very hard across, as I do, all these portfolios.

It was worth going on the record to say that that is what I do generally in this place. I read every bill, I go to all the briefings, I send my staff when I cannot make it, and I come in

and I speak on as much of the legislative program as I can. I will be doing the same in relation to the Estimates Committees.

Some concessions have had to be made for my new independent status and how I am able to engage with committees and GBEs and various other things. It is my understanding that I will have a similar program to what has been allowed for GBEs in relation to asking questions, which will be a question. I would have preferred it to be two questions - perhaps you could clarify that. That would be helpful.

I wanted to say on the record for everybody who does write to me and ask me to go in and fight for them and ask questions and get across all of the issues - it ranges from environmental through to housing, health, people trapped overseas, what is happening with restaurants, small businesses, families, children and education, and everything that we have had to deal with this year right through to building new economies, technology and IT - I will do my best but I will have to prioritise pretty heavily.

I wanted to get on the record that there is no lack of hard work by me and my team, but we are indeed a very small team.

[1.53 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I will be brief. I must admit the continual lecturing of the Greens of every other member of this House and the position that you put that you are the only party that cares about a whole range of issues, is offensive.

Greens members interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - It is so not true. There are many debates in this House. There are many forms of this House where we can engage in debate, where we raise the issues on behalf of our constituents across the gamut of the policy areas the state Government has responsibility for.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - If you listen to the leader of the Greens this is the only forum for her to raise these issues. Trying to cram in, in 63 hours, all the portfolios and all the work and the matters that we have to consider in the state budget is always very difficult. We have tried very hard to manage this process in a way, and we have consulted it as best we can, to try to fit as many in.

There are many important issues, particularly off the back of a pandemic and the economic challenges that we are facing. There is a range of portfolio areas that have lost time, that have not got enough time as far as we are concerned, but we have to fit in 63 hours to make sure we fit in with the allotment of time for debate as established in the Standing Orders.

I will not be lectured by the Greens on this. We had an opportunity, I think it was in 2018, where we moved a motion and we were keen to get extra opposition party members at the table to allow a greater scrutiny of the Government but the Greens voted against that, for whatever reason; a fit of pique or whatever it was. You voted against it.

Greens members interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - I will not be lectured by the Greens about trying to add more transparency into an Estimates Committee process when you have, in fact, voted against your own interest in trying to get opposition questions up.

Greens members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, order.

Mr O'BYRNE - The hypocrisy of the Greens on this is appalling. We support it. It has been difficult. It has not been the greatest of processes, and I am not reflecting on anyone by saying that. These are always very difficult times, but these kinds of performances and accusations do nothing to try to lift the tone of this place and allow matters to be raised appropriately.

[1.55 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I am also going to be brief in responding. Thank you to those members who have spoken. This process, I have discovered - and I think this is my sixth or seventh exercise in this - never brings everybody to consensus. That is not possible. However, I regret that.

Greens members interjecting.

Members Suspended

Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor and Member for Franklin - Dr Woodruff

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am going to ask the two members of the Greens party to leave the Chamber.

Ms O'Connor - I beg your pardon?

Madam SPEAKER - I am asking you to leave the Chamber. You have done nothing but interrupt the whole time and be very rude. You have made your point and you can leave until 2.55 p.m. when we come back into the House.

Ms OGILVIE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Will we be having a vote on this?

Madam SPEAKER - Yes.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, they can still vote on this because there is a vote. Madam Speaker, if I could assist you?

Ms O'Connor - So does that mean we cannot contribute to the MPI?

Madam SPEAKER - No, you will, but you just either sit there and be quiet and stop being rude to everybody, or you leave the Chamber. Now, please proceed.

Ms O'Connor - I am very happy to leave.

Ms O'Connor and Dr Woodruff withdrew.

Mr FERGUSON - I regret that and this is one of those procedural motions that should be pretty unremarkable - that is the ideal. This is something that usually should be seen as an agreement because I believe it is the case that everybody wants to have the Estimates process. This motion sets it up.

I say thank you to Mr O'Byrne and his colleagues for working with the Government on fashioning this. I will not go into the detail about how this works behind the scenes because it is unimportant.

The bottom line is this: the Government is elected to govern. It should not be unchecked. It needs to be scrutinised, and whose responsibility is it to scrutinise the Government? It is any member of the House, including government members, backbenchers, but predominately it is the official Opposition. It is my continuing view that if people wish to have more or less time on one portfolio compared to another, that is something to negotiate with the official Opposition. The last thing I will be doing is being seen to advantage someone who is not in the Opposition when we set up these processes.

I will conclude in noting that the Opposition did not have to, but have agreed - and they may now wonder why they did this to be so charitable - in that time that we suspended briefly, to trade half an hour. In response to the Greens wanting to negotiate some time, no time has been lost but time has shifted from one portfolio to another. I have to say I am surprised at the response from the Greens Leader. I am disappointed. I will have a good look at the record.

I will say now, if it is a year in advance, my message to anybody in this House, whether they be Greens or independent, for next year's budget Estimates, if you want to negotiate time do so with the Opposition.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 1.59 p.m. to 2.55 p.m.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Housing

[2.56 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin - Motion) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: housing.

I would like to begin with a couple of stories.

Recently I talked with a woman in her 50s from Huonville. She had been caring for her mum for 10 years before she sadly recently passed away. She was talking with me about her options regarding housing moving forward. It turns out there are two options. One, having talked with her three siblings who are interstate, they want her to pay market rent for the house she is living in in Huonville and she knows that is unaffordable for her on her carer's pension,

now JobSeeker that she has translated to. Her second option is for the house to be sold and she would get a quarter portion of that sale. With the \$80 000 or so she would expect to get from the proceeds of that, she would then become ineligible on the one hand for social housing and on the other, ineligible because of her income support payments for bank security, in order to get into home ownership.

The other story I want to tell is of a woman who lives in Rokeby, again in her early 50s, and she suffers from a mental illness but has been in a long-term subsidised private rental property. She has been advised that on 8 December she is required to move out; she is being evicted. She has been desperately looking with the support of her family for an affordable private rental property or for support from the social housing system and none is materialising, so her family have paid for her to move in with her mum interstate.

It made me think that once upon a time in this state we were concerned about losing our young people, the supposed brain-drain of our young people moving interstate. But what have we come to when in this state, in this day and age, when a woman in her 50s is forced to move interstate simply to find a home? That is unacceptable and it tells you a lot about the state of the housing and homelessness services in this state, particularly in the face of increasing housing unaffordability and lack of availability.

The Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-25 has two key outcomes. They are to decrease the proportion of low-income Tasmanian households experiencing housing stress, and to decrease the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness over that 10-year period. On both these key outcomes, this Government is failing the people of Tasmania.

In terms of housing stress, we have a situation where roughly 120 000 are living in poverty - one in four Tasmanian households. Around 8000 of those households are in housing stress and if you think about the number of people that represents that magnifies significantly.

There are 40 000 households in private rental and for median rental prices in Hobart there have been increases of over 25 per cent over the past five years. The median rental household is in rental stress because they are paying out at least 30 per cent of their household income in rental payments so they are caught in a pincer movement of increasing rents and low-income growth.

Recently the Australia Institute released a report called 'The Choices we Make: the Economic Future of Tasmania', and tellingly, the number-one recommendation within that report relates to social housing. It calls on the Tasmanian Government to make a direct substantial and focused investment in public housing for a range of reasons. I want to directly quote from the section relating to social housing. They say:

Housing costs and availability were a major issue in Tasmania's political and economic context even prior to COVID-19. This reflects Tasmanian being displaced by the influx of mainland *wealth*, (as mainlanders retire or 'tree-change' to Tasmania, selling in major metropolitan regions and using their purchasing power to bid up the cost of Tasmanian residential property) as well as the rapid growth of unregulated short-term rental services displacing standard private rental accommodation, and ongoing underinvestment in social and affordable housing. The cost of housing stock has risen to such a level that many Tasmanians were no longer able to afford housing in their

own cities and towns. This is demonstrated by comparing Tasmania's stagnant wage growth, discussed above, with rapid increases in the cost of residential dwellings - increases that significantly outstripped wage growth over several years.

While government income protections during the pandemic (for example), JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments along with the corona virus supplement and state Government rent relief), have mitigated housing stress for some time, it is likely that, as those income supports are withdrawn, Tasmania will return to the same levels of housing stress experienced prior to COVID-19.

Here we are with the private rental protection set to be lifted from 1 December and I am being contacted by tenants who are saying, 'What is the plan? I have no options'. People like those women who I discussed, in particular older women and younger folk, are particularly vulnerable in this market.

In relation to Commonwealth income support, the Tasmanian Commissioner for Children and Young People said that because of the temporary increases in income support, roughly 4000 children were lifted out of poverty and now they are being at risk of being forced right back into it. Demand for food security has doubled, the wait list for social housing is roughly 3500, an increase of around 60 per cent since the Liberal Government took office, and there is a shortfall of 11 000-plus social and affordable homes in this state.

The Affordable Housing Strategy is manifestly inadequate and is failing people in this state. In relation to homelessness, we know there are outdated Census figures and by talking with service providers we know that homelessness has increased rapidly and yet the latest Housing quarterly report - the September report - is now significantly overdue. The Government's report on the short-stay accommodation data that so tellingly talks about the private rental market impact is also more than two and half months overdue.

Seriously, what is this Government hiding? Why will they not release those plans and why won't they demonstrate an ability to reset the Affordable Housing Strategy to support people struggling with housing stress?

Time expired.

[3.04 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Housing) - Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for raising housing as a topic of public importance. It is a priority for our Government at this time and we have accordingly invested record amounts of state resources into addressing housing needs at many different levels across the market, from prevention of homelessness through to assistance for people who find themselves in acute housing stress, through to home ownership, through to longer-term social housing and working in the broader market across our portfolios to reduce red tape and streamline planning to enable more houses to be built in Tasmania - and they are. During COVID-19 we were concerned there would be a massive downturn in commencements of new housing projects, and that some Tasmanians who already had builders, loans and sites selected and council approvals, might not proceed. We were also concerned about investors losing confidence and not putting in DAs. That has not happened, for a range of reasons - including the application of federal and state home

builder grants, Tasmania's first home owners grant and the generous increased home share program.

Tasmania continues to record record levels of development applications, approvals and completions. Our building and construction sector is building homes as fast as possible at the moment, right across Tasmania. An immense amount of building activity is underway: ask anyone who is building a house, whether it is for Government social housing stock or in the broader market, with or without the government stimulus that is in place. The only thing that will in the long term affect housing availability and house price increases, and that cost of housing as part of a cost of living, is supply of more houses.

I am very glad the building and construction sector has been able to continue operation at nearly full capacity right through the period of the pandemic, supported in part through government stimulus and brought-forward investment in public and social housing. Other sectors have had to close down entirely. The building and construction sector has found ways of working, and has kept their clients confident. They have taken the assistance and incentives that are available and they have been building hammer and tong. I am not sure what you use tongs for in building, but hats off to the building and construction sector and the wonderful multipliers that they represent in our economy whenever they are out building houses for Tasmanians.

Our investment across a range of affordable housing action plans continues, and we have nearly doubled it since it was first announced, with the Commonwealth housing debt waiver and initiatives such as the extra \$100 million we recently announced, which is now contracting to build an additional 1000 social housing dwellings for Tasmanians who need them right across the state over the next three years.

In terms of the systems that underpin that, and in response to the constituent matters Ms Standen has raised, Tasmania has the most highly integrated housing support system in Australia at the moment. Housing Connect is the envy of other states. It is a highly integrated system that can help to direct your constituents, people with concerns about their housing, people under housing stress, through a range of options. Those options include homelessness support services, crisis accommodation, rapid re-housing, private rental assistance, private rental incentives to assist people to secure 'two year plus two-year' private rentals in the market where they would not be able to compete by themselves.

Other options include Homeshare, Streets Ahead and longer term social housing. People come to us for help and various options are extended to them. Those options may help them at least to buy some time while they consider their options and finances, and make their decisions. They might not take up those options, but they remain available. I write this in lots of letters in response to you and others - 'these are the supports that have been offered, they remain available to your constituent, please encourage them to take up these offers and please encourage them to do X, Y and Z that can assist them with placement'.

There are not enough homes. We need to build more, and we are building more with State Government money than have ever been built before. The building industry is flat out building homes for Tasmanians. We will do everything we can to support and assist them to do more of that as quickly as possible. We do not want to overcook the market and drive prices further up. We do want to streamline processes for releasing land for development, for

planning approvals process without losing rigor but reducing red tape that might see some of that investment not happen, or be taken elsewhere.

This Government will do what we can to ensure there are more houses on the ground for Tasmanians who need them, both in the broader market and specifically for the people on low incomes. You will see each week that we are announcing new projects delivered and new initiatives commenced, showing this government is delivering more for housing Tasmanians than Tasmanian governments have before.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very happy with our track record although I know that we need to do more.

Time expired.

[3.11 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge there is considerable activity happening at the moment in increasing the supply of housing. However, I dispute the minister's statement that the Government is doing all it can. We have an allocation towards infrastructure of around \$3.1 billion. That has been much touted since the start of the pandemic. The vast majority of that money is going into the construction of roads: into hard infrastructure, not social infrastructure. I have no doubt at all that property developers and housing developers are having a very busy time at the moment and they are increasing the supply of housing, but the supply of social and affordable housing still manifestly lags.

We know from last year's report from the inquiry into housing affordability, that we are about 11 500 homes short of what is needed in Tasmania - primarily social and affordable housing. It is not true that the Government is doing all that it can. What it is doing, which is what Liberal Governments do, is relying heavily on the private sector to pick up and increase the supply which Government has failed to deliver. That is the bottom line.

The Greens advocated passionately for our recovery out of COVID-19 to be a housing led recovery. We wrote to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council strongly proposing that investment in social and affordable housing be prioritised to get us out of the economic doldrums, provide employment and then have the long-term social fabric improvement through a substantial increase to the supply of social and affordable housing.

It is pleasing that there is plenty of activity out there and that more homes are being built. However, the Greens remain concerned that not enough of those homes will be affordable, or pitched at that end of either the buyers or the rental market where we know the need is greatest - and that is amongst low to middle income Tasmanians and people who are reliant on income support. The focus of our housing build should be increasing the supply of homes for people who, right now, have been shut out of the home buyers' market- young people, single people, older single women. They have also increasingly been unable to find an affordable rental home.

The shocking article this week in the *Mercury*, showed that Tasmanians are paying the same rent, with only one-dollar difference, as people who live in Melbourne who are on higher incomes, and yet, Tasmania is still the poorest state in the country, if you do not count the

Northern Territory. Tasmanians are finding it increasingly impossible to find a rental they can afford or that is close enough to work, to education or training.

I was only having a conversation this morning with a friend of mine who is 64 years old, works really hard, has very little in her super and will be eligible for the pension in a year or two, but that will not pay the rent. The aged pension cannot pay a rental in Hobart or Greater Hobart, and it cannot pay the rent increasingly right across Tasmania. This friend of mine has resigned herself, as she said, and I will quote her, 'I'll be working, darling, until I drop dead'.

That is the situation that has been created in this state where the lag that took place between 2014 and 2017 in funding for new social and affordable housing is now bitterly playing out in the lives of people who cannot find a home. For three years this state Government put no new money into the construction of social and affordable housing - three whole years. Then when it became clear that we were in a housing and homelessness crisis the Government had to act, and that is why they are acting, but it took a crisis. It took tents on the lawns of Parliament House, tents with families of six in them at the showgrounds. It took that obvious evidence of shortage of supply and people put in crisis for this Government to put some state money into increasing the supply of social and affordable housing.

Up until last week there was a tent on the lawns of Parliament House. I think there was a couple of weeks when that tent was there, and so much of it -

Mr Jaensch - Just a tent, though.

Ms O'Connor - Did you say it is 'just a tent'?

Mr Jaensch - As I understand it, there was not someone relying on it for their bed for the night.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, I had not had that confirmed, minister. That is quite interesting.

The concern we have is that Tasmanians are being priced out of their own paradise. Increasingly people are having to move further and further out of the city just to rent a two-bedroom butter box. With that move out to a more affordable rental in some of our towns like Sorell or Brighton, comes increased costs of travelling into work, much of which is in the city, increased congestion on the roads and increased emissions from transport. We can do better here. What was that, Mr Ellis?

Mr Ellis - There are emissions from concrete and bricks.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Ellis is giving me a lecture on climate. I wonder if Mr Ellis made any sort of advocacy for an increased time for perusal of the Climate Change portfolio? I will bet he did not. In fact, I know he did not.

Time expired.

[3.18 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, for about the last 12 or 13 years I have worked out of electorate offices in the Bridgewater/Gagebrook area, not always in this capacity as an MP, and I have never seen it as bad as it is at the moment. I have spent a fair bit of time working out of that particular office over the last fortnight and it is a constant rotation of people,

which is fabulous - that is what we are there to do - but the need has become a lot greater than I have ever seen before over the last 12 to 13 years.

Twelve or 13 years ago I would have a constituent come in and they would say, 'I am homeless', and my response to them would be, 'Do you have anywhere to stay for the next month or so because at worst it could take a month for us to be able to help find you somewhere to live?'. Sometimes you could have somewhere for them to stay which was not a shelter but a home or an apartment, and sometimes it might have been a place where they could stay for a short time before they moved into something more significant. Sometimes you could have people rehoused within a week or two. At worst it would be a month.

Now when people come into the office and ask whether or not they would be able to find any housing, we tell them to go through the normal channels but we know that waiting list is well and truly longer than a month and longer than it has ever been. There are 3500 applications at the moment. My good colleague, Alison Standen, told me before that 3.2 people is the average household in Tasmania so if you multiply the 3500 applications by 3.2 you are looking at over 10 000 Tasmanians who are waiting on our housing list.

