



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 15 June 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Wednesday 15 June 2022

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, this morning I welcome grade 6 students from Howrah Primary School to the gallery. Welcome to Parliament House.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Macquarie Point Development Corporation - Role of CEO

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.02 a.m.]

Last week it was announced that yet another review would be held into the Macquarie Point Development Corporation after more serious allegations were raised about their operations. Can you confirm that the CEO is being quietly moved into a special projects role and will no longer be heading the Macquarie Point Development Corporation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am advised that is not correct. We are continuing to progress our plan to deliver a once-in-a-lifetime development at Macquarie Point. It is a very exciting opportunity for Tasmania as one of the last remaining vacant urban infill locations in any of Australia's capital cities. At over 9.3 hectares, it is a huge parcel of land, which I know members recognise needed extensive complex remediation from its history as a former industrial site, preparing it for future development. We encourage temporary uses such as Dark Park during Dark Mofo, the community garden, cycleway and carparking, knowing these will change when future developments occur.

I know the minister has recently updated the House with respect to Macquarie Point on a number of occasions. I do not need to go into that but I have been asked a direct question and I have provided a direct answer.

Electricity Prices - Cost of Remaining in National Market

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.04 a.m.]

Because of your broken promise to delink Tasmania from the National Electricity Market, leading energy experts are anticipating an increase in power bills of more than 10 per

cent. This is not just a short-term hit. Alinta Energy executive director Daniel McClelland has said:

If we're going to be honest about this, it looks like these higher prices are going to persist for the next two years.

Are you going to be honest about the cost Tasmanians face as a result of your broken promise? Given you are clearly not going to provide a winter energy supplement, what are you going to do about these massive price shocks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Tasmanians will know that under Labor, electricity prices went up some 65 per cent. Tasmanians will remember that.

They know that this is a government that will always do what we can to put downward pressure on electricity prices. We understand the national situation at this time and, as the Tasmanian Government, we are actively monitoring the changing circumstances in the National Electricity Market, which saw market notices published on the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) website yesterday.

I can confirm the notice that related to Tasmania was cancelled shortly after by the AEMO. Accordingly, there have been no underlying supply issues evident in Tasmania, and there is more than sufficient generation in Tasmania to meet Tasmanian demand. This was confirmed with respect to the discussions that our minister, Mr Barnett, had with the AEMO's CEO, Daniel Westerman. Our minister also sought and received assurances from Hydro Tasmania's CEO in relation to this matter that there is no risk to Tasmania's electricity supply, and there is more than sufficient generation available in Tasmania to meet Tasmanian demand.

When it comes to cost of living, when it comes to energy prices, we will always do what we can as a government to alleviate the pressure on Tasmanians, particularly when it comes to low- and fixed-income Tasmanians. We know how important the cost of living is to Tasmanians. That is why we have worked hard to ensure our regulated energy prices for Tasmanians have remained the lowest, or among the lowest in the nation.

I will remind members that last year households received a 7.1 per cent reduction in regulated electricity prices and small businesses received an 11 per cent drop. Over the past seven years, regulated energy prices have decreased in real terms some 18 per cent for residential customers and some 27 per cent for small business customers.

We know that Tasmanians continue to face very real challenges when it comes to cost-of-living pressures. We are working to do what we can to alleviate those pressures within the tools available to us. While many factors increasing cost of living are outside our Government's control and being felt by consumers across the country, the Government is looking after those who need it most. We have provided among the most generous concession programs, hardship preventions, energy-efficient loan schemes and winter payments in the nation to help those in the community doing it tough. That is exactly what will continue to drive us as a government.

Local Communities Facilities Fund - Conflict-of-Interest List

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.08 a.m.]

Yesterday we asked you for a full list of the conflict-of-interest disclosures made by Liberal candidates when applying to access the local communities facilities fund. You did not provide this disclosure list. You could not even bring yourself to say the words 'conflict of interest'.

Last week we found out the member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, had secured tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayer funds for a club of which a family member was a member. We now know that the member for Lyons, Mr Shelton, has done the same. We are asking you again: will you table a full list of the conflict-of-interest disclosures made by Liberal candidates when applying for these taxpayer funds? If you do not, the only logical conclusion we can draw is that you are protecting other Liberal MPs who put their hand out not just to buy votes but also, arguably, for their own self-interest.

Members - Hear, hear.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As you well know, it is an MP's job, a local member's job, to support their electorate, work hard in their electorate, keep their ear to the ground and listen to various community organisations - largely not-for-profit organisations or sporting clubs that do really great work in our community.

Ms O'Connor - As long as they know a Liberal member.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Making promises during an election campaign and giving Tasmanians the right to vote on those promises is a transparent and fundamental part of our democracy.

As an MP I make no apologies for working around my electorate of Braddon, listening to people, not just during the election campaign but for the entirety of the four years. It is our job to do that. I have seen neglected infrastructure of sporting clubs and the like -

Dr Woodruff - The Sandy Bay Rowing Club is not an impoverished organisation. Let's just be real about this.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - During the 2021 election all Liberal candidates were expected to get out on the ground and talk with local communities about their needs. Candidates were asked to put forward their ideas and requests for small, one-off community projects, as I have done

at every election, if my memory serves me correctly. I mentioned yesterday my experience as a candidate in 2002, 2006 and 2010. We made various commitments -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45, relevance. We have just asked the Premier for the second day in a row to table a conflict of interests -

Mr SPEAKER - The point of order is relevance; I will take that. You do not have to explain. I will remind everybody that I cannot put words in the Premier's or any minister's mouth. They can answer the question. It was a wide-ranging question and, from my point of view, the Premier has been dealing with the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - While I was successful as a candidate to become a member of parliament, our party was not and therefore those commitments did not come to fruition unless they were picked and supported by the government of the day. That is a fair and transparent process.

I am aware of the commitments of those opposite that they made at the last election as well. Didn't they have a crack - some \$31 million of projects was promised by those opposite. I can see Mr O'Byrne and he is shaking his head; it is almost about to fall off. I am not sure why you are shaking your head because I have a fair old list from you, Mr O'Byrne, that you committed. No doubt you were doing the work and supporting organisations that approached or whatever the case may be.

Ms O'Connor, elections are really about democracy. If we had not won or were not successful at the 2021 election, the commitments that we made would not have come to fruition. I know, in a transparent way, our minister for Sport -

Dr Woodruff - It came out because the Greens brought this out.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our Minister for Sport and Recreation tabled a list of projects yesterday.

Macquarie Point Development Corporation - Further Consultancies

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for STATE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION and HOUSING, Mr BARNETT

[10.14 a.m.]

I am told that more consultants have been engaged for the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to redo the vision for the site, yet another one. Can you confirm that this is the case? How much is this latest version of consultants going to cost Tasmanians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question and her interest in Macquarie Point. The Premier has outlined the plan and the vision, the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity we have to develop Macquarie Point. I have shared the importance of the master plan going forward. I have also raised in this House the governance arrangements for Macquarie Point Development Corporation, with the board being responsible and the chair, Brian Scullin, whom I thank for his work and his service, together with the board members. I thank them on behalf of not just the Government but the community. They have an important role to play.

I am personally not aware of the advice that has been put forward today by the member for Clark. That may be something in the purview of the corporation. I am happy to follow up on that and see if there is any further advice that can be provided to the member and to this place. They are operational matters and those matters are dealt with in an operational manner with respect to the board and they report to the board.

I will not say anything more at this stage but I am happy to make further inquiries while noting that those sorts of things are very much the responsibility of the board.

Health - Access to General Practitioners

Mr ELLIS question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.16 a.m.]

We are contacted regularly by constituents who are concerned about accessing primary healthcare services, especially GPs. We have also seen how rural and remote communities can have challenges accessing, attracting and retaining GPs. As a state, what can we do to address these issues?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his considerable interest in this matter. Frankly, he is right. Communities around Tasmania are telling us that they have a need for improved primary care, to live and stay well, close to their homes. We recognise that under current health funding arrangements the split of responsibility and the funding between federal and state governments for primary care and acute care can cause some challenges. At the end of the day, our communities do not care about who is responsible. They just want health services where and when they need them. They see a system that, despite the best efforts of dedicated and hardworking GPs, is characterised by falling bulk-billing rates and increasing difficulty accessing appointments. It is no surprise that at times patients feel that an emergency department becomes their only option.

To ensure our community has better access to primary care, we need to think differently, outside the square, if you like, about what can be done. We are committed to exploring ways in which our Government can work with the Australian Government, GPs, stakeholders and the community to deliver something that is truly innovative. In particular, I am keen to investigate how general practice and primary care services in rural and regional areas in Tasmania, which struggle to offer sustainable GP services, could continue to be funded by the federal government but run by the state and fully integrated with Tasmania's

single public health and hospital system. Our vision includes the use of existing state infrastructure such as our district hospitals and community health centres where GPs could work alongside appropriate nursing and allied health professionals to provide integrated multidisciplinary care.

We will work with the Australian Government to explore ways in which such a model could be trialled in Tasmania and deliver more sustainable, effective, integrated and patient-focused care in rural and regional communities. I have written to the new federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Honourable Mark Butler MP, on a range of health matters, with these reforms high on my priority list. This primary care reform is ambitious, it is innovative and an opportunity for Tasmania to take the lead in healthcare delivery. As such, I hope all members in the House will be supportive.

I note in yesterday's matter of public importance debate, the member for Lyons, Ms Butler, raised the issue of GPs in Tasmania and the difficulties some communities are facing. Given GPs are predominantly a federal government responsibility, I trust that Ms Butler is also communicating very strongly with the new federal government about improving access to GPs in Tasmania.

I will also be raising health with the new Prime Minister this week when I attend National Cabinet in Canberra on Friday. Tasmania wants to lead the country in implementing Australia's Primary Health Care 10-Year Plan, aligning this with our Tasmanian Department of Health Strategic Priorities 2021-2023 which includes reforming the delivery of care in our community. Tasmania's primary care reform would encourage collaboration, the integration of services within the state health service, and reduction of silos between sectors of health. It would bring multiple clear benefits for patients in our community, including better access to bulk billing GPs, better integration between general practitioners and other medical specialists, streamlined sharing of information, and greater benefit from our record investment in digital health.

We are keen to take the lead with an innovative new model of primary care, and change is clearly needed. The ability to access appropriate care where and when you need it is constantly brought up with me, and no doubt other members in the Chamber. That is why we are looking to explore a piloted partnership with the Australian Government - because Tasmanians priorities are our priorities.

Members - Hear, hear.

Wages Policy

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.21 a.m.]

Last night, the Governor of the Reserve Bank said inflation would likely rise to 7 per cent by the end of the year. The Fair Work Commission has just determined an increase of 5.2 per cent in the minimum wage, and said that is fair and responsible given the soaring cost of living. In handing down the decision, the President of the Fair Work Commission accepted the need for moderation but specifically noted that the proposal that they should only increase

the minimum wage by 2.5 to 3 per cent would result in unacceptable, real wage cuts. How can you continue to maintain that your 2.5 per cent wages policy is fair?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am aware of the Fair Work Commission's decision of 5.2 per cent to the minimum wage. You also spoke of the Reserve Bank Governor, Mr Philip Lowe, who indicated the Australian economy is strong and expects it to continue to grow strongly next year.

Tasmania's economy has been rated the best performing economy in the nation for an extraordinary ninth quarter in a row. Employment is at near record levels, with 26 100 jobs created since March 2014, and our unemployment rate is some 3.8 per cent. State Final Demand is 8.4 per cent higher over the year to March 2022, and State Final Demand in the four quarters to March 2022 are the strongest four quarters on record. Private new capital expenditure grew 10.2 per cent over the year to the March 2022 quarter; and I am advised that is the highest growth of the states. Our economy grew by 3.8 per cent last financial year and this was the second fastest growth rate in the country, and our fastest economic growth in 13 years.

We have a strong economy in Tasmania. We always want to ensure that when it comes to cost of living pressures, Tasmanians who are doing it tough on low or fixed incomes are at the forefront of our minds. We will work in that space as well to support Tasmanians, as I have indicated in response to the second question that the member asked me. When it comes to wage negotiations, we have consistently said that we will always negotiate in good faith with industrial advocates and unions.

Members - Hear, hear.

TasNetworks - Proposed Job Losses

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.24 a.m.]

Your Government's recent Budget forecast increased dividends from TasNetworks. The Budget papers say they will partly result from 'strategic initiatives'. These increased dividends to prop up your Budget are in excess of \$50 million over just three of the four forward Estimate years.

It is patently clear that 'strategic initiatives' is simply another name for your Government's secret plan to gut up to a quarter of the TasNetworks workforce, which is the very same workforce that has worked tirelessly around the clock to restore power to thousands of Tasmanian's homes. What is strategic about your Government's initiative to cut up to 300 jobs from the energy industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The national conversation, the global conversation, and here in Tasmania, our energy landscape is dynamically changing. That brings increased growth opportunities to the sector, as the Minister for Energy and Renewables has pointed out. Over the next decade, there will be thousands of jobs available as we become Australia's renewable energy powerhouse.

Mr O'Byrne - What do you say to the 300 who are on the chopping block?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - TasNetworks will continue to adapt their operations so that they are fit for purpose, they are efficient, and in the best position to grasp the opportunities ahead, while keeping downward pressure on power prices. We want to keep our energy prices as low as possible.

When you were in government, Mr O'Byrne, that was not the case. A 65 per cent increase, if my memory serves me correctly.

We want to keep our energy prices as low as possible. We also want to keep connection fees for homes and businesses down, as well as continuing to service our new subdivisions and developments, as I believe the minister would have said. That is why we need TasNetworks to continue to be fit-for-purpose, adapting to an evolving environment. I assume you agree with that? Why would you want to stay the same, in a period of such dynamic change for our energy sector? I am sure that is not your policy -

Mr O'Byrne - Cutting 300 in the middle.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Franklin.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am sure it is not your policy to be standing still, when there are such dynamic changes in our energy sector across the nation.

Regarding TasNetworks, I have said there will be more jobs in the sector in the future, given our opportunities. TasNetworks is undergoing a transformation and review and is working closely and openly with its people through this process. The CEO of TasNetworks, advises that the business continues to undertake its analysis in relation to its transformation. Any impact on staff members would first go to the board, and then to the minister and the Treasurer as the shareholding ministers. It would be the expectation that formal advice would be provided to the minister and to the Treasurer on a matter as significant as this, and of course, to the Government. We will wait for this advice.

Election Promises

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.28 a.m.]

Earlier this year the Integrity Commission released its report into your party's gross pork-barrelling during the 2018 election. The report was highly critical of the use of a

secretive slush fund to engage in effective electoral bribery. Despite being aware that the Integrity Commission was looking at the 2018 election, the Government you are part of then decided to do the same thing in 2021 - another \$15 million of taxpayer funds out the door, with no proper process or transparency.

The Integrity Commission has recommended reform to end this practice, including changes to legislation, and introduction of mandatory grant rules. Will you be the premier who finally has the courage to stop the rot and end the rorts? Will you commit, today, to introducing legislation and regulation that will put an end to election pork-barrelling through grants and slush funds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is important to note that, like every political party, we take into account a range of views and representations when developing our election policies - as you have.

You speak of our election commitments, Ms O'Connor, that we made in the 2021 election. I am advised that your alternative budget has maintained those commitments so obviously you support our -

Ms O'Connor - Is that the best you can do? As if we are going to take money away from small organisations.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The Premier has the call.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I expected to get a rise, but not such an animated rise from those on the Greens benches.

Ms O'Connor - We've asked you what you're going to do about it. Maybe you could mention the words 'Integrity Commission'.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As the Integrity Commission report states, the commitments which were made were all clearly documented in the 2018-19 budget papers and approved by parliament, I am advised -

Dr Woodruff - No, it doesn't say that. That's misrepresenting the Integrity Commission's findings.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am advised that the Integrity Commission has not in any way accused the Liberal Party of electoral bribery. The board of the Integrity Commission determined to undertake an investigation in February 2019, and subsequently revoked its original determination to conduct the investigation, meaning the matter would not proceed to

the board for a determination under section 58 of the Integrity Commission Act. The board decided it would not be in the public interest to commit further resources to reinvestigate the matter, noting that no misconduct had been identified.

Ms O'Connor - That investigation went a long way before they pulled the pin.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The board also had requested that confidentiality be maintained on the matter, as - and I quote - 'it had the potential to affect the rights and interests of many'. I am advised that the Integrity Commission investigation Operation Hyperion found no evidence of misconduct.

Dr Woodruff - They didn't meet good grant principle guidelines, they didn't have objectives, they didn't have selection criteria, they weren't competitive, they didn't identify decision-makers.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe we have been very transparent about the election commitments we have made. I am pleased you were funded; our election commitment is in your alternative budget as well and we welcome that. I know that many organisations would appreciate the fact that the Greens value those grassroots organisations and your support in the 2021-22 state Budget, so thank you very much.

Basslink - Outage

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.33 a.m.]

Documents I have received under right to information show that, despite an arbitrator in 2020 finding that Basslink needed to implement a range of important reliability upgrades, these have not been completed to Hydro Tasmania's satisfaction. Overnight, it appeared Basslink was only operating intermittently, if at all, and that appears to still be the case at the moment. Is your Government aware of the Basslink outage and if so, what is the cause and when will it return to full capacity?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will answer the question to the best of my ability but our Energy minister, indeed all our ministers, are very capable of answering any question you put forward. I am happy to take them, but we have very capable ministers who are champing at the bit, quite frankly, to answer your questions.

I am advised that during the unprecedented price volatility in the NEM, Basslink made a commercial decision not to export energy from Tasmania to Victoria whilst the price cap is in place in Victoria. I am advised there is no physical issue with the Basslink interconnector. Basslink is available for energy import should it be required. I am also advised there are no

energy supply concerns in Tasmania and hydro storages are in a healthy position for this time of the year.

Budget 2022-23 - Road and Bridge Infrastructure Investment

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.35 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Government's budget investment in road and bridge infrastructure and, in particular, the commitment to protecting our existing assets for the safety and the amenity of Tasmanian road users?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question. The Budget I delivered two weeks ago for 2022-23 confirms that our investment in road and bridge infrastructure around the state will be taken to another level over the next four years.

The Tasmanian and Australian governments' commitment to the State Roads capital investment program for the coming financial year is \$712 million. This is almost double the planned expenditure of \$372 million for the current financial year, which in itself has been a record year of investment and delivery. By way of context, expected spending on roads and bridges for the current financial year is almost three times what it was under the former Labor-Greens government in its final year in office just nine years ago. However, it is the budgeted funding in future years that makes our infrastructure commitments so remarkable.

Investment in our roads and bridges in the Budget and forward Estimates totals \$2.7 billion, an increase of \$700 million over the prior year's budget and forward Estimates. This forward program is continuing to provide confidence to businesses in this sector, to create new jobs and invest in training for people of all ages - men and women. The civil construction industry and professional consultancies have responded very well to the uplift we required in the capital program over recent years. They have delivered for us in partnership with government and they are working to overcome the challenges of coming out of a pandemic due to the disruption to planning, procurement and resourcing constraints, to achieve record results for our beautiful state in every region.

Projects like the Bridgewater bridge are historic opportunities for this sector but it is not just the big-ticket projects that stand out in this Budget. The Government is committed to providing a stronger and more resilient road network right around the state. Our state road and bridge network is a constantly depreciating asset and we need to look after it. Economic growth has resulted in an increase in traffic volumes; more vehicles, more light vehicles, more trucks, more buses, and this includes higher productivity vehicles on our network as part of an increase in freight vehicles in general, as it has responded to a booming freight economy in our state. The Government has anticipated this challenge and we are responding with a step-change increase in our infrastructure maintenance budget across the forward Estimates, or as Mr Tucker said yesterday in the debate, a game-changing investment.

We are increasing our spending for road maintenance over the next four years by 25 per cent. We have increased the infrastructure maintenance budget by more than \$19 million this year with a total boost of \$81.5 million over the Budget and forward Estimates. What does this look like around the state? We are investing in the largest pavement renewal program that has ever been carried out in our state, targeting high-priority roads. We will be bolstering our road resurfacing program and something that I hope every member of this House will endorse, a separate crumb rubber program as part of our commitment to reduce waste and bringing recycled products into our road surfaces, again being responsible stewards of our environment and waste product.

We will also enhance our intervention maintenance to anticipate and respond to issues because we know that changes in freight routes and extreme weather events impact our roads. We saw the impact of high rainfall on our network in late winter and spring last year, particularly in my communities of northern Tasmania and in the north-west. As well as greater resourcing for road surface renewals, we will make use of new technologies so that we can get the right data to help our decision-making under our maintenance contracts. This will allow us to provide a more resilient road network that is maintained in the interests of future generations.

In closing, I can tell the House that we have secured a very positive agreement with the Australian Government for \$80 million across five years for road and bridge renewal under the Freight Capacity Upgrade Program. That is \$16 million per year which will be matched by Tasmania's \$4 million per year. This is a very significant improvement in our position to look after our roads. I am very confident in this historic investment and what it means for Tasmanians - more infrastructure, and looking after it better as well.

Basslink - Decision to Stop Exporting

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER FOR ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[10.40 a.m.]

The Premier has just outlined that Basslink has elected to cease exporting during the current market conditions. Does your Government and Hydro Tasmania support this decision? Did the AEMO CEO provide advice about whether it supports Basslink's decision to stop trading?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The Premier has answered the first question very clearly and distinctly. The Opposition knows there is unprecedented volatility on the mainland. I make it clear to not just the Opposition but to the parliament that there are no issues when it comes to energy security in Tasmania. There are no concerns when it comes to energy supply in Tasmania.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing order 45, relevance. You previously ruled that -

Mr SPEAKER - I take the point on standing order 45. You do not have to explain.

Mr WINTER - I am making an argument about standing order 45. Am I allowed to make an argument?

Mr SPEAKER - I have accepted your point regarding relevance. All I can do is point that out to the minister.

MR WINTER - You have upheld the point of order?

Mr SPEAKER - I will uphold the point of order. I can do that. However, in doing that, the minister was on his feet for less than 40 seconds before you raised a point of relevance. I can only ask the minister to be relevant but, given the flexibility that he has, he has the opportunity to answer the question the way he sees fit.

Mr BARNETT - As I was saying in the first 40 seconds of responding - and I draw the member's attention to the response - there are no issues in Tasmania in terms of the security and there are no concerns with respect to energy supply -

Ms White - Does Hydro support Basslink not trading?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - As the Premier has made very clear, the decision not to export energy from Tasmania to Victoria while the administered price cap is in place in Victoria was a decision for Basslink. There are no physical issues with Basslink. Basslink is available for energy imports should they be required. There are no energy supply concerns.

I draw to the attention of the House a media release put out by Dean Winter, the opposition leader, yesterday where he says 'lights potentially out for Tasmania'. He also said, 'Tasmanians are being warned the lights could go off'.

Mr Winter - That is what they were warned.

Mr BARNETT - Mr Speaker, this is irresponsible -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order. On a point of order.

Ms WHITE - Thank you, Mr Speaker, it goes to misleading the House. It was a quote from AEMO's CEO. The minister for Energy should be more responsible. He is being reckless.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, points of order are not there to correct anything. I will allow the minister to continue.

Mr BARNETT - Let me read the media release from Mr Winter yesterday, just to correct the record, because it starts with:

Lights potentially out for Tasmanians, as Barnett fails on energy policy. Less than two weeks after embattled Energy minister Guy Barnett confirmed he had dumped the Liberal Government's signature energy policy to delink from the National Electricity Market, Tasmanians are being warned the lights could go off.

You are scaremongering. You are acting irresponsibly. You are a shadow energy minister and you should know better. The member has done this before. He has done this when it come to the Tasmanian gas pipeline. He says 'intervene, intervene'. We arrived at a mutually agreeable outcome.

With respect to Basslink and causing fearmongering, now today with this media release, he has hit very hard three times and he has missed. Three strikes and you are out.

National Electricity Market - AEMO's Ability to Direct Tasmanian Supply to Victoria

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.45 a.m.]

Less than a fortnight after you abandoned your signature policy to delink Tasmania from the National Electricity Market, the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) yesterday forecast potential power outages for Tasmania. It now appears it will not come to that, for now. Your massive broken promise has left us completely exposed to the chaos currently gripping the National Electricity Market. Can you confirm the reason this notice was issued in the first place was that AEMO has the power to direct Tasmanian generators to supply power to Victoria even if that means power shortages here in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have detailed the fact that the Tasmanian Government is continuing to work with the Australian Energy Market Operator and other jurisdictions on a daily basis while the market pricing across the AEMO is highly volatile. I want to repeat that there is no underlying supply issues evident in Tasmania.

I agree with Mr Barnett when he says that the Opposition and Mr Winter should know better in terms of undermining business confidence and scaring Tasmanians, when he knows that people take note of comments we make in this place and positions such as shadow minister for energy. You say it to grab a headline but there are consequences of grabbing a headline in terms of scaring Tasmanians and undermining confidence. It is irresponsible.

You did not miss a single moment yesterday with your media release. You have provoked unnecessary fear and concern when it comes to Tasmania's energy security. Those fears are unfounded.

Mr Winter - Is he saying, 'Hey, you guys are wrong'? Is AEMO wrong?

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, order, you are warned.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Instead of scaremongering, Mr Winter, you should be supporting Tasmania's renewable energy future, which we are very proud of in Tasmania -

Ms White - They may direct Tasmania to send power to Victoria.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In terms of some of the uncertainty you may have created by your ill-conceived statements yesterday, poor judgment, as it has been said in this place: for all the consumers in Tasmania, particularly the ones on low and fixed incomes who will be feeling vulnerable as a result of your scaremongering, there are no underlying issues evident in Tasmania.

Given the history of the Labor Party when it comes to increase in power prices under your watch, downward pressure and decrease on our watch, Tasmanians know full well that we will be working on these very challenging issues with the new federal government. Mr Barnett has already spoken and engaged with energy ministers across the nation and with Mr Bowen as well, as I understand it, and I believe he has also articulated. I advise the member to not scaremonger and peddle fear when it comes to Tasmania's energy supply and security issues.

Ms WHITE - Can you answer the question? Point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance. The Premier is going to run away now but the question was, can he confirm that Tasmania can be directed to support Victoria and export energy?

Mr SPEAKER - You do not get to repeat the question. If you wish to ask another question -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mrs PETRUSMA

[10.50 a.m.]