I had a good example recently and I have written to the minister about this, so I am hoping that is going to be progressed really quickly. I have also written to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing about this same issue. I met with a constituent and his dad recently. He is in his early 30s and was diagnosed with chronic schizophrenia 10 years ago. He became homeless in January this year when after having a relapse he did not meet his bills or pay his rent and was evicted from the long-term unit he had rented. He applied for social housing in January and was provided with a priority 1 listing. This is a person with chronic schizophrenia. In May the constituent was able to obtain some accommodation at the Martin Cash Hotel and his dad moved back from the mainland to look after him because he had relapsed. They were then asked in early October to leave the Martin Cash Hotel because of his erratic behaviour, which is attributed to his chronic schizophrenia. Since that time, this constituent has been living in secure accommodation of a night time at Hobart City Mission and during the day he and his dad are living out of a car.

A few days ago, that car was broken into in Collins Street. They were parked there for the night because they were in the secure accommodation with Hobart City Mission. All the few possessions that they had in their lives are now gone and they cannot drive the car at the moment. They are trying to pull together some money to have it fixed.

That is how we are treating our most vulnerable people in our community. That is not right and it is certainly not acceptable. That constituent does not deserve our pity but he and his father deserve our help. That is what our safety nets are meant to do. They are meant to capture people like that, not leave someone with chronic schizophrenia on a housing waiting list since January. That is 10 months and we need to be doing so much better. That is one example I have.

I conducted my own study of new housing in the Bridgewater/Gagebrook area. The minister has responded to my request to go doorknocking and I thank him for getting back to me; I appreciate that. I invited him to come and meet the residents of those properties because during our initial debates there were 78 per cent of people who invited me into their properties who reported faults in those properties.

I appreciate the fact that we are building properties and that that is done by community housing providers, but there needs to be some ownership from government about the standard of the houses. You have written that they receive an occupancy certificate, but what is the process around that occupancy certificate? I know the housing providers have started to go in and make those repairs, which has been a really good outcome. Some of them are not going to be able to repaired though. If you are just replacing the same faulty door with another copy of the same faulty door, it is not going to fix the problem, but it is good they are trying.

Minister, is there independence around the occupancy certificate? Are the companies that are building those properties employing their own inspectors? I would like to talk to you about that at some stage because we need to make sure that all the new houses we are building are built to proper standards so they are going to be standing in 30 to 40 years' time. For the first three years of you guys being in Government you did not invest any money. Granted, that was not your portfolio then and I recognise that there is movement in this area.

Time expired.

[3.25 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am disappointed but not particularly surprised that the shadow minister for building and construction does not really understand building and construction regulations.

Ms Butler - Do you?

Mr ELLIS - I am a tradie so I want to talk about home building and housing and how the home building industry in Tasmania is going absolutely gangbusters. You can talk to any tradie anywhere in the street, whether they are chippies, sparkies, plumbers or whether they are silly enough to be bricklayers, and they will tell you that things are going absolutely gangbusters. They cannot find the guys and girls to do the work at the moment, which is in many ways a good problem to have because you are always better to be too busy than not busy enough.

As we know, the project of home building that is happening right across Tasmania is also being supported by the work of both the federal and state governments in getting people into their own homes, buying packages of land, giving young people that opportunity to build and own their first home and that takes them out of -

Ms Standen - Your home builder program does nothing more than line the pockets of people who are wealthy.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - a position of housing stress and puts them on the path to having a bit of financial independence, having a decent life, having a place for a family to grow up and really flourish and thrive.

At the moment tradies are flat out and that is brilliant to see, particularly given that we know that we are in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. Right around the world there are economies that are in very deep recession and they cannot get anything built. Here in Tasmania the problem is that there is too much work out there. That is a good thing. When you compare

it to the David O'Byrne recession of about a decade back, tradies were leaving the state because they could not get a job. These were highly qualified people but they were having to go to the mainland so they could earn a crust. It was ridiculous. What happens when those people leave? It means that apprentices cannot get a job either.

It is fantastic to be able to provide more opportunities through the home building system that the Minister for Housing has been talking about. We are rolling out more properties, whether it is in the social housing space or in the private home building space.

Ms Standen interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Standen. You were listened to in silence.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. What we know is that it brings more young people into the building and construction industry, into the home building industry. I say to all the boys and girls out there who are finishing year 10, year 11, year 12, who are doing their exams at the moment, get into it. It is a brilliant industry. You can work flat out, you can make good money, and you can have a good time doing it. You will still find time to catch a few flathead in the Mersey after work, or pick the kids up from school. It is a brilliant thing to be part of. You are also helping set people up for life, putting them into a home of their own. That is doing a good thing.

Labor and the Greens think that the only future for our young people is making coffees or suing people, but we want to tell you that you can have a great future on the tools. You do not need to run a protest; you can run a building site.

I am one of those year 12 tradies. I did my year 12, so for people who are doing their exams at the moment and wondering what they are going to do, they could do an Arts degree like the Greens want them to do, or they can look at becoming a plumber, a sparky, a boilermaker, or get out there and work in the mines, work in forestry, work on farms. It is a brilliant thing to see.

We are blessed to be in a spot where we are currently so busy that we need to expand the building and construction industry. That is a brilliant problem to have because it means that there are opportunities for young people who are leaving school who want to get a great job, who want to work hard and who want to build our state for the future. It is about more opportunities.

I want to talk briefly about the sharing economy and read from one of my favourite first speeches. I will quote here.

It has been observed recently that Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles, and Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no real estate. ... It is turning a generation of interconnected people into entrepreneurs. ... It brings down prices, it cuts out middle people, it encourages innovation and, crucially, it is environmentally friendly because it avoids greenhouse emissions through the more efficient use of existing resources. It is the free market working like it should for the benefit of people and the ... environment.

... The drivers of the global economy in the years ahead will not be cumbersome, cost-heavy corporate dinosaurs; they will be small businesses, the innovators and the entrepreneurs of the future, and the Greens will be right there with them advocating for more support, less protectionism and the lightest possible regulatory touch.

Fine words and the former Labor-Greens minister, Nick McKim, hit the nail right on the head with the sharing economy, because the people over on the other side will make sure that they cannot rent out a room in their house, whether they are in beautiful Boat Harbour, or whether they are in Marrawah. They do not want to see those people share any more but once upon a time they did. Once upon a time people like Nick McKim of all people wanted to see the sharing economy work because it works for people.

If you are on a fixed income, if you are a pensioner and you can rent out a room in your house in a beautiful coastal community like we have right across the north-west, the west coast and King Island, that puts a little bit more meat on the bones. It means that you have a bit more money in the budget. It means you can go out for dinner on a Friday night with your spouse and have a nice time. They are the kinds of the little life-changing opportunities that the sharing economy brings right across Tasmania.

Ms Standen - Are you missing the point about housing affordability and availability? It is just not in your sphere of life experience.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Standen.

Mr ELLIS - I want to speak briefly about a beautiful little example of making the system work and making housing work for people who are doing it tough. In July 2020 funding was delivered for all the 35 new units of homeless accommodation and it has been set out to include 18 temporary accommodation units for homeless men at Bethlehem House, 10 two-bedroom accommodation pods at the Hobart Women's Shelter -

Time expired.

Matter noted.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (ELECTORAL EXPENDITURE AND POLITICAL DONATIONS) BILL 2020 (No. 45)

Second Reading

[3.33 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark - 2R) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

It is my honour today to be introducing Labor's Electoral Amendment (Electoral Expenditure and Political Donations) Bill 2020 for debate in the lower House. This bill, if passed, will be a significant and ground-breaking first step in fixing Tasmania's weak political donations laws.

Members would be well aware that Tasmania has the weakest donation disclosure laws in the country. In fact, I do not believe it is really even true to characterise them as the weakest laws in the country because we actually do not have any at all. In other states and territories there are strong, robust regimes in place that mean donations to political parties, members of parliament and candidates are declared publicly. Many other states also place caps on how much money parties and candidates are allowed to spend on their election campaigns. Other states, for a variety of reasons, have had cause to introduce these schemes to allow public accountability and give the public the confidence they deserve to have in our political systems to know who donates to political parties and candidates and how much candidates and parties spend on their campaigns. These schemes, while operating in different ways from state to state, have one thing in common - they are about transparency and integrity in the political process.

It is no secret that political campaigns cost a lot of money. The cost of printing posters, billboards, flyers and other materials adds up, let alone the high cost of television and radio and print advertising for those who use it.

Parties and candidates in Tasmania fund their campaigns by fundraising, through donations and through the use of their own funds - through savings or, in the case of my own campaign, borrowing against my house. I was lucky that I had the capacity to save money and to borrow against my house. For many Tasmanians the prospect of funding a political campaign is low because the cost can be seen as prohibitive. It defies logic that in the same electorate, in a race to win the same seat, one candidate could be spending \$20 000 while another could potentially, for argument's sake, be spending hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is not a fair race. It is anything but a level playing field.

Right now, there are no spending caps, and no requirements whatsoever for candidates to report on what they spend, or to disclose the donations they receive and from whom. At the moment the only requirement for reporting that applies in Tasmania at all, comes from Commonwealth legislation, not Tasmanian law. That Commonwealth provision requires political parties, but importantly not candidates or sitting members, to disclose the donations received by that party over \$13 800. That is hard to fathom. That is not a cumulative total. That is any single donation over that threshold of \$13 800 - and I dare say not many Tasmanian candidates would ever receive a personal donation of that magnitude. That threshold is ridiculously high and it is my firm belief that the Commonwealth laws also need significant reform.

In the meantime, Tasmania's law is entirely lacking in any disclosure requirements and that is not good enough. It is not good enough for me, and it is not good enough for the Labor Party which is why we are taking action based on a long-held policy, by bringing in this private members' bill today.

When I was a first-time candidate in 2018 it came as a surprise to me that there were no disclosure requirements placed on me. Notwithstanding that my campaign was not a rich one, it did not sit right with me that I had no obligation to disclose donations or to report spending - not to my party, not to the Electoral Commission, and not to the public. This needs to change, and today's bill gives us a chance for this parliament to take one first important step to fix this - to start restoring trust in politics, because we all know public trust in politics is at an all-time low. We are seeing that public trust erode and seeing a growing cynicism in politics and politicians around the globe. Sadly, we are not immune from that in Tasmania.

While I know that everyone here works hard for their community, it is often the case that our words and actions are not taken in the way they are intended. It is often the case that peoples' eyes glaze over when they hear another politician speaking, or making statements they find to be trite or disingenuous. That is a real pity.

Public trust is eroded when governments and leaders, and elected officials, are not honest. When they hide information, public trust is eroded. When they fail to tell the truth, public trust is eroded. When they shift their story, when they do things only for political or personal gain, when they take people for granted, public trust is eroded. To me it is a great pity that trust in politics is at an all-time low.

I grew up in a family that valued and held high the importance of our public institutions. From a young age I was taught by my parents that politics and parliament is where policy is made and that policy should, at all times, be focused on improving the lives of people in our state. I learned that the institutions of government are important for everyone, but hold a particularly acute level of importance for people who are doing it tough. For people who desperately require support, it is incumbent on government to ensure that the services they need are there, and are accessible and affordable.

It is these people who Labor has always advocated for and always will: people who are doing it tough, people who have been let down and failed by the system; people who have had every need for government to support them, but who have sadly been given many reasons not to trust the systems of government.

It is those beliefs and values that motivated me to stand for parliament in the first place. I was motivated by a passion for change; a passion for good government and good governance; a passion for integrity and authenticity in leadership; a passion for good policy, for progressive social policy that improves people's lives; a passion to help make this island continue to be the absolute best place in the world to live.

I know each of you in this place have your own passions and motivations for being here and doing this job. They may be different to my own, but I respect them and I respect each of you for representing your values to make the changes that you want to see in this state. Whether we agree on policy or not, whether our values collide or clash, all of us can do better when we begin to start to restore trust in politics and in political leadership, because when we each do better, we all do better.

It is not lost on any of the 25 of us who have the honour of filling one of these seats, that we have a huge responsibility to represent the voices of more than half a million Tasmanians. Their values, their hopes, their needs and their fears are distilled and hopefully represented in the laws and decisions that are made in this very room.

As I look across the Chamber at each of us, I see those half a million people we are charged with the responsibility to represent: the city folk, the farmers, teachers, builders, health care workers, small business people, the people who are out of work or looking for more work to get by, the people of faith and the atheists, the first-time Tasmanians, the sixth generation Tasmanians, the newly arrived and the Tasmanian Aboriginals; those from the northernmost tip to the southernmost, and everyone in between; those who are doing okay and those who are only hanging on.

Every one of them is affected in one way or another by the decisions we make in this place, and they deserve to feel confident in us and our political system. It is these things that the bill we are discussing today seeks to address, because it is also my view that many in our community do not see parliament for the beautiful place that it is and should be. They do not always see us as a group of values-driven, community minded, hardworking advocates.

Instead of seeing themselves amongst us, too many people are seeing us standing apart. They look cynically upon us as a class of people who look after ourselves and our mates, who do not give a second thought to the person in the street. To my mind, few things are more corrosive to the health of our political system and the health of our democracy than a perception that money buys influence. Right now, in this state, there is at least a perception that it can. This bill is our change to begin to address that wave of cynicism that we see engulfing democracies across the world. It will be our first step in cleaning up politics in Tasmania.

I have said in this Chamber many times, and in the public, this bill is a start. It is not the only step that is needed to reform our electoral laws and bring them into line with best practice. It is not the only step we need to take to clean up politics in Tasmania, but it is the first and it is an important one. It is likely to be criticised for not going far enough or perhaps for going too far, or for not replicating the schemes that operate in other states and territories in their entirety. To those critics, I reiterate that this is but one first and important step down the long path of fixing our donation laws in this state.

They have been well consulted and I thank members of the public and members of parliament from this Chamber and from the Legislative Council who contacted me, and for their thoughtful and considered comments on the draft bill.

I am confident that the measures we are putting forward in this bill today are measured, fair and most importantly, achievable. If this bill passes our parliament, there will be time and capacity for them to be implemented in time for the next election, due in 2022.

Madam Speaker, this bill proposes a range of changes to the Electoral Act. Together, they would address the fact that we have the weakest donation laws in the country and they would put in place a regime that is fair, transparent and achievable, and practical for parties, MPs and candidates to comply with right away.

First, this bill would make it law that all donations above \$1000 to political parties, candidates and MPs, are declared to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission every 30 days and made public by the Commission. This disclosure requirement would also apply to cumulative donations of smaller amounts from one donor that reached that threshold of \$1000. Once smaller donations from one donor reached that threshold, they must be declared.

Second, the bill places spending caps on the election campaigns run by candidates and parties in elections to the House of Assembly. Spending caps are not an unfamiliar concept to Tasmanians. They are already in place for elections in both the Legislative Council and for elections held at the local government level.

This bill would introduce a cap on lower House campaigns where right now there is no cap and no limit whatsoever on what can be spent by candidates or parties. This is an incredibly unfair system with anything but a level playing field. Putting in place a cap for spending on lower House campaigns is one very important step in making sure elections are a battle of

ideas, not a battle of bank accounts. The person who wins a seat in this place should be the one who works the hardest, who presents the best ideas, who represents their community the best, and not the one who can simply afford to pay for the biggest billboards or the most ads on television.

I encourage members to support the changes in this bill. The cap we have suggested, while maybe seen as high by some, is more than enough for a campaign. From a personal perspective, it represents more than double what I spent on my personal campaign. It is not healthy for democracy for any more than an amount to be spent on a campaign in a jurisdiction as small as ours.

The bill also puts in place administrative mechanisms that mean candidates would submit returns at the end of the election period to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission accounting for all of their campaign spending. This is based on the current requirements already in place for candidates for the Legislative Council who must submit their spending to show the commission that they did not overspend on their cap.

Similarly, the bill also places caps on how much a political party can spend on an election campaign. As members know, in most cases political parties do not spend money on individual candidates but rather spend money on central campaign-related activity and messaging on behalf of their party. Right now, this spending is entirely uncapped and not disclosed publicly at all. Similar to the new requirement for lower House candidates to submit a spending return to the Electoral Commission to show how much they spent on their campaign, parties would also have to do this as well.

The bill goes on to make other significant changes. It bans donations from anonymous donors above the donation disclosure threshold and it also bans donations from foreign donors above the disclosure threshold. The bill incorporates the same language used in Commonwealth legislation to clarify what constitutes a donation from a foreign donor.

Finally, the bill creates offences with penalties for failure of a party, a candidate or an MP to comply with the new provisions. The bill does not address third-party campaign spending or donations from specific industry groupings. No doubt this will be one of the reasons used by others to criticise or oppose the bill. It is true that other jurisdictions have regimes which address these areas of reform and on this, I will remind members that this is a private member's bill which represents the first in what I believe are a number of steps that need to be taken to fix our donation laws.

Similarly, this bill does not propose public funding on election campaigns. Members would know that Tasmania is the only state that does not have some form of public funding for election campaigns. I know this will likely be raised by government in their contribution on this bill as it has been raised already this year a number of times by the Premier when speaking on this issue. However, it is disingenuous to reject outright the other reforms in this bill by simply batting them away as a pathway to public funding. They need not be seen that way.

The reforms in this bill have been carefully considered and consulted upon and they are achievable for political parties, candidates and MPs to comply with them right away without the need for public funding. Against the backdrop of the pandemic and the very likely dire state of the Budget, now is not the time to consider public funding for elections.

As I said earlier, I thank people who made comments on the draft private member's bill that was circulated for public consultation in July this year. I heard from lobby groups, members of parliament and individual members of the public. Thank you to each person who contacted me for their considered comments and suggestions. I acknowledge not every single suggestion has been taken up in this final version of the bill. However, I hope that you can see the input that you made reflected in parts of this bill.

I go now to the contents of the bill in a bit more detail. First, the bill adds new definitions to the Electoral Act for the terms 'disposition of property', 'foreign donor' and 'property'. These terms are used later in the other changes made in this bill meaning they require definitions to be provided for in the act. The bill adds new section 5A and 5B. These sections explain the meaning of 'gift' and the meaning of 'political donation'. This is so it is clear to all what must be declared under the new reporting regime.