Can you provide an update on what assessments have been undertaken in relation to the World Heritage listing criteria, and the condition of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for his question and for his interest in this very important matter. The Tasmanian Government is very committed to the effective

management and protection of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area (TWWHA). The TWWHA is recognised as having both cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, the protection of which is of global importance for all generations. Its ecosystems are of outstanding significance for their exceptional natural beauty, distinctive landforms, species and plant communities, habitat and the ecological processes that result in some of the tallest vegetation in the world. The statutory TWWHA Management Plan 2016 is key to specifying how the outstanding universal value of the property is preserved and managed.

The delivery of Status and Trends Reports are an action under the management plan, and today I will be tabling three reports that inform priority and policy decisions on adaptive management within the TWWHA. These reports are: Status and Trends in the Condition of the Natural Values of the TWWHA; Status and Trends in the Condition of the Cultural Values of the TWWHA; and Summary Status and Trends in the Condition of Cultural and Natural Values of the TWWHA. These reports outline the condition of the cultural and natural values being rated as good, however, with some concerns due to the major threats to the values, identified as being: change in climate; extreme events; pests; weeds; and disease.

The findings of these reports align with those of the independent Conservation Outlook Assessment Report, prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2020. This is the first Status and Trends Report on the condition of cultural values in the TWWHA, with the recognition that the TWWHA is a precious cultural landscape for Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the values of their continuing culture. Mr Speaker, this will be the first time that such a wealth of information on the values of the TWWHA has been compiled for publication and importantly, changes in the condition of these values will be tracked and reported on every five years. The series of status and trends reports is available now on the Department of Natural Resources and Environments (NRE) Tas website.

This Government recognises the major threats that have been identified within these reports, which is why we are already delivering a range of mitigation and management strategies including: the TWWHA Natural Values, Climate Change and Adaptation Strategy 21-31 to manage risks and reduce future climate change impacts; and the TWWHA Biosecurity Strategy 21-31 which the funding of \$3.27 million in this year's Budget will assist by addressing biosecurity risks within the TWWHA. I was also pleased to table during Estimates the final TWWHA Fire Management Plan, which outlines the adaptive management framework that is already and will continue to be utilised to modify fuel characteristics and behaviour, and to protect fire sensitive, natural and cultural historic assets that form an important part of our cultural landscape. These strategies are a significant step forward and an impressive body of work. I congratulate all the department staff for their hard work, skill and expertise in developing and delivering this suite of reports.

I also take this opportunity to thank all those who helped to protect the TWWHA over summer, especially the rapid fire response effort to protect the natural and cultural values of Olegas Bluff at a cost of approximately \$3 million. This included 695 hours of flying time for aircraft, three fixed-wing water-bombing aircraft and five helicopters, delivering over 200 000 litres of water every day. It also involved 95 staff from the Parks and Wildlife Service, working with Tasmania Fire Service, the Emergency Services GIS Unit, the Bureau of Meteorology, the State Air Desk and many other technical specialists from NRE Tas.

The Olegas Bluff fire was also an example of how our agencies and Tasmanian Aboriginal people work together to deliver outstanding outcomes, with collaborations between firefighters, Aboriginal rangers, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, to monitor, manage and reduce impacts to our important cultural sites. I cannot speak highly enough of all the brave, skilled and hardworking individuals who delivered this wonderfully successful outcome to keep this fire under control and to protect cultural values, as well as a stand of significant Huon pine forests in the area of the fire ground. On behalf of all of us here, our heartfelt and grateful thanks to all of those involved. Your efforts were truly inspirational and outstanding to protect this area for future generations.

Members - Hear, hear.

Basslink - Decision to Cease Exporting to Victoria

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.55 a.m.]

Does your Government and Hydro Tasmania support Basslink's decision to cease exporting during current market conditions?

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I am disappointed that Mr Winter, shadow minister for energy, would scare Tasmanians. I have answered questions about Basslink.

Mr WINTER - Point of order Mr Speaker. The Premier signalled that simple questions can have simple answers. The question is very specific. It is about the Government's position on Basslink.

Mr SPEAKER - No, it is not an opportunity to repeat the question. What I have ruled in the past is that the Opposition members have significant opportunities for a preamble and so forth, and so the Premier indicated earlier that he would be answering the question.

From a point of relevance, how can I administer a point of relevance when, again, less than 30 seconds into the answer, you raise a point of relevance? I will again give back to the Premier and again explain that I cannot put words into the Premier's mouth.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the member for his question. As I said before, I am advised that during the unprecedented price volatility in the National Electricity Market (NEM), Basslink has made a commercial decision not to export energy from Tasmania to Victoria whilst the administered price gap is in place in Victoria - in case you put out another scaremongering release, as you did yesterday. Frankly, you should have corrected the record

once you knew the information. I noticed that the Leader of the Opposition corrected the record on the Adjournment last night, and I thank her very much for that.

In case you were coming out and scaring people again, there is no physical issue with the Basslink interconnector. Basslink is available for energy imports should they be required; there are no energy supply concerns in Tasmania; and hydro storages are in a healthy position for this time of the year.

Members - Hear, hear.

Climate Change - Emissions Profile and Action Update

Mr ELLIS question for MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr JAENSCH

[10.58 a.m.]

Can you provide an update on Tasmania's nation-leading emissions profile and whole-of-government action on climate change?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank my Braddon colleague, Mr Ellis, for his question and for his commitment and real action on emissions and climate change.

Ms O'Connor - Give us a break. It is bullshit.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The minister has the call and nobody else should be heard.

Mr JAENSCH - Tasmania's emissions profile continues to be the envy of the nation and the world. The latest state and territory greenhouse gas inventories for 2020, released late last week, show that for the seventh consecutive year, Tasmania has maintained net negative greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, Tasmania's net emissions were negative 3.73 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, and for the seventh year in a row we were the only state to achieve net zero emissions.

Our net emissions are 121 per cent lower than they were in 1990, while our economy in the same time period has doubled and more than 60 000 jobs have been created, demonstrating that we have successfully decoupled economic growth from growth in greenhouse gas emissions in Tasmania.

This nation-leading achievement is due to our sustainably managed forest estate, our long-term investment in renewable energy and ongoing emissions reductions in our waste sector.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister is manifestly misleading the House and Dr Woodruff will take up his misleading on the adjournment tonight. That is untrue.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, unless it is a substantive motion. The minister has his views and opinions and can state what he believes is right. Anybody who

does not agree with him has an opportunity on the adjournment to speak from a different point of view.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, but on the point of order, climate science is not a matter of opinion, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, unless you want to exit the Chamber, I suggest you do not say any more for this question time.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, our nation-leading emissions achievements are due to our sustainably managed forest estate, our long-term renewable energy investments and ongoing emissions reductions in our waste sector in particular, and from 2020 we have achieved self-sufficiency in renewable electricity supply.

Tasmania's enviable emissions status and our ambitious targets will deliver brand benefits, investment and jobs for Tasmania, while adding value to everything we offer and produce here, including in hospitality and tourism, science, agriculture, aquaculture, advanced manufacturing and resources. Between 1990 and 2020, direct combustion emissions are 3 per cent lower and emissions from the waste sector are 35 per cent lower.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, but native forest logging is the highest emitting industry.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr JAENSCH - Emissions in the land use change and forestry sector are over 200 per cent lower. However, a number of sectors have seen increases in emissions over this period, including industrial processes and product use, which are 5.9 per cent higher, transport emissions are 2.8 per cent higher and agricultural emissions are 3 per cent higher.

Further, emissions modelling shows that as our economy and population grow and the risk of severe bushfires increases, we will need to do more to reduce emissions across all sectors to maintain our net-zero emissions status. That is why, in response to the independent review of our climate change legislation, detailed emissions and economic modelling and extensive consultation with industry and business in the community, we will legislate a target of net-zero emissions or lower from 2030. This will be the most ambitious legislated target in the country and one of the most ambitious in the world, and I look forward to debating the enabling legislation.

This Government is committed to working with our industries, businesses and communities to reduce Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions. The 2022-23 Budget includes significant funding to reduce emissions, including almost \$10 million over four years to deliver our next Climate Change Action Plan, \$10 million over four years to replace the government's ageing fleet of fossil fuel boilers, and we have increased our investment to transition the government vehicle fleet to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030 to \$4.6 million over six years.

Over the last three years we have invested over \$300 million in direct funding or support for climate change-related initiatives. This includes reducing emissions in the energy, transport, forestry, industrial, waste and agricultural sectors, including \$250 000 for the

carbon farming advice pilot program; over \$16 million for Metro Tasmania to trial zero-emissions buses; \$4 million to grow on-island processing and value-adding of forest industry products; \$6 million to improve and increase food organics and garden organics -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 48. It is now six minutes since the minister got to his feet and misrepresented the climate science. I ask you to ask him to wind up.

Mr SPEAKER - On the point of order, I am sure the minister was about to conclude. If you could continue, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - I have spent half of those six minutes sitting here waiting for Ms O'Connor to stop talking, Mr Speaker.

I point out again that I am running through a list of things that this Government has invested \$300 million in on our journey to reduce emissions in Tasmania and maintain our net-zero emissions status. All the Greens are interested in is closing things down. We are completely opposite on this and we are getting results. There is \$6 million to improve organics industrial composting in the north and the south of Tasmania, diverting organic waste material from landfill where it generates greenhouse gas emissions, and we are supporting Norske Skog to consider alternative fuels for its new boiler as part of a \$2 million state government commitment to ensure the sustainability of its operations.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker, it has been seven minutes now since the minister has been reading from that press release.

Mr SPEAKER - On the point of order, I control the Chamber. I do not need to be told how to do that. If you interject again or raise that point of order, I will ask you to leave. That is twice from the Greens.

Ms O'CONNOR - On the point of order, Mr Speaker -

Mr SPEAKER - No, Ms O'Connor. On the point of order, I have indicated that the minister was about to wind up so I will control it, thank you very much. If you argue, I will ask you to leave.

Ms O'CONNOR - On the point of order, Mr Speaker, I need to understand, as every member in this House does, if we are still allowed to raise points of order?

Mr SPEAKER - You are allowed to raise a point of order but not to complain about the length of time that a minister has. I control the time that the ministers have to speak so you are reflecting on the Chair.

Ms O'CONNOR - I am not.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, just to seek clarification. Are you indicating that standing order 48 no longer applies in this Chamber?

Mr SPEAKER - No.

Ms WHITE - It is an important question. We all need to understand what the Standing Orders are and which ones apply and which ones do not.

Mr SPEAKER - I am indicating that I will control that. I do not need members standing up, particularly one after another, complaining about the minister and his answer. I am asking the minister to wind up. The minister will do that and that will be the end of question time.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Last week's figures confirmed Tasmania is a global leader in net emissions and we intend to keep it that way. This Government will continue to take action to reduce emissions across our economy while we build resilience and adapt to our changing climate.

Time expired.

SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER

Macquarie Point Development Corporation - Further Consultancies

[11.08 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing) - Mr Speaker, on indulgence, I would like to add to the answer I provided to the member for Clark, Ms Johnston. In relation to her question, I am advised that this is not the case. Consultants have not been engaged to redo the vision for the site. The corporation is committed to the existing master plan which is now embedded in the Sullivan's Cove Planning Scheme 1997.

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Burnie Court House

Ms Archer tabled the response to a petition presented by **Ms Dow** on 10 March 2022:

- Petition No. 4 - See Appendix 1 on page 115.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY (PRICE CAP) BILL 2022 (No. 34)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Winter and read the first time.

CARER RECOGNITION BILL 2022 (No. 33)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Street and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Affordable and Reliable Energy

[11.10 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: affordable and reliable energy.

I will to start my contribution by explaining why we have directed most questions around energy to the Premier, rather than the minister for Energy. That is because the minister for Energy does not answer questions. Whether it is in Estimates or in question time, he refuses to answer the simplest question we ask. Whether we ask a straight-up question, single sentences, we do not get an answer; whether we add a preamble, we still do not get an answer. I do not know how to extract an answer from this minister. That is why we ask the Premier - occasionally he answers questions.

The reason we know that this Government dropped its energy policy is not because the minister for Energy fronted up and admitted it. It is because the Premier did. The Premier had to explain, had to admit, that they dropped their energy policy. This Energy minister could not even front up to the fact that he dropped his own energy policy. The signature energy policy of this Government - lowest regulated electricity prices of the nation, including the promise to delink from the National Electricity Market (NEM) to break the link with the mainland pricing - has been abolished by this minister, who could not even admit to it.

That is why we do not ask this minister questions in relation to energy in this place. We gave him another chance today. He still did not answer. He refuses to answer even the simplest of questions. He pretends as though he has answered it. He has not. Anyone who watches can see it is a simple question, presumably with a simple answer. There are only two options: (1) he does not want to answer, or (2), and I think a more compelling case, that he does not know the answer to these questions because he is not across his brief, because he does not know what he is doing. He is on track to becoming the worst energy minister in history, coming very close to Matthew Groom, the former minister for energy.

If the Premier, the Treasurer, and the minister for Energy are not going to do their job to protect Tasmanians from massive bill shock, Labor will do it for them. If the cost of living is not something they understand, I am here to tell Tasmanians that Labor does. We do understand. We know this is not the time to cut energy concessions from Tasmanian pensioners. This Government does not understand that.

Labor has tabled a bill today because the Premier, the Treasurer and the minister, Mr Barnett, have not done their job. In 2018, they promised to undertake a NEM exit to break the link with the mainland pricing. That is the same pricing that is now putting Tasmanian families and businesses at risk. They promised to reduce power prices through an NEM exit. They promised that their NEM exit would remove the linkage to Victoria and what they said was recent high energy prices and volatility experienced on the mainland. Well, wow, that is exactly what we are now facing.

In the interim, between 2018 and now, they have not done their job. The exact set of scenarios that this policy was supposed to protect us from exists now. Tasmanian families and businesses are exposed because this Energy minister has not done his job. It is his incompetence, his failure to do his job that has left Tasmanian families and businesses exposed to the National Electricity Market and the risks of massive bill shock for Tasmanian families.

They did cut prices for three years but then they did not do their job. They broke their promise to Tasmanian families and businesses. If this Government, this Premier and Treasurer and this incompetent minister for Energy will not do their job, Labor will. The bill we tabled today ensures that Tasmanians will not experience the price shocks threatening Tasmanian households and businesses due to the chaos in the National Electricity Market. Labor's bill will cap power prices at 2.5 per cent.

We do that because we do not believe in real wage cuts for Tasmanian families as this Government does. The Premier had an opportunity today to outline his wages policy but, again, he failed to do so. The only wages policy they have is 2.5 per cent. Seemingly, the only institution in Australia at the moment that believes that is a fair wage rise is the Tasmanian Government, this Premier, this Treasurer, who believe that is fair in this current environment. We do not agree.

This Government does not care about the cost of living. This is a government that cut cost-of-living support in the middle of an energy crisis, in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, because they are so deeply out of touch. There is chaos in the National Electricity Market because of nine years of failed conflicted energy policy by Liberals and Nationals in Canberra, because the political party on that side turned energy policy into a matter of ideology, not policy. On that side, it is always about the politics and never about the people.

This cannot be shown any more clearly than the minister's release a couple of weeks ago where he effectively said he was putting Marinus first, ahead of Tasmanian businesses and Tasmanian families. He dropped his policy that promised 7 per cent to 10 per cent lower prices for Tasmanians. This minister has backtracked; he has broken his promise to Tasmanian families -

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, I remind you about the standing order that says not to use a prop. Could you desist in waving documents around, please?

Mr WINTER - Thank you, Mr Speaker, I am holding a piece of paper.

A man who thinks his job is holding things and posing for photos, who thinks if he says something in this place then it magically happens - that is this Energy minister. Yesterday this Energy minister rose in question time and, in a truly bizarre contribution, attacked me for calling on him to implement his own policy to exit the National Electricity Market. He is all at sea, he has no idea what he is doing. He is on track to becoming the worst energy minister in Tasmanian history. He is second at the moment, only behind Matthew Groom, and it will not be long until he is the worst.

Time expired.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome - and I noticed the minister is up there with them - there are more students from grade 5 and 6 from Howrah Primary School. Welcome to the Chamber.

Members - Hear, hear.

[11.17 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased to speak on affordable and reliable energy because that is what we have in Tasmania. It is very important to say upfront that energy security is not at risk, energy supply is not at risk, despite the scaremongering from Mr Winter and the Labor Party on the other side.

It is a great shame that Mr Winter continues to scaremonger and create fear in the community. The media release yesterday talked about the potential of lights going out - the headline, in fact, of Mr Winter's media release. What should have happened is that Mr Winter should have come in this morning and apologised to the parliament and the community for causing fear. He should have apologised on the public record. He should have said, 'I didn't take advice, I should have taken advice'. He could have called me. I received advice from Hydro Tasmania, which also put out a statement yesterday, saying energy security is not at risk, energy supply is not at risk. You could have taken advice, you could have talked to anybody but you quickly threw out a media release to try to get a cheap headline. Now you are embarrassed because you have been caught out.

This is not the first time, in terms of the major swings you have had on energy. With the Tas gas pipeline negotiations, you said intervene, intervene, intervene, intervene. Of course, there was a mutually agreeable outcome. The Government did not intervene. We set up the arbitration arrangements some years ago, supported across the National Electricity Market. That was one major fumble. The second one related to Basslink and the fearmongering over that. The third one has come in the last 24 hours, where he has been caught out again. Three strikes and you are out. It is time you reconsidered your position.

I spoke to the CEO of the Australian Energy Market Organisation, Daniel Westerman, last night and received those verbal assurances, as we have provided earlier in the day from Hydro Tasmania based on advice from my department and what is commonly understood. I sought and received those assurances that there is no risk to Tasmania's electricity supply. You should be checking the facts and they were a distant second when your media release went out yesterday. You have been caught out and you should come clean right now.

Regarding our plans for Marinus link, the question is, does state Labor support Marinus link? Nothing. I might say it is a rhetorical question.

Ms O'Connor - You expect them to answer your questions but you never answer any of ours.

Mr BARNETT - I am putting a rhetorical question and it is a big blatant vacuum: no response from state Labor. I find it interesting after very positive, collaborative conversations with the federal minister and the stark contrast with state Labor. Do you support Marinus link?

Mr Winter - Tell me what it is.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, order. There is no opportunity to interject, you know that.

Mr BARNETT - He does not know about Marinus link; he said tell me what it is. It is an embarrassment. Marinus link is the major national infrastructure project across Bass Strait from Tasmania to the mainland. Everybody knows about Marinus link except the shadow minister for energy on the other side. When we ask if he supports it he does not know the answer. It is yes or no but he cannot provide advice. You have been caught out. We have big plans with Marinus link, Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. With respect to your decision, do you support exiting the National Electricity Market?

Mr Winter - Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER - It is a rhetorical question. You are not expected to answer it. There will be a second speaker for Labor. If you wish a comment to be made they can make it.

Mr BARNETT - Exiting the National Electricity Market puts our economy at risk, puts jobs at risk and puts those projects at risk. It will kill off Marinus, it will kill off Battery of the Nation, and it will kill off our plans for green hydrogen.

Regarding your plans, it appears to me that you want to exit the National Electricity Market. Let us ask the Labor Party their position because it was not so long ago, in February this year, that he was up at UPC Robbins Island and put on his Facebook page that the wind farm at UPC Robbins Island will create hundreds of construction jobs in the region and produce clean energy for Tasmania and the rest of the country. Where does the energy go? How does it get to the rest of the country? It has to go via a cable and that cable is Marinus link, Mr Winter. You supported Marinus link in February this year but you cannot answer the question today. You have been caught out. You have done a total 180 degrees, a total turnaround for and on behalf of the Labor Party.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Members on my right, order.

Mr BARNETT - To finish, with respect to electricity prices, we have a track record. Cost of living is top priority for us. Keeping downward pressure on electricity prices is a top priority. Since we have been in government they have gone down 27 per cent in real terms for business and 18 per cent for residential customers. Last year there was a 7 per cent reduction and an 11 per cent reduction respectively for residential and small businesses. We know this is a top priority. That is why we stand ready to respond to the independent regulator's decision.

Labor has a track record of increasing power prices by some 65 per cent when they were in government and that is something that the Tasmanian community will never forget.

[11.24 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, this is an incredibly childish level of conversation about such a serious issue. We have a government which is failing to answer questions and failing to be transparent with Tasmanians about the money their Government is proposing to either attract in investment and therefore forgo other investments that could be attracted to Tasmania, or spend from Tasmanians' hard-earned taxes themselves. That is what the Government is doing. They are being utterly silent about the commitments that are being made and the cost to Tasmania of the large sources of power generation and distribution that are on the table at the moment - Marinus, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen and all the other investments that are on the table in Tasmania.

On the other side of the Chamber we have an opposition party that has no position, no conversation about removing emissions being a top-order priority, nothing to say except to have a fairly puerile level of discussion about such an important issue.

The Greens look at every decision that is made in this space through the prism of looking at reducing emissions as a matter of urgency and making sure that Tasmanians have ownership of generation and supply, so that we have security for ourselves, so that we take responsibility for our emissions and we ensure that the investments and expenses we put into renewable generation are the best possible spend for the dollar.

What Tasmanians want, and what the Greens will demand for them every time, is total transparency about these enormous decisions that are being made secretly behind closed doors by men in suits, most of the time. I reflect on my experience of sitting at the Energy table at Estimates. It was quite interesting. I was sitting there and on one side of the table, all men, and on the other side of the table, all men, and everyone who was speaking was a man. These decisions are made by old establishment thinking, fundamentally. They are not about being nimble, being on the margins, being adaptive. They are all about setting stuff, being part of the big players on the mainland.

We have to be very careful, because this is our children's future we are making decisions about. A safe climate, which this is all essentially about, is a very small side-order matter of discussion when most of these conversations are being had behind closed doors in Tasmania and on the mainland with all the electricity market players.

Let us talk about what we need. We need some answers because at the moment what is on the table is that Tasmanians will be expected to pay for infrastructure that does not benefit us. In Tasmania we desperately need to reduce the emissions that we ourselves create. Around 50 per cent of our emissions come from liquid fuels. There is no plan at all from this Government for how to electrify our transport. I know; I asked the questions in Estimates. There is no planning for TasRail to replace locomotives, so if we buy another locomotive and we sign up again for another diesel locomotive for TasRail, that is 30 years into the future of burning fossil fuels.

The minister could not answer a question about green hydrogen and how much of the off-take was going to stay in Tasmania. The reason he did not answer that question is because it seems, from what we understand, that about 99 per cent of the green hydrogen that

is being talked about being produced by Woodside, Fortescue and other companies in the green hydrogen cluster, is all going to go overseas in the form of ammonia to be used at the other end, exported and sold on the global market. That is fine. We have no problems with that, except that first of all, if \$70 million of Tasmania's money and \$70 million of federal money is being used to generate a green hydrogen industry in Tasmania, it should first be about electrifying Tasmania's transport system. Those electrons should be used in Tasmania to create a green hydrogen TasRail system, to create the sources of electricity we will need so that our industries can stand above others on the planet. However, the minister goes ahead and has secret conversations with Woodside and Fortescue as if that is going to provide the security and the growth that Tasmanians need - nor real jobs.

I can be pretty sure that a green hydrogen industry is not about long-term sustainable jobs. In the short-term, it might be about construction, and after that, most of those jobs will be in Melbourne from a tower because it will be electrified.

Dr Mountain's report from the Victoria Energy Policy Centre was very clear, with an update in November last year, about the analysis of the economics and the greenhouse gas impact of Marinus Link; and Battery of the Nation made it really clear - there are questions that have never been answered by this Government about the fact that it does not stack up. It does not stack up for an investment from the federal government in the order of \$7 billion to go into an industry which is already being replaced; a generation of electricity and a stabilising capacity like pumped hydro that is already being replaced every single day on the mainland by long-storage batteries.

Super-sized, long-storage batteries are replacing the need for that sort of firming in our distribution system. The minister never provides any answers.

Time expired.

[11.31 a.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I have to say our little mates up there would definitely be surprised that the Greens in Tasmania are the ones who are opposed to wind farms, hydro dams and green hydrogen. They are basically opposed to any renewable energy that could possibly be generated in this state. They have no plan to get it from here to the mainland and they have no plan for it to be utilised by anyone. I thought the motto was, once upon a time, 'Think global, act local'. Now the Greens do not want us to think and they do not want us to act.

This is the problem we have with a lot of these conversations in Tasmania - they are poisoned by people who are just anti-everything. When Bob Brown was asked 'Why are you opposed to wind farms? How is it that an environmentalist, a conservationist, the fundamental father of the Greens is opposed to wind farms?', he said 'I do not know why this surprises anyone. I have made my entire career opposing renewable energy'. Of course he has. He was opposed to hydro dams, which are the things that are generating the net zero that we are able to commit to in this state under this Liberal Government. He was opposed to the wind farms that are getting built so that we can electrify our vehicle fleet, and provide power to the mainland that is cheap, that is replacing coal, and enabling a clean energy transmission in this country. They are opposed to all those things, and they are opposed to the mechanism to get there.

When I see these matters of public importance about issues around energy security and reliability, you can be assured that we have a two-headed attack from the other side - one from a group that is absolutely opposed to common sense, and the other, the Labor Party, which does not know what they believe.

The minister has already talked about Mr Winter's little field trip up to Braddon - my neck of the woods - to take a look at Robbins Island, where one of the largest renewable energy projects in the Southern Hemisphere is going to be built. He did not know how that was going to benefit Australia and the world - presumably, because he did not know how any of the electricity was going to get over to the mainland. He did speak about the fact that the clean energy would benefit Tasmanians, mainlanders, and Australia; I am not sure how he thought that was going to happen, because he did not even know, in this debate, what Marinus Link is.

I am sure that he and his mates were cruising around the Budget briefings that we held with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce the day after the Budget, where they heard from Marinus Link, who are really great sponsors of that event. They told everybody who was there, including the business people of this state - who are excited by the possibilities that will be generated from that game-changing renewable energy infrastructure - exactly what it is. Mr Winter first, does not know what it is and second, does not know whether he supports it.

He has spent the last three weeks in this place trying to crab walk around whether we should have some kind of position on Marinus Link, or whether we should oppose it; whether we should try to make some political hay out of this -

Ms Butler interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Member for Lyons, order. Interject again and you will leave the Chamber.

Mr ELLIS - important project for the future of Tasmania. This is one of the largest investments that our state has ever seen. We know Mr Winter was waxing lyrical once upon a time about Basslink and how the Bacon Labor government managed to create Basslink. Good on them. They did a fantastic job. What we want to do is supersize Basslink. We want to provide something that is 1500 megawatts - more than three times the size of Basslink.

We thought that a visionary, bold, future-focused policy and project such as Marinus Link would get the support from those opposite, particularly someone who comes in here and pretends that he is concerned about energy security and the lights going out. The point has been made by AEMO, by us and by federal Labor, that interconnection is the thing that guarantees we can have market security and surety around this country. If we can get energy from places that are producing it with no emissions, such as Tasmania, and we can get them to other parts of the country, then we can help deliver security - not just for ourselves, but for our fellow Australians.

We are really proud of the projects that we are bringing into this place to create jobs, to create opportunities for young Tasmanians and to reduce Australia's emissions. It is sad that those opposite us cannot even bring themselves to have the kind of low-level positivity to

support a bloody good thing. We know that on that side opposite there are the prophets of doom. Every Labor member who is given a portfolio almost gets some kind of briefing note to say, 'The number one thing you have to do in Opposition is make sure that you oppose whatever the Government puts up'. It does not matter whether it is a good idea. It does not matter whether we are delivering budget surpluses - we are not spending enough. If we are delivering deficits, it is because we are spending too much. They are fundamentally inconsistent and stand for nothing.

This is a Government that is delivering the energy security our state needs. We have a plan to build 200 per cent capacity from renewable energy. Nowhere else in world is doing that. We are developing the projects which are getting Tasmania to the point where we are leading the world by so much that it is not even close.

The Greens whinged and complained when the Minister for Environment and Climate Change got up in question time and talked about the \$300 million-worth of investments that we are making, because they were not the ones that were on their little pet project list. This state needs to have a sense of Team Tasmania if we are going to drag our position to the forefront.

There are miners on the west coast who are starting to talk about the fact that they have the lowest emissions tin and zinc produced in the world. There are people across our state who are relying on this parliament to deliver those game-changing projects, while maintaining the affordability and the reliability that Tasmania's energy system is so widely renowned for under this Government.

The Opposition is nothing but a sponge, full of holes and no backbone. We are very proud of the work we are doing in this state to deliver energy security for Tasmanians.

[11.38 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, someone give the man a Logie or an Academy Award. Maybe even a ministry would have been a good idea. Thank you for that. It was completely irrelevant and right off key.

We have a really big problem here, and the minister knows we have a big problem. We have a problem with increasing power prices. We have a problem with the fact that you have reneged on your 2018 policy, which was to decouple Tasmania from the mainland. That has not happened. It was a plan that you announced in 2018 and you took to an election. Your policy was called 'lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation', and that was where the Government was heading.

That has not happened. Yesterday, the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) issued a warning of maximum power load interruptions across five states, including Tasmania. Minister, when you stand up in parliament and you accuse our shadow minister, Mr Winter, who knows what he is talking about, of scaremongering, what you are actually saying is that the Australian Energy Market Operator, who issued that warning yesterday, is scaremongering. That is what you have done.

You have completely undermined the experts. We have an obligation as members of parliament to bring important issues into this House and you also have an obligation to

answer those questions which you do not, which is why Mr Winter was asking the Premier questions. Frankly, either you are out of your depth, you know something that you are not sharing with us, or you are basically incompetent. You do not really provide answers.

There has to be some surety and that is why today Labor has taken the front foot and introduced a bill to cap electricity prices at 2.5 per cent. That is really important. I congratulate Mr Winter on introducing that bill to the House this morning because it is sensible. Somebody has to do something. You only provide electricity relief when it is election time as a form of porkbarrelling, and everyone knows that. When you are doorknocking, people think, 'They've just handed them out because they want me to vote for them; I'm still not going to vote for them, though.'

We have a really big problem and it is time you were honest about the problem we have because Tasmanians basically cannot afford what some of these anticipated increases in power prices will be. It is thanks to the incompetence of this Government because in 2018 it was your policy to decouple and you have not continued that policy, but you have never explained why you chose not to. You have never been able to give us any information about why you made such a big change in your policy because it was a 2018 policy and we are still linked. Tasmania has 100 per cent renewable energy and is more than capable of powering our own state. That was the whole policy you introduced in 2018 and you have just stepped back on it. You even have some experts saying that there could be power increases on the mainland up to 41 per cent. We really hope that does not happen in Tasmania but you are not providing any assurances. All you are doing is playing politics on it.

Mr Ellis, you do know that there is a Liberal member who is opposed to the wind farms on the north-west, don't you? You do understand that Gavin Pearce has come out against wind farms on the north-west? At the moment the Liberals and the Greens -

Mr Ellis - You do not even know the place well enough to know which wind farm we're talking about.

Ms BUTLER - Do some research. I know you are very good at gaslighting - it is a skill. I have an eight-year-old child and sometimes when he gets angry he argues just like you do when you stand up in the House, which says a lot.

In Tasmania our wholesale prices have risen. We are looking at around \$140 per megawatt hour and that is about \$100 more than it was this time last year. Living costs are also rising at an alarming rate. Food prices are up by at least 4.4 per cent. Housing costs rose by at least 8.1 per cent. Transport costs have increased by at least 20 per cent. Education costs have risen by at least 5 per cent. Tasmanians cannot afford an increase in power prices, and nor should they have to because they believed you.

They believed this Government when you said in 2018 that you were going to work to ensure that what we pay for power in Tasmania would be protected and you have not done that. This is an absolute indication of mismanagement and you cannot PR yourself out of this or blame Labor for this. This is your mismanagement and it is really concerning. It is just not going to cut it anymore because it is such an essential piece of our infrastructure in Tasmania. It is so important to Tasmanians to make sure that power prices will not rise. If

they are forecasting that in some places on the mainland - and we are linked to it - they could go up by 40 per cent. That is not scaremongering. That is true.

It is disgusting that we had a minister come into our House today who we have almost given up asking questions because he does not answer them. At least the Premier can answer them. We did give you another chance today to answer a question because you are meant to be the minister and that is part of your role. However, when you have the Australian Energy Market Operator stating that Tasmania could have power load interruptions, and then last night Basslink stopped exporting as well, obviously there are some issues going on. Be honest and fix it, minister.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2022 (No. 23)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2022 (No. 24)

Reports of Estimates Committee

In Committee

Continued from 14 June 2022 (Page 118).

DIVISIONS 2, 9 and 10

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

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE - I rise to make a contribution on the Estimates process for Minister Petrusma. I need to say, because I was criticised yesterday for being negative, that I had a discussion after Estimates that minister Petrusma was across the detail of her portfolio. I might have some concerns with some of the decisions and the outcomes of those, but it was refreshing to see a minister who knew enough of her portfolio to be able to take questions, not flick them off, and to discuss them in a very in-depth way. As I said, I will probably have some issues with some of the outcomes of it but it was impressive to see the work the minister has done across the areas that were examined which were Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Prevention of Family Violence and Parks.

I will start with some of the concerns that were raised around the wellbeing of police officers. The minister and the Government are very quick to talk about the significant investment into the Wellbeing Unit. It is not that that work is not laudable or that will not have a great impact for those people who identify as requiring support through the process and the online program that exists identifying whether you need support. The significant concern we raise is around causality: the reasons that people are ending up in such a highly significant state of stress. What we know, and the minister confirmed, is that almost 10 per cent of the police force is on open workers compensation claims. That is around 134 workers on open claims. We also know that there are other staff on unpaid leave and extended sick

leave, which ticks us into the probably over 10 per cent of the workforce that cannot be at work because of either physical or psychological injury. That is a real concern.

The work that is done and the evidence the minister gave during the Estimates process was very much about wanting people to come forward and identify when they have concerns, which is, as I said, quite laudable. What is missing is a genuine understanding of what we are doing wrong in our workplaces.

There is a review of the Country Fire Station Relief Policy and the minister has said that she will be open and have discussion around the outcomes of that review. Part of it is a staffing issue, the ability for people to be able to take leave; part of it is the ability to have enough staff on call. What concerns me is, despite the fact that there have been ongoing conversations around causality, we do not have an understanding yet across our police service about what is going wrong. There are a couple of outcomes that I want to talk about.

I mentioned the 24-hour police station review. I look forward to the outcomes of that. I am pleased that the minister will be discussing that review. I am not sure how much of the review will be public but there will be analysis of that review, but what was concerning was that we still could not work out how many times the relief policy could not be enacted. Unless we understand that, it is really difficult to understand what is the next step that we need to go through to ensure that our Country Station Relief Policy is working appropriately.

In addition, there was a review of the workers' health and safety structure in Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) conducted in late 2020, and it has taken some time. We are almost at a point where all of those recommendations will be resolved. That has taken a couple of years to get to, and we have the request that has been around for a little while, for a proper understanding of causality.

There has been discussion for some time around an investigation into what is happening in the causation. A decision was made by Police not to take on a significant claim for a WorkSafe investigation, and that WorkSafe investigation would be looking at what is going wrong in our workplaces, that means is unsafe and is leading to these workers health and safety issues. The concern with the full WorkSafe investigation was recognised by everyone, in that it creates negative media, and it becomes a little bit harder to recruit people. Nobody wanted to have that rather dark story in the space, if there was a better way to work out what was going on.

The agreement was done: that there would be greater research into the Tasmanian implications and the Tasmanian circumstances on workload and work safety. There is, obviously, a national piece of work that is being talked about but this is about a significant commitment to understanding the Tasmanian circumstance. What concerned me is that, despite the fact we are putting money into wellbeing, we are apparently not prepared at this stage to commit that kind of funding to understanding causality. There is an Australian Research Council grant application going through through which will be very much a global analysis.

If that does not get up, there is not a decision, and there is not a willingness to take on the funding for that investigative work. In fact, even if that investigative work was to be undertaken - and I hope that it is a successful grant process - it does not deal with Tasmania's

specific circumstances. Workload analysis is one thing; relieving is another thing but there is a whole host of things that need to be considered when we go through what might be creating unsafe work environments. That is probably the thing that concerned me the most during that process.

There is also the Winter Review that has been undertaken. The Government has made the decision that they are not going to release the Winter Review, the argument being that it has some level of sensitivity. Not having seen the review, I cannot say whether that is a true analysis, or whether it is some kind of protective analysis. It is disturbing not to have that information.

The minister has committed to updating us on the implementation time frame of all 23 recommendations, bar the one that is not being accepted. The one that is not being accepted is around that commitment to immediately backfill positions which, as we know, is having a bit of a challenge.

These were major areas around WorkSafe that I wanted to raise within this area. I want to stress that throughout the conversations, workload analysis is one part of understanding why a workplace is unsafe. It is not the only part. Not understanding causation, and expecting things to change, is a significant problem.

We also found that we are seeing a greater level of people leaving Police than before. Back in 2015, we were seeing about two separations a month. That is currently sitting at 4.8 with an expectation of 5.2 or more. That cannot all be put down to the age profile. There are other things going on that are making people decide not to stay in Police.

The Government's argument is that we are recruiting more police officers. However, there is a significant time before those officers would be at the level that would meet the trained outcomes or the level of experience of those officers who are departing. Also, our recruit training is not having the same kind of retention rate as it had in the past. We are getting more through, but we are also losing them in that process. That also needs to be understood.

I say all of this whilst commending the minister for the fact that we do have a wellbeing program. It is great but it is only part of the problem, and if we do not understand causality then what we will have is a lot of people taking up the wellbeing program whereas what we would like to see is a lot of people not having to take the wellbeing program. I do not think the minister would disagree.

We then moved on to Tasmania Fire Service. Today, the Fair Work Commission has recognised that the significant cost of living impact has meant that our lowest paid workers around the country should get a 5.2 per cent wage increase. I welcome that decision; it is an excellent decision. However, it does draw into stark comparison this Government's decision not to recognise the significant cost of living impact that is being faced by our public sector workers. Fire fighters in Tasmania are the lowest paid in the country. That is on the 2020 figures because there have been wage increases in other jurisdictions since then.

'Hideously lowest paid' is a fairer assessment of what the wage disparity is there. The Government keeps using this phrase, 'we will negotiate in good faith'. Perhaps there is not an

understanding of what 'good faith, means because each time something has been put on the table, it is pretty much the same offer. Coming out and saying 'we have put six offers on the table and we are bargaining in good faith' when you know that that offer is already not going to be accepted is not bargaining in good faith. That is not what bargaining in good faith means.

I am extremely disappointed and concerned about that. I am concerned about some of the funding profiles like Project Wake Up and for the work that has been done in Community Fire Safety on hoarding and high-risk properties. These areas are being reassessed. I do not imagine the Government would not want to continue their funding, but they are not profiled in the Budget. That concerns me because we see a pattern across the entire Budget which may get Mr Ferguson into the figures that he wants when it adds up. I am not sure; I have not done the work. It might be an interesting piece of work to do over the break.

I cannot imagine that you would not be funding those projects into the future, particularly given what we have seen in the last few weeks. We have seen significant numbers of house fires, risk to life and people have lost an awful lot in previous fires. Everything that we can do around high-risk properties, hoarding, community safety, and things like Project Wake Up should be adopted by this Government. I am quite concerned about that as well.

We spoke about the incident management teams and the remote area teams. Whilst really good evidence was given, I am still unconvinced that the work that needs to be done is in place now. Whilst it was very easy to touch wood and say that we would not need to stand up a remote area team right now, we might not need stand up an incident management team - anything is possible in Tasmania with Tasmanian weather. Whilst there is an awful lot of cold and snow out there right now, things can rapidly change and can rapidly change in different parts of the state. That concerned me quite a bit.

The other very concerning thing is there was no guarantee to rule out the privatisation of the Tasmania Fire Equipment Service. I am extremely concerned about that. The Government has said that they are reviewing it and they imagine that the service would still be provided by someone. However, it has served us well to have the Tasmania Fire Equipment Service maintained as a Government entity. There are a lot of good reasons for that; it keeps a really good watch on what is happening in the sector. I would be extremely concerned if the Government made the decision to privatise it. That is something most members should pay attention to.

Moving on, simply because time requires it, to the prevention of family violence. We were fortunately able to keep the police representatives for the beginning of that to address some of the concerns that they had. I thank the minister for this. We heard about some extremely high rates of family violence reporting. What I did not get to, and it is possibly something I will put on notice, minister - I will speak to you about it - is that what we are able to get data on is the things that meet the reportable threshold of family violence. Then there is another statistic of figures which are for family arguments. There would be a number of things that are reported to police that do not flag as being family violence at the time that they are reported - they may be damage to property; they may be to do with children's safety and children's access; they may be about an assault but it is not immediately identified as a family violence issue.

My guess is that the scope is actually quite large. I do not know if the minister has any ability to look at how we might get a more global picture about what is coming through. It may be that it is very hard to quantify, but it may be a piece of work that the minister can undertake - given what I know to be her passion in this area. We talked a lot about the increased funding that is being provided over the five-year funding arrangements. I still have a concern, however and I have raised this concern, recognising that this is the five-year funding the sector has wanted and it is providing a level of surety for the out years, which is a good thing. However, I know from talking to the sector that they were so frightened about losing their additional COVID-19 money that pretty much what they put in was to just not get less than they are getting now, and to have that commitment over the forward Estimates. As the minister knows, this embeds the significant wait times we have for services. It is not about anything that is going to deal with the wait list we are currently failing to manage.

It does provide security for the sector and it does mean that they do not lose staff at such a rapid rate because they lack ongoing contracts. There are a host of good things about it but I still believe that we are failing to resource that unmet need.

We provided additional money during COVID-19, which is fantastic. The former premier called me when he was looking at COVID -19 payments and I appreciate the conversation we had at that time and the commitment he was giving but what happened is that we pretty much just caught up with what we had before. Numbers are escalating and wait times are escalating. It is simply unacceptable that people identify in a point of crisis and we are not able to help them.

While I commend the minister for locking in the increased funding and five-year contracts that cannot be the end of it. We will probably need to see some more in the next Budget. There are gaps in the Budget regarding the ongoing planning for our response to family and sexual violence and ongoing funding for women broadly. Apparently, we are waiting to see how much we will spend, a bit like those matters I raised in the fire safety area.

I cannot envision we will not be funding that money. In fact, the minister does not envision it. She said in her Estimates response, 'It is okay, it will be in next year's Budget, you can hold me to account for it then'. My concern is that it should be at least a nominal figure in the Budget now because that goes to that broader picture of how much we should be spending. Just saying, 'we have not put the money in yet because we do not know how much therefore we are going to spend that, or it does not exist', is not the way the Budget should be operating. I cannot imagine the minister is going to spend less; I know her commitment is to spend more but the fact that the Budget does not reflect even the current levels of funding in the out years is concerning.

We talked a little about the multidisciplinary centres. There is a lot of work to be had with that; it does need to be done with a level of sensitivity. I know that the minister and police are looking for the engagement and involvement of victims/survivors. I know, as well, that they are already putting really hard time frames on people for whom trust in government and trust in police, in particular, might be a significant issue. This is causing a bit of concern in the sector. That is not a lack of intention. That is just a reality of the stakeholder group with which we are dealing. I am still quite concerned about that.

We raised at the time that we would like to see coordinators for these facilities, because otherwise what you might have is just a lot of people collocated. The capacity to provide a really good responsive framework is because those services are working together and there is a broader understanding of how the MDC is working. If it is just, 'well, you can come in and use that room, and we have those people in those rooms over there', that does not really take advantage of what could be achieved in this area.

Quickly going on to Parks, because 20 minutes is never enough and I talk too much. I am concerned that we have still a long way to go with the purchase of the land for Brighton School. The difference between what is desired to be paid and what is wished to be paid is quite significant. That puts a major dent in the Government's capacity to deliver on that project.

I am concerned about the ongoing 50-hour and 100-hour contracts. I am concerned that whenever I raise these issues of insecure part-time work, members of the Government say it is all about choice. I do not think the members of Government talk to enough people because, while there are always some people for whom it is their choice, it is not a choice for the vast majority of people I speak to. They will take what they can get but they are desperately trying to cobble together jobs that have enough permanency, security and hours to be able to meet their ongoing needs and costs.

I note that after some questioning, the minister did agree that she would meet with any workers who are on those 50- to 100-hour contracts who want to transition into permanent work. I hope that takes place because an odd conversation with someone at a park who says, 'I am a student and it suits me well' is not representative of the vast amount of stories being brought to us through those individual staff or the industrial body that represents those staff.

We were looking at those issues around field officer positions and identified positions. We may still be waiting on some data for that. I will double-check the question on notice. The minister did come back to us with most questions.

Mrs Petrusma - I provided all my answers to questions on notice.

Ms O'BYRNE - Okay, in that case we may follow through with you a little bit more about the rates of identified positions because I believe that data could not be provided at the time. I will check whether I framed the question well enough for the minister to answer it. I do not believe the minister has attempted not to. She is one of the ministers who got back very quickly with answers. I appreciate that as well.

The other issue is infrastructure works and work planning in Parks. I have been the Parks minister - a long time ago, I admit. I am 120 years old or something. There should be within Parks a register of work that needs to be done. The answer from the acting secretary of the department, Mr Jacobi, was that 'it will take too much work, too many staff hours for us to identify all the jobs that need to be done'. The fact is, there has always been a process whereby if you identify work that needs to be done, you can upload that work and that work exists. I do not believe that does not exist. If I am wrong and it does not exist, then that is a fundamental failure in understanding the future demands of Parks.

One of the things Parks does is that it manages some of those works in order to manage the amount of people they can get in and out. Sometimes they do not work on a project because they want to reduce the amount of people in. That is something that should be upfront and understood but all we were given was a very short work list about some jobs to be done in the next 12 months. It concerns me. The Government needs to be more transparent with their works plan because the parks are one of our greatest tourism assets and greatest infrastructure assets.

Time expired.

Mr TUCKER - Chair, I am delighted to speak on these portfolios that appear before Budget Estimates Committee A. I congratulate the minister for the fantastic job she is doing across these vital portfolio areas. Today, I am going to focus much of my contribution on the area of Parks and Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

The topic of major projects and infrastructure within Parks was discussed during Estimates. There is significant investment in this area to ensure that our world-renowned natural places are able to be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. This Government is investing \$144 million for major projects in our parks, including: \$14 million for the ongoing development of the Freycinet Visitor Gateway; \$7.7 million for the Freycinet Peninsula wastewater project; \$18.7 million to advance Tasmania's \$40 million next iconic multi-day, multi-hut based walk in the Tyndall Range; \$1.75 million to revitalise the Edge of the World Experience at Arthur River; \$1.9 million to deliver a contemporary management plan for Ben Lomond that has a focus on year-round activities; \$2.3 million for the Tamar Island Wetlands boardwalk replacement; \$6.8 million to deliver stage three of the Maria Island Rediscovered project to improve amenities for visitors; \$9 million for the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area; and \$5 million for ongoing maintenance within our national parks.

The tourism sector remains in a challenging position as a result of the global pandemic. We must do all that we can to support the sector and ensure that Tasmania stays at the top of mind for tourists. This means supporting new and exciting demand-drivers to develop sensitive and appropriate tourism that also broadens the range of unique experiences on offer in our parks and reserves for people of all abilities. This infrastructure investment will continue to support our regional economies in terms of economic activity and jobs creation. The Government's commitment to our world-renowned national parks and reserves will ensure that we continue to attract visitors to the state, and that this supports a return to the prosperous visitor economy.

There has also been much discussion at Estimates in relation to the Aboriginal heritage in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the TWWHA. I know that this Government is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of the TWWHA, particularly as it covers almost a quarter of the land area of Tasmania. It is recognised as possessing outstanding universal value under UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, as one of the world's largest temperate wilderness areas and a precious cultural landscape for Tasmanian Aboriginal people who have lived here for over 40 000 years. The TWWHA has also been identified by UNESCO as providing the greatest net carbon sink of the World Heritage property globally.

I listened as the minister spoke passionately about the TWWHA's Biosecurity Strategy 2021-31 which has been developed to respond to significant threats to the outstanding universal values of the TWWHA from invasive weeds, animals and diseases. The minister also tabled the TWWHA Fire Management Plan at Estimates, a document that has been shaped and informed by community consultation, in addition to vegetation mapping and climate modelling, to understand where risks will likely increase over time. The plan outlines the adaptive management framework that will be utilised to modify fuel characteristics and behaviour and to protect fire-sensitive natural and cultural historical assets that form an important part of our cultural landscape.

The plan will also guide ongoing fire management practices within the TWWHA to assist in the comprehensive protection of not only the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) but also public safety, critical state infrastructure and adjoining land values. Importantly, the plan also points out that fire not only reduces fuel load but is an important ecological tool for a healthy ecosystem. The TWWHA contains vegetation that relies on being burned at a certain fire frequency and intensity, therefore complete fire suppression within the TWWHA is undesirable, as many of these ecosystems would cease to exist.

The minister also spoke of the cultural burning grants, the cultural burning program and the Government providing \$1.3 million to support Aboriginal cultural burning in Tasmania. This funding commitment will assist the Parks and Wildlife Service and Aboriginal organisations to work together to undertake cultural burning within Tasmania's national parks and reserves. The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to engage with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and organisations to identify areas that are suitable for cultural burning and facilitating the relevant approval for organisations to undertake this very important cultural practice.

Turning to the portfolio of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, I was interested to hear the minister outline the work that is being undertaken in training our remote area teams to fight fires in challenging terrains. The Government introduced the Volunteer Remote Area Firefighting Program in 2018 and has so far invested \$2.3 million into this program, with a further \$640 000 provided over the forward Estimates. Under this program, selected volunteers undergo helicopter insertion training and gain firefighting skills in this highly specialised area. Remote area firefighters access difficult terrain by helicopter or on foot and use special lightweight pumps or hand tools to fight bushfires, protect lives and keep properties safe. This is particularly useful in Tasmania's remote wilderness areas to protect iconic environmental natural and cultural assets or to stop bushfires before they impact our cities, towns and critical infrastructure.

Many reserves are required to be accessed this way, such as the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Freycinet, Douglas-Apsley and Maria Island national parks, as well as private property. The remote area team training includes exiting helicopters on challenging terrain in Tasmania's wilderness. I am advised that an expressions of interest process to apply for the next round of training recently closed, with 70 applicants. I understand a total of 56 people will now be completing this training round, to be prepared for the upcoming summer, and fitness training for this group is scheduled for Sunday 19 June statewide.

I also want to touch on the discussion concerning workers compensation and work health and safety for police. This Government is the biggest supporter of our hardworking

police officers. Since 2014 the Government has invested in significant measures to improve the work environment and health and safety of our officers. Given the cuts that Labor made to policing, they have no credibility on this issue. I know that the minister is passionate about this topic, in particular a health and wellbeing program that has been implemented by this Government to support our police and emergency service workers to be healthy and well. We are investing \$3 million each year, with a total of \$7.5 million already invested in this nation-leading program. This investment has provided a health and wellbeing team of 23 staff, including increased numbers of wellbeing support officers, psychologists and critical incident stress management support roles.

The strategies for our emergency services to support mental health include a wellbeing support unit that operates 24/7 with access to psychologists, wellbeing support officers; wellbeing training for managers and supervisors; a proactive wellness program called Ready for Response; mental health first aid training; and an online intervention and support hub called MyPulse. This program, on top of the incredible recruitment of 329 additional police officers, the Country Police Station Relief Policy, the \$21.7 million for upgrading police housing and the massive investment of \$50 million to deliver state-of-the-art police stations means that our police officers will be able to share the workload across an establishment of 1499 police officers and work and live in comfortable and contemporary stations and houses. On the issue of police officer wellbeing and workload, Labor has no credibility. Our Government is rebuilding our police service from the harsh cuts imposed by Labor which slashed 108 police officers.

In closing, I would like to again congratulate the minister for her strong delivery within her portfolios and I look forward to future work that is undertaken to improve these portfolios under the minister's strong leadership.

Ms O'CONNOR - Chair, today I will mostly focus on the Parks area of minister Petrusma's multiple portfolios. I know Dr Woodruff will be speaking on some other areas.

I listened carefully to Mr Tucker's assessment of what happened at the table last week when we talked about the management of Parks. He talked about this Government's goal of maintaining the integrity of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Of course they should. The issue the Government has is the expressions of interest process for commercial development inside public protected areas, including the TWWHA. This process has a taint around it and a stink, and by its very nature it degrades wilderness values and cultural values.