Section 7 updates the spending cap for Legislative Council elections. Members would be aware that candidates for Legislative Council elections are already subject to a spending cap on their campaigns. Currently in the act, that cap is defined as '\$10 000 in the year 2005' and increases by \$500 each year. In practical terms this means that the spending cap for the most recent upper House elections held for the divisions of Huon and Rosevears was \$17 500. The change in this bill modernises this definition so that the spending cap for Legislative Council elections held in 2021 would be \$20 000 rising by CPI each year. This a more meaningful representation of the inflation costs associated with election spending than a random figure by which a cap increases each year, as is currently the case. Similarly, the new caps of spending in the lower House would also increase by CPI.

The bulk of the changes to the act are achieved in the new Parts 6A and 6B proposed in the bill. New Part 6A sets out the rules that would apply for spending by candidates and parties for lower House elections. This is the part that replicates many of the existing provisions of the act around spending and lodgement of expenditure returns that apply now in the Legislative Council and adapts them for application to lower House elections.

This is also the part of the bill that sets out the new expenditure limits for lower House candidates of \$100 000 for candidates endorsed by a registered political party, and \$120 000 for independent candidates for the lower House. This differential limit was included in the act as a result of the community consultation held on our draft bill. It was raised with me that there was an inherent unfairness in an independent candidate being subject to the same spending cap as a party-endorsed candidate while the party endorsed candidate would also benefit from the central party spend. I believe this is an argument which has merit. I note that in Queensland there is also a differential spending cap for party-endorsed versus independent candidates. We have taken a similar approach with this final version of the bill.

The way the bill deals with the expenditure cap for political parties is to set a limit of \$40 000 per candidate up to a maximum of 25 candidates. In practical terms this means that for a party that fields 25 candidates, or one for each seat in the lower House, the spending cap would be \$1 million. If a party endorsed one candidate in each seat, for example, meaning they ran five candidates, their spending cap would be \$200 000. By contrast, the spending cap for political parties in New South Wales is around \$11 million. In South Australia, it is \$4 million. In the ACT, a comparable jurisdiction to Tasmania in many respects, the cap is \$1 million.

New Part 6B is the new section that will deal with the disclosure and reporting of political donations, making donations of \$1000 or cumulative smaller donations from one donor that reach \$1000 declarable every 30 days and made public by the TEC. This part also bans anonymous and foreign donations, as I said earlier.

The bill goes on to empower the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to collect information and publish it in a publicly available register. The commission would also be empowered to require information and related necessary powers to ensure the new regime is complied with by parties, candidates and MPs. Finally, the bill also creates offences for failure to comply with the new requirements.

This bill is about making elections fairer, more transparent and levelling the playing field so that candidates with the best ideas and the best policies are elected, not just the ones with the deepest pockets, and to start restoring that trust that is missing in politics right now.

As members consider their position on this bill, I ask them to reflect on what brought them here to do this job. Reflect on the diminishing trust in politics and ask yourself if you support fairness in our electoral system. If you do, you will support this bill. Do you think that it should be the people with the best ideas, not the deepest pockets, that have the honour and the responsibility of filling one of these 25 seats? If you do, you will support this bill. Do you think transparency matters? Do you think public accountability matters? Do you think fairness matters? If people agree with those things, they will support this bill.

I sincerely hope members will look at the provisions put forward in this bill in good faith and take them as a step in the right direction and a vast improvement on our currently non-existent donations disclosure and spending cap laws in Tasmania. I hope people can put politics aside and reflect on our duty to serve our communities here transparently and honestly and I commend the bill to the House.

[3.54 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I would like to hand out my alternative proposal, most of which you have all seen before, and you are well aware that I could not agree more about the need for transparency and fairness. I will have a copy sent up.

Transparency, fairness, the battle of ideas, hard work - all of those great things our forebears thought pivotal to the Hare-Clark system when it was established. The ability to run, and run hard, as an individual candidate is central to where I am going to be headed, so I have a different perspective on this now. I am also now a veteran of a few campaigns, including an upper House campaign, which has expenditure capping in place, so I have some views on that.

I have very carefully read Labor's proposed bill. I also previously tabled my own bill. I am particularly interested in the issues around the fairness aspect of social media and the horrible things that can happen on social media. We have seen this turn into some nasty situations, particularly during the last American election. I will try to outline in general terms what we all tackle in these campaigns and the fact that we need reform. We need deep and hard reform. We need more voices. We want more diversity. We need more grassroots candidates to come forward. I have been speaking about this since the 2010 election, in particular in relation to capping lower House campaigns.

I encourage us to expand and enliven our democratic franchise. What does that mean? That means that anybody should be able to have a fair go at running for a seat and not necessarily just those people who are in parties who can afford to spend the money. By dramatically reducing the cost of running for parliament, we would allow more people to put their hand up to run for a winnable seat. It would really make a difference. I would like to see people in my electorate from Glenorchy to Tarooma, from all over the state, Bruny Island to King Island, come forward and say - 'I can have a fair go at running and winning because I am known in my local community and I want to give service to my community and my state'.

If we dramatically reduce the cost of running, and put some other elements into place around stronger caps, stronger transparency, faster reporting and improving the way we digitally manage our campaigns and our parliament - I have spoken about that before - I believe we can make some ground. I consider everything should be on the table when it comes to electoral reform. We need a bold, new discussion on electoral reform, but we need deep structural change. There is no point tinkering at the margins when real reform is required.

Broadly, I propose three immediate steps -

- (1) we set campaign caps in the House of Assembly at \$18 000 to align directly with the Legislative Council, with the same identical all-in rules. Those rules are already there. We already know how they operate. They could be applied here and in fact they were applied here, right up until late 1970s early 1980s. This proposal is not anything new.
- (2) individual donations - they should come from individuals, and they should be capped at \$1000 and all donations over \$500 should be disclosed.
- (3) continuous disclosure of donations within a 48-hour time frame is absolutely achievable. You can just send an email to the Electoral Commission. If the Electoral Commission needs more resources, we can put those into place. We are here to expand and enliven our democratic franchise - reduce the cost of running for parliament, and encourage more people to put their hands up so that we can get those voices and diversity happening.

No one should have to spend \$100 000 to be able to win a seat in parliament. It is ridiculous. Parties are spending up to an additional \$1 million over the top so when you add up the \$40 000 per candidate, and you work out you are going to run five in each seat, you are getting close to your \$1 million - perhaps even more if you run more candidates. Why is that acceptable? That is ridiculous. We are a small state. It is a Hare-Clark system. If you are going to cap campaigns, then cap the campaign, individual campaigns, not party spending over the top. Party spending should be banned.

Tasmanian Labor's proposed reform bill, does not go far enough. I have used the phrase 'uses a feather duster where a scalpel is required'.

I cannot support a proposal that sees an everyday person needing to spend \$100 000 and then have access to \$1 million over the top to have a fair chance at winning a seat. So, I agree the only sensible approach is to take the big money out of the mix, level up the playing field and give democracy back to everyday people.

I have handed out some suggestions. I put some effort into amending Labor's bill and I will run through that in a moment, but in your packages you will see at the back my proposed bill on the electronic reform. I know there is diversity of opinion in this House around that, and how that amendment could or should be made. I will bring that on for debate at another time. Nonetheless, it is in your package for consideration.

I believe we can find some common ground with Labor's proposal and where I consider we need to head with this issue. I begin with clause 4. One of the issues I believe is woven through this is the definition of property and gift. I am concerned that the definition does not seem to be aligned with the definitions that are set out in the Tax Act which is the reference point to work out if something is a gift or property. If we are talking about property, we are generally referring to real property and personal property, but importantly - and again this comes to the digital aspect of campaigning - we are now also including intellectual property. It is your photos, your social media, your copyright, your digital and design. All of those resources are very valuable and I consider they should also be captured under the cap.

The bill could be improved. I propose the last part of clause 6, amending section 5A in relation to the meaning of gift, be deleted. It currently includes an exclusion for volunteer labour for no consideration. It is one thing to have your kids helping you, or your parents or a couple of volunteers. But, if you have a lot of people helping who would otherwise be paid and they have chosen to forgo payment, I consider this should be subject to some sensible rigour, as they would with the Legislative Council. We know how to do that because it is done in the upper House.

Clause 7 amends section 160 and that is a change to the Legislative Council approach. I believe we should leave that alone. We should let the Legislative Council deal with that themselves. I suggest leaving it at \$10 000 is appropriate. I do like the consumer price index increase - that makes economic sense and aligns with the way we deal with our tax system and our economic system.

I would delete clause 8, section 161. I do not believe we want to remove the number \$20 and substitute with \$500 if we are going to bring the cap down to where I propose it should be, which is \$18 000. The whole regime shifts down from that very high level to a much lower level. For everyone in this room who has to run in elections, imagine if you could run and win on \$18 000. They do so in the upper House, so it is possible.

Clause 165C is proposed to be inserted. I have proposed we change subclause (2) from \$100 000 to \$18 000, bringing it right down. I consider that would be really healthy for our democracy. Therefore, the expenditure limit for candidates who are not endorsed by a political party would be \$18 000. We do not need to have a change for an independent candidate because if we are getting rid of party expenditure, taking it down to \$18 000 for individual candidates - imagine the cost savings. The printers in Tasmania will not be happy with me. Nor will the radio or television stations but everybody might feel there is a better battle of ideas that goes on and yes, in some senses I am being a bit facetious but you are getting my gist, no doubt.

Regarding proposed section 165E, party's expenditure limit, I have deleted pretty much that entire section and instead inserted the words -

A party must not, in respect of a party's campaign for an Assembly election, incur election expenditure.

Parties can run their parties. You need money, you have day-to-day jobs to do, state secretaries need to be paid, all those sorts of things, but none of this spending over the top because it causes angst amongst candidates that does not need to exist.

Proposed section 165F, lodgement of party's election expenditure return, is entirely deleted as it is no longer needed if we adopt this other approach. I have gone through and made consequential changes to take out the references to 'party secretary' because we are bringing it right back to a member, a candidate or an intending candidate.

I want to talk about the disclosure of donations. I think Labor is onto something here. We can really tighten that up and I would like to see intending candidates disclose to the commission in an approved form any donation of \$500 - when it hits \$500 it is cumulative as well - and that really should be within 48 hours of receipt. I do not buy the fact that in this digital world where we all manage to run an entire planet digitally for a year that we cannot disclose donations more quickly. You can put it on your website.

Ms O'Connor - That is what we do. We run it through an ethics lens and then put it on the website.

Ms OGILVIE - I know you do. I am a little more centrist about it and I am happy with everybody following the law but I think we need to change the law. I am a bit on side with that. Within 48 hours we can do it and if we need to digitise, we can digitise.

Proposed section 165M, anonymous political donations - well, why are there any?

Ms O'Connor - Yes, good question.

Ms OGILVIE - Let us delete that. Donations from foreign donors, again, why are there any foreign donors? There should not be anonymous political donations. They should be named.

Ms Haddad - We have in this bill outlawed donations from anonymous donors but you have deleted that section which would allow them.

Ms OGILVIE - I will have another look at it if I haven't got it right and perhaps you could walk me through it. There should not be anonymous donations but I also think donations should be by individuals. This is maybe where we are at cross-purposes. Why do we have companies donating and lobby groups, those sorts of things? Individual donations are sensible and would be fairer.

I see that there is a cost burden that might come with reform in this area. I know the Liberals are working on their plan and I have made a submission to that process even though it commenced before I returned to this place.

I am also pleased that no vote is being required today because it gives us chance to have a proper conversation, which is really your goal, right?

Ms Haddad - Absolutely.

Ms OGILVIE - That is very good. I have come forth with a bunch of ideas which have some merit. Some might be more difficult, but if we really take it back to basics, back to the grassroots and think about what Hare-Clark was about when it was designed, it was for individual candidates to be able to run and win and to truly represent their part of their electorate. Sadly, we have got ourselves into a bit of a party pickle in some senses and we can start trying to reel that back.

I have done some other consequential amendments towards the end relating to other things that have been fixed. Proposed section 12 relates to parties getting into trouble if they breach party caps. Party caps are not sensible or workable and if we are going to look at capped expenditure on election campaigns in the House of Assembly, we have to look at that campaign. Having run upstairs and downstairs, the model is there and is able to be applied and if that is what we want to do, that might be a sensible way forward.

I would like to wrap up by running through some of the detail of where we could land something. You have heard my passion about nobody having to spend \$100 000 but the reality is people do spend a lot, and parties spend a lot as well. The fact is that elections are expensive and require fundraising but we can do better and faster, more transparent reform and reporting.

In summary, why don't we think about capping campaigns at \$18 000? Campaign expenditure for House of Assembly elections could be capped at \$18 000 for the same as the Legislative Council, rising with CPI - I agree with the CPI element - with the same all-in rules applying. That helps work through issues such as GST spending which is obviously part of an expenditure budget when you are going into these capped campaigns. As to the reporting of that and the rules around that when you get it wrong, mistakes can be made and people are able to fix those up if they happen. We all agree that politics should be a battle of ideas, not who has the biggest cheque book or who has the biggest resources.

There are different pools of resources that parties can draw upon and everybody has their secret magic that helps them be more competitive, whether its extra dollars, more boots on the ground, great town halls, digital presence. Everybody has a strategic advantage - and if you did not you would not be in this House. It is good to have that competition but we must also recognise that it is not one thing or the other. All these elements ought to be looked at and considered in election campaigns if we are going for this sort of reform.

I believe we can do donation disclosure within 48 hours, regardless of what the caps are. We have the capacity in digital technology to be able to do that. Even if that is you disclosing it to the TEC, if they are unable to get it up on their website in real time, you have disclosed it and that is a step forward. It could be made within 48 hours of a bank receipt. We all get digital receipts so you can just flick them on. We live in a digital world and there is no reason transparency should not be accelerated.

This is the big one for me. The more I talk about this the more women have come forward to tell me about their terrible experiences on social media, particularly in relation to politics, local government and political campaigning. I have had some terrible things said and done but I think we all have, so it is not personal. This is the mode that we live in and it is time, and I am calling on the women to get together to resist this nonsense. No other generation has had

to put up with this. This is something for our generation and we need to fix it because the next generation coming after us deserves a fair and free go.

We have tried to work out how to use social media and what those rules are in election campaigns but we are not doing a very good job because at the moment you can put anything out there and say anything. It is only recently that we have seen even President Trump, known for his hyperbole and nonsense -

Ms O'Connor - For his lies.

Ms OGILVIE - I said hyperbole but you know what I meant - now he is finally getting some tags from Twitter and the rest of them saying, 'Don't listen to this'. Even the mainstream radio and television stations shut him off. Things are a little bit out of control and that is a global example. The Russian interference that was alleged in the American election; all that stuff was done digitally. I do not know about other people here but I get emails from people I do not even know suggesting that I vote one way or another in the American election. I do not know where they got my details from, probably sucked it off some database somewhere.

This is a call-out to all sensible and decent people, to the women in this House, to stand up and say enough is enough, we do not want any more of this stupid bullying and nonsense, the threats or whatever it is that comes forward. It is time to act on that. I have spoken with the Attorney-General about this. I know she is aware of this and I think she has some sympathy for my position on it. I am hopeful that we will be able to work through that.

Ms Archer - Women are the worst to each other.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, I know. I have also spoken with the Greens member for Clark and we have different view about how we need to fix this, because I talked about not being able to use candidates' names. We have a different view on that section.

Ms O'Connor - I think you should just scratch section 196.

Ms OGILVIE - I think we have a fundamental agreement about the bullying problem - that is what we need to deal with, that is where I want to go with that. We agree on that big picture stuff but how it is implemented - that is something we will probably need to discuss.

I call it cleaning up social media and I think that no one participating in their democracy should be subject to abuse. It is pretty straightforward. What do you reckon? How about we get it stopped?

Ms Haddad - No one should be subject to abuse at all.

Ms OGILVIE - We are the people in here who can stop this.

Madam Speaker, I am sorry, I am talking out of school but I think you have had some experiences as well.

Ms O'Connor - I do not think we can stop it.

Ms OGILVIE - I think we can stop it. This is called - we should try.

Ms O'Connor - Anonymous keyboard warriors, full of hate.

Ms OGILVIE - There is a lot of hate out there and crazies. So there is a general mood of agreement. No one should be subject to abuse so let us try and let us think of ways to close the loopholes that allow personalised negative campaigns that are delivered by digital means such as social media or telephone banking or whatever it is. Let us nip those in the bud and put a layer over that. We owe it not just to ourselves but to the next generation, the sisterhood and our daughters in particular who are coming through.

I suspect some of the blokes will want to say, 'You probably get -

Mr Ellis - I am the only here. I am starting to worry.

Ms OGILVIE - Where have all the men gone? Maybe, we will bring a vote on to vote ourselves into no deal bullying position. What do you think?

Ms O'Connor - Why don't we just stage a coup and take over the government and run the place?

Ms Haddad - Hear, hear.

Ms OGILVIE - Just for the *Hansard* record we note that the wonderful Felix is in the House and he is holding the fort for his side very nicely and we like him very much.

You are getting the vibe of where I want to go with this, to use a great phrase from *The Castle*.

The Electoral Act contains provisions preventing the use of candidates' names - this is the one I have been speaking with the Greens' members about - but that rule can be avoided in digital campaigning. It is time for a clean-up and I have tabled my own bill on this point. Before I did that, or in conjunction, I have written to the Attorney-General because it needs to be a negotiation. This is something that we have seen over the last year and with private members bills they are tricky, they create a good debate, which is great. You get those ideas out there. But to land legislation and real change you need a policy framework that sits under legislation. You need that work to have been done; resources need to be looked at; agreement with stakeholders, full consultation - all those elements. I am hopeful that this discussion will feed into those ideas around how that can all be pulled together.