The two emblematic examples of that are the wilderness values that would be lost should Daniel Hackett's heli-tourism proposal be successful at Halls Island in Lake Malbena and the cultural values which Aboriginal Tasmanians tell us are rich and ancient and embedded in the landscape throughout the TWWHA, but most recently that conversation has centred around the cultural heritage along the South Coast Track. Until this Government gets rid of the expressions of interest process, which is unpopular, it cannot be taken seriously on effective management of the TWWHA, because commercial industrial tourism is anathema to the values for which this remarkable part of the world was set aside.

The EOIs have seen a corruption of process where World Heritage and national park management plans were written to favour developers; where wilderness zones were rezoned

for recreational purposes, otherwise known as allowing a commercial enterprise hut/lodge or infrastructure around it.

We have had this Government sign exclusive-use agreements and hand over an entire island - Halls Island at Lake Malbena - to Mr Hackett for a peppercorn rent. The island has never been leased before. The lease before was over Reg Halls Hut but this lot, this Government, gave Daniel Hackett a peppercorn lease and exclusive use over an entire island in the TWWHA. Then we found out at the Estimates table that on 2 June the minister re-signed a deed variation agreement with Mr Hackett, who has already been defeated by the Central Highlands Council, the Supreme Court of Tasmania and in the court of public opinion. This developer now has the Liberals so clearly in his back pocket that every single thing he asked for is now in the very deed which I have here. The area was rezoned because Mr Hackett wanted that rezoned a not wilderness area. The lease was extended three times because Mr Hackett wanted that. We have not quite got to the bottom of what these words were, but words were removed from the lease because the developer wanted those words removed. This is a set of words that the previous Parks minister, Mr Jaensch, said to Mr Hackett in correspondence:

I have taken advice on this matter. It is the Government's position that the removal of the requested clause will not, in its own right, provide you with the ability to proceed with construction as asserted. In any event, I have given consideration to your request and determined that it is not appropriate to remove the clause.

It was not appropriate to remove the clause under the previous minister but it was appropriate to remove it in the variation on the deed that was signed on 2 June. We would like to know if Crown Law advice, which is presumably what minister Jaensch was acting on in the earlier correspondence, advised against the removal of that clause or that set of words that Mr Hackett wanted removed? Why have they been removed from this new agreement? What changed about the Crown Law advice? You can be absolutely sure we will be pursuing that.

I also noted at the table that we had an acting secretary and Director of Parks, who must have taken his lesson on how to behave at the Estimates table from the former secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment, Mr Tim Baker, who made a habit of hopping in to answer a question when he had not been given the call, presuming that he had an authority at the table other than as an adviser to the minister. I pulled up Mr Jacobi. I asked a question about the fire management officer for the TWWHA, whether or not there was a fire ecologist position yet in place. Mrs Petrusma said:

I know the Government invests a lot of money into fire management and the TWWHA, but in regard to -

I interjected - this is on the *Hansard* - and I said: It is about the specialist expertise.

Mr Jacobi piped up: Through the minister -

I said to him: With respect, Mr Jacobi, you were not given the call yet.

And Mrs Petrusma said: I did give him the call.

I do not think the minister did. I did not hear the minister give him the call at the table and the *Hansard* record does not reflect that he was given the call. I remind bureaucrats who sit at the table with their ministers that they are there at the mercy, or the pleasure if you like, of the committee table. If the minister wants them to assist with an answer they have to be given the call. They cannot just presume to insert themselves into an answer. Mr Jacobi needs to learn that lesson and if we need to help him the hard way we certainly will.

We also raised the issue of the acting secretary, again Mr Jacobi, directing Parks and Wildlife to compile information for Wild Drake Pty Ltd to inform their Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act review into the Halls Island Lake Malbena project. We understood and were told that representatives from Fishers and Walkers Tasmania and the Tasmanian Wilderness Guides Association met with the minister to discuss their concerns about Lake Malbena and development in general in public protected areas. At that meeting, the minister committed to provide the same information that was given to the developer to those organisations, and now we have been advised that the department then denied them access to the information.

Who is running this portfolio? Is it minister Jacquie Petrusma, is it Mr Jacobi, or is it in fact property developers? That is an open question at this point. We have a minister who said the information would be released and we now have an acting secretary of that agency who is saying it will not be released.

I ask the minister, when she rises to respond today, to give an explanation for why she looked those groups in the face and said she would provide them with the same information she provided to the developer.

There is something wrong with the process when the resources of our public Parks department are devoted to supporting developers get through state and federal environment laws, but groups defending our wild places and cultural landscapes are effectively given the middle finger by the secretary of that same department who seems to be undermining the authority of the Minister for Parks. I know minister Petrusma takes this portfolio seriously and cares about it. That is why we are getting a statutory process for reserve activity assessments, that is why we finally saw a fire management plan for the World Heritage Area, that is why there is a renewed focus on cultural burning practices in the TWWHA, but I will say this to the minister: do not just pay lip service to the palawa pakana people, the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, do not just engage them in cultural burning practices. If they tell you their cultural heritage is embedded deep within that ancient landscape, listen, and do not sic some Queensland-based developer who wants to exploit the South Coast Track for profit onto Aboriginal people to try to divide and conquer them through some fake consultation process which does not stand up to scrutiny.

Finally, Chair, I want to raise the issue of the proclamation under the Nature Conservation Act 2002, which includes those areas of future reserve forests under renewed tenures in the TWWHA. This is very problematic because the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania wrote to the previous premier and made a formal claim on part of that land, yet there has been no response throughout and there has been no recognition of the legitimacy of

that claim. Instead what we have is a proclamation which effectively undermines and indeed ignores that land rights claim, and I call on this minister to do better by Aboriginal people.

Ms DOW - Chair, I rise to make my contribution on this Estimates committee hearing from Mrs Petrusma. The items that I want to cover in my contribution today are around Parks and Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

I will lead off with Police, Fire and Emergency Management and talk specifically about the country station relief policy. I understand there were discussions during Estimates about housing being made available across rural and regional Tasmania but also important upgrades to our police stations across those areas.

This is really important when we look at some of the current strains on rural and regional Tasmania and access to services, but also the retention of professionals across those communities as well, which are so important. I want to thank the minister for her commitment to upgrading police stations and providing upgraded housing for police officers across rural and regional communities, but I also want to highlight the inadequacies that exist across other public services across the regions as well. We know in places in our electorate, Mr Deputy Chair, the west coast has been advocating for a very long time for improved housing, particularly for healthcare professionals, but they do have some significant challenges outside of public services also when it comes to housing.

I want to put the Government on notice about that today to say that there needs to be more work done with that local community to look at how that is holding back industry growth, and how the Government and local government can work together around housing options in that community. I would love to see a commitment from this Government to upgrade health housing that is provided by the state Government across the state in my shadow portfolio area, because that is critical when we look at attracting and retaining health professionals across those communities.

We need to provide these basic services in rural and regional communities to allow people to be able to access important services but also to encourage population growth across those centres as well, and it is very important when you look at economic growth, jobs growth and community development. This needs to be a greater priority of this Government, so I am very pleased to see that minister Petrusma is taking some action in this area, particularly around the police workforce, and I am sure that will be welcomed.

The Rosebery Police Station, for example, is pretty old, pretty decrepit and perhaps not the best image from the street front, but I am certain that this Government, through the commitment they have made to upgrade, will improve that and I would like to see that rolled out to other station sites across the state. The same could be said about ambulance station upgrades as well. There have been some, but there are significant delays to others across the state, so that is what I wanted to make reference to in regard to that country station relief policy.

The second point under that item is about the announcement today around a 5.2 per cent wage increase, which is very good news. I attended the rally on parliament lawns last week with our firefighters, who came from across the state to join together to advocate for better pay and conditions. They want pay parity with their mainland counterparts. They are

currently the worst paid firefighters in the country, as are a number of our public health professionals across the state, as well as other public sector workers. We have a significant problem when it comes to workforce development across the public sector. The wages policy that was included in the Budget that was handed down just a couple of weeks ago, does nothing to instil confidence in the value that this Government places on public sector workers or that this Government will work in good faith and negotiate better pay and conditions for all our public sector workers. They - not unlike our firefighters - deserve it, because they are there at a time of need in an emergency response. Right now, this Government is failing to deliver for them across a number of areas, and wages is just one important part of that.

I move now to infrastructure delays, and parks infrastructure. Reading *Hansard*, I know there have been a number of interactions between Ms O'Byrne and Ms Petrusma about delays to national park infrastructure projects. Those projects are critical to economic growth across regional Tasmania and making sure that we get tourists out into the regions. It is great to have increased activity in the south, but those of us from the north and north-west of the state want to see increased tourism spend and people travelling to experience the beauty of those places and invest in the local economies of those places through accommodation, visitation, and enjoying everything that we have to offer.

One of those projects that is a hallmark of that philosophy is the Cradle Mountain Masterplan Project. This Government committed to the project back in 2018, and we have seen significant delays, particularly with one component of that project - the Cradle Mountain cableway. It is not clear why that part of the project has not progressed. There does not appear to be any federal money for it; or at least there had not been any federal money under the previous Liberal federal government for that project. It would be great if the minister could in fact provide an update on that project, in her contribution. It is an important project. It is an iconic project for the state but it is a particularly important project for the north and north-west of the state.

Cradle Mountain is one of our greatest assets in Tasmania. We know the cableway project was all about increasing visitation, but it was also about minimising the footprint on that national park, making sure that people could have a spectacular aerial view of that area and going up to Dove Lake, and reducing the footprint and impact on the environment from shuttle buses or cars. I can remember driving to the carpark to take a walk to Dove Lake and take in the magnificent beauty of what is Cradle Mountain.

This Government has gone quiet about this project. It was a centrepiece project that was developed a long time ago by the Cradle Coast Authority in the north-west. I know when this was questioned during the federal election there was some deflection to say it was not the responsibility of the member for Braddon Gavin Pearce. In fact, it was Brett Whitely and the Liberal government that committed to that project - as did the state Liberal government, the state and federal Labor parties as well. It has not progressed under this Liberal Government, but it is not clear why.

I attended an information session recently at Cradle Mountain with local tourism providers who want to see this project progress. They were very keen to receive an update on the project. It would be good to hear from this Government about the next steps in this important project that will bring increased visitation to Cradle Mountain and will create jobs. We understand there was a significant amount of private investment that was to accompany this project to make it viable, but we have not heard a lot about that. The state Government

has delivered on its commitment to the visitors' centre and the viewing platform out at Dove Lake, but it has not been clear about what the hold-up is. We want to make sure that is cleared up. During her response to Ms O'Byrne during Estimates, Mrs Petrusma made reference to the fact that COVID-19 had had a significant impact on materials and contracts. It is fair to say this project has been kicking around for a very long time, and that type of explanation is not sufficient for why this project has been delayed for so long.

It is beholden on this Government to provide an update, particularly to the people of Braddon, about where this important project is at. There was a significant amount of work done by mayors - and I was one of them - who advocated very strongly for this project many years ago and the great benefits that it would bring to the state. The Government has dropped the ball on this component of the project and it is not clear why. I would be interested to hear why.

Mr Deputy Chair, to sum up, my contribution has been about the importance of investing in the regions and the great benefits that investment and infrastructure - and not delaying infrastructure - brings to regional communities through jobs growth and opportunity for local people, for tourists, and for our wider economy. I have again put on the record my desire to see this Government work constructively and proactively with fire fighters across Tasmania as they negotiate better wages and conditions and to thank them again for their valuable contribution to our community.

Time expired.

Mr WOOD - Mr Deputy Chair, I am delighted to speak on these portfolios that appeared before Budget Estimates. I congratulate the minister on the inspiring work she has undertaken across these vital portfolio areas. I will focus my reply on the area of prevention of family violence. Eliminating family and sexual violence is a key priority for this Tasmanian Liberal Government. We have a vision for a Tasmania freed from all forms of violence and abuse.

I acknowledge and pay tribute to the courage of all victims/survivors of family and sexual violence. I also thank all those across Government and in our NGOs, who assist victims/survivors of family and sexual violence and help them in their most vulnerable time of need. I also thank them for their strong dedication and ongoing efforts to support Tasmanians impacted by family and sexual violence.

During Estimates, there was discussion about the third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan and ongoing funding. Every Tasmanian has the right to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. That is why this Government, since the launch of our first nation-leading action plan in 2015 and under our second action plan launched in 2019, has continued to build upon our commitment, investment and scope in preventing and responding to family and sexual violence in Tasmania.

The minister outlined during Estimates that one of the key priority actions in the new action plan will be a commitment of increased recurrent core funding for Tasmania's nine specialist family and sexual violence services, with five-year contracts to provide greater certainty and increased operational capacity to respond to demand. This Government wants to strengthen service delivery to ensure that Tasmanians who experience family and sexual

violence have access to specialist support services that meet their needs and their circumstances.

The increased recurrent core funding is a 37 per cent increase on the current core funding, with nearly \$75 million being provided to our services including: Engender Equality; Huon Domestic Violence Service; Anglicare's Relationship Abuse of an Intimate Nature Program; Catholic Care's Safe Choice's Program; Yemaya Women's Support Service; the Sexual Assault Support Service; Laurel House, the Australian Childhood Foundation; and the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service.

I will read some of the comments provided by some of these services, as this speaks to the importance of this matter, and the commitment of the Minister, and this Government.

Engender Equality stated that:

This is a significant increase in funding in the 2022-23 Tasmanian State Budget, ... representing a meaningful increase to our frontline counselling capacity in all regions of the State.

Not only will this bring urgently needed relief to clients on our waiting lists, but it means we have five years funding certainty, for the first time ever.

Engender is grateful to the Tasmanian Government for responding to the critical need for increased resources to support victim-survivors of family violence in Tasmanian communities.

Yemaya, which is in my electorate of Bass, stated:

This is the first funding increase in 30 years. The long-term investment of funding over five years will mean support services can forward-plan, and attract, and retain specialised staff.

The family violence sector in Tasmania will welcome it with open arms. It validates the work that we have been doing and it validates women's experiences. It is really important for women to know that when they lift up the phone, that there is going to be a timely and an appropriate response.

The Huon Domestic Violence Services response to the announcement of the additional funding was:

The Budget announcement of an increase in core operational funding alongside a five-year commitment to funding contracts, will greatly increase the capacity of the service to meet the growing needs of the people in the community.

The minister also spoke at Estimates on the important matter of support for the welfare of pets, that are involved in family violence.

Concern for the welfare of pets, when leaving relationships, extends to a variety of animals - not only cats and dogs, but also to animals such as rabbits, horses, sheep, and even

snakes. Family violence in Tasmania includes threats of intimidation, in addition to damage caused directly or indirectly to any property. Therefore, harm, or threats to harm pets, in a family violence incident is family violence.

Support for people with pets is also available through the Tasmanian Government's Flexible Support program, which is providing flexible and responsive practical support for people affected by family violence. The Tasmanian Government launched this program in 2021, which provides up to \$6000 for victims/survivors of family violence for practical supports to enhance safety and wellbeing when leaving an abusive relationship. Flexible Support packages have been used to cover pet expenses such as kennel costs while a victim/survivor was in emergency housing, and kennel costs for travel on the Spirit of Tasmania for a victim/survivor who was relocating interstate.

Government or non-government services can submit an application on behalf of a client after they have undertaken a Family Violence Risk Assessment and created a Safety Plan. In 2022-23, the Government will provide continued funding of \$330 000 to support this valued program.

The minister also outlined that under the new National Partnership of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-23, we will fund the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \$100 000 to pilot the Safe Beds Program, which will establish a co-ordinated network of safe bed providers and fund safe bed places for pets of Tasmanians in at-risk situations, including family violence and homelessness. Our pets are part of our families, and many of us rely on our pets for emotional support during difficult times, such as these. This is why this Government is continuing to support the flexible support packages and providing the RSPCA with their funding to ensure the wellbeing of victims/survivors and their pets in escaping family violence.

I was pleased to read the response from the RSPCA who welcomed the announcement, stating:

The Safe Beds program assists people escaping abusive relationships by caring for their companion animals while they recover and re-establish their lives and their homes. This commitment is great news for people fleeing domestic violence or facing other at-risk situations and for their best friends, furry or feathered.

Chair, I look forward to the delivery of the third action plan for family and sexual violence, which I know will build on the important work already achieved under the first two action plans. I note that at the heart of the third plan are the voices of victims/survivors who are at the centre of the Government's approach to consultation and collaboration with the Tasmanian community. This is critical and is being well received, especially when we have already received 655 responses to the Hearing Lived Experience Survey. I also note the fantastic reach the survey is having on social media, with the social media advertising campaign generating over 1.2 million impressions across Facebook, TikTok and Snapchat, reaching almost 200 000 unique users.

In closing, I congratulate the minister for her passion and dedication to this portfolio and her hard work in advancing the Government's goal of a Tasmania free from all forms of violence and abuse.

Time expired.

Ms HADDAD - Chair, I attended part of Mrs Petrusma's Committee A appearance for Police and Family Violence. As my colleague, the member for Bass, Michelle O'Byrne, said, it was much appreciated by the committee that the minister was able to retain her Police department representatives at the table for the family violence output, which is the output I will speak about today.

I have raised in this place and in the Estimates Committee over the years my sincere belief that there needs to be consistent and mandatory police family violence training. I know that Ms O'Byrne has been raising those things in this place for a much longer time than I have as well. The reason for us advocating for family violence training, specifically for police but also for others who interact with victims/survivors of family violence - lawyers, people working in the health profession, people working in the social services profession - is a recognition that the responses people receive from service providers when they raise the situations of experiencing family violence are often inconsistent. Sometimes that is not the fault of those people who are working in the system; it comes down to their understanding of family violence. As a society, our understanding of family violence continues to change and evolve over time. Our responses to family violence need to equally change, evolve, modernise and be fit for purpose.

I know that view is something that is very much shared by the minister. I have been encouraged over the last little while that the minister has made it clear that it is her expectation that family violence is dealt with seriously and consistently so that people anywhere in Tasmania know that if they attend a police station, particularly if they are raising non-physical forms of family violence, that those allegations will be taken seriously and acted upon.

Many states and territories are acting to legislate for non-physical forms of family violence to be criminalised and we all get letters in this place from constituents asking us to do the same. In fact, Tasmania's Family Violence Act when it was introduced, included two provisions where people can be charged with non-physical forms of family violence. That was former attorney-general Judy Jackson who did that back in the early 2000s. Our legislation has been nation-leading since that time.

Section 8 and section 9 of the Family Violence Act are the two sections where people can be charged with non-physical forms of family violence. Emotional abuse or intimidation is one and the other one is economic abuse. As people would know, often those non-physical forms of family violence are accompanied by physical forms of family violence or, in many cases, can be a precursor to physical forms of family violence. I dare say that in most instances where there have been physical forms of family violence, they have been preceded by non-physical forms of family violence, including those that can be charged and are criminalised in our legislation, which is emotional abuse and intimidation - section 9 - and section 8 which is the economic abuse section.

I asked the questions at the Estimates table again this year around utilisation of those two sections. The reason for that is that I had an intern in my office who conducted some research around the under-utilisation of those sections. While they have been in the Family Violence Act for a long time, they have been under-utilised. That is partly due to a lack of understanding about the fact that those sections exist and can be used to charge people with non-physical forms of violence, with or without physical forms of violence also existing in that person's experience of violence.

That paper was written by Abbey Murphy, who was a UTAS student and conducted an internship through the Parliamentary Research Service at the library and Professor Richard Herr at UTAS. I was very encouraged that the minister was interested in reading that paper. I was further encouraged when I asked about utilisation rates of those charges at the Estimates table and was told that a body of work has now been commenced within the minister's department as a result of that research paper conducted by Abbey Murphy. I commend her as a student and I commend the minister for taking that research to her department. It has now led to a body of work where the commissioner is working with the head of Scottish Police. The Scottish Police department is seen very much now as a world leader in how they are dealing with training for police officers and professionals working in the family violence sector, and a world leader in how they are supporting victims/survivors.

I was encouraged to hear Commissioner Darren Hine say that he has formed a strategic alliance with Scottish Police to understand how Tasmania Police can work better with them. Quoting from the *Hansard*; he said:

Scotland developed their coercive control legislation based on ours but much more recently in 2018. He has people working within the Tasmania Police department with Scottish Police developing training packages to make sure that we continue to train police officers and making sure that that work is fed into all of the parts of the police that deal with family violence but more importantly, more broadly in police.

Chair, as I said at the outset, it is the experience of many victims/survivors that when they raise allegations of family violence, particularly when they raise non-physical forms of family violence, sometimes people can receive an exemplary response from police if they happen to speak to somebody who has a very good understanding of family violence. It is equally the case, and we have all heard those heartbreaking stories through our offices, where people are sometimes dismissed or not taken seriously. Because the forms of family violence they are experiencing are not physical forms of family violence, their complaint is sometimes not taken seriously. In some instances that has led to fatal results for victims of family violence.

At least one case that I can think of just in the last 10 years of Olga Neubert, who was murdered by her estranged partner after her allegations of non-physical forms of family violence were not taken seriously enough. That is not to say that everybody involved in that case were not trying to do the right thing, but it is a very tragic example of why an understanding of non-physical forms of family violence, of coercive control, economic abuse, social isolation, emotional manipulation - those non-physical forms of family violence are insidious. They are much harder to see than a physical family violence experience and they are just as serious.

Most people in this place understand that because non-physical forms of family violence can go on for years and years, and decades, before they escalate to physical forms of family violence. Sometimes they do not escalate to physical forms of family violence, and that is the point. They are, in and of themselves, insidious crimes that are committed far too frequently by family violence perpetrators in this state. They are the kinds of violence that can have lifelong psychological impacts upon victims/survivors of family violence.

I am very encouraged that the minister and her department are progressing that work. Part of what has to go hand-in-hand with that is increased funding to the family violence sector, to the organisations that support victims/survivors of family violence, who support them through their experiences of raising complaints with police, going to court and the counselling support they provide, as well as crisis support.

I look forward to hearing about how that work progresses, to continue to ask questions about whether that training is being rolled out widely, and look forward to the next iteration of the Family Violence Action Plan. We will make sure that we continue to work collaboratively on this really important issue.

Time expired.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I asked some questions of the minister in the portfolios of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, and Prevention of Family Violence.

I will start by saying how welcome the additional funding was into the community of people across Tasmania who work every day to reduce acts of violence in family, domestic and intimate partner relationships. No doubt we could spend a whole lot more but this has been a quantum shift in support for services like Engender Equality, for example, that have been on essentially the same insecure funding year on year for over a decade. They do the critical work every single day and they have had a waiting list of six months for people who ring and seek support, counselling, direction and a safe place. They are the first port of call for many people, and they are a point of referral for many services. If it were not for the work of Engender Equality, thousands of people trying to escape intimate partner violence and a whole range of abuse would be in a very difficult place. I thank them for the work they do.

I want to speak about some things that came out of the Police, Fire and Emergency Management portfolio questions with the minister and members of the Tasmania Fire Service and emergency services. I started by asking the minister whether, now that the federal election had finally changed nine dark years of leadership by a climate-denying federal Liberal government, she had had a chance to touch base with the new Minister for Emergency Management, Senator Watt, and also to talk about -

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

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2022 (No. 23)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2022 (No. 24)

Reports of Estimates Committee

In Committee

Resumed from above.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I was talking about minister Petrusma signalling that she would have a conversation with the federal Minister for Emergency Management, Senator Watt, and I understand that Ms Petrusma has done that. That is an important matter because we have had nine years of inaction from the federal Liberal Party and nine years of climate denialism.

The royal commissions on the 2019-20 east coast bushfires have made it very clear that we need a step-change in how we respond to the increasing climate heat. It not only affects the safety of people in the community from bushfire threats in the future and other natural disasters of course - floods - but it is a really important issue for us to take account of when it comes to the safety of emergency service volunteers such as Tasmania Fire Service volunteers. These are the people, the 6000 Tasmanians, who turn up every single day they are called, come rain, hail, or shine, even in the extreme and dangerous storm events that we had the other night that did so much damage in the north of Tasmania. Every time we need them they are there. The Greens are incredibly concerned to make sure that the Government is doing everything it can to prepare those people for the changing circumstances in the climate.

I asked Mrs Petrusma a number of questions, and through her, to Chief Officer Dermot Barry about the preparations we have in place for training around the changed fire conditions with the new pyro-convective firestorms that can throw a hail of fire and create mini-cyclones of fire and extraordinary winds beyond any human experience. We cannot any longer continue to call these things unprecedented because every season, every natural disaster event will bring with it new changed volatile conditions. This is the world we are living in, the world we are creating by the emissions we are producing. We have to, first of all, reduce the emissions as quickly as possible, as well as adapt ourselves as best we can.

I was very pleased to hear the welcome expressions of understanding of the science and the royal commission findings from Chief Officer Barry. He made it clear that Tasmania Fire Service has changed tactics. They are working very closely at the national level with the Australasian Fire Commission to look at the best practice in response around the world including, as we always have in Australia, with California. They have been our friends and colleagues and many people from fire services in Australia have been on exchanges to California and learned from them and vice versa. Unfortunately, they imported our eucalypts over there and they certainly do not suit their desert-like climate.

I also talked about the ageing volunteers. Chief Officer Barry was quite clear that we do have an ageing volunteer force and he would like to increase the numbers of people we have up to 8000 people or more. I strongly support him and we will continue to press the Government to prioritise resourcing to those people. I know from speaking to a woman who is one of the people in charge of the Cygnet Fire Brigade that there is a desperate need for

upgrading of the vehicles. I think she said, minister, that you had promised when you were a new minister to visit the local fire brigades in the Huon Valley and D'Entrecasteaux Channel region. I am sure you have been busy but I put it to you that they are quite looking forward to you coming to visit and showing you around their kit and how they do things, because every single fire brigade has its own special conditions and represents the beating heart of our communities and they need our care, attention and support, as much as we can.

I was also relieved to hear about the new fire management approach that Tasmania Fire Service is taking. I want to thank the minister for being very aware of the reality of the changing climate. It is a relief to those of us who put science first in this situation because without the science and the evidence of what is happening, where would we be in understanding what is ahead of us? The minister who is the head of our emergency services is not a climate denier and that is a great start to have. The chief officer was also very clear that the priority in free-running bushfires has changed to not fight the fire once it is out and running and until the weather switches to our advantage, they do not just stand in the way of a fire anymore, as once we used to do in Australia. At the moment to do that in the changed conditions would be to have potentially terrible consequences visited on firefighters. What that means, Chair, is that there has to be, and there has been, a quantum shift in firefighting approaches where they were once only response focused and now they are much more in the planning and prevention side of things, as they should be.