I also believe that it might be time for us to consider a real time complaints mechanism that online bullying and defamation, and fake news and all those other horrible things that are best exemplified by the American election, but which do happen here as well - this is a global problem. It happens everywhere but it is in the interests of Tasmanian democracy that candidates are free to campaign safely and fairly online and without fear.

I do not think we are in that position. It is not often that we down tools to have a big session talking about yourselves but this one is one that matters. It goes to the nature of the candidates we will be able to attract, which goes to the quality and capacity of our leadership that we have in this place. This is a real issue for people I have spoken to who are worried about impacts on their families and various other things that are quite real.

The impact of that online nasty behaviour across all sectors is significant but it is untenable in political land so I would like to see a mechanism able to rapidly address complaints in real time during election campaigns and if this is something that we need to ask the Electoral Commission to consider - a digital capacity - then let us have a look at that and look at what policy and funding could look like around that.

We are going to have to look at it in our court system as well and we have had many, many complaints come in through constituents into my office and I bring them to this House - people who are having an awful time with stuff they just cannot get stopped online or they cannot get taken down from being online. Some of it is awful when you think about the terrible things that happen with revenge porn and those sorts of things, just dreadful.

On the broader donations landscape, there are a raft of ideas, lots of ideas that could be considered, such as, only allowing donations from individuals full stop. Not organisations. Here is one for Cassy. I think you will enjoy this - restoring the numbers of the House of Assembly -

Ms O'Connor - That would be excellent.

Ms OGILVIE - to create a depth of talent - I see some grinning and smiling.

Ms O'Connor - That is the tripartisan view of the committee: that the numbers should be restored.

Ms OGILVIE - I remember this, and you may also recall that it was my father in his Ogilvie Report who recommended that parliament not be shrunk in the first place, but however, there we are. It is out of my hands, but I always have been on the record about that one.

We could do some really good reform stuff. I tell you what I am not going to put up with though - I am not going to put up with emails that go out to groups, constituent groups, suggesting that I in some way have a different view to what I actually do. My view is that we can do better, we can reform. There is a need for deeper reform than that proposed today, but I want us to come together to negotiate around this stuff.

It is good that there is not a vote. I would have probably voted against this bill for these reasons because I am not putting up with \$1 million spend for parties and \$100 000 for other people. It is not okay. Let us work it out together. We do not need to be sending any more emails out; we can just talk to each other about it. Hopefully, I put forward some suggestions which are quite bold, and a bit different, and maybe we can have some discussions around where it might go. It is good that the Liberal Attorney-General is in the House. I am sure she is listening. I am also pretty sure she probably does not agree with me, but that is okay because we can still be friends.

[4.22 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I thank Ms Ogilvie. That was an interesting and informative contribution. I am not sure I agree that there is any real way that we can stop people, behind the anonymity of their keyboards, from slinging abuse. I do not think it is possible because there are quite a few people in the world who feel deeply aggrieved -

Ms Archer - People who use nom de plumes too. Yes, and I know who a lot of them are, which is interesting.

Ms O'CONNOR - about everything. Yes, it is the anonymous cowards who think attacking particularly female MPs is good sport. It says so much more about them than it does about us.

I also thank Ms Haddad the member for Clark, for bringing on this legislation. It is a significant step forward and, of course, the Greens will be supporting this bill. I am glad that we will be given the time as a parliament to go through the second reading process and then into Committee and work through some of the issues that Ms Ogilvie has raised, but we would also want to talk about some amendments.

Politics in Tasmania, in many ways, is damaged by our lack of any donations disclosure framework beyond the Commonwealth law. It has created a rot at the heart of our democracy. It treats voters like mugs because what the system says to them at the moment is, we do not believe that you should know who is donating how much to which political party and for what purpose. That is insulting to voters and it is wounding to democracy.

If you want to understand one really good example of how the influence of money on politics corrupts outcomes and works against the public interest, we need look no further at a federal level than the 2018-19 disclosures that revealed fossil fuel companies have donated a total of \$2 million to the Labor and Liberal parties: \$1.3 million of that went to the party of government, the Liberals; and \$700 000 went to the Labor Party and that is up from \$1.3 million in the previous year. The money ramped up in an election year because the fossil fuel industry was investing for its very survival and we know that the money, the big spend, paid off because despite the fact Australia has gone into a COVID recession and there is a clear and pressing need for a transformation of our economy into a renewable sustainable future, the best the Morrison Government could do was offer Australians a gaslit recovery. Regrettably, because the money has also contaminated the Opposition, the other side of politics, young people had to listen to the federal Opposition Leader back in the Prime Minister on a gaslit recovery. The same thing happens over and over again in this country on resource-extractive fossil fuel industries where both parties basically say exactly the same thing.

It comes home to Tasmania when you look at the Estimates schedule that I had a few words to say about this morning, where both the major parties think it is perfectly acceptable to only allocate 30 minutes to scrutiny of the Climate Change portfolio. Any scientist will tell you it is the single most important and pressing issue that any parliament or any government at any level has to deal with. We should be having Estimates scrutiny of the Climate Change portfolio that is at least as long as the Premier's four hours or Treasury's four hours. There are so many questions that need to be asked, thought about and answered in the Climate Change portfolio. The people of Tasmania have been sold short and that is in significant part because of the corrupting influence of the dark money flowing into the major parties from fossil fuel interests.

As we know, Tasmania has the most deliberately lax donation laws in the country. This was confirmed during the 2018 state election by ABC Fact Check. In fact, it is the first and only time in my political life I have been ABC Fact-Checked and it was good to get

confirmation that we were correct. We are the only state without a state-based legislative framework for political donations.

At a time when public confidence and trust in politics is so low, we have the right to demand more honesty, more openness from our government, but instead what we are getting daily is more spin, more secrecy and less transparency. Central to an erosion of public confidence and trust in politics is a perception that the political process has been corrupted by the spending power of a narrow range of interests, and we know who they are. No big business hands over money out of the goodness of its heart. It is money they regard as an investment in their own self-interest and, of course, the quid pro quo expectation is implicit.

Without public disclosure, there can be no accountability and Tasmanians are unable to weigh up whether their elected representatives acted in the public interest, or in the interests of those who gave them a hefty wad of cash. With an absence of public disclosure of political donations it is no wonder there is a perception that money buys influence in Tasmania, and it has for decades. It is true that money from vested interests is buying influence in Tasmania; indeed, we put it to the House that gambling industry money bought the last election.

Tasmania's political donations laws need a radical fix to make sure the community knows who is funding elections. Fixing these broken laws is fundamental to our democracy and to restoring trust in politics. It has been so eroded because people so often see their elected representatives working against their interests, lying, fighting and not serving the community that elected them to be their representative.

I believe there is a hunger in the community for truth, decency and integrity in politics. We saw that in America over the past week. I do not know about other members of this place but when the numbers started first coming in on that night and it looked like Trump was in a good position to win, I felt incredibly despondent about the fact that at that point 68 million Americans could vote for a lying, sex-abusing criminal. But as the votes started to come in we saw something else happen. We saw the majority of American people rescue their democracy. We saw black women and young people come out in numbers never before seen to restore democracy and fend off fascism. I think what we saw in that vote is a manifestation of that yearning for an ability to trust in politics, a longing for elected representatives who are truthful, who will tell you that honour matters and they will live that way, who have integrity and who every time will work in the public interest. Unless we have a strong donations disclosure framework in Tasmania, the people of Tasmania cannot have that faith.

Changes to the Electoral Act were promised in the lead-up to the 2018 state election but in dispiritingly typical fashion, the Liberals have failed to deliver on the review process of the act, thus exposing their promise, we believe, as nothing more than a stunt to quieten public debate following a pokies-flushed election win. It has now been 19 months since submissions closed for the Government's Electoral Act review interim report. A final report was due about a year ago, in 2019, but it has instead remained in the Attorney-General's inbox, or wherever it sits, since December last year.

Indeed, the Premier, Mr Gutwein, has only managed tokenistic gestures in relation to promised changes, saying in February that he would merely 'have a look at it', and six months later when we asked him about it he told the House he had not 'turned his mind to it', which of course was a crabwalk away from his predecessor's albeit lame process of reviewing

Tasmania's electoral laws, with a strong suggestion that there would be some changes to legislation in this term of the parliament.

It is unsurprising the Liberals have not rushed to clean up these lax laws as they have benefited from them for years. Having not disclosed who is behind nearly \$2.6 million worth of the \$3.4 million in donations during the last election campaign alone, it is clear the only reason the party in government is dragging its feet on electoral donations reform is because there is something to hide and they believe it is in their best political interests for the status quo to remain. That is exactly why we need donations reform.

The Tasmanian Greens support expenditure caps, bans on corporate donations, donations from foreign interests, developers and gambling interests. Yes, we support public funding for election campaigns and it has been unedifying to see the Premier when he is cornered on this issue focus only on public funding for election campaigns which is a longstanding Greens position.

This legislation does not have public funding in it and we support this legislation. Every other Australian state and territory and the Commonwealth has a measure of public funding for election campaigns, but not Tasmania. That time will have to come. If we do not want to have corporate money and vested interests permanently able to corrode our democratic foundations we will need to have a form of public funding for campaigns in Tasmania.

Lowering the threshold for donations disclosure is also critical but they should also be seen in real time and that is what the Greens do. Obviously we do not have the capacity to elicit or accept donations from the big end of town like the Liberal and Labor parties do. The vast majority of the money that we receive in order to campaign comes from individual donors and quite a small group of people who are dedicated to making sure in this parliament there are elected representatives who will stay good and true to this island and speak up for the environment, for communities, for our parks and for action on climate change.

Labor's draft bill is a significant step forward. It requires the disclosure of all political donations to parties, candidates or members of the House of Assembly or Legislative Council over \$1000, including multiple donations from a single donor that add up to over \$1000 within 30 days. It prohibits anonymous donations over \$1000 to individual MPs, candidates and parties. It prohibits foreign donations over \$1000 to individual MPs, candidates and parties. Our view is that it should just prohibit foreign donations to political parties.

I again take this opportunity to put on the record that the Liberal Party accepted \$30 000 from the Yuhu Group, the director of which is Huang Xiangmo, who has since been banished from Australia because of concern about his deep ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

This bill sets a limit of \$100 000 for the campaign expenditure of candidates endorsed by a political party for the House of Assembly elections, increasing by CPI. I can certainly confirm that no elected Greens MP has ever had that substantial sum of money allocated to them for their campaign. I am not going to tell you how much money we had for the last state election campaign but it was not very much relative to what the Liberal and Labor parties were able to draw primarily from business donations, but also from the Labor Party's point of view from trade unions.

It sets a limit of \$120 000 for the campaign expenditure of candidates not endorsed by a political party for House of Assembly elections, increasing by CPI. It sets a limit of \$40 000 for each candidate to a maximum of 25 candidates for the campaign expenditure of political parties for House of Assembly elections, increasing by CPI and it increases the spending limit for candidates for election to the Legislative Council to \$20 000, increasing by CPI.

I have to say when Ms Ogilvie was talking about being able to run a Legislative Council election campaign successfully on that sum of money, or the \$17 000, which was the limit at the time, it does tell us something about how much money goes into House of Assembly elections. It raises the question about why so much money is apparently needed for House of Assembly elections, and I share Ms Ogilvie's queries about the thresholds that have been set in this legislation. Nonetheless, it is a threshold. It is a limit, a cap, and that is exactly what we need in this state.

While Labor's bill is a step forward and in many ways reflects substantively the bill that former attorney-general, Brian Wightman, brought into this place in late-2013, which had Greens' support, it fails to deliver real-time donations disclosure. It contains the provision for a 30-day disclosure time frame. Thirty days is about your average campaign length. If Labor is serious about making sure voters know who is giving them how much to which political party, they would have drafted legislation with seven to 14-day donation disclosure thresholds. That is an amendment we would flag in the Committee stage.

The omission of a cap on donations from individuals and a ban on donations from corporate interests from developers and gambling interests is notable and we believe it weakens Labor's bill, but I do not want to take anything away from the fact that Labor and Ms Haddad have gone to the trouble of preparing this bill and bringing it to the House for debate because it is something to work on. It is a very good start.

Tasmania needs reform to bring our state in line with the rest of the country. Regardless of party politics, the public has a right to know this information. If simple commonsense ethics will not motivate change, we urge the Liberals to think of the public perception of them and their work and see that changing these laws will only improve their standing in the community. It will improve trust in politics and in our fragile but precious democracy.

Elections must be about a contest of values and policy not a battle of dark money. Political donations that are not disclosed but come from vested interests cheapen democracy. They treat voters like mugs. Not knowing who has funded the campaigns of political parties is toxically corrosive to democracy and it is untenable.

We believe that Tasmanians want strong donations disclosure laws in place. The Liberals must know that there is a perception in the community that something is rotten in the State of Tasmania, otherwise they would not have made a pledge under the previous premier to undertake a review. You do not undertake a review unless you are prepared to implement some change. We believe that came from understanding but there is real unease in the community about the lack of transparency, the opacity around money that comes into political parties before and during election campaigns.

That unease was only amplified after the 2018 state election. With the river of dark money that poured into that campaign it was hard to get a proper sense of it because the evidence of millions of dollars was everywhere you looked - in every newspaper every day on

every second page, in advertising that started on Boxing Day during the cricket that was relentless, in in-kind contributions, third-party endorsements through the Love Your Local campaign, the backing of the Federal Group, one of the most poisonous corporations Tasmania has ever known. I say that because the influence of the Farrell family and the Federal Group on this parliament, on political parties Labor and Liberal, on democracy, on government over 40 years has been profound and not positive. It is because of that influence that Tasmanians are undoubtedly going to have to face legislation that embeds poker machines in pubs and clubs until the year 2043.

The framework that will be put in place through that legislation, the policy that the Liberals changed before the election to reflect the Federal Group's position, is now as the Federal Group would wish it. So again we see the deeply worrying and corrosive influence of one Sydney-based family on this whole place over four decades. The harm that has come from that one family's capacity to tell whatever party is in government at the time how things are going to be is incalculable. The human cost is beyond imagination.

Those machines have led to suicide, homelessness, deep poverty, family violence, child abuse and neglect and addiction. That has come about because of government policy to allow the proliferation of poker machines into pubs and clubs. Both parties historically have been complicit in that because they have allowed the Farrell family to tell them how things are going to be.

I will cite a study from the University of Tasmania's Institute for the Study of Social Change which revealed only 20 per cent of the \$25 million donated to Tasmanian political parties in the past decade was publicly disclosed.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, how are we to know whether powerful interests have made multiple donations under the threshold via a number of separate entities? That is the problem with the framework we have in place now. It is so muddy, so opaque and such large sums of money are moving through party accounts and so little of it is disclosed. It is impossible to know how much money is coming in and to what exact purpose.

I am sure the Attorney-General wants to make a contribution and perhaps to make some excuses for the ongoing delay to Electoral Reform -

Ms Archer - You make me so excited about jumping now. You were going so well then, being nice and peaceful.

Ms O'CONNOR - I could not help it, on my way out. I am saying it as I see it. I am pretty sure the Attorney-General is going to get up and make some excuses for why the recommendations of the already limp review of electoral laws in Tasmania has sat on her desk for a year or so, or maybe it is only 11 months.

This bill is a very good start. The House should support it. We should all have the courage to support it. There is no problem with that from the Greens point of view. Most importantly, we should all have the courage, come election time, to put ourselves before the people and have faith that they will know we are honest and open about our funding. We should be able to go to this next election and it will be about values and policy. That is how you make good government. That is how you restore trust in the community. You do not instil

trust in the community, for example, by concealing a policy to weaken firearm laws which comes out one day before the election. That again is treating Tasmanian voters like mugs.

We can all do better and, with this legislation, we have an opportunity to start cleaning up politics in Tasmania. My goodness, doesn't it need a good broom through it.

[4.48 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Madam Speaker, I get to ask the questions, which I am actually looking forward to on this. I doubt I will get to my questions today as I will only be part-way through my contribution before time will expire for today. I note that Labor does not require a vote on the bill this afternoon, which I find curious in itself.

I also find it curious, and perhaps more interesting than curious, that every member who has spoken on this bill so far has been very willing to accept that this is a first step or a first tranche for Labor. Members may like to recall that we have had a first tranche. The whole purpose of the first tranche was to deal with some mechanical modernisation technical-type issues that needed to be done prior to a Legislative Council election back in - I will have to come back to that because I cannot see it in my notes for the time being. It was needed to be dealt with within a specific - I know, the bill passed, received royal assent on the 15 April, it commenced on the 18 April 2019 in time for a May 2019 Legislative Council election. There were some things that needed to be dealt with in that. There was a first tranche and they were the things that could be done. There were other procedural things that I will get to in my contribution.

I find it interesting that it is more about what this bill does not deal with than what it does. Labor has deliberately, I believe, left things out of this bill. They have not chosen, on the face of it, to deal with the issue that they like to sweep under the carpet. That is, namely, the funding from the unions. They have not dealt with that.

I am also very curious how they have arrived at some figures. Some of the figures differ from a previous bill of theirs in this House, which they introduced when they were in government and they introduced it at the last dying hour of their government. They have made some changes some of which have increased expenditures. Ms Ogilvie knows that there is a disparity between how Labor is prepared to treat party candidates to independents.

Ms Ogilvie - Yes, that was a bit weird.

Ms ARCHER - All of it is a bit weird and many of my questions will be around those types of things. What data? What analysis? What cost analysis? What evidence has been used? What projections have been used? Have they done a proper and complete review of the law so that it is sound law reform? I hazard a guess that the answer to a lot of that is, no. I do not mean to sound as smug as that sounded. It galls me when we come into this House and people are not prepared to do the thorough research or the work, or prepared to accept that the Government, yes, we have the review it is well known, yes, we will be releasing the report.

Members on the other side of the House and indeed the Greens have been in Cabinet as well. They know how these things work. They know that things need to be considered; they know I need to seek advice on some things as well. They know that with a terribly complex area of law reform what sounds like very simple concepts on the face of it are not that simple. When you look at other jurisdictions around our country and you see that none of these types of measures have been introduced without public funding, and a bill like this does not even

mention it, and pardon, I had to leave the House momentarily when the public funding aspect was mentioned, but it was reported to me that Ms Haddad did mention it but said that this was just one step and we will deal with that later.

Ms Haddad - No, I said that the mechanisms of this bill are achievable without public funding. That is why it is not necessary.

Ms ARCHER - What I am saying is, on my preliminary analysis, no other jurisdiction has dealt with it that way. I hazard a guess that there are very sound reasons for that. All those things are being considered by my department.

Members of this House, I know you want to be cynical, I know you want to suggest that we are sitting on it and that it is somehow sitting on a shelf in my office gathering dust. It is not. These things do need to be considered and looked at.

The former premier took an interest in this so much so that he called the review. Our current Premier takes an interest in this for obvious reasons as well. The review is something that is in conjunction with the Department of Justice and the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well.

As I said, it is a pity I will not get to the questions but I want to let members know what our current position is, and that is we have been dealing with a small thing called COVID-19 this year, and we are still dealing with a small thing called COVID-19. For the record, if anyone is reading the transcript of this *Hansard*, I have my tongue firmly planted in my cheek when I say 'little'. It has been a mammoth task dealing with COVID-19, it has been a mammoth task dealing with all the different legislation dealing with emergency provisions we have had to take through this place with reduced sittings because of COVID-19, many of which were in some areas of my portfolios. That is, rental protections and measures that we have had to take to ensure that people have been able to remain in their homes during this challenging time. We also considered funding to ensure that tenants have access to relief, and landlords have access to relief - which is offered only in Tasmania, not anywhere else in Australia. We have had to focus on a number of matters relating to COVID-19.

Putting that aside, tomorrow we will deal with the State Budget which is one of, if not, the most important budget this side of the House will ever hand down. It is a budget that we have been working on for some time and in response to COVID-19.

I am very surprised that Labor has chosen to bring this bill on today, during the budget week, rather than revealing anything they might put in their alternative Budget. We are still hopeful on this side of the House that they might actually prepare one.

Ms O'Connor - You sound like you are clutching at straws there, Attorney-General.

Ms ARCHER - I will say it again: the Greens - two of them - can come together and produce an alternative Budget, but Labor with their members in this House and the upper House cannot muster up enough courage.

Ms White - You can't even talk about donations reform.

Ms ARCHER - I have a speech here, which I do not want to waste in the small amount of time remaining this afternoon, Ms White. I have highlighted throughout my speech the list of questions I am going to ask Ms Haddad. I am reluctant to bring them forward in the small amount of time that I have this afternoon because they are all important questions.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, the member is on her feet.

Ms ARCHER - It seems members have very short memories about why we have ended up at this point, in terms of process. I understand the frustration with the time it takes for some law reform. I get frustrated at times. We have undertaken a lot of law reform during the last few years, but members in this House are suggesting to the public that we, on this side of the House, have done absolutely nothing in relation to electoral reform. Our review commenced on 9 June 2018 with general -

A member - A long time ago.

Ms ARCHER - No. With a general call for submissions and target stakeholder consultation on the terms of reference. Thirty-three submissions were received from a range of stakeholders and individuals. An interim report on the review was released on 20 December 2018. This is the information that has been wiped from people's memories: the interim report was prepared having regard to submissions received and research into electoral laws applying in other Australian jurisdictions and relevant international comparisons. The interim report contains 19 consultation issues seeking feedback to inform the recommendations in the final report. Following the release of the interim report, the High Court handed down a decision in *Unions New South Wales - it was actually Unions NSW & Ors v NSW* [2019] HCA1 - that was relevant to aspects of the review -

The decision directly relates to the issues of capping electoral expenditure by third party campaigners (in a differentiated sense to political parties or candidates) and potentially also extends to limits on donations to third parties for the purpose of electoral expenditure.

It is clear from the decision that careful analysis, research and evidence gathering is required to support and justify as reasonably necessary the formulation of legislation or policy that seeks to burden the implied freedom of political communication or governmental and political matters.

I emphasise that last sentence. In response to this High Court decision, an addendum to the interim report was released on the 18 February 2019. That was so people could provide further consultation and feedback. Then we had the first tranche of amendments, and I have explained why they were necessary. I will not go through that now; I will go through it properly during my speech.

The High Court case is very important because matters can be determined to be unconstitutional if we do not follow that law.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Aboriginal Flag - Permanent Presence above Parliament House

[5.00 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens - Motion) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes the theme for NAIDOC Week 2020 is 'Always was, Always will be.'
- (2) Recognises that First Nations people have occupied and cared for this continent for over 65, 000 years - the oldest continuing culture in the world.
- (3) Further recognises that European invasion saw brutally violent and systematic atrocities inflicted on Aboriginal Tasmanians.
- (4) Acknowledges these atrocities have been followed by decades of dispossession and oppression - much of it perpetrated or condoned by governments, both state and federal.
- (5) Further acknowledges that, despite this tragic recent history and enduring injustice, the palawa/pakana people and their culture remains strong.
- (6) Understands that lutruwita/Tasmania is still, and will always be, Aboriginal land.
- (7) Further understands that all people, but particularly elected representatives, have a responsibility to recognise and respect this fact.
- (8) Further notes the Tasmanian Parliament does not currently recognise this fact at the most basic level - by flying the Aboriginal flag throughout the year.
- (9) Calls for the Aboriginal flag to be flown over Parliament House whenever the Tasmanian State Flag is raised.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Is a vote required today?

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Deputy Speaker, a vote will not be required today but I believe the House will resolve today that the Aboriginal flag will fly permanently over this building.

We have had a number of conversations with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Ogilvie and the Speaker and there is overwhelming consensus that it is well past time that beautiful flag was flown over this building.

A number of members of this House attended the Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast this morning, and we had the great privilege and acknowledgement of country from Professor Tim McCormack, the recently retired Dean of the Law School. I cannot do it justice here, but it was deeply moving and respectful. It also was a challenge to us all as elected representatives who attended, and every person who was there, to understand the depth of the injustice that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have endured and still endure.

Professor McCormack talked about a sovereign people and about the warriors. He talked about the terrible injustice of promises that were made and broken. In 1831, Governor George Arthur made an agreement with the Aboriginal leaders of the time that if they would simply gather their people together and go off to Flinders Island, once things had settled down a bit, they would be allowed back onto their country and allowed to resume their way of life.

As is the case for so many agreements between colonial governments and the first people of any race, that agreement, that promise was broken. What happened on Flinders Island was a travesty, where people were decimated by disease and by heartbreak. A remnant population of Tasmania's First People came back to the mainland onto their country, which had been stolen from them, in 1847. We have never made reparation.

We have never properly and deeply acknowledged the wrong that was done to this Island's First People, whose connection to this country dates back around 65 000 years. The Aboriginal people's story on this island is deep in the landscape. The history of this island did not begin 217 years ago, it is 65 000 years old. Thank goodness, at least we have a dual naming policy in place now so that Tasmanians more broadly, can get a sense of that human story on this island that goes back 65 000 years.

One of the nicest things is hearing young people and children refer to the mountain only as kunanyi, an acknowledgement of that mountain's deep, spiritual meaning to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Australians are the oldest continuing culture in the world. This country has the world's oldest oral stories. The First People of Australia engraved the world's first maps and made the earliest paintings of ceremony. Aboriginal people were engineers, navigators, farmers, botanists, fire scientists, astronomers, artists, creators. The deep connection to an understanding of country, of landscape, of the cycle of the seasons is very much a part of Aboriginal identity and culture.

We know that the European invasion of Australia and Tasmania was brutally violent and it was chillingly systematic. Terrible atrocities were inflicted on the palawa/pakana people, and these were very often condoned or perpetrated by governments - state and federal. The Black War which began in 1824 decimated this island's original inhabitants. The black line, which was a movement of troops and civilians in a line across this island to drive the Aboriginal people into a corner, was symbolic of the mentality of governments and many colonisers at that time.

Today is Remembrance Day. It is the day we remember the fallen. We have never properly acknowledged the warriors who fought in the Black War to defend this country and we should. It was good to read the Minister for Veterans Affairs' talking point article in the

Mercury today, where he respectfully acknowledged the contribution of First Nation soldiers to Australia's war endeavours.

We have to do more. We have to make sure that in our schools and in our communities there is a deep and respectful understanding of the first Tasmanians, their connection to country, their struggle, their persistence, their endurance, the strength of their culture and their identity and their connection to country.

There are some terrible characters in the history of European settlement on this island. John Batman, after whom the Batman Bridge is named, was responsible for hunting and killing dozens of Aboriginal people - yet perversely we still celebrate him, with his name attached to a bridge. William Crowther mutilated the remains of a Tasmanian Aboriginal man, William Lanne. Crowther's statue remains standing in Franklin Square, despite demands from the Aboriginal community for it to be removed.

How many decades did it take for any gesture to return the preminghana petroglyphs to Aboriginal people, which was just announced by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs today? Far too long.

Injustice and oppression have continued unabated in the decades since invasion. This is the norm. It is not the exception. The thousands of heartbreaking stories that make up the Stolen Generations - and we have not yet properly made any enduring reparation for that crime against the First Nation's people. Four hundred and thirty seven Aboriginal people have died in custody in Australia in the last 30 years.

Dr Woodruff and I are not among them, but many Australians still celebrate Australia Day on 26 January. That is the day that Aboriginal people recognise as the day they lost their country. It is the day they had their country stolen from them and we need to understand the country was never ceded but it was taken. This island was not ceded by the palawa/pakana people; it was taken at the point of a gun. That requires us to have a good, long, hard look at ourselves and do everything we can to make some sort of amends. That means we need to seriously change the date of Australia Day so it is a day we can all celebrate as Australians, connected respectfully but connected to each other.

Today in my question to the Premier I made the point that Aboriginal heritage is often ignored or destroyed. I was talking to a very well-known Aboriginal leader earlier today about this motion. He reminded me of this litany of acts by local and state governments and other developers to obliterate Aboriginal heritage. An example he pointed to is at South Arm at Arm End, which has gone from being public land in the hands of Parks to being converted into a golf course, but the construction works around that Arm End golf course are just smashing up middens left, right and centre.

I know we have made some changes and improvements to Aboriginal heritage legislation but they do not have meaning because they are not given effect and we have not given responsibility for Aboriginal heritage to the people who own it. Again, it is insult on insult.

I do not know how many people are aware of what happened to the Djab Wurrung birthing trees in Victoria, but to make way for a highway the Victorian government smashed down these trees under which Aboriginal women would bury their placentas. Only three weeks ago, under cover of COVID-19, VicRoads contractors went in and chainsawed down the Djab

Wurrung trees. Then of course there is Rio Tinto's shameful destruction and blasting of the rock art at Juukan Gorge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let us do better. Let us commit collectively as this parliament in this time to do a lot better. Let us acknowledge that Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system are disproportionately represented. Let us acknowledge that Aboriginal children are let down by the child safety system. Let us acknowledge it has been far too long since lands were returned. Without being able to connect to country and to have some economic independence as a result of having lands returned to them, progress for Aboriginal Tasmanians will continue to be too slow.

We have had two Labor premiers promise the return of wukalina/Mt William in the north-east of Tasmania. Silence on that. That is Aboriginal land. That is the home of mannalgenna. That is the source country for Tasmanian Aboriginal people today. Surely as a parliament we can do better than, stay silent on land returns. I remember bringing legislation into this place to return two pathetically small parcels of land, which was all I could get through cabinet, at Irapuna and Rebecca Creek. Unanimously across this parliament, we agreed that those parcels of land should be returned, but the legislation went upstairs and was snuffed. Not even those two tiny parcels of land could this parliament collectively, in both Houses, bring itself to hand back - like we even owned it in the first place.

We need something from Government on the Tarkine tracks, and I say this in the spirit of trying to be constructive. It is a policy that was taken to the 2014 state election. Six years later, thankfully, there are still no tracks through that priceless Aboriginal heritage, one of the richest archaeological sites on the planet. Politics might be getting in the way of Government doing the right thing here and telling the people of Braddon that they are not going to put tracks through the Tarkine, but it is really disrespectful to leave that hanging over the Tasmanian Aboriginal community for six years and not be honest about where it is at. Perhaps in his contribution the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs could touch on that matter of what is happening with the Tarkine tracks.

There was an agreement in 1831 and there is a very strong legal argument that that agreement was a treaty with a sovereign people. It was not honoured. Parliament in the last terms collectively amended the Constitution again in a symbolic gesture to make sure that the Constitution Act of Tasmania recognises there were people here before the arrival of the Europeans.

Let us start working on treaty, because it stalled at the national level. I believe as long as Scott Morrison is Prime Minister it will stay stalled. We can have a state-based treaty with the First People. We could do that collectively with political will by working with our hearts and our heads together and set that framework up. It would require in the first instance for us to be prepared for some truth-telling and they would be hard truths to hear, but we have to hear them if we are really serious about reconciliation being much more than a word.

We definitely need dedicated seats in the Tasmanian parliament for Aboriginal people. The House of Assembly Restoration Bill select committee unanimously agreed that there needs to be dedicated Aboriginal representation in the parliament. It recommended that a select committee be established to report back on how that might be achieved. Let us get on with it. I love looking across this Chamber and seeing the member for Bass, Ms Houston, who is a proud palawa woman. Did I get that wrong? Are you pakana or palawa?

Ms Houston - There is no correct way and no wrong way.

Ms O'CONNOR - No correct way. That is terrific but it is not enough. It is not enough to fly the flag in this Chamber as it has flown here for 11 years. We need dedicated seats in the parliament, we need to move on treaty, we need to return lands, and we need to change the date.

I believe today we are going to agree on a symbolic gesture to make sure that the Tasmanian Aboriginal flag continues to fly over this Parliament House because there is only one week in the year when that flag flies and that is this week, NAIDOC Week. It is just wrong.

I know that there was the contentious debate at Clarence City Council where my excellent local government colleague, Beth Warren, moved to have the Aboriginal flag fly permanently at council chambers and we saw some really unedifying contributions from some of her colleagues and the wrong decision not to vote to fly the flag.

Thankfully, reason arrived and the Aboriginal flag will now fly permanently over Clarence City Council chambers, just as it will fly permanently over the Northern Midlands Council chambers and just as last year when our wonderful Governor, her Excellency the Honourable Professor Kate Warner, worked with the Aboriginal community to make sure that the Aboriginal flag flies permanently at Government House. It is a beautiful sight.

I know it is only symbolic but it has some real meaning because what it is says is that this land is Aboriginal land. This parliament sits on Aboriginal land, the land of the muwinina people of nipaluna who were wiped out. They are no longer here.

It is a good thing to fly that flag over the institutions of this country including local governments and parliaments. There is a very heated debate happening in the federal parliament at this moment and how sad that it becomes something we would even argue about -

Mr Street - Actually, there is not; it was lost.

Ms O'CONNOR - It has gone now?

Mr Street - Yes, 29 to 28.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is so shameful. I think we have a somewhat better cut of elected representative in this place and I believe we will agree today to fly the flag permanently. Personally, I would like to see it not come down at the end of NAIDOC Week. That would be right. More than anything, I hope that when that flag is flying over this building, each of us will come into work here each day and it will challenge our conscience and remind us that we have a solemn duty to be part of reconciliation and reparation and that we have a duty to facilitate truth-telling and treaty and land returns.

On this issue, we have a duty to work together and the less divisive and more respectful these debates can be, the better the signal out into the broader Tasmanian community about why we have collectively resolved to take whatever legislative action we might in order to progress reconciliation or agree to take a symbolic action like fly the Aboriginal flag over the heart of democracy in Tasmania. Yes, it will only be symbolic, but it is a powerful symbol.

I look forward to hearing other members' contributions. I very much look forward to us all agreeing that this is a small but significant symbolic gesture to fly that powerful and beautiful flag over this building. I commend the motion to the House.

[5.24 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Speaker, with some energy I want to thank very much the member for Clark. She became a bit emotional and you always know when that happens she really means it. This is a bloody good idea and something that I feel really passionate about as well. As I was driving to parliament I saw that flag flying and thought how cool and how right it was. I feel that the motion she has brought on today - and I was at the function this morning and heard those speeches - was wonderful.

Ms Houston, you are a favourite in this place. I do not know if you know that, so I will say it. We love the jewellery you wear and you bring a real resonance and depth of knowledge and understanding to this place. I hope the party you are with really appreciate that and take great care of you because it does matter.

I was reflecting on my experience in this place as a new candidate and member as well. When I made my inaugural speech, having studied classics and history and art and archeology, and having worked for the UN in Paris helping get cultural heritage items returned - and the return of the petroglyphs is a marvellous and wonderful thing; they never should have gone in the first place but that work is ongoing and something we all need to work on together - I had some words in there as my best effort and as very much a white girl about what I thought we could do. One of those was to address what I felt was a gap in the Tasmanian Constitution and to recognise that there was history beyond what we said history was.

A lot of work went into that. Guy Barnett was extremely supportive and helpful and we ran an inquiry and the words were ultimately changed. I too felt that we could go further and I have spoken in this place and am on record around seeing some value in a pathway to treaty-type process. I have always said that we ought not to be frightened of the word 'treaty' because it just means a contract or arrangement. It could be a handshake; it could be more or it could be less. It is a conversation we need to have, and history is multi-layered and we move through it. It is never static.

I appreciate what the member said about the bad things that have happened in the past and who we recognise in the statues. I had a moment of great fear with granddad's statue out there and I quickly did the research to make sure it was not something awful that had happened that he would be pulled down over, but he was just dressed up in some blue crochet garment.

Ms O'Connor - He looked fantastic.

Ms OGILVIE - Did you like that?

Ms O'Connor - Yes.