Time expired.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Chair, I was pleased to appear before Estimates Committee A last week in relation to my portfolios of Prevention of Family Violence, Parks, and Police, Fire and Emergency Management. It is indeed a great honour to have been given the responsibility for each of these important portfolios because there is so much work that has already been achieved but there is much more work that has to be done. This Government is very committed to undertaking this work and I look forward to continuing to deliver for Tasmanians in each of these portfolios over the next three years.

At the outset, I thank the Chair of Committee A, the secretary of the committee, my ministerial and office staff, and the staff of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, the Department of Communities Tasmania, and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management for all their hard work and efforts in supporting me as minister and my staff.

In relation to my portfolio of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, the Tasmanian Government is very committed to supporting our police to keep them well and safe so they can likewise help keep our community safe. This is why this Government has made significant investments in additional police numbers and improved working conditions for our hardworking police officers. This contrasts to when Labor lost government in 2014 when Tasmania was left with fewer police officers than when Labor first came to office 16 years before in 1998, as Tasmania Police was cut by 10 per cent or 108 police officers between 2011 and 2013. This Government is rebuilding our police numbers from those days of Labor by recruiting 329 additional police officers, a 31 per cent increase, which will see Tasmania having its highest ever establishment of 1449 officers by July 2026. These additional police officers are enabling the establishment of safe staffing numbers at all of our 24/7 police

stations, thereby creating safer environments for our police officers and ensuring that the workload is reduced for each officer.

It was also our Government which removed step-down provisions for police officers and implemented nation-leading presumptive PTSD legislation. Our Government is also working hard to support our police officers, especially in regard to their mental and physical health and wellbeing. This is why we have invested \$7.5 million to date, with \$3 million every year embedded in the Budget, to support their mental health and wellbeing. This funding allows for additional services such as psychologists and counselling, and ensures that all of our emergency services personnel and volunteers are able to receive the support they require when they need it.

I note Ms O'Byrne's comments regarding causality. We know that our emergency services personnel are exposed to challenging incidents, including being confronted by situations most of us are never likely to experience, which can impact our personnel's mental and physical health. Attending incidents like these is part of the role of a police officer, a firefighter and SES career and volunteers. This is why we have implemented our nation-leading and award-winning health and wellbeing program.

As we care about Tasmania Police officers' health and wellbeing, we have upgraded police houses for our hardworking police and their families. On coming into government, they were living in substandard accommodation. We are investing \$21.7 million to upgrade 67 police houses across the state to ensure contemporary family-friendly homes which are secure and comfortable, with 57 of these houses already upgraded or newly built and the other 10 well underway.

The Government is also providing state-of-the-art facilities and equipment to ensure our police officers have contemporary, comfortable work accommodation and accoutrements to improve their health and safety. We have deployed 812 body-worn cameras to general uniform policing units, which act as a deterrent to assaults on our officers and ensure evidence is recorded. This Government has also strengthened laws regarding assaults on police and introduced mandatory sentences of six months' imprisonment for serious assaults against a police officer.

The question also needs to be asked: why did Labor abolish the full-time Special Operations Group, putting at risk not only community safety but the wellbeing of our officers, who are supported by these highly trained officers when they attend dangerous incidents?

In contrast, we have funded 20 new police for a full-time Special Operations Group and invested \$400 000 for specialist equipment. We built the northern Special Operations Group facility through an investment of \$1 million. The \$3.6 million southern Special Operations Group facility will be delivered later this year.

This Budget also invests \$760 000 for the rollout of new Glock pistols to help keep our police officers safe.

Because we are adding so many additional police officers, we are investing heavily in new police stations that can accommodate our growing numbers and provide contemporary facilities to improve the working environment, and health and wellbeing of our officers. We

have already delivered the \$5 million New Norfolk Station and the \$5 million Longford Police Station. We are also investing \$12 million in the new Sorell Emergency Services hub, \$7 million to upgrade the Launceston Police Station, \$12.5 million for a new Bridgewater Police Station, \$7.5 million for a new St Helens Police Station and \$1 million for an upgraded Rosebery Police Station.

We are making significant investments to improve Tasmania Police's information technology systems to further enhance policing and improve the health and safety of our officers. This includes \$17.27 million for the Emergency Services Computer-Aided Dispatch, or ESCAD system to provide an integrated system for all emergency services; \$6.2 million to replace the department's automatic vehicle location systems to ensure officer safety on the job; \$59.1 million towards the upgrade of information technology systems, including for Atlas and Project Unify; \$860 000 for drone technology to help keep our officers safe while cracking down on crime and anti-social driving; \$500 000 to scope the emergency despatching messaging and alerting project; and \$567 million for the Tasmanian Government Radio Network, with migration to the new network on track for completion in 2023.

With regard to workload for our police officers, this Government has implemented the country police station relief policy with \$2.65 million invested already and \$10.6 million in funding over the forward Estimates. This ensures that our hard-working country police officers can take their well-earned leave and rural communities will have police coverage during this time.

During Estimates we discussed KPIs: our investments in police are having a real impact on crime KPIs. Tasmania Police recorded 24 089 total offences in the year 2020-21 - the lowest number recorded in eight years. This was an outstanding result, especially when compared to the days of Labor when total offences were, at one point, a whopping 48 223 - more than double what they were last year under this Government. In fact, crime was so bad under Labor that one of the targets Labor set for Tasmania Police in its Tasmania Together Plan and Vision for the Future was to only achieve 30 256 total offences in 2020. It took a Liberal government to deliver well below that target. In fact, in 2021 we were another 6167 total offences below that target, or 20.4 per cent.

This Liberal Government will continue our unprecedented investments in Tasmania Police, and the health and safety of our officers, to ensure they can continue their important work of fighting crime and keeping Tasmania safe. This Government understands that we face increasing climate-related threats and challenges to community safety, which is why we are responding and planning for these events to ensure that our communities are safe, ready and resilient.

I was pleased to inform the Estimates committee that we are investing over \$121 million across the forward Estimates for bushfire and flood prevention, increasing community safety and reducing community fire risk. Since 2014, we have invested \$64.5 million in the Fuel Reduction Program to protect our communities from bushfire. We are now investing \$11.95 million per annum, and will continue to invest strongly in fuel reduction because it works. Fuel reduction burns helped to curtail the Dynnyrne bushfire in February this year and the Sisters Beach bushfire in December last year.

To further improve community safety, we continue to roll out mission-critical equipment for our SES and TFS volunteers through our \$2 million investment, including personal protective clothing and the new female uniforms soon to be rolled out to our SES volunteers.

We have our new state-of-the-art \$12 million Sorell Emergency Services Hub, which will be complete in early 2023. We are also investing \$420 000 for our SES to purchase new rescue vehicles and a storm trailer for the hub. This will provide our SES with equipment they need to help respond to emergencies in Sorell and surrounding communities, thereby improving community safety.

I was pleased to inform Estimates that we are continuing to develop, sustain and grow remote area team capacity, providing \$640 000 for volunteers to gain firefighting skills in this specialised field. This is on top of the \$2.3 million already invested for our TFS volunteers and the \$2.1 million in the Parks and Wildlife Service to establish remote area firefighting capability.

With regard to wage negotiations, this Government is very grateful to all of our career and volunteer firefighters for the outstanding work they do to keep all of us safe. Firefighting is one of the most important and challenging roles performed by emergency services. We are very grateful that they are there for us, usually at our most vulnerable moments. This Government is committed to negotiating with all unions on wage agreements in good faith and I note that another meeting has been scheduled with the union next week.

Turning to my Parks portfolio, I will first talk about the comments raised about the acting secretary, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, during the committee and today.

Everyone has the right to a physically and psychologically safe workplace. Being a member of parliament does not entitle any of us to behave in a manner that is derogatory and hostile towards our hard-working state servants. The Tasmanian Government takes issues such as harassment and other inappropriate behaviours extremely seriously, and is committed to ensuring safe and harassment-free workplaces for all Tasmanians. This is why we have established an independent review of parliamentary culture.

As parliamentarians, we set the standard for our society. Our parliament is Tasmania's most prominent workplace, and all of us in this place should serve as an exemplary model for others. What I saw and heard in Estimates was not that model. We all bring what we are passionate about into the workplace. Indeed, our constituents expect that we bring in these qualities. However, when this passion descends to personal attacks and allegations, we must always call this out. It is simply hurtful and wrong to hurl innuendo at others under the cover of parliamentary privilege. I therefore urge all members to stop their political smear campaigns against long-standing, hard-working professional state public servants, who are unable to come in here and defend themselves in this place.

The Tasmanian parliament should be the place where expected standards of behaviour are modelled, championed and enforced, where respectful behaviour is rewarded, and where all Tasmanians should feel safe and welcome to contribute.

I am not going to repeat any of the comments made but I do want to put on the public record again that I have had a lot of positive feedback about the acting secretary who, despite the comments made, did get the call from me to answer questions in Estimates. I want to acknowledge and thank him for his commitment and passion to ensuring that Tasmania's parks and reserves are in an even better condition in the future than they are today.

The Liberal Government's investment in our parks since 2014 has been unprecedented. This continues over the forward Estimates, with a commitment of \$144 million for our parks infrastructure to ensure that our special natural places are protected and presented in ways so that people of all abilities can enjoy the natural and cultural values they contain, while also helping to drive our regional economies and create jobs.

Budget Estimates revealed that we have a lot to be proud of, as we continue our strong track record of investing and delivering in Tasmania's parks and reserves. This includes the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) which covers almost a quarter of Tasmania and is recognised through World Heritage Convention as having both cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.

The protection of this beautiful landscape is of global importance for all generations. That is why during Estimates I spoke about and tabled a couple of important documents including: the TWWHA Biosecurity Strategy 2021-31, which is accompanied by \$3.27 million for implementation and has been developed to respond to the threat of invasive weeds, animals and diseases; as well as the final TWWHA Fire Management Plan, which has been shaped and informed by community consultation, vegetation mapping and climate modelling to understand where risks will likely increase over time. Importantly, the plan points out that fire not only reduces fuel load but is an important ecological tool for a healthy ecosystem. The TWWHA contains vegetation communities that rely on being burnt at a certain fire frequency and intensity, therefore, complete fire suppression within the TWWHA is undesirable as many of these ecosystems would simply cease to exist.

This Government appreciates the rich cultural environmental understanding that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have. That is why, to support joint land management outcomes between the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the Tasmanian Government is providing \$1.3 million to support Aboriginal cultural burning in Tasmania. This builds on our pilot Cultural Burning Program that delivered cultural burning grants to Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations last year, and will continue after the PWS review of last year's program is finished, to inform the future structure of the program.

Turning to Lake Malbena, which was also raised during Estimates and again today, I recognise that there is a long and controversial history to this project since it was first approved to progress to lease and licence negotiations back in 2018. I assure the House it was only after careful and fulsome considerations of all of the options available to the Crown in relation to this lease, including the department seeking formal advice, that a deed of variation was recently signed. The deed of variation needs to be read alongside the original lease in its entirety. By issuing this deed of variation the Government had an opportunity to significantly improve the lease conditions in order to deliver the Crown greater certainty for actions against key milestones, including: termination of the agreement, should that be required if milestones are not met; and also contemporising the lease, in terms of language and in response to several issues that have arisen since it was first drafted.

Based on the advice received, the Government believes this to be a reasonable and fair approach and in no way provides any green light for any approvals processes. The proponent must still progress through all of the required assessment processes in order for the lease to remain valid whether that be local, state or federal, and a notification by the state party to the World Heritage Centre, if required, otherwise the proposal will not proceed. This Government will also respect the decision of the new Minister for Environment and Water, when it is delivered.

I also note Ms O'Connor's comments on adjournment last night as well as today where she stated the following:

The minister knows full well that Reg Hall only had a licence over the 35 square metre hut.

I now table a Department of Lands Transfer under the Crown Lands Act for Mr Reginald George Hall to Mary Elizabeth McQuilkin as the right title and interest in the land described as being for 8.094 hectares of Halls Island. That is a lot bigger than 35 square metres. This information is also freely available under release by the department as part of a Right to Information request.

Ms O'Connor has made a range of comments in relation to the lease arrangements. I reiterate that the deed of variation must be read alongside the original lease in its entirety. For example, with regard to clause 2.1(b)(ii)B of the lease, I refer Ms O'Connor to clause 2.2 of the deed of variation titled 'Appeal Matters' and I encourage her to read both the lease and the deed of variation in their entirety. To ensure transparency, the lease and deed of variation were published as an active disclosure on 9 June.

Turning to my portfolio as Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, eliminating family and sexual violence is a key priority for the Tasmanian Liberal Government. That is why the Budget allocates \$12.5 million in 2022-23 for the first year of our third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan. This plan is currently being developed in consultation with the Government's Family and Sexual Violence Consultative Group, key stakeholders and people with lived experience. This \$12.5 million represents a 40 per cent increase on the annual investment under our current action plan. I also assure the House that, over the five years of the plan, the annual funding will be a minimum of \$12.5 million for each year of the action plan.

One of the key priority actions in the new five-year action plan is a commitment of increased recurrent core funding for Tasmania's nine specialist family and sexual violence services, with five-year contracts to provide greater certainty and increased operational capacity to respond to demand. This is why services including: Engender Equality; Huon Domestic Violence Service; RAIN; Safe Choices; Yemaya; the Sexual Assault Support Service; Laurel House; the Australian Childhood Foundation; and the Family Violence Counselling Support Service will receive additional core funding with a total of nearly \$75 million to be provided for these services over the next five years.

The plan will also include new actions to further refine our efforts towards preventing and responding to family and sexual violence, whilst putting the voices of victims/survivors

at the centre of our approach. New actions include \$100 000 for the RSPCA for the Safe Beds program, which will establish a coordinated network of safe bed providers and fund safe bed places for pets in at-risk situations, including family violence.

There is also \$15.1 million for new multidisciplinary centres, as well as \$3.7 million to provide next generation technology and instruments for our scientists to ensure higher quality evidence for court proceedings, and increased capacity for storage of evidence, including sexual evidence kits. This means that victims/survivors can have their forensic samples taken knowing that their evidence will be kept indefinitely, until they feel ready to report to police. Tasmania Police are integral to Tasmania's response to family violence, which is why in addition to the formal training and modules taught to Tasmania Police officers as part of their cadet training, officers continually undergo on-the-job coaching in relation to family violence response. I was pleased to inform the committee that further to this training, Tasmania Police will now be funding and undertaking mandatory training bi-annually for family violence.

The development of this training has resulted from recent engagement between Tasmania Police and the United Kingdom and Scottish Police involving an investigation of current training methods for police, particularly concerning coercive control. I also place on the record my thanks for Abbey Murphy, as well as the member for Clark, Ms Haddad, for providing me with that paper on coercive control. It has been like a butterfly; the ripples are now turning into something that is going to be 'it's about time' for police, but also for family violence in Tasmania, especially for victims/survivors in regard to when they experience emotional or economic abuse or other forms of coercive control.

In closing, Mr Deputy Chair, I reiterate my thanks to my office staff and to all in the three departments that supported me in my portfolios. The 2022-23 Budget is our blueprint for delivering on the priorities that are important to Tasmanians, and I look forward to continuing to deliver in my areas of responsibility.

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

DIVISIONS 7 and 12

Estimates of the Attorney-General, Minister for State Growth, Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, Minister for the Arts

[2.58 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD - Mr Deputy Chair, the Attorney-General output was on the first day of Estimates, so we were all there very bright and early. We went through each of the outputs, starting with Attorney-General and Justice, then onto Corrections, and then onto her other portfolios. I was very pleased on the day that the minister was happy to take a number of questions on notice, but, unless I have missed an email in the last half hour or so, unfortunately, we have not had answers yet.

Ms Archer - There is much the department has had to do; it is not through lack of wanting to do it.

Ms HADDAD - I take that on board; the Attorney-General has said that her department is still working on the answers to those questions on notice. However, I do note that ministers who appeared later in the Estimates process have provided answers back to -

Ms Archer - It shows how busy my department is.

Ms HADDAD - It is a fair point for me to make. The purpose of this week is to make comment on the things that were raised at Estimates last week and I can see I have frustrated the minister by opening with those remarks.

Ms Archer - No, I'm disappointed for my department because they work really hard and I know that it's not through want of trying. It's not deliberate.

Ms HADDAD - I appreciate the effort the minister's department puts in too. I am sure those members of her department who have briefed me on bills recognise that I also appreciate the amount of work they put in.

Nonetheless, the purpose of this week is to reflect on the information that is gathered at the Estimates table. I am at a bit of a disadvantage in being able to do that job to the best of my ability as a shadow minister because we do not have the answers to a number of questions that were put on notice - crucial questions around workforce conditions within the Tasmania Prison Service, funding and a range of matters that impact upon not just the minister and her department, not just the people who are serving time or working in the Tasmania Prison Service but actually serve the Tasmanian community. It is reasonable for Tasmanians to expect that when we are in this place we are doing our jobs to the best of our ability and I do not feel I can do that today because I am still waiting on answers to some of those questions.

Ms Archer - I did answer a lot of your questions, though.

Ms HADDAD - I can tell I have really annoyed the minister by saying that, Mr Chair, and that was not my intention. I am sure that if the roles were reversed I would be equally criticised for not having provided answers. I am going to go through as quickly as I can notwithstanding that we just wasted a bit of time back and forth with interjections across the Chamber.

I know that my colleague, the member for Braddon, will probably touch on this in her contribution as well, but through a question on notice in the upper House we found out just a week prior to Estimates that a little over \$2 million has already been spent on the process around potentially moving the Burnie Courthouse out of the CBD. There is no argument with the money that has had to be spent already on the existing building to make it COVID-safe and a safe workplace over a range of different issues - \$242 000-odd constitutes that spend - but that still leaves a little over \$1.6 million that has been spent on the Mooreville Road site.

In answer to my questioning around why that money had been spent and whether that money may have potentially gone to waste if the Mooreville Road site is no longer part of the consideration, the minister assured the committee that that money was transferable. I am not really sure what that means, if exactly the same designs and so on are going to be transferable to a new site. That is something we wanted to get some clarity on from the Government around what is happening with the potential move out of the CBD.

The minister made it clear that the expressions of interest process had closed now and her intention is that the court will stay in the CBD. That is a welcome announcement. I hope that is what ends up happening for the people of Burnie accessing the court, both working in the court but also members of the public needing to appear in court. It was very disruptive to that profession and that community to have that potential threat.

I want to seek some clarity from the minister around community legal assistance funding. The minister, through answers to my questions but also on a Dorothy Dixier, went through and made some very welcome announcements, I will say at the outset, of funding that has been recently committed to the Prisoners Legal Service, the Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service. What was not clear is how all of those different strains of funding is being distributed from those different sources. Specifically, the sector was concerned, and I have heard this from a number of community legal assistance organisations, about the distribution of the National Legal Assistance Partnership money, the distribution of the Women's Budget Statement which was Commonwealth money committed in last year's federal budget under the former government, but also the \$2.2 million election commitment that the minister made in the 2021 state election. The reason that I seek clarity is that -

Ms Archer - You should have on the day.

Ms HADDAD - I did seek it on the day. Gosh, the minister is really in a bad mood today, Mr Deputy Chair.

Ms White - She sure is.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Order.

Ms Archer - I am being misrepresented, that's why.

Ms HADDAD - I did seek information on the day and you provided information. It is still not clear to the sector because what the sector has told me is that some of them are two years into a funding cycle without a signed funding contract. That is what they are telling me.

Ms Archer - None of this is controversial.

Ms HADDAD - There is no argument from me that that money is welcomed by the sector and is needed, but there are three very distinct sources of funding and the answer the minister gave at the table last week did not make it clear. Which of that was the NLAP funding? Which of that was the Women's Budget Statement funding? Which of that was last year's state budget commitments, and which was the 2021 state election commitment of \$2.2 million? It was not clear.

The minister made assurances that funding agreements would be signed now and that money would be reaching organisations, but I worry that I will get to the Estimates table next year and I will still be getting told by the sector that they are not sure where the money is that has been committed. There is no argument with the announcements the minister has made.

Everybody agrees that that funding is required by the sector, but I am not doing my job properly if I do not raise those issues at the Estimates table. I did and the answers received did not make it clear why some of that money has not yet been distributed and which parts of the money have and have not been distributed, and that is why I seek clarity on that today.

Dear oh dear, Mr Deputy Chair, we are off to an interesting start, aren't we?

Ms Archer - I'd just like to be quoted, that's all, and you're not being fair to me or my department.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Deputy Chair. We have limited opportunity to contribute on debates like this. They are time limited and the Attorney-General keeps continually interjecting and I do not hear you calling her to order. It is disorderly and it is taking time from my colleague to make her contribution.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you for your point of order, Ms White, but I also believe that Ms Haddad is trying to engage with the minister in the way she is talking at the lectern.

Ms HADDAD - Great cover you are running there, Mr Deputy Chair, with respect. I have 20 minutes to contribute and I am seeking clarity.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Excuse me. You have been inciting the minister with what you have been saying across the Chamber to her.

Ms HADDAD - How? I will go back and read the *Hansard*, but I can tell you that from the minute I opened my mouth the minister has been engaging in conversation with me across the Chamber. I have actually not seen anything like it in this place before -

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR - Please continue, Ms Haddad.

Ms HADDAD - and particularly not from the Attorney-General. Usually we have a pretty respectful way of talking to each other in this place and it is not unreasonable to seek questions on notice to be answered before Estimates report-back week. She would be raising the exact same things about me if the roles were reversed. It is not unreasonable to seek clarity on things that were not clear in answers at the Estimates table.

To be honest, I cannot really see the point in me continuing my contribution today. Perhaps I should just take my seat and let the minister have the time. However, I will go on because there are important issues that are raised with me by the sector that I take very seriously and undertake to raise in parliament. It would not be very respectful to those organisations and people working in the sector if I did not do that.

One of the things that has been raised with me, and was raised at the table last week, is the mental health stream of the new Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Mr Deputy Chair, you may also have heard this feedback as well through the community. I have heard from community members as well as from advocacy that prior to the establishment of TASCAT, Advocacy Tasmania would receive an automatic notification when people were appearing before the Mental Health Tribunal. The tribunal is now part of TASCAT. That was

pre-hearing assistance that Advocacy Tasmania were able to provide to people at a time when they were very vulnerable. It was sometimes the case that people were not aware that they had a hearing coming up with the tribunal and they were at a point in their life when they needed as much support as they could possibly receive. It is not legal representation, it is pre-hearing support provided by a community support organisation and often goes side-by-side with legal representation through Legal Aid. I have also heard from Legal Aid practitioners that they recognise the important role that was played by advocates from Advocacy Tasmania in the Mental Health Tribunal, and that role has now unfortunately been stopped due to concerns around privacy.

I understand the requirement for information about people not to be shared without their consent, and that people need to have given informed consent for their personal information to be shared. The pre-trial assistance program did just evolve over time in the first place, through that community organisation working with people appearing in the tribunal. The end result of that being ended is that there is a disadvantage for those Tasmanians who are appearing before the mental health stream of TASCAT in that they now do not have that pre-hearing assistance they used to receive.

I raised that at the table and the minister was already very much aware of the issues and acknowledged that they have been raised with her as well. The minister made a commitment to the table that she is keen to get the balance right, in terms of community members being given that assistance from Advocacy Tasmania, while also having their right to privacy respected. I know that Advocacy Tasmania has written to the Attorney-General, the President of TASCAT and to the Premier. The minister committed at the table that there would be community consultation on a move forward for that work to potentially be recommenced.

There are models put forward by Advocacy Tasmania. Time does not allow me to go into detail about what they have put forward but there are opt-in and opt-out models in other states, that Advocacy has a lot of experience in working on and will put forward to Government. Of course, people need to have their privacy protected, but there did seem to be a bit of a disconnect between how things used to operate under the Mental Health Tribunal and how they are now operating within TASCAT. The end result, as I said, is a disadvantage for those community members who need that support.

People who are working for Advocacy Tasmania and supporting people in that vulnerable time in their lives are not putting themselves forward as legal representatives. Often, they work alongside or they make warm referrals to Legal Aid, who then represent those people in the tribunal if they need legal representation as well. There was a good discussion at the table about the need for there to be that support in one way or another. I hope very much that those conversations will continue between the Attorney-General and with the tribunal and Advocacy Tasmania so that a solution can be found that would allow them to recommence that work. People appearing before the Mental Health Tribunal, and now TASCAT, are often in a very vulnerable state, and they need as much support as they can receive. There are no other competing organisations who are missing out, if you like, on the opportunity to represent people in that way; they work alongside, not in competition, with legal representatives from Legal Aid, representing those clients. That is something that I will continue to advocate for and make sure that that work does continue.

I have been left with only a few minutes to cover Corrections, which is a huge portfolio and I may come back in on the adjournment to finish my remarks on the discussions that we had. The most notable change from last year is the renaming of the minister's portfolio to include minister for Rehabilitation. There are very high expectations on the philosophical shift that should, and hopefully will represent, because everybody knows that working in the Tasmanian Prison Service or serving time in prison is very hard. It is a hard job to work in the TPS, and it is also pretty hard when you are serving time as well.

If we want to live in safer communities where there is less crime we need to start addressing very seriously the root causes of crime and the opportunity for people to rehabilitate when they are serving time in prison. All of us know, when we have gone through it in previous years in Estimates, the number of times that the limited programs that are available to people serving time are interrupted through staff shortages that lead to lockdowns. Unfortunately, that is something that still continues.

The minister told the table that there is funding in the Budget for increased program delivery, new classrooms and new facilities. I am very keen to see those things progress for prisoners of all classifications to be able to access increased rehabilitative programs. There are more substantive and structural issues around staff shortages, so no matter how many classrooms or programs are available, if the prison is in lockdown and it is not possible for units to be unlocked people are going to miss out on those programs. It is a welcome philosophical shift to have the word 'rehabilitation' in the name of the minister's portfolio but time will tell how much of a change that makes on the ground in terms of the ability to provide programs and see people have the opportunity to turn their lives around when they are serving time in prison.