Ms OGILVIE - We loved that as a family. Again it is about recognition and integration with community and how we all live together today. He did a lot of work back in his era in the 1930s on polio, particularly eradicating it within the Aboriginal communities and helping to improve the standard of health after his visits overseas. That is something we all must be

working on. We are in it together now. I feel we have reached a new place, particularly as we have and have had people in this House who have direct descendancy and experience.

There is always work to be done. We can be squabbling cousins. We all live on a very small island and we need to get along. I want to be very clear that I am 100 per cent supportive of this very good suggestion. As I go to the schools around Hobart I see they are all flying the three flags, Australian, Tasmanian and Aboriginal, and others as they come through. There is no reason why we should not do that. It would be a good thing to do. It is very inclusive.

I too hope that the motion today will be supported and subject to going to the other place, and I am sure it would succeed there. This is something the member for Clark has come up with that is genuinely a good idea. The flag should stay up and fly in all its glory. Others can be added too. If it is something that Aboriginal Tasmanians want - and I always get nervous that I do not want to speak for people that I am not representative of -

Ms O'Connor - That's the tricky part.

Ms OGILVIE - It is really hard. Everyone has a good heart and we want to do the right thing. I would like to see that happen. I think we have other work to be done. The work on language is amazing as well - dual names for everything, everywhere, when they are ready - why not?

Ms O'Connor - Geographical features.

Ms OGILVIE - Yes, geographical features. We will get to the finer detail of the architectural issues.

Ms Houston - You know what, rename the bridge.

Ms OGILVIE - I want to rename the bridge; I agree with you on that. What would you like it to be?

Ms Houston - There are a few suggestions. We should consult around that; there are a lot of options. I have my ideas and my family has ideas about what we would like it called.

Ms OGILVIE - That is a great idea. Why do we not put together a process to do that? This is interesting, isn't it, minister?

Mr Jaensch - Everything is interesting.

Ms OGILVIE - Would you like me to sit down?

Mr Jaensch - No, when you are ready. You go for your life.

Ms Houston - There needs to be broad community consultation. Hire a hall, Roger, put on a feed and they will turn up.

Ms OGILVIE - It is something we could work on together in NAIDOC Week.

I will sit down so that you have time. I wanted to genuinely, and with a good sense of unity in this place, recognise people and also recognise good ideas when they come forward. I believe it is genuinely a good idea. If we could keep that flag flying it is symbolic, it is a good idea, it is very warm and inclusive. That is not to say there is not a lot of other work to do as well. I will sit so the minister has some time.

[5.30 p.m.]

Ms HOUSTON (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the NAIDOC theme for 2020 is 'Always was, always will be' Aboriginal land. Always was, always will be culture. Always was, always will be lore. Always will be connection and stories and ritual. Always was, always will be ours. NAIDOC Week is always bitter sweet. While we celebrate culture and survival we also become intensely aware of those we have lost on the way.

In the last 10 days we have lost three members in our community and here at NAIDOC events there were more empty seats once filled by elders, and more empty places left by those taken from us too young. The gap is not closing for us. Too many are dying too young and it is taking too long to fix it.

An extraordinary set of circumstances that seemed to have been caused by a global pandemic, and could only be caused by a global pandemic, resulted in NAIDOC Week and Remembrance Day overlapping. Therefore, I feel this is the perfect time to pay respect to all the Aboriginal warriors, to the men and women who bravely defended this land against invasion and occupation. The survivors of those Black Wars were the ancestors of the palawa/pakana people of today.

I pay my respects to all those who fought for this country, with a special mention for those First Nation warriors who answered the call and marched off to war, who fought for Australia in every conflict. They fought in two World Wars, yet many did not enjoy the benefits of citizenship until 20 years after the end of World War II. The manner in which many veterans, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans, have been treated in Australia is a stain on the fabric of our history. It is one of many.

The roots of our family tree are buried deep in the sacred heart of this country. The palawa/pakana have lived on this land, cared for it, shaped the very landscape itself for thousands of generations. We tamed fire, we made it a tool and used it to shape our environment and thus prevented wildfire from devastating our lands as it all too often does today.

NAIDOC Week is a time for celebration and reflection. It is fitting we reflect on the past, on our past as a state and as a nation: the European invasion, the atrocities and the near genocide of the palawa/pakana. It is a time to reflect on the generations of struggle, to regroup and rebuild, all the time holding onto the culture and family in the face of policies of eradication, segregation and assimilation. All the while in Tasmania there was the shadow of an alleged extinction. I can assure everyone the announcement of that in 1876 underestimated the tenacity and determination of the palawa/pakana people to survive. Not only have we survived, we have retained culture and ties to land and family and they are strong to this day.

Centuries of persecution have seen Aboriginal people around Australia become the most vulnerable and disadvantaged demographic in the nation. There is a very long way to go to

right the wrongs of the past and address disadvantage, and this road must be paved with recognition, respect and action.

Do not just say it, do it: close the gap, fund the organisations, fund the elders properly and fly the flag.

When I arrived at this parliament for my first day there was no Aboriginal flag out the front - and that was startling because everywhere else I had gone to work, to serve my community, there was an Aboriginal flag. Anglicare fly one, the university flies one, other services fly one, private businesses fly them, councils fly them and there was nothing here.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I add my voice to the call for the Aboriginal flag to be flown over Parliament House and also ask that when valued elders in our community are lost, that the flag fly at half-mast for the day of their funeral. Always was, always will be.

[5.37 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Clark, Leader of the Greens, Cassy O'Connor, for bringing this motion today. I thank others who have spoken. In particular, I thank Ms Houston for her proud and heartfelt contribution just now.

I am pleased to confirm that the Government will support this motion today. We do not intend to propose any amendment; however, I would like to have a little discussion about some elements of it.

The theme for NAIDOC Week as others have confirmed and we discussed again this morning, 'Always was, always will be', particularly with reference to land - always was, always will be Aboriginal land. I believe that is a fantastic theme and I will now explain how I personally understand that.

There are many different ways obviously, and Ms Houston has referred to the dimension of spiritual connection to land and the importance of that. It is a birthright for Aboriginal people which I do not share in, but there are other layers of meaning in it which I would like to feel that I do share.

To me, always was, always will be Aboriginal land means not just land owned by Aboriginal people or occupied by Aboriginal people, in the sense that we might refer to something being in someone's possession today. My sense of what we mean when we say 'Aboriginal land' goes to the sense that Aboriginal people not only were in the landscape, but of it. They changed it. They were here for so long that their use of the land and their management of the land altered its ecology, altered its shapes. It would have altered its seasons, and the animals and plants that grew around. They lived here for long enough that they created middens tens of metres high with the shells they collected for food, and that the landscape is not just something they lived in - they fundamentally changed it. In the absence of their practices, it will change to something else, it will not be the thing that we know and it is changing.

I am proud to have been part of a generation that is starting to understand that, and I hope we are not too late. I hope we can understand the landscape we all occupy now and use, and its rhythms and the complex interactions that happen within it. I hope we start to manage it, not as something that we overlay our ways that we brought from elsewhere, but that we adapt

to what has been evolved into it, over 65 000 years or more of influence which has been fundamentally shaped by human presence, Aboriginal use of Aboriginal land.

In that way for me, I see that when we refer to our natural areas, Aboriginality is in that nature, it is part of the identity and it is part of our identity and it is part of that great suite of things that we need to understand, respect, protect and share.

That is my grasp of what we mean when we say Aboriginal land. It is different from others, but it is something my kids might be able to appreciate and participate in, in their lives as Australians. When we think and talk about Europeans coming to Tasmania and the clashes of cultures and ideologies, expectations and practices, perhaps today's Tasmanians and Australians are coming to identify more with this place than with the place that those first Europeans came from. I hope we are coming to an understanding and a respect for Aboriginality and Aboriginal land. I am proud to be of a generation that is starting to come to grips with that.

I spoke this morning about our Government's commitments to our relationship with Aboriginal communities: recognition, advancing reconciliation and working to achieve real outcomes. Aboriginal people are now recognised as Tasmania's First People in our Constitution Act. We have updated the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy which strengthened the Aboriginal Heritage Act, and we are working on that act and others to strengthen them further.

We are reviewing the mechanisms and models for returning land and managing of Aboriginal land, with the intent of returning more land to Aboriginal communities as part of our journey to reconciliation. Importantly, we are working hard to address generations of silence and denial on the subject of Tasmania's Aboriginal history, pre-history and culture by bringing Tasmanian Aboriginal voices, words and language into our schools. As a Government, we are open to treaty and discussions on ways forward.

This morning I was also pleased to announce that the budget we will bring down tomorrow includes our first investment in the new process for Closing the Gap, to which Ms Houston referred. Our funding will contribute to a national pool which will be matched by the Commonwealth and reinvested here in Tasmania to build the capacity of Aboriginal community organisations to deliver services in the areas where there are gaps, to better the life outcomes of Aboriginal people.

Through that process, the aim is to build capacity such that we are able to transfer the provision of services from mainstream providers through partnerships, or entirely in time to competent Aboriginal organisations who know their people and their needs better than anyone, who are experts in the gap and have hopefully the support and resources to better address the gap than we have been able to in the past. It is a new approach which says that it is not just the mainstream and governments who are responsible for closing that gap but rather those mainstream service providers and governments, having not closed that gap, need to transfer the means and the information to Aboriginal people themselves to do a better job.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand that is Ken Wyatt's mission in particular and I am very happy to support that. I am looking forward to that process rolling out over coming weeks and

months in Tasmania and the engagement we will have with Aboriginal people and organisations around the state, as well as mainstream organisations who provide services that have not in all cases delivered for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

I also had the opportunity this morning to share some news about the preminghana petroglyphs. I do not want to revisit that because it is only a process that our Government has contributed something to which has been sought for a long time and is long overdue and now underway.

One of the things I wanted to pull out of my contribution came through my reading and research on how materials like the petroglyphs should be handled and managed, and treated and respected. The message was part of the application submitted by the QVMAG and TMAG which referred to nationally accepted principles of repatriation and a statement that materials - which is a very clinical way of referring to something like the petroglyphs - recognised as spiritually and culturally important and all that have been acquired in an unethical way should be returned to their rightful owners unconditionally. The plain English for me of that is that when things that have been stolen, if they are intended to be given back, there should not be too many rules about what their rightful owners do with them.

Ms O'Connor - Who are the thieves to say?

Mr JAENSCH - Exactly, or the descendants of them, even if they are institutions - so without blame but certainly with the obligation of overdue recognition, apology and respect to unconditionally return. That is the principle we work with, and now it would be the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania which would be the titleholder of the site that the petroglyphs would be returned to that they hold on behalf of all Aboriginal people in Tasmania to work with the museum and tell us how the petroglyphs will be returned, protected, made available for others to see, enjoy and learn from, particularly Aboriginal people across Tasmania. We will stand ready to work with and support them as they do that.

There is another shift happening now in the way we recognise landscape, our role in it, and how we identify with it differently from what our predecessors as Europeans might have when they first came. There is a change happening now that is reflected in these examples. These are not the petroglyphs of government, ministers, people or institutions; they belong to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. We have, thank goodness, a system now for registering and being careful and having paperwork and rules about what happens to Aboriginal heritage that did not exist in the 1950s and 1960s when they were carved off the face of the rock and trucked around the countryside. That is why it has taken a little bit long to formalise permission for return now than it might have taken to procure them in the first place, but they are not ours to make the decisions about.

It is the same with Closing the Gap and the new approach that the federal minister, Mr Wyatt, has taken and I am committed to, which is more about asking and working with Aboriginal people to ask how they see this gap and why it is the way it is. What can we do together and what can we do for you that enables you to have a hand in closing that gap, rather than it being something that we do as governments just for or to other people?

This is where I want to come around in a long way to the question about the flag. I think we all agree that that symbol reflects our openness, our acceptance, our respect and our inclusion of Aboriginal people, Aboriginal culture and history as part of what Tasmania is and

what it stands for. Our House of Assembly and Legislative Council may agree and our parliament technically can decide to fly the flag because we think it is a great idea.

I feel that is an important step and that consensus is wonderful, but I would like to suggest there is another step beyond these rooms of people deciding. That might be, having made our decision, that we think that would be a good idea, that there is some way we empower or request our Presiding Officers to approach Aboriginal community leaders with our suggestion, our decision, our offer.

Ms O'Connor - That is not a bad idea. To be clear, I have had some conversations within Aboriginal community leadership about this move. I would not have brought it on without flagging it with those people.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand.

Ms Houston - So have I because I would not have supported it without that.

Mr JAENSCH - I think for completeness -

Ms O'Connor - I worry about delays.

Ms Ogilvie - Things can happen in parallel, surely? Keep it going, keep the flag up.

Mr JAENSCH - What I am suggesting is a discussion about an important symbol which represents things and there might be room in the process for us as a parliament, having had these discussions and shared these intentions, values and wishes, which approaches at the other end of the cycle of consultation the leaders in the Aboriginal community for their advice, their permission and their blessing on the finer points of how that happens so that it is done in a respectful way.

I heard the suggestion that, for example, in recognition of loss in the Aboriginal community that flags might be flown at half-mast. What are the other rules which ensure that that symbol and what it stands for is part of the decision-making and not simply our gesture as a parliament of what we would like to express with a decision to fly or not to fly the flag and under what rules?

This is part of that turning a different sort of corner. The empowerment, the unconditional handing over of information, and power to decide and determine - that is beyond recognition. It is beyond belated acknowledgement of Aboriginal people and their place in this place and is a worthwhile gesture to complete the picture. I am very pleased to have been able to be part of this discussion. I like the consensus around it, and I look forward to us having Aboriginal flags flying appropriately, in a way that our Aboriginal communities, our leaders and elders in Tasmania feel honoured by as well as acknowledged by. I thank the member again for bringing this motion.

[5.55 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I pay my respects to the palawa/pakana elders past, present and those younger people who are emerging as true voices for their people. The palawa/pakana have cared for this island for tens of thousands of years and we are gifted by the beauty that we live amongst and by a culture which is rich and flourishing. We have so much to learn on the journey of living together on this island.

I am pleased to be a member of a party which has always recognised that this land was stolen, it was never ceded, and that true justice for Aboriginal people in Australia, in Tasmania, requires more than symbolic gestures. It requires real action towards treaty, towards land returns, towards choosing a date which is appropriate to Aboriginal people. It requires true and meaningful funding of services to change, to remove the inequalities that Aboriginal people in Australia suffer in every area of living - housing, education, health, ability to access jobs, disproportionate incarceration rates. There is much to be done.

I truly understand concerns that some people in the Aboriginal community have mentioned in past times about symbolic actions like the flag and the apology from the Prime Minister of Australia. These symbolic actions must be an essential first step, but they cannot be the last step that we take. They are an essential basis for action but they really are only a stepping stone on a journey that we must rapidly move down. In that respect it is so important that we have the Aboriginal flag flying above this House. I truly understand what the member for Bass said about her real surprise of the discordant situation where the Parliament of Tasmania does not fly an Aboriginal flag but we see it in so many other places. It is really symbolic in another way that we are one of the last places to make this decision and it is so past the time that we are doing it.

I will make some comments about the young people in the Aboriginal community and the incredible strength and spirit of young people. The SEED Indigenous Youth Climate Network, which is an Australian group and which has incredible activist voices in Tasmania, is recognising that justice for First Nation people is central to the future they want to inherit. In fact, they are linking up with non-Aboriginal people across the planet who recognise that First Nation people must be the creators, the biggest part of the story of climate action. We must have a future that provides justice for First Nation people as part of the transition to the new world that we must create, in order to have a habitable, flourishing, life-giving planet and so to those young people, we are on the brink of a transformation and a safe climate must be one that is a just society.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Beaconsfield Primary School

Anniversary of the Dismissal of the Whitlam Government

[6.00 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, without reflecting on a vote of the parliament on the matter before the House, congratulations to everyone who has participated in that. There were some excellent contributions on such an important matter.

I rise to speak about Beaconsfield in northern Tasmania. Beaconsfield Primary School has a lot to be proud of, including what happens during book week, where all of the children at the school dress up. The entire town becomes part of the event, and the children parade in their book week costumes throughout the town, being recognised and applauded by the community. They do a lot of wonderful book readings and have guests come in for that. It is a beautiful event where the entire town embraces book week.

I also had the opportunity recently to speak to Beaconsfield Primary School. Most of us as MPs go and talk to schools and talk a little bit about what happens in politics, how government works, how laws are made and similar issues.

I was pleased to be invited to speak to Grade 4 and Mrs Gore on the subject of politics and to answer their questions. We talked about those things that we always talk about when we go to schools - state and federal governments, law making, and how elections work. The students had some very insightful questions and were a wonderful representation of their school. They did Beaconsfield Primary very proud with the types of questions they asked and the way they asked them; they were wonderful.

I want to particularly thank these children. I am going to name this small group because they really were one of the best school conversations I have had in all of my years: Jack, Lachie, Peyton, Missy, Raywin, Xavier, Manique, Danielle, Daniel, Lily-Rose, Joel, Taylah, Hannah, Kelsie, Aaliyah, Gabriel, Kade, Cruze, Cooper and Van - although I understand Ms Cooper may be formally changing his name to Roger in the near future.

Thank you so much for your questions. The reason I raise this tonight was because of a couple of the questions they asked which may, at day two of a very long session, remind us about one of the things we are here for.

They asked me the thing that I was most proud of that I had done in parliament, and the thing that I loved the most. Often, we get so caught up in the business of day to day of the things we do, we forget to reflect on the reasons we do this job, the things that we love and the things that make us proud.

I want to congratulate Mrs Gore and her fabulous class. They are a wonderful group of children. I thank them again, because at the end of the question and answer process, we played a game called 'silent ball'. I can assure you the game is more complex than it sounds and was a really good way to break the tension and discussions that we had had, and for people to relax. It is possibly something we might think of intermittently in the next five weeks ourselves as things get very tough.

I will also mention that while today is Remembrance Day, and we all have appropriately paid great attention to our serving personnel with many of us attending wonderful remembrance services around the state, it is also the anniversary of another significant event - the 45th anniversary of the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. It is interesting to note that the laws that existed at the time constitutionally, that allowed the dismissal of an elected government, still exist today and have not changed. That is something we should all reflect on.