I was written to recently by somebody who is serving a pretty long sentence and he wrote, I thought, quite articulately that he believes that Tasmanians would expect nothing less of him than that he would put his time in prison into rehabilitating himself. He wants to do that but feels he has been prevented from being able to do that to the extent he wants to because of long wait times to get into courses and courses being cancelled because of prison staff shortages and lockdowns.

We also talked about some of the comments that the Chief Justice had made in a decision he handed down just before Estimates week commenced, where he described the Tamar Unit as 'inhumane'. I asked some specific questions around training for staff working in those maximum-security units, recognising that - and the minister and the Director of Prisons both agreed and also recognised - no-one pretends it is not a dangerous job but in particular working in those maximum-security units has an added level of danger in terms of staff responsibilities. The director explained that it is the intention that staff working in those maximum-security units are provided the extra training that is required and expected but that is not always the case. Due to staff shortages it is sometimes the case that people who have not received that training end up working shifts in the Tamar, Franklin and Apsley units and that is something of concern as well.

Time expired.

Mr WOOD - Chair, I was pleased this year to attend the budget Estimates committee hearings for the portfolios under the responsibility of the Attorney-General, Elise Archer,

which are Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, and Minister for the Arts. I take this opportunity to thank all the departmental staff for the many hours of hard work they have put into the preparation for this process. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr Ellis for his expert chairing of the sessions.

As a newbie I am learning it is a heavy responsibility that all of us as elected members bear, whether we are presenting or scrutinising this Budget. We all work towards an outcome that best benefits all Tasmanians. There are many factors to weigh and consider - the current economic temperature, the unique needs of the state and the specific needs of the community. Despite our differences of opinion from time to time, one thing that shines through is the underlying desire for the betterment of Tasmania and its people. There is obviously going to be some debate around what those items are and how they are handled, but it gave me great heart to see that there are instances where political agenda can be put aside in order to work together to strengthen the fabric of this beautiful state.

Today I would like to reflect on some of the ways that I saw during the budget Estimates the desire for that fabric to be strengthened.

There will be the option of trial by judge alone, without a jury in the Supreme Court. This has just commenced a week or so ago and will align Tasmania with more of Australia's state jurisdictions to provide an optional alternative to jury trials in our state, where appropriate. The benefit of this is it will help address our Criminal Court blockages or backlogs and allow greater choice and better access to justice for all Tasmanians. It further complements the increase of Supreme Court judges and magistrates over recent years to address those backlogs and will deliver better outcomes for both victims of crime and people on remand for indictable crimes.

We are not only concerned about the pressure on the court systems. Our concern extends to the offenders themselves, which is why it is so important to recognise that there will be strong investment under this Government to increase rehabilitation options for offenders. There has been evidence to show that the majority of people entering prison usually arrive there because of an underlying cycle of disadvantage, and that prison has the potential to both exacerbate and entrench the cycle of disadvantage unless broken. The Government wants to ensure that anyone serving a custodial sentence has the tools they need to rehabilitate and successfully reintegrate back into the community. I will outline just how we are investing to ensure that this occurs.

This Budget includes an additional \$500 000 for a new literacy program that will support offenders to improve their functional literacy and provide a strong foundation for increased opportunities for employment upon release. That includes assessments of the literacy needs of each individual and provides delivery of programs to target those specific needs. Rehabilitation remains a key priority for this Government and is something that I believe all Tasmanians ultimately would benefit from.

The Minister for Justice also recently announced the additional funding for the Tasmanian legal assistance sector. Pleasingly, the new funding will help more Tasmanians navigate the justice system and ensure that Tasmanians who need extra help can access free or low-cost legal services. This funding has been committed to Tasmania's vital legal assistance

sector in addition to funding already delivered by our Government under the National Legal Assistance Partnership.

The Prisoner's Legal Service Tasmania will benefit with \$80 000 for a preventative lawyer initiative, working with prison inmates to develop strategies to prevent conflict and resolve outstanding legal issues. The Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service will benefit with \$77 000 for the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa pathways program, and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service with \$202 750 for a community legal education program. A further expressions of interest process for initiatives and projects to improve Tasmania's access to justice will be conducted later in 2022, with a continued effort to doing all we can to support Tasmanians accessing legal assistance.

The 2022-23 state Budget contains strong investments in our important cultural and creative industries to ensure that they can continue to grow and support local jobs across the state. This includes our significant new investment of \$90 000 in additional funding for the new biennial Tasmanian Literary Awards, which reinvigorates what was previously the Tasmanian Premier's Literary Prizes. The awards provide direct support to Tasmanian writers through an expanded program of award categories that reflect the strength, depth and diversity of our Tasmanian literary community. Nominations for the awards are now open, providing an opportunity to honour the achievements of our local writing community, raise the profile of Tasmanian authors and foster emerging literary talent in our state.

The expanded 2022 awards now feature a total prize pool of \$125 000 and six new award categories, providing direct support to both established and emerging Tasmanian writers. This is an increase of more than three times the prize money offered in the last awards, presented in December 2019. The new categories include the Tim Thorne Prize for Poetry, named in honour of the distinguished Launceston poet Tim Thorne, who sadly passed away in September 2021. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Writers Fellowship will be open to all published and unpublished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers living in Tasmania and, for the first time, the award will include a prize recognising books for young readers and children.

The Tasmanian Government is a strong supporter of Tasmanian literature and it is fantastic to be able to build on our state's strong literary tradition by recognising excellence in our writing community, and highlighting uniquely Tasmanian stories through this suite of seven award categories.

The building and construction industry will benefit from a new professional development grants program. The Tasmanian Government is providing \$300 000 to eligible organisations to support continuing professional development, or CPD, for licence holders under the Occupational Licensing Act 2005. Since 2016, licence holders have been required to undertake CPD activities annually throughout the term of their licence. Continuing professional development is a key component to ensuring that licensed persons maintain and develop their technical knowledge and skills, particularly around changes to Australian standards and emerging technologies. The Continuing Professional Development Grants Program also provides funding for initiatives also.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Attorney-General for her passion and dedication to her portfolios. I am pleased to say that I have learnt a lot so far and there is

much more for me to learn, I am sure. From all the feedback I have received, I believe that this Budget is meeting the needs of Tasmanians in a sensible and compassionate way.

Time expired.

Ms BUTLER - Mr Deputy Chair, we have had many problems with our building and construction sector for many years and they have been largely ignored over many years. Labor has taken a large tranche of work over at least the last three years to fight for changes on behalf of consumers and also people from within the building industry.

We believe that different Government members have also been aware of the huge problems, of the fundamental issues which underline the regulatory way we manage building construction in Tasmania. There has been too much oversight and very much a lack of consumer protection for many years. It was only after Labor and the ABC, and other media outlets began to share publicly the stories of the hundreds of Tasmanians who have been stung by problems over many years that you have finally started to make some changes. I appreciate that and I welcome a home warranty insurance scheme. That will make a difference.

My only concern is that the reforms you are now talking about implementing should be done through a parliamentary inquiry and done properly. That is because some of the people who put these inept practices into place or managed the ineffective regulations and legislation that have led to hundreds of people being adversely affected, from within the industry and also outside of the industry, are still making the decisions on these reforms. I do not know how successful you are going to be.

I will keep stating that we need a parliamentary inquiry. We need to make sure we have all of the information put on the table because that is our job as parliamentarians; an inquiry made up of two Labor, two Liberal, an independent or a Greens person. That way we can thoroughly examine and listen to witness statements, experts from all around Australia. People from here can run through their own experiences with us, then we can develop recommendations and introduce a properly regulated building and construction sector, because we know there are huge problems.

The minister stated in the committee that our Residential Building Work Contracts and Dispute Resolution Act 2016 includes provisions for mediation and adjudication of building disputes related to residential building work. Minister, I think that is a rubbish statement. This act is meant to, generally speaking, provide consumers with some protection for poor building practices, defective builds, contractual disputes, et cetera. We sent a right to information request in relation to adjudications and it read:

The number of adjudications broken down by year by CBOS under the Residential Building Work Contract and Dispute Resolution Act 2016.

The answers that came back are really startling.

The Residential Work Contracts and Dispute Resolution Act 2016 commenced operation on 1 January 2017 and CBOS has received four applications for adjudication from 2017.

In 2017, nil; 2018, nil; 2019, one - application withdrawn by owner to pursue a civil claim; 2020, nil; 2021, two - first application, adjudication panel appointed, second application withdrawn by owner, referred back to building surveyor. In 2022, to date, one - application assessed and panel to be appointed.

What that means is that there have been no adjudications made under that act since its inception, so when the minister is talking about the bill providing the ability for adjudications, it is rubbish because it has never happened. What is wrong with the act? That is what we have been trying to figure out and we have a lot of people doing research on that at the moment.

Instead of using that act, CBOS provides information to the consumer to go and seek very expensive legal advice. It takes years, as you know. Most people cannot afford \$100 000 after they have just tried to build a house or renovate a house. As you know, they very rarely end up coming out of that communication, that legal process with the same amount of money in their pocket. Your legislation has failed since 2017 when it comes adjudication. It is clear: it says no adjudications have been made.

Through our investigations into consumer protection, it has become very clear that the legislation is ineffective and it has not done much to assist consumers with disputes. We do welcome the fact that you are making moves on that, but we still consider it would be best for that to be done under a parliamentary inquiry. Another point which we talked about in committee, was the effectiveness of CBOS. My understanding, from a lot of correspondence that we have received, is that CBOS has consistently told consumers, in writing, that they do not have the resources to help them with matters.

Now, this has not just come from one couple or two couples; this has come from a wide range of couples. I am not going to use names because I know that there are people in CBOS who do a fabulous job. However, I do think they are under-resourced. I cannot see anything in this Budget over the forward Estimates that would provide any relief to those poor people who are trying to work with legislation which they cannot properly use, which is not providing any relief for consumers and they are under gunned.

There was one situation where CBOS was advised in August by a constituent that they believed that their building company, which has subsequently gone into liquidation, was trading as insolvent. It read 'We have served Urban Homes with a clause notice 43 letter from our lawyer, and we are hoping to terminate our contract next Wednesday' This was to CBOS:

As advised in previous emails, the likeliness of Urban Homes completing our home is very unlikely. In meeting with the director on Wednesday, he advised that they had \$1.50 in their bank account. It is a little disappointing concerning that CBOS has not done anything in relation to this complaint so far. At this point in time, we know of at least one other client that is going through exactly the same thing we are going through, and we have heard stories about other clients over the last few years that have gone through the same thing. Can you please advise or provide me with a copy of CBOS' complaints process or recommendations or any external avenues that the complaint can be lodged?

That was sent in August. There is further correspondence from CBOS later in August, where they run through how you can go about lodging a complaint. Then there is a really long gap, and the person has gone back to them in September, and said 'Just wanted to check and see how this is progressing'. Then there is another email coming back from CBOS, saying:

I have been unable to make any progress with your complaint since our last emails, as I have been directed to work solely on another matter that may involve risk to life to occupants of a number of buildings. There is sufficient time available to carry out an investigation in relation to your complaint prior to the expiration of a limitation of proceedings.

They were told two or three times by CBOS that they did not have the resources to assist them at that time. Finally, in January, the constituent contacted CBOS, and said, 'We are now out of pocket \$50 000, the company has gone into liquidation.' In this example, CBOS was aware that this building company was most probably trading whilst insolvent, that other people were implicated, and they stated that they did not have the resources to assist this consumer. These people lost at least \$50 000, and they had to watch it go down the drain. Much work needs to be done. We need a building inquiry, minister.

Time expired.

Ms O'BYRNE - Mr Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to a couple of the sections of the minister's portfolios that we examined last week.

I will start with Arts. The minister has a strong interest and passion for the arts. The only thing that I wanted to explore there was a conversation that the minister had, about whether there is a capacity for massaging of the COVID-19 assistance program. The minister put on the record that she had already amended it twice and that she was open to massaging.

One of the things that has come back very heavily from the industry, whilst they are very grateful for the fund, is that it did not necessarily always reflect the kind of losses that they may have incurred, or may still incur. Whilst the world is getting a little more predictable, we are still regularly seeing shows being postponed or cancelled. That does have an impact, as we not only battle our new COVID-19 world, but with masks changing, we may see some changes to some of the outcomes there as well. We are also now hearing of people who not only get COVID-19, but get flu at the same time. That is a complexity that I do not believe we could have anticipated before.

Most of the grant funds that we could be looking at is whether you could look at a model that was more about an actual loss, as opposed to the threshold point of the 70 per cent ticket level. I put on the record that I appreciated the minister's engagement in that area and her recognition of the work that had been done by the sector. She mentioned that at one stage there had been a massaging of the scheme for John X Productions but there might be an opportunity to further explore that, to be a bit more responsive to some of the further challenges that we may see. The minister may want to touch on that in her summing up, or she may be able to provide further advice on it later on, because that sector has been hit pretty hard. It was also hit hard from previous federal government resourcing and funding decisions.

We are all very hopeful that now we will have a national cultural arts strategy that we can work well with, and I understand the sector is very excited about that as an option. There are still a lot of unknowns of the impact of COVID-19 on performance. If we can get any further thoughts on what the minister might be looking at, about whether that 70 per cent threshold could transition to something that picked up the sort of costs for theatre space, lighting, sound, or whatever might have been outlaid at that time.

We have talked a lot about community grants in parliament this week and whether there were infrastructure grant opportunities in the future for community theatre as well. There may be some scope to extend that as well.

There is more I would like to say about arts but it is probably not necessarily related to the work that was undertaken during the Estimates process. I thank the minister, and Mr Sudmalis for the information he gave us during that time.

I also asked some questions about Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs and was able to thank the minister for her contribution towards the Workers Memorial Park. It has meant a lot to those people, particularly a couple of individual families who campaigned very heavily. However, I was extremely disappointed that the minister made very clear that she has no intention at this stage of introducing industrial manslaughter provisions. The minister, in her response, said it was probably not needed here, because we have manslaughter provisions. I understand, however, that every jurisdiction has manslaughter provisions and nearly every other jurisdiction has now introduced industrial manslaughter legislation. That does not go away from the work that is being done nationally about threshold points, but it does go to that very strong message that is sent to employers about their obligation to maintain a safe workplace.

There is a very strong argument that there are no such things as workplace accidents; they are all because we have not put the right safety measures in place. There is not a circumstance where you should go to work in the morning and your family does not welcome you home at the end of your shift or your day. We fundamentally believe that industrial manslaughter provisions would increase the capacity, or the obligation or perhaps the intent, of employers to ensure that there is a level of safety provided in workplaces.

We are not very far from those days in the 1950s and 1960s where they used to identify the number of deaths they would expect in a major infrastructure project and cost that in. It is unacceptable for us not to pursue this. I urge the minister to continue to review this matter. I would like to see national legislation - we all would - but in the absence of that, and the fact that other jurisdictions have adopted industrial manslaughter provisions, we call on this minister to do the same.

We were not able to get the numbers of serious injury rates year to date, but we did get the information that there are 5305 workers compensation claims to date this year. The percentage of open workers compensation claims in the workforce and private sector/public sector was taken on notice as well. We were able to get an update on the asbestosis support claims. There are 198 total claims against asbestosis support, with 11 new ones just in the last year. I think many people would assume that the rates of asbestosis claims might not be as high anymore, but we are still seeing significant numbers of claims. The open claims was taken on notice, and the reason was to get an understanding of the impact of asbestosis and

mesothelioma, and also to potentially understand what the impact of silicosis might be in the future and the minister provided some engaging information around silicosis, numbers of workplace inspections et cetera. The minister said that we were waiting for national advice regarding an assessment of the risk for silicosis, which might put some weight around a decision on whether or not there may be a ban on engineered stone if other measures that are in place to ensure safety are not undertaken. If the minister is able to update us on when we think that work might be available, that would be of interest to people.

We have seen an increase in claims. Of the 14 claims we have had, nine were in the last three years, so we are seeing a bit of growth. I was interested in the blitz that WorkSafe took in 2019 of sites which yielded 17 inspections, and out of those 17 came seven prohibition notices and 33 notices to improve. That indicates to me that while we might have the rules out there, we have a bit to do in terms of ensuring workplaces are safe. That was in 2019, and with the pause during COVID-19 there have only been two inspections so far this year, so I think the interesting measure will be if we are going to see high levels of prohibition notices and notices to improve, which would indicate that perhaps we are not getting the change in behaviours that will keep workers safe in that industry that we want to see. The lessons that we have learned from asbestos should stand us well when we look at these risks to workers.

The other questions we were looking at were about the amount of inspections conducted by WorkSafe in the last 12 months. Of 3026 inspections, nearly 2000 of those were COVID-related. We would like to see an increase in inspections in other places but particularly in those proactive ones. We all know that a phone call saying, 'We are going to pop out and see you today': whilst it might be necessary in some worksites and work environments to make sure that the people are actually there on the day you are visiting, it is also gives a bit of time where you might be able to get things tidied up for that day and we really want to understand whether or not those workplaces are safe.

We addressed the presumptive PTSD claims as well. There have been 299 to date. an average of 27 per year. From 31 March this year there have been 25 reports. We are interested in how the disputation process has been undertaken with these claims, whether or not there is a disputation before acceptance, or whether they are immediately accepted holus-bolus. An understanding of how those might be being implemented would be good.

I was going through my notes to check whether we had any advice yet from the WorkCover board about extending it to the private sector and, from memory, the minister had not received any advice from the board at this point. If the minister has any further information around that, that would be useful to know, because one of the pieces of work was about understanding what the cost liability would be and whether we could extend that. As we are asking workers to come forward, particularly those with psychological injury, to get the right amount of support and care, it is important that we make sure that should they not come forward they are provided with the level of support that is necessary.

That is probably all I needed to raise from those issues and I thank the minister for her answers and look forward to the answers to questions on notice. I am one of those people who feels we should have them before this comes back. This week becomes a bit of a farce if all we can do is say, 'Well this is what I got told last week'. One of the reasons that there is the report-back session is not only to comment on Estimates but also to allow us the opportunity to explore those matters that are provided in answers to questions on notice. It is not unreasonable that they should be provided on time.

Time expired.

Ms DOW - Chair, it probably comes as no surprise to the Attorney-General that I want to speak on this Estimates committee output under the Corrections and the Justice areas around access to a better justice system and support in the Burnie region. This has been an ongoing issue for my local community. It was announced back in 2018 that there would be a commitment by this Government of \$15 million at that time to upgrade the Burnie courthouse on its current site, and we made that commitment as well because we understand the importance of that facility being improved, the fact that it is not currently fit for purpose and there was a requirement for investment at that or indeed another site in the CBD.

Things have gone a bit awry from there. It is important to note that there really was not a lot more information gleaned from the Estimates process about the Government's current position on this matter. People want certainty, minister. They want to know where the court complex is going to be located. You have the business community up in arms about this. You have the legal fraternity and you have the local residents around Mooreville Road area who think it makes no sense for the court to be relocated there.

I tabled a petition on behalf of the people of Burnie who signed that petition: almost 1200 locals who are opposed to that move and want to see that facility remain in the CBD. During the Public Works Committee hearing we heard that 50 000 people frequent that site a year and that is 50 000 people who would be taken out of the central business district, which it is fair to say is lacking a bit of economic activity at the moment. There needs to be more vibrancy and more investment in the Burnie CBD to ensure that the businesses there continue to grow and thrive and it is a lovely active, vibrant central business district.

On that point, it is interesting to note that the state Government supported the relocation of the university campus in the first instance closer to the central business district to do just that, not only to raise the profile of education in the region making it a much more visible site connected to the city but also to increase activity and vibrancy in and around the central business district. Why would you then take out such an important part of a central business district and put it in a residential area?

After a long wait, we received the response to our petition today which really does not give much more information at all to the community or allay their fears or give them any certainty about this Government's position. We now know that we will have to wait until the end of June-July to understand what this Government intends to do. You did that backflip where you took that step back and decided you would have a look at an expressions of interest process in the central business district, which should have happened from the outset. I am still not clear why that did not happen.

There has been no consultation or communication with the community right from day one, minister. You did not hold a community meeting. You just announced it on the front page of the paper. That is very poor. I look forward to understanding why that expression of interest process has laid bare what position you will bring forward post that process. I understand that there are a number of sites in and around the central business district that are suitable. There are landowners or business owners who want to work cooperatively with the state Government around this proposal and see that it stays in the central business district

where it belongs. I encourage you to work constructively with them and rule out the Mooreville Road site. The Premier will not do that, you will not do that, your other local members will not do that but you should because it is the right thing to do for the people of Burnie and surrounds.

Let us be honest, this could be a very exciting project for the region, for a renewal of a corner or part of the central business district, how that connects and interplays with the rest of the central business district and the vibrancy, economic activity and renewal that will bring to the CBD, as well as the improvement in access to justice services. It can only be a positive thing but let us make sure that we go about it the right way and make sure it is positive. It has been a less than positive experience to date for the community by the way the Government has undertaken this process and ridden roughshod over the community, which is disgraceful.

The last point I want to make before I conclude is around what my colleague, Ms Haddad, made reference to, which was the right to information inquiry we made that revealed that almost \$2 million had already been spent on this project and a lot of that has been attributed, to my understanding, to consultancy fees. Some of that is about making improvements at the current site, I understand, and I welcome that because they were required to make the current site safer and better for both the community to access and those who are working in that facility as well.

It would be good to understand exactly what this money has been allocated to. It is a lot of money. The fact that the project has blown out from \$15 million to \$40 million is pretty significant as well, considering you are going to a site where there are already buildings. You are not building on a greenfields site. It is quite extraordinary.

There has still not been a lot of detail provided to the community about what the Government's position is, what its plan is, even what its plan is on that Mooreville Road site. It has been scant from day one.

I encourage the Attorney-General to come to Burnie when you finally make your announcement about what you intend to do - and I hope that is to keep the Burnie Courthouse in the Burnie CBD - because the community expects nothing less from you and your Government, from the Premier, and our local Liberal members who represent that part of Tasmania. Come and meet with the community, make your announcements in the community, work cooperatively with the business community, with the legal fraternity and with the local residents. It is time you did that.

Ms Archer - Excuse me. I meet with the stakeholders all the time. Do not believe that I do not.

Ms DOW - You have not had a community meeting, though. It is a pretty significant change to thrust upon a community.

Ms ARCHER - You mentioned a lot of people there, and I think you -

Ms DOW - I would like to see you meet with the community about it because it is important.

Ms Archer - I am just correcting you. I do not like being verbally, that is all.

Ms DOW - Well, do the right thing by the community. Perhaps if you had gone about it the right way, consulted with the community, spoken to people about what your plans were, understood the concerns of the community about the site you were proposing to relocate the court to, then I would not have to come in here and speak about this after Estimates time and time again. It has been going on for years now. We want to see it resolved. I want to see you work with the local community. I want to see it stay in the CBD and I want to see you do the right thing.

Time expired.

Mr ELLIS - Chair, in keeping with the introductions of my colleagues, I could not have been more delighted to be a part of the Estimates process this year. It was one of the great experiences of my life. The Estimates process we have, which was a legacy of former Liberal premier Ray Groom, is a really important one. I am glad that we have the opportunity to do such a thing here in Tasmania, to really scrutinise the money that is being spent in the name of the Tasmanian taxpayer, for their benefit. To be able to go through it in great detail is something that is a credit to this parliament. I say long may it continue.

In the Attorney-General's portfolios, she was complimented by the Leader of the Greens, such that she remains the Leader of the Greens for the current moment, about how well across her brief the Attorney-General is on a range of matters, right through legal issues, corrections, arts and a range of different matters, whether it is the big things or the little things. The Attorney-General is one of the great reforming ministers of this Government, and is doing much good work to modernise our laws and make the justice process much more contemporary and fit for purpose for Tasmanians.

One of the big announcements during the Estimates process for the Attorney-General was the important announcement of guaranteed prison time for paedophiles. Our Government has a mandate for this. We have been to three different elections seeking a mandate for such a thing, and the Tasmanian people have rightly backed that proposal because they understand just how heinous and damaging these crimes are. The fact that it is possible in Tasmania for someone to rape a child in aggravated circumstances, so potentially drug that child, and manage to avoid prison time is sickening. It is something that does not live up to community standards or expectations. The fact that we are bringing in these laws so that cases the Attorney-General has outlined will get between two and four years of guaranteed prison time with the option to extend even further is so important. These are crimes that steal a childhood and that someone has to live with for the rest of their life. It is not good enough that you can get off on those kinds of offences without even going to jail.

I say to the Labor Party which has made public comments in the last couple of days opposing, again, these laws, despite the fact that they are considered and with the purpose of protecting children, just have a think about what your federal Labor colleagues did when they had the option to look at guaranteed jail time for paedophiles in the federal parliament. They made the decision to back mandatory minimum sentences for paedophiles who abuse children overseas. The current Australian law is that if you abuse a child overseas you will get a minimum of six years in prison. That was supported by federal Labor. If that is good enough for kids overseas, then it is good enough for kids here in Tasmania.

We need to protect our kids and we need to make sure that these monsters, these grubs, these despicable people are where they deserve to be, and that is in jail. I thank the Attorney-General for her work on this. It is going to be a very important debate over the coming months and I hope that we can do the right thing by our kids in this parliament and make sure that we pass guaranteed jail time for paedophiles.

On some of the other matters raised in the Attorney-General's space, I have spoken about potential mandatory minimum sentences for child sex offences. The Attorney-General has also outlined significant work currently underway under the commission of inquiry. This is one of the most important things that the Government is doing right now because we need to expose what has happened in Tasmania over many governments, over many years. We need to pull these weeds out of the garden right from the roots. We need to go right down and eliminate this kind of systemic problem that we have in our state.

We are not alone. It is a common thing that sadly infects societies around the world. We have an opportunity in Tasmania to put in place the safe systems that I wish we had been able to do decades and generations ago so that some of the people I have spoken to - people like Steve Fisher, who the Attorney-General knows well, and others who have done inspiring work in many ways in incredibly difficult situations. I was speaking with Steve the other day and I said, 'Mate, I really don't know how you do it'. To have that intestinal fortitude as a victim/survivor, to get up every day and advocate for people like him. I am personally incredibly inspired by him and grateful for the work that he does.

I hope the commission of inquiry can be something that this session of parliament looks back on as one of all our great legacies. There should be support right across the aisle for the work they are doing in the commission of inquiry because there is no higher purpose for a government than to protect the children it serves.