While in office, the Whitlam Government implemented a huge program of reform of which we should all be very proud. In 1972, the end of conscription. In 1973, the establishment of new Commonwealth and agencies and functions including departments of Aboriginal Affairs, Defence, the amalgamation of Air, Army and Navy departments, Environment, Urban Regional Development. Other innovations included the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission, the first ever Advisor to Government on Women's Affairs - and I pay great tribute to Susan Ryan in that role - Institute of Criminology, the Law Reform Commission, the Schools Commission, the Social Welfare Commission.

In 1974 they established the Aboriginal Land Farm Commission, the Australian Legal Aid Office, the National Employment and Training Scheme. In 1975, the Australian Heritage Commission, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Australian Postal Commission, the Australian Telecommunications Commission, the Commissioner for Community Relations, the Family Law Act under which divorce law was reformed and the Family Court established in 1976 and importantly to so many of us, the Medicare health scheme.

It is not an exhaustive list and it does not include the fact that many young women from poor families got to go to university for the first time because of the Whitlam government. It is the forty-fifth anniversary of the dismissal but it is also, therefore, an anniversary for some of the most fundamental nation-changing reforms that our country has ever seen.

Barnstoneworth United Football Club

[6.05 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, over the last couple of weeks it has been a real pleasure to be able to attend a number of end-of-season finals in Australian Rules football, senior and junior, and the world game, football, in Tasmania. It was a pleasure on the weekend to attend the Lakoseljac Cup at KGV and see the great games in the under-20s and the women's and the seniors, with great results. Football was the winner on that day but I want to make reference to the Barnstoneworth United Football Club who played their final on the weekend. They are a club named after Michael Palin's *Ripping Yarns* story 'Golden Gordon'.

United has two teams, the Golden Gordons, who play in division 4 and the Scrappers, who play in division 5. Sunday was the div. 4 league cup, the Golden Gordons versus the Uni Bees. It was a classic match-up, the old bulls versus the young bucks, the underdogs versus the red-hot raging favourites. Bernie was going for only its third piece of silverware in the club's 23-year history and it was a pulsating, high-standard game, one-touch silky football. My good friend Gavin Joyce gave a masterclass in playing the position of full-back and marshalling his forces, turning defence into attack in the blink of an eye.

Scores were locked at 1-all with less than 15 minutes to play, when Bernie winger Jules McMahon broke the deadlock with a goal that would not have been out of place in the Champions League. Striker Rob Shafe, corralled at the edge of the penalty box, juggled the ball three times to himself then bicycle-kicked it over his head to McMahon, who blasted a volley past the keeper into the top right-hand corner. Bernie scored again and took the title 3-1.

Mr Street - You wouldn't be letting hyperbole get in the way, would you?

Mr O'BYRNE - Not at all. This is a very calm description of what was a magnificent game of football. For goalscorers Scott Logie, Jules McMahon and Rob Shafe, it was a great day all around. After the match, club president Chris Schofield dedicated the win to Chris 'Froggy' Belars, a club stalwart and legend who sadly passed away after a recent game with his beloved Barnstoneworth United team. As the lads are wont to say, 'Kick it Barnstoneworth, kick it!'.

Pamela Larkins - Tribute

[6.08 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to express my deepest condolences to the family and friends as well as my own sense of loss and sadness on the passing of Pamela Larkins who was sadly taken from us on 28 October.

Pam was born on 14 May 1937 and will always be remembered for being a generous, loyal and very loving daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, friend and volunteer. Pam alongside her late husband, Morrie, were always fierce champions, advocates and powerhouses for the Liberal Party in Tasmania. I for one will deeply miss Pam's wicked sense of humour, her vibrancy, her passion and commitment.

Pam's dedication and service to the Liberal Party for over 45 years is forever now memorialised with Pam receiving the Bruce Reid Memorial Prize twice, the only Liberal member to have ever received such distinction, as well as the State President Certificate in 2011 and this year the Meritorious Service Award.

Pam's hard work and endless campaigning efforts also helped ensure our success in both federal and state elections and our past premier, the Honourable Will Hodgman, has asked me to pass on the following:

Pam without doubt was one of the kindest, sweetest people I have ever met but also of well-founded and strong political values and beliefs. Pam and Morrie were a great support to me, Nicky and the kids throughout my political life. I take great comfort from the fact that they are together now.

Franklin electorate chair, Michael McKenna, has asked me to pass on that Pam approached the world with a smile and a genuine air of concern. She shared God's own capacity for love while maintaining a most wicked, devilish wit and sense of fun. She was a Liberal woman with spunk. Pammie was fierce in defence of her own and compassionate towards anyone in need. She was like a second mum who revelled in our successes, was in your corner when times were tough and was there to pick you up with a laugh when things went the other guy's way.

The Liberal Party was indeed blessed to be counted among those things that Pam valued deeply. Her commitment and dedication over so many years with her wingman, Morrie, was a mainstay of party activity. Even at a young 83 years of age she was determined to do her bit as she was when she joined the Liberal Party more than 45 years ago.

She has touched the lives of so many Liberals over the years, not just in Franklin, and we are the poorer for her passing. The president of Pam and Morrie's branch, the Lindisfarne branch, James Walker, said:

What can I say about Pammie? A life absolutely lived well and a life lived in the service of her community. Eternal warmth and generosity of spirit, so much so she even had a Walker sticker on her car outside of election times. Pammie was always the first to turn up and help out and one of the last to leave. If more people followed in her footsteps the world would be a much better place.

President of the South Arm RSL sub-branch, Mike Gallagher, who also spoke at Pam's funeral yesterday, said:

Pam Edith Larkins was an affiliate member of the South Arm RSL sub-branch who joined our ranks to unselfishly give of herself in the areas of RSL service.

Pam joined our ranks through her husband, Morrie, who served in the defence force and in so doing committed herself to the RSL tradition of unselfish service to those with disability and the bereaved and the maintenance of the highest ideals of citizenship.

Pam was a beautiful person and a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She was also a wonderful friend to so many.

Pam was a tireless worker and member of the South Arm RSL sub-branch, the South Arm RSL and Community Club and a tireless worker for Hobart Legacy. Nothing was a trouble for Pam. She was an enthusiastic and committed sub-branch committee member who previously held the position of secretary.

She was so supportive, loyal, unselfish and tireless, to just touch on a few of her qualities. Above all, Pam was loving and giving and as a result Pam was widely loved and respected, deeply admired and held in the highest regard by all who knew her.

Pam will be greatly missed by the South Arm RSL sub-branch, the South Arm community and the wider community.

Rest in peace, Pam. Lest we forget.

President of the South Arm Residents Association, Kerry Scambler, said:

The South Arm Peninsula community is still coming to terms with the loss of Pam. Her warm smile, generosity of spirit, sense of humour and lively presence will all be missed.

From the South Arm art and craft exhibitions which raised over \$22 800 for Legacy, management of the community market and work for the sub-branch to mornings spent with the local craft group, Pam's many deep friendships ranged across interest and age groups.

We find comfort in Pam being strong, independent and still active with projects the day she passed, and we all have memories we will treasure forever and more than a few Pam-isms to give us cause to grin, share a laugh and perhaps even raise a glass.

Rest in peace, our dear friend.

Pam and Morrie will always be dearly loved and respected by all her knew her and will forever be missed as consummate volunteers and two of our most inspiring contributors to the Liberal Party. I again pass on my deepest condolences to the family and friends on the loss of a truly great woman. Vale. Rest in peace, Pam with your dearly beloved Morrie. You are together forever now and you will certainly be missed by us all.

Pamela Larkins - Tribute

[6.14 p.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I reiterate the words of my colleague, Mrs Petrusma, in relation to Pam Larkins and pass on my condolences to the Larkins family.

Pam was a remarkable person. As Mrs Petrusma outlined, her service to the Liberal Party is pretty much unparalleled in my time with the party and having State Council on Saturday without Pam there was the first time that we really missed her as a party and it is going to continue for a very long time.

Community groups and particularly political parties are built on the back of people like Pam and Morrie Larkins. They exist in all political parties and they allow us to come into places like this and represent the community but also represent political parties. To have Pam taken so suddenly and tragically hurts all of us. When the message went out on the WhatsApp group for both the state members, the speed at which people replied expressing their shock, and their sadness, pays testament to just how much Pam was loved. As Mrs Petrusma said, she is now at peace with her husband, Morrie, who was also a great servant of the Liberal Party and I am going to miss both of them dearly.

Without wanting to reflect on the decision of the House, I want to quickly comment on the debate that we had in the last hour of parliament today. When you see a member of parliament like the Bass, Ms Houston, get up and make the contribution that she did with such passion and such emotion, it really does raise the rhetorical question of why would we not fly the flag above Parliament House, and why would we not undertake these symbolic gestures towards reconciliation. You can see how important it was to Ms Houston as a member of the Aboriginal community. For me, that is a fair indication that it should be something that is important to all of us.

There was a decision taken in another place today that I find profoundly disappointing. Like I said, yes, it is a symbolic gesture, but when it costs us nothing as a place to do it, and it means so much to the Aboriginal community, why would we not do it?

I will finish on the point that I have not given up hope that in my lifetime we will see a national flag that represents all Australian people. If you do not understand why Aboriginal people have such a deep connection to their flag, and why they feel that we need both an Australian flag and an Aboriginal flag, consider what is on the Australian flag. Consider why it is so disappointing and offensive to Aboriginal people that that is our national flag. Consider why our national anthem, as it is written at the minute, is so offensive to Aboriginal people. Would it not be great if one day we could meet as a group at sporting events and cultural events under the one flag, singing one anthem that actually expresses who we are as a people, and not just a section of people?

Pamela Larkins - Tribute
NAIDOC Week

[6.17 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, following Mrs Petrusma, a member for Franklin, on a tribute to Pam Larkins is always - her tributes are always so well researched and heartfelt. I warmly congratulate her on her contribution this evening, followed by Mr Street, also a member for Franklin.

Pam Larkins was a South Arm Peninsula local and she was involved in so many community volunteering activities over so many years as we have heard. She tragically lost her life on South Arm Road in Sandford on Wednesday, 28 October.

She was instrumental in managing the South Arm market for many years, and she was well-known for her loyalty, her energetic involvement in her community, for her enthusiasm, her vision, vitality and a wicked sense of humour. She was also known as a member of the South Arm RSL Sub-Branch, where I first met her. She joined that organisation, along with her late husband, Morrie, as we have heard.

Pam was truly loved, cherished and respected by all who knew her. I did not know her as a Liberal Party member, and that is a true testament to the woman that she was.

Mr Street - That was her greatest quality though, Alison.

Ms STANDEN - It may have been to you, but to me I saw her as a community member and a beautiful person. I extend my deepest condolences to Pam's family and her friends, and to everyone within the South Arm community that I know are deeply shocked at her tragic loss. Vale Pam Larkins.

I want to make a brief contribution on NAIDOC Week: Always was, always will be. This week across lutruwita/Tasmania, we celebrate NAIDOC Week. We celebrate 65 000 years of an extraordinarily rich and continuing culture, of survival against the greatest of odds, and of a determination to keep culture alive.

I will keep it brief, as I said, but as shadow minister for heritage, I wanted to acknowledge the work of Aboriginal elders past and present in making NAIDOC Week what it is today. They tell me that for so many decades they felt they had to keep their heritage secret, that they were treated as inferior to others. That as a people they did not exist. Those days are over. I want our Aboriginal communities across lutruwita/Tasmania to hold their heads high knowing they are part of the oldest living culture on earth.

I want to thank those who every day fight to keep this culture alive. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

Briefly, again without reflecting on the debate that occurred in the last hour of sitting this afternoon, I warmly congratulate my colleague, Jennifer Houston, member for Bass, for her extraordinary contribution in this House on the debate on a matter that we have ultimately agreed was a straightforward one, that is, to fly the Aboriginal flag above the Tasmanian Parliament. We should do that as recognition of Tasmania's First People and their enduring

culture and customs, and as recognition that their extraordinary rich and continuing culture continues today.

Penguin Surf Life Saving Club - DHL Club of the Year

[6.21 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Human Services) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Penguin Surf Life Saving Club in my electorate of Braddon for on Saturday night, 7 November, winning the prestigious DHL Club of the Year at the Surf Life Saving National Awards for Excellence for Australia.

The award recognises outstanding achievements in club development that results in Surf Life Saving Australia clubs providing safer beach and aquatic environments for the community. It is the first time in history that a Tasmanian club has won this coveted national surf life saving award. Penguin may be a small club and a community of 3800 people, but its dedicated volunteers provide a first-class safety service to the community.

The 90-year-old club has a long, proud history, but this would have to be one of its greatest achievements and I am sure the many life members of the club would be very proud of their club's win.

The Penguin Surf Life Saving Club has worked hard to ensure it is a club with a strong training and inclusion ethic. It has been steadily growing its membership and the Australian DHL Club of the Year Award is its reward. The club competes to the highest standard. They have great people training the young nippers of the district, and they collaborate and cooperate with their neighbouring clubs. Their surf sports program is enviable and they field six boat crews, an impressive number for such a small club.

I acknowledge the president of the club, Allison Kable, who is representative of a club that encourages diversity, inclusion and community participation as well as encouraging a very strong line of women lifesavers at Penguin.

This year, in Tasmania, as we celebrate 40-years of women in lifesaving, Penguin Surf Club is a great example of this effort. Three generations of the Randall family women have been active lifesavers for Penguin and all are actively involved in the club. They also have new generations coming up through their ranks.

There are a few important names that need to be recognised. Vice President Darren Ling, coaches Matt Stones and Andrew Towns, who are well known for their high skill level, and some of the most long-serving dedicated volunteers the club can always rely on, such as Cynn timer Ling, Janet and Rosie Britton, Maree Stones who now manages events at the facility, treasurer Julia McKenna, and Deanne Ailken who both serve on the committee and are highly respected club stalwarts.

This year's Tasmanian Life Saver of the Year, Nicholas Canales, is also from the Penguin Club and well-known in the surf life saving clubs movement. In 2018 as a junior, he won the surf life saving Australia's Youth Surf Life Saver of the Year and this year Nick was a finalist in the coveted national award as a senior for Australian Life Saver of the Year. While he did not take out the big award, we are very proud that he made finalist in that race.

There are a number of multi-generational families who are actively involved in the club, which is another testament to their loyalty. At only 21, Max Dunham has been on the committee of the club for two years and is the third generation of his family to serve at Penguin. He is a committed, passionate member of the club, like his dad, Dean Dunham, who joined in 1973. He earned his bronze medallion in 1954, surfed for 47 years and still actively patrols. His father, Trevor Dunham, joined in the 1950s and was a member until his death in 1998.

The club is now focused on their facilities and future plans, outgrowing their current facilities there. They have completed an architectural plan and are determined to deliver a much-needed upgrade which I am sure I will hear more about over coming months and years. Everyone from the youngest nipper to the oldest lifesaver, one of whom just celebrated his 70th year of service to Penguin Lifesaving Club, Ken Knight, are dedicated to its bright future.

I congratulate the Penguin Surf Life Saving Club for bringing the top national award to Tasmania. It is no mean feat to win this against clubs with far more money and infrastructure than anything we see in Penguin or Tasmania. It just goes to show that size is not everything; it is the heart and effort that wins the day. Congratulations Penguin Surf Life Saving Club.

Armistice Day
Braddon Electorate - Activities
COVID-19 - Stand-up Drinking Regulations

[6.26 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I recognise that this is Armistice Day, the eleventh of the eleventh, and reflect on the service of many great Australians, including members of my own family who have served in various conflicts including a great-great uncle who fell unfortunately at Bullecourt in World War I.

I also acknowledge my sister, Kerry-Anne, who is a current member of the Australian Air Force. Last year she did a peacekeeping stint in South Sudan. She was away for several stints over a period of six to eight months where she was away from her three young children and husband.

There are still members of the Australian Defence Force active around the world trying to make it a better place and make it safer not only for Australians but also for people in far-off places. I am very proud of my sister and her service in the Air Force but also for service that is ongoing for other members of the Defence Force.

I would like to talk about some of the visits I have been making recently around the electorate of Braddon. A week ago, together with Anita Dow and Labor Leader Rebecca White, we visited Jayben and were guided round its operations by Chris Johnson. The sort of innovation they are doing there is absolutely amazing. We had a look at their scaler which is basically a remote-controlled excavator that can clean up rock, up and down a cliff face. This is world-first technology. It is absolutely amazing the innovation that has gone into this machine, but also the investment and dedication that Jayben has made. This is a unique piece of equipment that no doubt has a bright future. We really hope it gets taken up by other people

around the country and indeed I think there is big potential for this to be an export product which would create 20, 30 or maybe more jobs on the north-west coast.

A little before that I also visited Epiroc. Epiroc is a company that was once Atlas Copco and with John Stanton from Epiroc I had a tour of the facility there along with Ben Maynard who represented TMEC. This is another example of innovation where Epiroc is refitting drilling machinery and the like to suit Australian standards and Australian conditions. The innovation again that is going on there is absolutely amazing.

This was again highlighted when I attended the TMEC dinner last Thursday. The minister was there as well along with Anita Dow and I think Felix Ellis managed to get there, and again the next day at TMEC's AGM. There is just an outstanding group of advanced manufacturers in Tasmania doing really amazing things. The most impressive thing about them is the way they work together, share and are trying to lift the advanced manufacturing industries all across Tasmania. It is something that we should be looking to build on and looking at ways that can be supported by government to make very high-value, unique products where the intellectual property is what we are selling, not trying to do things en masse trying to out-produce and make bulk products but make these specialist, really intelligent, well designed, creative, innovative products that will set Tasmania up for the future and create work, investment and jobs going on into the future.