I also note the reform that the Attorney-General is doing with the Public Trustee. This is an important part of looking after our most vulnerable Tasmanians. The Attorney-General is committed to a range of reforms and doing some diligent work in that space. It is important because these are some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

In Ms Archer's space as Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, she is the minister for plumbers and I thank her for the reforming work she has done over the course of a number of years. She recently announced increased interstate recognition for tradies. That is going to do a lot of good for Tasmania, particularly at the moment where we have such a shortage of tradespeople. To be able to bring in skilled tradesmen who are trained on effectively the same building sites in exactly the same conditions around Australia and be able to bring them here to help alleviate some of the issues we are having, as well as for Tasmanian tradies who want to go interstate and spread their wings in that way. I know I had to go through the process of recognising my licences when I came over here and it was a pain in the neck. It is good to be able to streamline those things and it is about government customer service working for Tasmanians and making sure that when they deal with us in those sorts of administrative customer service ways that we do it efficiently.

I also congratulate the minister on the grants for continuing professional development. This is an important area. It is something that I have to do as a tradie, particularly one who is not working on the tools. You need to make sure that your skills are contemporary and

relevant because whether you are a sparkie, a builder or a gasfitter, you can do a heck of a lot of damage if you are not exactly sure what you are doing, if you are not staying up to date with the latest science and regulations and keeping your hand in, in terms of making sure your skills and knowledge are contemporary and reflect best practice.

In terms of Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, I noted Ms O'Byrne's comments around silicosis and asbestosis. That is an important area. Dust diseases are extraordinarily cruel and it is important for our Government to be looking into that, and at a national level as well, to make sure we are streamlining some of those practices and some of those materials as well, particularly when it comes to engineered stone. That is really important and we need to make sure that the people helping us build our houses can go to work safely and come home to their kids in one piece.

Briefly, the Greens whinged and complained, as they usually do, about workplace protection legislation in the minister's portfolio and the minister was very strong in making the point that the lived experience of those people working in our forestry coupes, our building sites and our mine sites, show they need to be protected and they know exactly the sort of danger that they and the protesters have been put in by the disgraceful actions of those people.

Dr Woodruff - Mr Ellis, that is completely untrue.

Mr CHAIR - Order.

Mr ELLIS - We will be pushing really hard to make sure that that important legislation gets up.

Time expired.

Dr Woodruff - You shouldn't mislead the House. There is no evidence, there never has been and the minister didn't provide any.

Mr CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Chair, for allowing me to make a contribution to our budget Estimates hearings which were held last week. For the first time I had the first two days so it was quite pleasant having the rest of the week free of budget Estimates hearings at least.

First, I acknowledge the staff in my office, despite the attack question that was first off from Ms Haddad in relation to how many staff had left my office, insinuating that for some reason I am responsible for that. I make no secret of the fact there can be a high turnover in ministerial offices and particularly mine, with the extraordinarily heavy workload that all my staff have. I sincerely thank everyone who has worked in my office. I completely understand, particularly when they come from the department, that other opportunities arise and people avail themselves of those opportunities - they are very positive ones. I would never stand in the way of anyone taking on other roles and responsibilities, as I have done in my career over a number of years.

The comments made by Ms Haddad at the start did trigger me. I apologise for the trigger but I make no apology for standing up for my staff and the department's staff who work incredibly hard, which I know Ms Haddad acknowledged and I appreciate that. I felt they were being unfairly targeted for the delays in providing answers to questions on notice. I might add that I was extraordinarily generous on the day in taking a lot of things on notice. It has taken my department a long time to get back to the upper House and indeed will respond to this place. It is certainly not deliberate.

I acknowledge and thank all committee members and people coming in and out of the committee for their contributions to this important budget scrutiny process. I am not able to provide answers to everything today, particularly to Ms O'Byrne's quite extensive further questions, but I will look at the transcript to see if I can provide advice to her at some stage, or she might like to write to me. In any event, I was very pleased to be able to provide on the day a large amount of information to the committee in each of my portfolio areas. I reiterate my thanks to department staff. I know they do a lot of work in preparation and I know they find it very satisfying when they hear a minister refer to a lot of the information they prepare.

In response to Ms Haddad's reference to the mental health tribunal and some of the information of things in process that have changed, I thought I explained on the day, but maybe I did not, that this is as of result of direct legal advice that what was being provided was unlawful so we have had to change that process in accordance with the law.

Under my Justice portfolio and as Attorney-General, I was very pleased to inform and/or clarify for the committee a number of key initiatives aimed at delivering an efficient and effective criminal and civil justice system for all Tasmanians. I advised the committee that the Budget this year represents the biggest spend ever toward our justice system, and I am very proud of that. The Budget includes \$26 million for a range of projects across my Justice portfolio to not only keep Tasmanians safe but to also ensure that our justice system operates as efficiently and effectively as possible. This is something I have focused on over successive budgets, so it is very pleasing for me to be able to now deliver the biggest-ever spend, particularly in addressing criminal case backlogs.

I do not give up easily in the budget process; I know that the now Treasurer and indeed the former treasurer and premier know that. I remain deeply committed to better protecting our children too, which is why our Government established the commission of inquiry in the first place to bring light to the past failures of successive government institutions to protect our children and to learn from them so we can effectively safeguard children and young people into the future.

I am very conscious that talking about this in parliament and it being reported on can be very triggering to some people. I understand and know this from personal experience, and it is not easy for family members either. The evidence given to date in the commission of inquiry is confronting, we all know that, which is why as Attorney-General I am extremely focused on the development and implementation of a child and youth-safe organisations framework.

The adoption of child-safe standards will contribute to the prevention of abuse and harm to children because it will build a culture of child safety not just across government institutions but in the wider Tasmanian community across all organisations, and we are

talking about a lot of organisations. If you think of all the community organisations and sporting clubs that there are in this state, there is a mammoth amount of work to do in this space. People say implementing this over three years is too long. It is going to be a massive amount of work and we are deeply committed to doing this as quickly as possible, and that starts with the child and youth-safe organisations framework. We have committed \$2.5 million over three years to support the design and implementation of this framework.

Earlier this year I approved a comprehensive and accelerated implementation plan to establish the child and youth-safe organisations framework incorporating the key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to establish child-safe standards, to underpin organisational safety for children and young people and a reportable conduct scheme. Importantly, the framework will be monitored and regulated by a dedicated independent oversight body. This independent body or bodies and the regulation model for both child-safe standards and the reportable conduct scheme will be determined by the Government following analysis of existing oversight bodies, stakeholder engagement, financial modelling and of course wider consultation.

We also continue to strongly fund the courts to ensure we are addressing the criminal backlog that has been an issue for some time. COVID-19 has not helped that situation but there are now 17 permanent magistrates, the most that court has ever had and that is in my time as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. We now also have a full statutory complement of seven Supreme Court Judges for the first time since 1995.

I remain determined to implement the package of backlog initiatives that we have, including increased resourcing as I have just outlined, procedural, legislative and technological reform across the courts and our corrective services, to address criminal backlogs and improve access to justice more generally.

During Budget Estimates hearings I also announced the recipients of additional state and Commonwealth legal assistance sector funding. The new funding will help more Tasmanians navigate the justice system and ensure that Tasmanians who need extra help can access free or low cost legal services. This funding has been committed to Tasmania's vital legal assistance sector, in addition to funding already delivered by our Government and under the national legal assistance partnership.

It was my pleasure to announce, and I can clarify this for the record because I know it has been raised by Ms Haddad to clarify this, the successful recipients included:

- Hobart Community Legal Service, \$520 000 over four years to support people with mental health conditions to access justice and for frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment;
- Tasmania Legal Aid gets \$1 411 000 to support people with mental health conditions to access justice.
- The Women's Legal Service of Tasmania, their allocation is \$388 000 for frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment. That was the funding for women's services from the Commonwealth.

That is in addition to every other stream of funding that these organisations and indeed, the Women's Legal Service of Tasmania, receive from the state and the Commonwealth governments.

- The next one is the Prisoner's Legal Service Tasmania, \$80 000 for a preventative lawyering initiative working with prison inmates to develop strategies to prevent conflict and resolve outstanding legal issues.
- The Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service, that is \$77 000 for the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa Pathways program; and
- the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, \$202 750 for a community legal education program.

As I have said on the day, further expression of interest process for innovative projects to improve Tasmanian's access to justice will be conducted later this year.

I hope that makes it clear who gets what under various - the last three, of course, were to do with the state allocations and I believe the first three were the Commonwealth.

Under my Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolio, Estimates hearings were a great opportunity for me to highlight to the committee a number of measures under this Budget that provide for my continued focus on rehabilitation within our correction system and reinforce my strong support for our hardworking staff across the Tasmania Prison Service and Community Corrections. Our staff are often our unsung heroes and they do very difficult, challenging - but as I like to say - rewarding work. I know a lot of them do find it rewarding.

There has been a change in the name of my title. I have always been committed to the rehabilitation aspect. I have fought over a number of years for additional funding for rehabilitation programs. I am extremely proud that we now have an investment in offender rehabilitation programs and our staff within our corrections facilities with almost \$2.5 million allocated over three years for this specific purpose.

As I outlined for the committee, the investment of \$500 000 in new literacy programs will support offenders to improve their functional literacy, and provide a strong foundation for increased opportunities for employment and, thereby, successful reintegration into the community upon their release.

I was able to also reveal the opening of a new multipurpose classroom facility in the Ron Barwick Prison, with an investment of \$750 000. This facility provides an additional seven purpose-built training and interview spaces, which will expand the number of classrooms available for the delivery of rehabilitation services and programs.

In recognition of our trauma-informed response to supporting the specific rehabilitation needs of female inmates - and I say 'inmates' because I hate the word 'prisoners' and 'inmates' probably sounds a bit wrong with female but there is no other term other than offenders - I outlined for the committee the work being undertaken by the Tasmanian Prison Service to elevate a gender focus in operational practice at the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison. In addition to gender sensitive operational practice we are investing in specific training for staff with a strong focus on trauma informed practice and an emphasis on dynamic security. Upon completion of this training these staff will be considered specialists in managing female

inmates and they will be equipped with all the tools and information required to operate within a contemporary women's correctional facility environment.

We continue to recruit more correctional officers with the recently commenced intensive recruitment campaign bolstering our correctional officer numbers through four new recruit schools this year, the most we have had ever in one year, and at least two bridging courses throughout this year. Bridging courses are for already trained correctional officers from other jurisdictions which take about three weeks. It is a very efficient and effective way of getting on new staff quickly.

The safety and wellbeing of our hardworking corrections staff continues to be a key priority of mine with \$3.6 million invested to upgrade the mobile duress alarm system for staff across the Risdon Prison complex and the Mary Hutchinson's Women's Prison. There is a \$1.3 million investment in body scanning technology which we hope to in place by the end of this year. As well as the benefits for those being searched, the scans will have a positive impact in our corrections facilities through increase safety for staff, reduction in the time required for correctional officers to conduct searches, and the likely deterrent effect that scanners will have on people attempting to bring contraband into a correctional facility.

I was also pleased to update the committee on the Department of Justice's now fully embedded staff wellbeing support program which I discussed last year. That is now providing preventative, responsive and targeted support for our frontline staff as well as the whole Department of Justice. We have implemented that as a roll out scheme, and very quickly, I might add. I thank the department and my department secretary, Ginna Webster, for implementing that so quickly and effectively.

I acknowledge the amazing work done by our Corrections staff and thank them for their great work and commitment to positive change in our correctional facilities.

Turning to my Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs portfolio, the health and safety of all Tasmanians remains a top priority for me. People should go home at the end of the day safe and well. That is something we need to strive for.

I was also able to provide the committee with a substantial update on the legislation being developed to further strengthen protections for consumers under our building regulatory framework. Unfortunately, listening to Ms Butler's contribution today, you would think that we are not doing anything in relation to strengthening that framework or in relation to the costs of current legal proceedings. I am doing reform in that area. It is unfortunate that Ms Butler continues to peddle mistruths in this place and outside this place that I am continually having to correct.

I was able to provide the committee with a substantial update on that legislation that I am developing. It focuses on three key priorities: first, to give TASCAP the original jurisdiction for building disputes to make it faster, easier and cheaper for property owners to resolve these disputes, addresses one of the issues Ms Butler raised. Second, to extend the protections available to property owners under the Building Act for any building defects for an additional 24 months after completion of the building work. The protections are extending that period, again, that fixes a lot of issues in relation to building defects. Finally, to amend

the Building Act and the Occupational Licencing Act to establish greater accountability for the statutory office holders in the building approval and enforcement process.

I was also pleased to update the committee on the steps our Government is taking to ensure the health and safety of Tasmanian workers and that it is protected as we transition to living with COVID-19. During the pandemic, WorkSafe Tasmania worked with all industry sectors to assess them and to respond and recover from the pandemic and they continue to do so.

I am going to zip through this because I want to get to the Arts. I want to say that we have continued the funding of \$750 000 in this year's Budget extended from what we had in the budget last year for a further year so that WorkSafe Tasmania inspectors can continue to support businesses across Tasmania to transition and manage their COVID-19 risks in the same way they manage other work health and safety risks in their business.

Lastly in order but certainly by no means least, regarding my Arts portfolio, it was really enjoyable to allocate to this portfolio double the usual time in order for me to discuss the continued support for our cultural and creative industries as they move into the recovery from and living with phase of the COVID-19.

I was very pleased to be able to introduce to the committee our new Director of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), Mary Mulcahy, whose experience and knowledge, particularly in the areas of education and science, will be of enormous benefit to TMAG and our state institution which, of course, houses our state collection. Likewise, I was able to provide details of the new TMAG Vision and the support we are delivering to securing a sustainable future for TMAG and to ensure it is able to continue to play a leading role as a globally significant cultural centre and forge a reputation as a museum and art gallery of international prestige.

I was able to discuss the expanded Tasmanian Literary Awards which now feature a total prize pool of \$125 000 across seven award categories, providing direct support to both established and emerging Tasmanian writers, making it truly Tasmanian. These awards provide an important opportunity to honour the achievements of our local writing community, raise the profile of Tasmanian authors and foster emerging literary talent in our state. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive of this.

Most importantly, I was also able to reinforce and celebrate what our Government has done and continues to do to support our cultural and creative industries through the challenges of COVID-19 with consistent and ongoing support as well as through targeted initiatives like the second round of new work for new markets.

I also want to reinforce the importance of our Cultural and Creative Industries Recovery Strategy: 2020 and Beyond. I urge members to read this strategy. It helps the sector to remain active, vibrant and viable as we move to the next stage of COVID-19. It does not replace the programs, policies and support delivered on an ongoing basis by government through Arts Tasmania, Screen Tasmania and TMAG. Rather it acts as an umbrella to guide existing program delivery, broader collaboration across government and the community, and identifies opportunities for future growth.

I also celebrate Dark Mofo as it enters its second week. I remain strongly focused, of course, on sustaining support for our diverse arts sector. I look forward to seeing further growth and momentum over the coming year as a result of our significant investments in our cultural and creative industries.

Time expired.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Deputy Chair, I want to make some comments about the parts of the minister's portfolio responsibilities I asked questions in. They were in relation to Attorney-General and Justice and Arts.

There is a lot to talk about in Attorney-General and Justice, but I want to point to the conversation that we had about right to information and funding of the right to information. I asked the minister to reflect on the Premier's commitment that he had made earlier on Monday 6 June when he said in his Estimates committee that he was keen to increase transparency in relation to media inquiries, departmental responses, and the timing of right to information requests. It comes on the back of evidence that was provided to the commission of inquiry where it was very clear that the failures in the right to information processes that are numerous and ongoing from this Government are at least in part symptomatic of a cultural problem.

I asked the minister what she is doing to address the cultural aversion to transparency that afflicts this Liberal Government. We have heard from the previous premier, Peter Gutwein, exactly the same words as those uttered by Mr Rockliff. It is all very well to talk about making a commitment to increasing transparency but we all know we can see from the evidence of the sports rorts and the cover up of the election pork barrelling commitments that were made by Liberal candidates before the 2021 election that nothing has changed.

It was only because the Greens uncovered this by accident when we came across some hardware that had been in the Government's use at one time, I understand, that we found a list of the documents used by the Liberal Party to provide forms to election candidates and to incumbent MPs so that they could go forth into the community and buy votes by making commitments in a non merit-based process to people in the community. Buy off a few votes here and a few votes there. We do not know yet, Chair, we have not got to the bottom of it but we are not going to stop until we know the truth.

It is that sort of transparency that people crave. It is pretty clear from the results in the federal election that Australians voted with their feet for an integrity commission and they want one with teeth. They want one which has public displays of openness where we can see what is happening. We can see public servants and members of parliament be accountable for the decisions they have made with our money, being accountable for the cover-ups that are made to try to hide a trail of bribery, or preferences, or influence. There are whole range of ways that people can misuse public money. It is not always about bribery. It can be a whole lot of forms of soft power.

People have a right to know how their hard-earned dollars are spent and the Greens are on the people's side. We are with the people in wanting to know how our taxpayer's money is spent. We are quite keen to hold Premier Jeremy Rockliff to his word and make sure that he is as good as his promise to do something about right to information. It has not happened under the previous two Liberal premiers.

This is why I was hoping minister Archer would talk about her portfolio responsibilities and what she would do to deal with the cultural aversion to transparency. Instead, she did not go there. She went straight to the Ombudsman and tried to talk about funding to the Ombudsman; not the question I asked. It is quite clear that the Ombudsman should have as much money as he needs to do the work that he does; that is not the question. The point is that the Ombudsman is at the end of the trail. The beginning of the trail of transparency and accountability starts with governments providing information to people in the community.

That is where right to information officers sit in each department. They are responsible for each department's inquiries. What we have are right to information officers who clearly work in a culture where they are being required to do whatever they can to overly redact requests for information, to hide things under commercial-in-confidence when they should not be there, to delay the process and make it as drawn out as possible, to put essentially as many hurdles in place as they can so that people's questions either never get answered, or they might take months and months before they do. Often, they will end up in the Ombudsman's office because the right to information section in departments simply will not play ball, and they end up running people into the ground.

The minister, Ms Archer, did not address that question at all. Talking about culture setting, when we heard the evidence from the head of the State Service, Jenny Gale, during the commission of inquiry, it is pretty clear that senior public servants in Tasmania have no idea what setting culture is about. They have no idea about the responsibility of people. Most senior people - the most senior secretaries in the state - did not see it as their responsibility to be setting the culture for child safety principles. That is something they thought front-facing workers would be doing. It was not their job. Well, it is the job of every minister, it is the job of every secretary, to make sure that we have departments that are committed to transparency and accountability. It is not just about throwing some money at the Ombudsman.

I want to also mention the discussion we had about the Arts portfolio, and I make no bones about completely disagreeing with minister Archer's argument that there has not been a \$25 million cut to the Arts budget. There has been. There has been \$25 million less investment over the forward Estimates in Arts. You can call it a cut or you can call it a lack of investment, but \$25 million less is going to support and nurture development funds and arts sector funding in Tasmania over the next four years.

Ms Archer - It was COVID-19 money. It was COVID-19 funding for COVID-19.

Dr WOODRUFF - I know the minister likes to pretend that funding stops, but it was actually a pool of grants funding which has been discontinued.

Ms Archer - For COVID-19.

Dr WOODRUFF - The minister makes the argument that COVID-19 is over when that is not the reality.

Ms Archer - I didn't say it was over.

Dr WOODRUFF - You said we are in the recovery and transition phase or in the relief and recovery phase. That is not how people in the arts sector are experiencing the current situation in Tasmania. They are experiencing extreme cost-of-living pressures. They are people who are in insecure work with very low wages relative to other people in the community in general. It is not a sector which is well endowed. There are tiny little echelons in that sector that are well endowed but they sit on top of a huge mountain of people who have barely a wage to rub between their hands when it comes to trying to find money to buy groceries and just getting on with life.

We have a sector which has been hard hit and unsupported for the last two years by the federal government, and now the state Liberals are pulling the rug out too. It is shameful and it is a joke that minister Archer pretends that something that is not in the forward Estimates does not mean it is a zero. If it is not there, it is not there. We had an amusing conversation, if anyone wants to go back and look at the *Hansard*, about what the forward Estimates mean. The forward Estimates are an indication of how the Government is going to spend its money. Ask the Treasurer. That is what they do. What we see in the Arts Budget is that there is a gap in those years, and that means money is not going into that area that ought to be.

There is also a gap in the two years of money that is going to the Ombudsman so there is not a great commitment to increasing right to information transparency when we have zero going towards the Ombudsman in the out-years of the Budget.

Time expired.

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

DIVISIONS 2, 9, 11 and 14

Minister for Energy and Renewables, Minister for Resources, Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing and Minister for Veterans Affairs

[4.38 p.m.]

Mr WOOD - Chair, It is my pleasure to again speak on some of the recent topics I have been privy to in my time in budget Estimates. Particularly, I wish to highlight the excellent work of minister Barnett in all his portfolios.

We have discussed a diverse range of matters, and how the budget addresses them and will assist with the needs of Tasmanians. However, there was one that my ears really pricked up at, as I am sure it will do with the many small business operators and owners across Tasmania - the reduction of red tape. Are these not the very words that every small business owner wants to hear?

I am a big advocate for small businesses. My family owned a furniture business in Launceston and Hobart for many years. I later took over the day-to-day running from my father so he could retire, so I am personally acquainted with the blood, sweat and tears that go into running a small family business. Tasmania is packed with small businesses and we have a great reputation nationally and internationally for the diverse products and services we have

to offer, but there is one thing I think we would all agree that we hear over and over again. It is one of the biggest issues for small business owners and operators and that is that they are faced with arduous regulatory hurdles and delays. They have to go through long, drawn-out processes just to get the permits and approvals they need in place even before they start making a buck. I was therefore very pleased on behalf of all those hardworking small business owners to hear that this is one of the issues that is being addressed in this Budget.

The Tasmanian Government understands that running a business is hard enough without having to try to cut through red tape just to keep operating, so we are acting on behalf of Tasmania's business owners and operators to reduce those delays. The latest report from the Red Tape Reduction Coordinator and Small Business Advocate indicated that since the last report, another 37 red-tape issues have been identified with 16 now being rectified and the remaining items making strong progress towards resolution. Some of the key achievements highlighted in the last Red Tape Audit Report included the introduction of statutory service standards and deadlines for the connection of power to homes and businesses. That means that home owners, businesses and large-scale investors can now factor solid time frames into their developments and avoid long waiting periods. What a difference that will make, to have a definite deadline to work towards.

There is also the development of an online portal for the heavy haulage sector, the first of its kind in Australia, which identifies root options and whether a permit is needed for any sections of travel. There is also the commencement of a review of the regulation governing the establishment and operation of agritourism businesses, including farm stays, wineries and paddock-to-plate experiences to identify opportunities to reduce compliance costs, time frames and other barriers to entry. This will be terrific. Tasmania offers some of the most incredible agritourism opportunities in Australia; I would even go as far as to argue the world.

There is also the commencement of the distillery regulatory review into the rules covering the production of whiskey, gin and other distilled products, with particular focus on work, health and safety building standards. All up, since this Government commenced our red tape reduction program in 2014, 166 issues have now been identified, with 141 fixed. Anyone with evidence of what they believe to be a red tape issue is strongly encouraged to bring it forward and we will see if it can be fixed. That also goes for small business owners in my electorate of Bass. If you have one of these issues, please get in touch with my office, I would love to hear from you. We want business owners to be able to get on with what they do best, and that is running their businesses and providing for their families.

In State Development and Construction there has been real focus on investment attraction and facilitation, and it remains vitally important during these times that we continue to develop in this field. Throughout 2021-22, the office of the Coordinator-General continued its important work as the principal entity for attracting and supporting job-creating investment across our state. Last financial year the office facilitated more than \$382 million of investment across our state, exceeding its target of \$300 million, bringing the total investment facilitated since 2015-16 to over \$2.5 billion.

Tasmania is indeed blessed with picturesque locations, gourmet food and wine, an iconic heritage and a distinctly seasonal climate, and our tourism industry has successfully leveraged these exceptional and natural advantages.

Chair, here is another really important insight into some of the work that this Government is doing in the housing space, particularly focusing on vulnerable people in our state. The Premier promised a Government with heart, and the Tasmanian Government understands that every person in this state deserves a roof over their head and a place to call home. Right now, there are too many people doing it really tough, so we have started the most ambitious social and affordable housing program in Tasmania's history. This program is angled from a wraparound community-based approach to what is a very complex issue. This is a combined approach with state and local Governments, in consultation with stakeholders. It addresses the issues of the building construction sector, the housing sector, the homelessness sector and the services needed through ongoing community-based support. Providing safe and secure accommodation for the vulnerable, and helping young people and families into their first homes, is a priority for this Government. Anybody who looks at this Budget is going to see that there is strong evidence to support that fact.

Our 10-year plan focuses on investing \$135 billion to deliver 10 000 new homes by 2032. That is a lot of homes for families and individuals; a lot of roofs over our heads. It is the biggest action ever taken on housing in Tasmania's history. This financial year alone will see us spend \$204 million on addressing this pressing issue. The amount we are putting into new housing and homelessness services is more than the national average and has more funding per capita, making Tassie one of the highest spending jurisdictions in the nation.

I am sure that we have all noticed it has got very cold outside recently. There is plenty of snow about. While it might be easy for us to make a passing comment about how chilly it is, it is a lot harder for the people who are impacted by the cold and need the support of a roof over their heads tonight. There has been serious dedicated work and effort with local governments and specialist providers to work on collaborative solutions as a matter of urgency. Part of this was to expand the Safe Spaces in Launceston, Hobart and Burnie to provide further places for Tasmanians sleeping rough. We have created a new housing authority which will commence this year in October. The authority will be tasked with building and acquiring homes, as well as gathering with the not-for-profit sector to ensure that we leave no stone unturned to deliver the stock of houses and meet the growing demand to provide housing and homelessness services for those Tasmanians in need.

In conclusion, I congratulate Mr Barnett for his solid work ethic and dedication to his portfolios and it gives me heart to see this Government really working its hardest to provide a better future for Tasmanians.

Ms HADDAD - Chair, I recognise that Mr Barnett has a number of portfolios and I shadow him in just the Housing and homelessness portfolio. I will be speaking about that output this afternoon. I will commence where Mr Wood finished his contribution about the Government's announcements and promises to increase social and affordable housing. It was a surprisingly positive atmosphere at the table - and I do not mean that sarcastically. I believe there is a lot of goodwill and a lot of hope that the Government will be able to fulfil those promises. Certainly, as an Opposition member, it is my job to keep asking the questions and keep the Government to account on those promises. The public comments I have made display the fact that I am a little worried that those promises are very significant.