Another issue we should be reflecting on is the stress that the current COVID-19 restrictions are having on some businesses. It has been discussed in this place about the so-called vertical drinking regulations where if somebody wants to have a drink at a bar or a pub, they need to be seated while they are drinking an alcoholic beverage and the pressure that is putting on staff, especially young staff. We were speaking to Ben Carpenter at the Beach Hotel in Burnie and he was talking about the pressure that is on maybe a 20-year-old woman having to go up to a seasoned 50- or 60-year-old drinker and telling that intimidating male that he has to sit down while drinking. That puts a lot of pressure on staff members and causes conflict. It is really hard for someone like Ben to manage and have to deal with the stress that puts on staff members.

I know the Government is changing the regulations so that now stand-up drinking will be allowed on Friday if they are outdoors. That is not really going to help virtually all the venues across the north-west coast because there are not outdoor areas and it does not make sense. It seems that is a decision that is very relevant for Salamanca but not very relevant for operations like the Beach Hotel or the vast majority of pubs across northern Tasmania where they do not have outdoor drinking areas.

I urge the Government to give a bit more thought to the stand-up drinking regulations. It is putting pressure on staff. Also in some ways it does not make sense because if I go to a pub and order a glass of Coke, I can walk around with a non-alcoholic beverage or a glass of water. I can get my 10 ounces of Coke and walk around, but if I put a nip of Jack Daniels or something like that in it, then I am breaking the regulations. That sort of thing does not make sense.

We can have a system where we maintain social distancing. We do not want people being packed in like sardines, but one thing people are used to is standing-up and drinking and socialising that way. The other issue is that now we are going to start seeing people coming in from the mainland who have had more relaxed drinking regulations in terms being able to stand

up and drink. They are going to be coming into Tasmania and be told that if they are going to have an alcoholic beverage they have to sit down.

This is a decision that resonates well in Salamanca, but it is not a decision that is going to change the situation as we currently see it in Burnie. I urge the Government to have a bit more thought about how to make this work. The main reason is because of the pressure it puts on staff and the stress they are under. Nobody wants to cop a serve so we have to make it more reasonable and have a bit more logic to this decision.

Time expired.

Anglican Churches - Sale

[6.33 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight on the adjournment I want to talk about the re-entering into potential sales of Anglican churches across Tasmania which was reported in the press last week. I have a copy of a letter written by a group called SOCS, which stands for Save Our Community Soul. We did a lot of work with this representative group during the last onslaught, or I suppose attack, on a lot of Tasmanian churches two years ago and it looks like it is coming back.

This letter says:

Save Our Community Soul is a representative body of worshipping Anglicans and the wider Tasmanian Christian community which is greatly concerned about the sale of our churches and cemeteries.

SOCS fully supports redress. At our recent AGM members expressed their concerns about the progress of the redress scheme. The meeting agreed to write to you to seek information as to the progress of the scheme.

This is the letter to Bishop Condie -

The meeting also agreed to seek an update as to the total funds raised so far from the property sales and how these funds are being applied to redress or other purposes.

The Anglican Diocese of Tasmania's webpage on September 2020 states that 36 church properties have been sold with two more advertised, one under contract and 36 unsold.

SOCS respectfully requests answers to the following -

(1) The redress proposal on the same web page states that \$8.6 million will be raised from the Anglican property sales, levies and direct contributions from parishes, ie, the redress component of churches which were removed from the original sale list. Has this amount been attained or exceeded?

(2) How much money in total has been paid to victims?

(3) How many victims of sexual abuse by the priesthood and church workers have been compensated under the National Redress Scheme?

(4) Where is the remaining money from the total raised so far? Has it been expended, held in trust or invested, and how much interest has been earned?

The SOCS Committee takes the representation of its members and other concerned parishioners very seriously. It has a broad-based membership which has a vital interest in the progress of the church, property sales and the Redress Scheme. We are keen to communicate the answers to our questions to the SOCS membership. We look forward to your response.

I am also keen to know the answers to these questions, especially now that it looks like the attack on our churches will be starting again.

If there is a consensus in a community, if a church does not have a heritage value, if a church does not have a community value, if it does not have people attending that church anymore and there is a community consensus, by all means, sell that church.

Only 25 per cent of the funds raised from these churches and sales of lots and places - and obviously the members over here do not think this is an important issue - because it was interesting that one of the churches that was originally put up for sale was the Hagley Church. That could be a church which is again put on the market because the Hagley Church was able to pay out a redress, but it did not stop the diocese from coming back and potentially putting that back on the market. So the whole thing is starting again.

Maybe, we do not need to hold on to 75 per cent of the takings of these churches. Maybe we should give more to Redress, or maybe we should sell a hotel, or maybe we should sell a carpark instead of ripping the heart out of communities.

Some of the communities that we have dealt with as a party over the last two years - Pyengana, Tea Tree, Bothwell, Dunalley, Mathinna, Hagley, Osterley, Hamilton, Ross, Ouse, Kempton, Avoca, Carrick, Westbury, Tunnack; there is more. All these communities. Some of these churches were able to be saved but only because they actually coughed up; they coughed up the cash that went to the diocese that are holding onto 75 per cent and except for a little bit that is happening in Campbell Town right now, everyone is yet to see anything that has gone back into those communities where those churches have been taken.

They are apparently going into services. No one knows what those services are. They are holding on to 75 per cent. Those churches were built by the communities and they were donated by the communities. Some of those community members are so devastated about the loss of those churches. We need to step up and we need to find out what they are going to do with the 75 per cent. How much of it is actually even going to stay in Tasmania? That is what we need to know too.

We will not be accepting that it is moral and ethical to sell off any one of these assets and they should meet their obligations to Redress by increasing the amount that they are taking instead of just 25 per cent - increase it to at least 50 per cent and do not hold on to money that actually belongs to the Tasmanian community.

COVID-19 - Restrictions on Local Government

[6.39 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk about the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on local government. Of course, we recognise that there still needs to be hygiene processes in place. We recognise that there still needs to be some restrictions around people gathering. We are concerned that local government meetings continue to remain closed to the public, to constituents who have issues to raise. Some councils have online facilities so meetings can be broadcast. A number of them do not. This goes to that saying which is old but true - democracy dies in darkness. All around the state you have seen the easing of restrictions about people meeting. Yet local government meetings remain closed to people.

That is a significant concern, because it is in local government where planning decisions are made that impact on the lives of a community. It is in local government and council meetings where development applications are discussed and approved. People need to be able to see those decisions being made and they need to feel that they are part of that democratic process at a local government level.

We would like the Premier and the Minister for Local Government go back to Public Health and talk to them about the arrangements that are currently in place for local government. I read now from a letter that sent to the Minister for Health, Ms Courtney and the Minister for Heritage, Ms Archer, from Barb Rees who is a descendant of Dolly Dalrymple and a board member of the melythina tiakana warrana Aboriginal Corporation of the north and north-east of Tasmania -

Dear Minister Courtney & Minister Archer

A small group of people are wanting to attend the next Northern Midlands Council meeting on the 16th November. With the current COVID restrictions in place governing local meetings, we feel we really don't have a public voice. Why can't this be adjusted now and why hasn't the Chief Health Officer considered this?

The Council has said no to a Zoom or a Teams Meeting to the public for particular items.

As a public voice we want not only to be tabled as an email, but be seen in person because of grievances we have with a Local Council and its current subdivision of a heritage area of Perth which goes against its own E13 Local Historic Heritage Code (hence why I have included the Minister for Heritage).

We feel we are not being heard because what has been put before in previous meetings has basically been read and then put aside. It is a sensitive issue and one where there is conflict of interest with the Developer (in this case the Council...). We believe there is no social licence here because the rate-

payers have been heard and then ignored - they don't want to lose the Well because of its location near the public space.

This is an old convict well. The letter goes on -

Why is there still a COVID emergency still restricting us from attending a meeting? We want to be heard and be seen face-to-face even if we have to wear a mask - whatever it takes! We have a right to have a say and just perhaps, attending as a small representative group (representing the rate-payers and descendants of Dolly Dalrymple Johnson) will give more weight to what we want to put to Council - that have ... ignored the significance of the Convict Well now confirmed and recommendation from Heritage Tas ... that it should be preserved as a local feature of significance according to David Denman and Associates

[The well] is now surrounded by a paling fence, covered over with concrete and made ready to sell as a small building block with a building restriction.

We simply wanted the Council to leave things as 2 blocks so that the Well (of 500 convict thumb-printed bricks belonging to a nearby 1840s cottage) could be part of the Public Open space planned in a Heritage area of Town that could become something the township could take pride in - it should be listed as a Heritage Precinct under the council's own Heritage Code attached

Which is attached to the correspondence -

... involving Norfolk Cottage 1840s and its Well, Norfolk Street and its Coach transport history through Old Perth Town from Norfolk Plains and the Coach Inn, The Jolly Farmer (already listed and on Dolly Dalrymple Johnson's ... 20-acre government Land Grant of 1831) and Sir Adye Douglas, another historical Tasmanian from this land grant ...

This is a matter that involves the Dept of Health (COVID restriction to Meeting), the Dept of Heritage ... and the Dept of Local Government. ... The buying of land for subdivision at No. 32 Norfolk Street should not have come to this! This land should never have been bought for the purpose of further subdivision.

I await your response and hope that access to this meeting is made possible because for the last four months Community involvement has been made difficult.

Barb Rees

Dolly Dalrymple Descendant and board member of MTWAC.

I hope that the Minister for Local Government and the Premier have heard this adjournment contribution. I hope that another look is had at local government meetings. We have people coming to this Chamber from the outside world to watch parliament. We are allowing people into the dining room, even though it is in small numbers. There has to be a

way to make sure that we are keeping people safe, but also not locking away our democratic institutions like council meetings.

People have a right to be involved in local government deliberations and decision making, and at the moment the restrictions have shut them out. There is a varying degree of access because some councils are providing electronic access to those meetings while other councils - such as the Northern Midlands Council in this case - are not.

We hope the Premier and the Minister for Local Government will investigate this matter, and talk to the Director of Public Health about how those restrictions might be somewhat eased so that democracy can be seen in the light of day.

Pamela Larkins - Tribute
Gwendolyn Adams AM - Tribute
Layton Hodgetts OAM - Tribute

[6.46 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to pay a tribute to three fine, outstanding Tasmanians.

I associate myself with the remarks of Mrs Petrusma and others in this Chamber who have made mention of Pam Larkins, who was tragically killed in a car accident in recent weeks. She was a stalwart of the Liberal Party, and was a time keeper at our state councils over many decades and has contributed so much. She was sorely missed at last weekend's state council - missed by the Prime Minister, the Premier, and Will Hodgman in particular who had a very close association with her. We got to know her very well, as well as her late husband, Morrie Larkins.

Pam was a recipient of a range of awards including the Bruce Reid Memorial Award, presidential awards and was a member of the RSL. She was a very kind, loving, caring woman and she will be sadly missed.

I wanted to pay a special tribute tonight to Gwendolyn Adams AM, who passed away at the age of 79 on 31 October. You would know, Mr Deputy Chair, what a wonderful woman she was. She made a great contribution to agriculture, land management and land care across northern Tasmania and across the state. She has been recognised at all levels of Government, over her many years.

She was born in Launceston and attended Broadland House Grammar School and was married in 1962. She took over the running of the family farm, Leighlands, near Perth. I have visited there on a number of occasions. With her husband, Viv, Gwendolyn successfully built the business while also becoming a strong advocate for environment and land management.

In addition to her land, her sheep and her involvement with the Landcare association, she was a founding member of Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, and was certainly a role model for women and for many others as well. She was a wonderful mentor, and was such an encouragement to me in my time in the Senate and my time as a member for Lyons and more recent years as Minister for Primary Industries and Water.

Gwendolyn was a stalwart in Landcare organisations, including the association, the Landcare Trust Fund, and the Perth and Evandale Rural Landcare Group. She was also involved in the Northern Midlands Branch of Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, Greening Australia, Natural Heritage Trust, Bushweb Program, Green Corps, National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Council, and the TFGA Wool Council. She received a number of awards, including a life membership of the TFGA and the TFAG Weed Committee and of the International Wool and Textile Organisation Social Committee. She was the ABC Rural Woman of the year in 1995.

Gwendolyn received the Stock and Land Landcare Primary Producer Award in 2001, and was a finalist in the Bob Hawke Landcare Award in 2016, and was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia in 2006. I pass on my condolences to her family.

I also pay a tribute to a giant of the Derwent Valley, Layton Hodgetts. Layton is certainly a massive loss to the Derwent Valley. He led the Derwent Valley Concert Band for so long and was an inspirational figure. He was an OAM and he will be remembered as the father of the Derwent Valley Concert Band. He was enthusiastic and energetic. I remember visiting him and his family on Australia Day events, flying the flag proudly, a proud Australian, a proud Tasmanian and a proud leader of the Derwent Valley Concert Band.

His background is as a teacher. He had a long list of achievements across his 77 years including his 2008 Local Hero Tasmanian/Australian of the Year award; the 2005 Order of Australia medal; and the 2008 Tasmanian Outstanding Achiever award. As musical director of the Derwent Valley Concert Band he raised funds to get his concert band to Europe, to give them the opportunity to learn more and to understand not only the importance of being part of a concert band, but also the importance of seeing the world. I helped raise some of those funds. He appreciated the importance of seeing the world and gave such vision to his students. He was an inspirational figure and he will be sadly missed.

The Derwent Valley Mayor, Ben Shaw was a student of Mr Hodgetts at the New Norfolk High School, and he said Mr Hodgetts brought so much to the Derwent Valley community. Mayor Shaw was quoted in the *Gazette* today, noting that Mr Hodgetts was a well-respected and loved member of the community. I support the remarks of the mayor and I pass on our sincere condolences to Jane, Sarah and all of Layton's family.

The funeral will be held tomorrow at 1 p.m. at St Matthews Church. The Derwent Valley Council has approved a procession at noon, with the band marching the hearse from the top of Circle Street to the church, down High Street, past my office and past all the stores and shops all the way down the main street of New Norfolk. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend due to commitments in this place.

People are invited to gather along High Street to pay their respects to Layton Hodgetts. That is a wonderful send-off to a fine ambassador, a giant of the Derwent Valley, and I pay a special tribute to him tonight.

South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation

Ballawinne Festival

[6.53 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, as member for Franklin, I acknowledge and pay my respects to the south east Tasmanian Aboriginal community, which is a very large body of people who have been custodians of the lands in southern and south-eastern Tasmania for tens of thousands of years. I respect their elders past and present and the people amongst us today in the community who are showing true leadership and spirit, and are forging ahead with expansive community activities, showing the strength of that enduring culture, their wisdom and their contribution to their local community.

The South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (SETAC) was officially formed in 1992. It is based in Cygnet, which was the area of Fanny Cochrane Smith, who was such an important, amazing woman - the elder of many Aboriginal people who live in the Cygnet environs. She lived out the latter part of her life in Nicholls Rivulet and had a large family. The descendants of Fanny Cochrane Smith are actively involved in SETAC.

The 1998 establishment of a primary health and wellbeing centre was the root centre of SETAC, and their building in Mary Street, the main street in Cygnet, was also an important part. Because people in the Aboriginal community have moved increasingly into the Kingston region, SETAC has expanded their community support and offerings and I was privileged to attend the opening of their new health and wellbeing centre in Kingston.

They also have gifted the original building in the main street of Cygnet to the Cygnet community and that has had a soft launch of what is called Oura Oura House, which means white cockatoo in palawa kani. Oura Oura is a beautiful example of the inclusiveness of the Aboriginal community around the Cygnet south-east Tasmanian area and the connections being made between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together in learning and understanding the wisdom of Aboriginal culture.

The best demonstration of that was the incredible inaugural Ballawinne Festival which was held after the Cygnet Folk Festival in January this year. Ballawinne was an extraordinary evidence of the philosophy and the richness of Aboriginal culture. The stories that have started at the Ballawinne Festival are continuing to emanate throughout the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in southern Tasmania.

I am really confident that lands that were walked on by the mulukardee, the nuenonne and lyllequonee people will continue to be walked on by palawa/pakana people joining hands with non-Aboriginal people in the community around them to take the wisdom of Aboriginal philosophy which enabled the palawa/pakana to live in this land and care for it for tens of thousands of years. That same wisdom we need to be learning from so that we can face the changes that are coming and really understand why we need to pivot to environment, community and healing.

Layton Hodgetts OAM - Tribute BEAST Program

[6.58 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I too would like to place on the record my condolences to the family of the late Layton Hodgetts OAM. He was

an incredible man who did so much for the Derwent Valley Concert Band and for music in the Derwent Valley in particular with students at the school. He leaves an enormous legacy and I am sure it will be a very moving procession for his funeral tomorrow. I am very sad that I will not be there.

The other reason I rise tonight to speak is to acknowledge an incredible event I attended on Saturday night. I knew before I attended that it was going to be quite extraordinary but I still was not prepared for the impact it would have on me. It was the BEAST launch and gala. I congratulate the CEO, Will Smith, who was also named 2020 Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year, for the incredible work he is doing with young people across Tasmania who are disadvantaged and disengaged. He has been able to assist young boys who have been engaged with his BEAST program, in particular the 10 who graduated earlier this year, to be empowered, to re-engage with their education, to stop disengaging and acting in ways that sees them caught up in the youth justice system. He has helped them to see their leadership qualities and potential and truly turn their lives around.

It is a remarkable program and, sadly, there are 300 people on the waiting list. It is funded entirely through philanthropic donations and funds they are able to raise doing school events. I wanted to bring it to the attention of parliament because it is such an incredible program. It is impactful and changing the lives of some of the most disengaged young people in Tasmania and helping them to believe in themselves and turn their lives around.

The speeches on the night from Will and Ahmed were inspiring, eye-opening, heartbreaking and uplifting all at the same time. If anybody is unaware of JCP Empowering Youth and what they do please, please look them up. Acquaint yourself with them and acquaint yourself with Will Smith. He is changing lives and he deserves our support.

The House adjourned at 7 p.m.