The previous minister had a promise to build about a house a day, which should have been the deliverable number to meet the commitment with an end date of 2027. That promise

has now been increased to build 10 000 houses by 2033, which equates to around three houses a day. It is an enormous promise. In my heart of hearts, I hope that I am proved wrong in my worry, because there are just so many people suffering right now and I hope that it is something that will be progressed very fiercely by this new minister. There have been four ministers for housing since this Government came to power in 2014; that is a lot of upheaval for the sector and a lot of upheaval for the people who are waiting.

When the Government came to power, they inherited a housing wait list of about 2500 people. That is still a lot of people waiting; but that has grown year on year and more recently month on month, and it is hovering around a bit below 4500 right now. That is an enormous number of people and we all know those people. We know them because they are part of our community. There are so many people who are really suffering right now in the most inflated housing market that Tasmania has ever seen. Some might say that it was unpredictable; that the private housing market would boom as much as it has; but the truth is that in the eight years so far of this Government, I have witnessed them really deprioritise housing as a priority area. In my view, and the Opposition's view, that is part of what has led us to be in the housing crisis to the extent that we are in now, with people waiting an average time of 90 weeks to be housed, according to the most recent Government data - and 4500 families are waiting on that list.

I know the pressure that people working in the system are under and I do not shy away from that for one moment: people working in the minister's department; people who are working in the social housing sector; people who are working in the broader community services sector who are supporting Tasmania's homeless communities are doing an enormously difficult job in increasingly stretched circumstances. They are getting to the point where they are feeling the same desperation that housing applicants are feeling because we have reached the end of the road of the advocacy that we can give and the fight that we can join to try to advocate for people's needs. In many instances, unfortunately, we have been unable to find a suitable housing solution.

At the Estimates table this year, all the people asking questions - the Labor Party, the Greens, the Independent member for Clark and the member for Franklin, David O'Byrne - raised specific constituent examples. That is a bit unusual in the context of an Estimates committee but it was -

Ms O'Connor - It is because we are desperate because we do not get responses.

Ms HADDAD - Yes. Ms O'Connor raises an important point. It was unusual, but it was necessary for us to raise those human stories, because people are feeling more desperation than ever before. I feel that the minister shared in that. The minister was already aware; he knew of those constituent stories that we were raising and I really hope that things can change under his leadership in this portfolio to find solutions for those people.

I will not go through the stories of many of the constituents that I have raised at the Estimates table and in this place but it is getting increasingly desperate and people do understand that it is getting worse. However, one story I did raise, was about Sharnie Connell. I have talked about Sharnie a number of times in this place. She was assisted through Housing Connect with brokerage funding - in other words, that is funding that the Government can use to assist people to stay in temporary accommodation like motels and

caravan parks. She has been living in a mixture of caravan parks and motel rooms for 14 months now, which is an unusually long time for brokerage funding to be used. We had quite a long discussion at the Estimates table about the rules around the use of brokerage funding and the parameters that the sector needs to consider when deciding whether to assist somebody with that kind of housing support. It was made very clear to me by the minister and also by his deputy secretary that there will be some further work done with the sector around brokerage funding, perhaps to increase the understanding and expectations of the department around when it can be used.

The story I told was heartbreaking. Sharni lost her brokerage accommodation and ended up sleeping back in her car. She is now sleeping in a bus; she has given up on the system. She does not want to be assisted with brokerage funding at the moment because she is just feeling really let down.

It was made clear to me at the Estimates table that the way she lost her brokerage funding is not the intention of how that funding is used, that she should not have lost it. I am relieved that those answers were given at the table and that there might be some increase in the ability for sector organisations to use brokerage funding, which is an emergency form of assistance. It is not intended to be long-term, albeit it has been long-term in Sharni's situation. It was not intended to be long-term. It is supposed to be something that organisations can use in emergency situations where they need to find somewhere for somebody to stay, usually just for a few days or weeks, until they are in a permanent housing situation.

We spoke about the NRAS tenants who had visited us in parliament just a week before. Those are the elderly residents of Redwood Village in Kingston. I am glad that the Government has acted on those people's needs but -

Mr Barnett - I visited them.

Ms HADDAD - You did, minister, and I acknowledge that. My colleagues have too. There was 18 months of lobbying from the Labor Party on the needs of those tenants. There are other NRAS tenants at risk as well.

The Redwood Village residents were represented by Alison Standen, and then by Dean Winter. The Government did finally act. I do not like to feel cynical, I am not by nature a cynical person, but a little bit of me did feel like the Government acted only after it became an unpalatable media story for the Government, after these residents, all in their 70s and 80s, spoke to the news, spoke to the television cameras and then came into parliament.

A solution has been found for those tenants and I welcome that, and they welcome that because they were terrified by the very real prospect of homelessness. These are model tenants who have lived in these houses for 10 years and have built a community in this small cul-de-sac. I welcome the fact that a solution has been found for those tenants. There are other NRAS tenants around Tasmania who do not have that certainty yet. It is imperative that the Government does everything it can to work with those tenants and landlords.

I know that since the Redwood Village residents' story has been raised in here and in the media, that other landlords have begun to reach out to apply to be a part of the state-based

scheme, the PRIS. That is really positive but we need to get the word out to landlords that that is an option and that they should be encouraged to be in touch with the state Government, to apply to be a part of the PRIS so that their tenants can remain.

I am speaking specifically now about the Perth residents whose story was shared on ABC news. Those properties are all privately owned, similar to the Redwood Village houses, but community sector-managed. Some of those landlords are minded to sell. That is their decision. They own that house. If there is an opportunity for the Government to work with those landlords to encourage them to be part of the state-based scheme, that is something that needs to happen.

Prior to us going down those lines of questioning, I began by asking about the Government's decision to disband the Department of Communities Tasmania and create a statutory authority because, honestly - and I spoke about this in a different output yesterday, the decision to disband that department came as a complete surprise to the community, to the sector who that department supports, works with and funds and also to the staff working in that agency. They had only just started to bed down the new department of Communities because they were carved off from the former Department of Health and Human Services. There were parts of DPAC that came across into Communities and they were starting to take shape and all of a sudden, no, that department is being disbanded.

It is going in all sorts of directions as members know, parts are moving to DPAC, parts to State Growth, parts to Education and the statutory authority for Housing has been announced. The people working in that department have been raising through their unions really fundamental, serious questions that indicate to us and make it very clear that this was a surprise announcement by former premier, Peter Gutwein, in the state of the state Address. It was not something that had been worked on with the people working in that department to bring them along and contribute to that change. They are experts in their field.

They were not consulted in any way prior to that big surprise announcement being made by former premier Gutwein. The questions that people are still raising are fundamental questions: had there been a consultation people would not be left in the dark about. Things like, they have asked through their unions why there has been no consultation with the people affected, with the staff. Will there be changes to their industrial agreements? People would know that many people in that department are employed on the HASA award and will potentially be moving - they do not know: that is the point - to the public sector award.

The HASA award has demonstrably more appeal in conditions, more leave and different entitlements to the public sector award, so that is a fundamental question for people to still not know. It was confirmed at the Estimates table that the planning for both the disbanding of the community's department and the establishment of the statutory authority began at the time that Peter Gutwein gave that speech in March. That is when the wheels started to go into motion of establishing committees and consulting with unions and speaking with staff.

Honestly, for a change so significant to the public sector, that is just not good enough. It is not good enough that people would be left in the dark around their working conditions, left in the dark around a major change to actually disband a whole department which really was a department that was still in its formation in that it had been established only around

four years ago. There are still some very big questions for the Government to answer around that decision and specifically on that statutory authority. There are also very big questions that the Government still needs to answer.

I recognise that the minister released for consultation the consultation draft of the legislation to establish the statutory authority. He released that at the Estimates table that morning and consultation is open until the 5 July. I know that the sector has high expectations around that community consultation. Shelter Tasmania, the peak body, will be conducting consultations as well for and working with Government and representing much of what they have been lobbying for for many years an increase to 10 per cent of social housing as part of future housing stocks; more innovative solutions to solving the housing crisis.

I know that none of the things that will be put forward should not come as a surprise to Government because they are things that the community housing sector has been lobbying for, for many years. Shelter Tasmania, as the peak body representing that sector, has been raising those issues as well. We will be considering that consultation draft legislation and making a contribution on that as well. As I said at the outset, there are very high expectations on the Government to get this right. Upheaval like this can go in all sorts of directions and there are still a lot of unknowns around what the Government's intention was in announcing that they were going to carve off Housing Tasmania from the public service and turn it into a statutory authority. Those questions need to be answered. If it means there will suddenly be a different ability to increase supply, we need to know what those intentions are. Equally, there is a fundamental responsibility of Government to provide housing and that, philosophically, belongs in the state service. I know that the outsourcing of community housing management has been going on under successive governments and has been going on since the early 2000s or around when Kevin Rudd became prime minister.

I recognise the very important role that the community sector plays in managing community housing and affordable housing, and supporting people who are renting through community organisations. However, there is a fundamental role for government as a housing service provider that should never be completely removed from government. I have worked in the community services sector and I have enormous respect for the sector, but fundamentally, my belief is that the sector is providing essential government services on behalf of government.

It is still the responsibility of government to provide those services and ensure that they are provided, even when they are being provided through the sector. That said, there are still big question marks around what the statutory authority means for government provided and government managed housing. The sector does not manage all the public housing; there is still a large component managed directly by government, and that should remain the case for a portion of that housing.

There are still big questions about the Government's intention in announcing that a statutory authority would be established to manage that on behalf of Government. The minister has said it will be a skills-based board, and that is important but it is equally important that the voice of people who are homeless or who have been homeless is recognised as one of the skills that needs to be included on that board. It would be a tragic oversight if a board is established that includes property developers, industry representatives, and misses out on the voice of the sector, but also on the voice of Tasmanians who have been homeless or who are homeless.

I believe that if you want to know if a government system is working well, you ask the people who actually access services through that system. If you want to know how the health system is working, ask somebody who is going through health treatment. If you want to know how the housing system is working for Tasmanians, ask someone who is homeless and who is going through the process of applying through Housing Connect. That is how you get the real answers.

It is very important to me that the skill-based board includes that community voice - not just through sector organisations, although they also need a voice on that board. I am talking about the voice of people who have been or who are homeless because without that, we will really miss an opportunity, Mr Chair.

Time expired.

Sitting Times

Mr STREET- Mr Chair, I move -

That the House not adjourn at 6 o'clock and that the House continue to sit past 6 o'clock.

As soon as minister Barnett's portfolios are completed, we will report progress and adjourn. I was not sure whether that would be completed in the 50 minutes that are left, so I thought I would lift the adjournment. As I said, we will adjourn as soon as we possibly can.

Motion agreed to.

Ms O'CONNOR - Chair, in this minister's portfolio, there is so much to talk about in only 10 minutes, so I am going to focus on two areas. One is an area of minister Barnett's portfolio, where he, Ms Haddad, and I are in furious agreement, and that is on the need to urgently build more social and affordable homes. I also want to talk about his Resources portfolio.

I remarked at the table, after observing the minister, Mr Barnett, in his new role, that I thought that the Housing portfolio brought out the best in him and I believe that. I think that the Resources portfolio brings out the very worst in him. I can tell that Mr Barnett is heavily, personally invested in the Housing portfolio. He is undoubtedly daunted by the scale of the unmet need, but he is also energised by the challenges ahead.

We have some questions that remain unanswered about what form the new statutory authority for housing will take and what kind of amendments there might be to the Homes Act 1935 - which is very clear about the responsibilities of the Director of Housing to make sure there is sufficient social housing that is affordable to meet the needs of Tasmanians. There is a very purposeful social obligation in the Homes Act. That needs to be retained. I am not saying the act needs to be unchanged; it may need to be changed. However, if you are going to create a statutory authority that sits, to an extent, outside Government, then you need

to have enough of a leash on it to make sure that it is delivering to the purpose. The purpose is to make sure Tasmanians who need an affordable, secure home, have access to one.

There was a very frank exchange about the level of unmet need and the minister, quite graciously, took on board the representations that members opposite made on behalf of their constituents who, frankly, are getting more desperate by the day. The reason, as Ms Haddad pointed out, that we felt we had no choice but to talk about individual cases, is because of the frustration in our offices about our inability to find homes for people who are in the most desperate of circumstances, and for whom we have been advocating for many months. I have no doubt it is the same feeling in Ms Haddad's office as it is in ours. This causes great stress to our staff because they feel that vicarious trauma of not being able to help desperate people.

We want the minister in this portfolio to pursue tripartisanship, however possible. We want there to be openness and transparency about the changes that are coming ahead. We want to be included in the conversation about how you reshape housing in Tasmania into a statutory authority, and how you make sure that public funds going towards building social and affordable houses are well spent and we are building good homes for people.

Of course, I wish that the minister showed the same level of compassion for nature as he does for people. He obviously has a deep, abiding concern for people but it always troubles me to see the glee with which he approaches the forestry portfolio, in particular. We had a number of conversations about the fact that the minimum sawlog quota continues to not be met. This is the quota that was cut to 137 000 cubic metres as a result of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. After questions at the table, we confirmed that yet again Forestry Tasmania has not been able to meet its minimum legislated quota. This year, for example, I think 115 000 cubic metres were harvested from our native forests.

We also established at the table that the vast majority of the timber that is harvested from our native forests ends up as woodchips. It is in the vicinity of about 1 million tonnes of native forest woodchip that we export off this island every year. I hope that the minister makes the time to read the latest report from Dr Jennifer Sanger which was released today, called *Tasmania's Forest Carbon: From Emissions Disaster to Climate Solution*. It is referenced, not yet peer reviewed, but it is a very important body of work. It references, for example, the 4.4 billion tonnes of carbon that is sequestered across our forest estate, from private to public. That figure was arrived at as a result of work undertaken during the Labor-Greens government by Greens' climate change ministers to commission the forest carbon study, which determined a best guess of how much carbon is stored in our mighty forests. This report tells us that native forest logging is Tasmania's number one emitter. It is our biggest emitter and our biggest climate risk. Its emissions are 4.65 million tonnes of carbon a year. That is equivalent to the emissions of 1.1 million cars, and it is two and a half times the entire Tasmanian transport sector.

Because of the way that emissions are reported, the emissions from native forest logging are not separated from the carbon dioxide absorbed by our forests. Only a net figure is reported. This means there is no easy way to tell the exact emissions from native forest logging and I note that Dr Sanger requested information from Forestry Tasmania, which did not respond or provide the information that was requested. This report is the first time an emissions figure has been made publicly available using what I regard as a robust methodology and the latest contemporary science. This report - and Dr Woodruff will go into

more detail on this - states that if all Tasmania's public forests were protected, an extra 75 million tonnes of carbon could be drawn down from the atmosphere by 2050, which is equivalent to \$2.6 billion in carbon sequestration services.

Chair, the benefits of protecting our native forests are twofold. We can achieve both emissions reduction and absorb carbon from the atmosphere. This is our gift to the world as the climate continues to heat. It is a no-brainer. It is only ideology that stops us from doing this. Protecting our native forests is a low-cost, effective and immediate way to take real action on climate change. I do not believe that the minister wants his legacy to be the trashing of Tasmania's forested lands. I hope that is not the legacy that he wants as minister but I do encourage him to look at Dr Sanger's report. It says in here, for example, in Tasmania only 1 per cent of the forests' biomass gets turned into sawn timber which is used for building houses and furniture and we got those numbers at the Estimates table to confirm that. A further 5 per cent goes into what is referred to as engineered wood products, such as laminated veneer and plywood. That means 94 per cent -the rest - goes into short-lived products, such as paper and cardboard.

It talks about native forest logging, with the obvious statement 'is not carbon neutral'. It says:

After native forests are logged, the sites are often burned by high intensity fires, the site is then reseeded, often with a single species of eucalypt and a modified forest slowly starts to regrow.

However, the science is clear; it would take centuries for the original amount of stored carbon to be absorbed by the regrowing forest. What matters most, this report says are:

The short-term emissions from native forest logging. A round 64 per cent of the forest's carbon is released within a few years. At current logging rates, this is around 2.21 million tonnes of carbon each year. Over these few years, when the short-term emissions have been released, the regrowing forests have not been able to draw down much carbon. This creates a huge carbon deficit.

We also know that Forestry Tasmania and the native forest logging industry has received somewhere in the vicinity of \$1.1 billion in subsidies. This is a loss-making industry. Every time Forestry Tasmania or a contractor chops down a tree, they might as well burn a \$50 note of public money. This is a loss-making industry but more importantly, Chair, it is an industry which is contributing towards climate change through the logging of our mighty carbon stores the burning of our forests afterwards, the release of carbon from those burns, the release of carbon from the soil and the fact that most of these forests end up as woodchips. It is a travesty.

Time expired.

Mr O'BYRNE - Chair, I will make some brief comments on the Committee B, the Minister for Energy and Renewables. Essentially, the elements I am going to talk about are housing and energy. In terms of housing, I tend to agree - and I find it disturbing that I am agreeing with him on this one, Ms O'Connor, who just left the Chamber - in terms of the

earnest approach I saw the minister taking when answering the questions and taking on this wicked challenge facing the community. The minister has some intent to tackle this challenge.

The problem is that this is the third minister in three or four years responsible for this portfolio. For one of the most confronting issues facing our state to have yet another minister given the responsibility to tackle the challenge of this housing crisis must be so frustrating for the sector. It is frustrating for me as a local member having to write similar letters pleading with the Government for assistance for people to seek housing. While you were out -

Dr Woodruff - He said something nice about you.

Ms O'Connor - Uh-oh.

Mr O'BYRNE - I said I actually agreed with your reference to the minister and his earnest approach to try to deal with housing.

Ms O'Connor - Absolutely, yes.

Mr O'BYRNE - The problem is, he is the third minister in the last three and a half years to have been given this wicked problem. The letters after letters that we sent to the previous ministers, Mr Ferguson and Mr Jaensch, and will no doubt have to send to Mr Barnett, pleading the case for some of our constituents and essentially receiving the formal response from the department saying if they could add a few more suburbs to their application and, yes, we understand they are engaging with the gateway and have an advocate working for them. These are people who have basically listed the entire state as somewhere they would seek some sort of shelter and create some sort of home for their family.

Minister, all the earnest and serious intent will not erase your Government's record in this area. When you came to power in 2014, there was slightly over 2000 applicants on the priority waiting list. There is now way over 4000, and it is heading north. When coming to government, the waiting time for priority applicants for housing was 26 weeks. For someone in a priority circumstance 26 weeks is a long time. It is now over 90 weeks. That is horrific.

The consequences are not just for that person on that day in that week. This will echo through these families, potentially, for generations because the consequences of losing a home for a young mum with a couple of young kids trying to give them the best start in life, and having to couch-surf or we are hearing stories of people living in really terrible circumstances and not being physically and emotionally safe in their circumstances, and sleeping in cars. The consequences are not just for that night. This is something that will live with these families, and the trauma of these young mums and families trying to create a safe space for their kids to grow up. How can they get to school in any sort of condition to learn? How can they even make better decisions in their life if the most fundamental decision is, 'How can I be safe tonight? Will I be dry?'. People say it has been a cold start to winter. Bloody oath it has, and it is horrific.

It is not just winter. In the elements it is difficult for people. We have conversations in my electorate office with people in tears, and are absolutely helpless in what we can do. I know the Government has trumpeted billions of dollars and thousands of houses. We just do

not see it. Most of the money announced in this year's Budget is beyond the forwards. You keep on reannouncing all of these numbers in terms of houses but we do not see the numbers getting better. More of the same does not cut it.

I cannot disagree with the Government more. I understand that other members have said 'let us try and work with and consult around the new housing authority'. I cannot disagree more with that decision. What you have done is created more uncertainty in the management of public and social housing with the providers for the next 12 months on an internal, bureaucratic reorganisation. Instead of focusing on people putting in houses, sadly, they are spending resources creating this new authority which will be at arm's length from government. As a government, and as ministers and people in parliament, you actually want to get control of the problem, you want to be in a position where you have responsibility, where you can move as many of the pieces on the table as you can to effect a better outcome.

What you have done is run away; you have given it away so then you can say: 'Yes, it is sad, yes, it is terrible that we have a dire housing crisis but it is the housing authority's problem that they need to fix and we have given it to them.' It is a cop-out. You actually should have done the opposite. You should have brought more housing back under your direct control so you can manage the maintenance, you can manage the people moving between the houses, depending on their need, you can deal with the crisis, you can deal with the immediate shelter for people in terms of transitional homing, particularly when people are leaving shelters but also when people are coming out of our correctional facilities.

There is a reason why we have the rate of recidivism we have. It is because when people are coming out on parole and want to make a better life for themselves, after making some poor decisions, they are basically forced back in because they do not have a stable and secure roof over their head to make better decisions. It is devastating for communities.

You talk about the economy. Listening to the Premier reeling off all of those statistics and data - that is precious consolation for those people who cannot even get a roof over their head. If you want to build a stronger economy, if you want to build a fairer society, the place to start is giving people a home, for goodness sake.

These numbers are horrific. Some people say, 'There is a housing crisis in every state'. That is concerning but nothing is as bad as what Tasmania has. Pound for pound, we have the worst housing crisis in the country. It is no surprise that we have some of the highest levels of inequality in our community when there is such a wicked problem confronting us.

I have said this so many times: straight after the state election in 2018, when there were tents on Parliament Lawns, when out at the showgrounds there were homeless people in caravans and tents, and Scott Gadd from the agricultural society was looking after them, then premier, Mr Hodgman called a crisis summit two or three days after the election to try to deal with this challenge. It is has actually become worse. Imagine if they did not call it a crisis how bad would it be? It is a wicked problem.

I do wish, minister, that you will be the one to break this cycle of inaction but I fear you have inherited decisions and you will perpetuate decisions that will continue the same story, it will get worse, not better, and you will fail Tasmanians.

I want to touch on energy. I made the point at Estimates that our energy policy is a mess. There are lots of announcements; lots of talk; lots of spin; not a lot of substance. The big projects that are being touted - you are already sacking 300 TasNetwork staff so the jobs bonanza is illusory. I made the point to you, minister, that there is change in the ministerial orders. Treasury has flagged Marinus and now hydrogen as financial risks to the Budget. They have clearly given you a few years to try to deliver something.

I know it is different now because I am not sure if you are going to miss Angus Taylor. At least now we have someone in the federal parliament and a federal minister in Chris Bowen who has the intellectual capacity and the policy grunt to try to make a difference and not deliver more of the same. I am pretty sure Angus Taylor is still talking about nuclear as an option because he is against wind. What a knuckle-dragger he is in terms of energy policy. For federal Liberals to come out and blame Labor for this energy crisis, well, goodness me. We are reaping what they have sown for the last six or seven years in energy policy.

I know you will be happier with the new minister but it seems that in terms of the ministerial orders, Treasury has run out of time for you and they have run out of patience so they have dragged you in so they can directly supervise your work, minister. I did float whether to move a motion of no confidence in you as a minister for the last six years and being unable to deliver on Marinus or any coherent strategy to deliver those projects.

Time expired.

Mr ELLIS - Chair, it is a pleasure to be able to speak about -

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Mr CHAIR - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr ELLIS - Labor member in exile for Franklin. I have to say it was good to have Mr O'Byrne comment on that. His questions during the Estimates on the Housing portfolio were interesting: a little bit superseded by the announcement which he clearly did not see or was not paying attention to. I guess when you do not have the might of the Labor Party apparatus behind you, it is hard to keep up with what is going on. I know he is doing his best.

I am pleased to be able to speak on these particular portfolios. With my colleague, Mr Wood, addressing a lot of stuff around housing, I will try to focus on energy and resources because my neck of the woods, the north-west, west coast and King Island are the forestry, mining and energy superheroes of Tasmania. The work that this minister has done in our electorate -

Ms O'Connor - Are you delusional. Call a million tonnes of woodchips a superpower?

Mr CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr ELLIS - over the last eight years has made an enormous difference when it comes to the job prospects of young Tasmanians who want to be able to get the great full-time well-paid careers that can come in forestry, mining, energy and manufacturing. What we have been able to deliver, as a Government, in these areas has been important for not just now but into the future.

We covered a range of different topics in energy, particularly around renewable energy, which of course, the Greens in Tasmania oppose.

Ms O'CONNOR - What a lie. Point of order, Chair. Please tell Mr Ellis that he is required to tell the truth in here. We do not oppose renewable energy. We support renewable energy. If he is calling the burning of forests for power renewable, that is because he is a Luddite, not us.

Mr CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, it is not a point of order. This is the debate. Please carry on, Mr Ellis.

Mr ELLIS - And, of course, they are opposed to hydro-electricity, which is renewable energy. They are opposed to wind farms. I know Mr O'Byrne comments about knuckle-draggers who are opposed to wind developments. We are looking at the two knuckle-draggers in the Tasmanian parliament over there. The kids who were watching question time and the matter of public importance today were obviously scratching their heads to come into a world where Labor and the Greens are opposed to renewable energy projects and major renewable energy transmissions.

Dr Woodruff - You are just making up so much garbage. It demeans you and it is slightly embarrassing. He is making a fool of himself.

Mr CHAIR - Warning, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ELLIS - People on the mainland scratch their heads when they watch the Tasmanian political scene to see those people who, in their jurisdictions, are most firmly in favour of renewable energy whingeing and complaining, and trying to shut down even these industries. It shows that they are not about the environment. They are not about making a cleaner world. They are just fundamentally anti-everything.

The investments that this Government has made show that we are putting front and centre the ability for young Tasmanians to find job opportunities, whether it is as part of the Battery of the Nation project, which will be transformative, particularly in my area, in the north west, when it comes to some of the major pumped hydro upgrades we will be seeing at our existing schemes or whether it is potential windfarm developments or being able to work in civil construction. Only the other day, I was speaking to a young bloke who owns a couple of trucks and a small quarry in Circular Head. He is looking forward to being able to take part in some of the amazing renewable energy opportunities that are going to be coming in that part of the world.

That is what this is about: it is about drawing in investment, creating the jobs of the future, whether it is my neck of the woods or in Bell Bay, with the potential of hydrogen hub there in Bell Bay to be transformative for the job opportunities for young people in that neck of the woods.

Dr Woodruff - What an absolute crock. You should look at the numbers.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ELLIS - To be able to generate the renewable energy the Greens interject again and tell us that they are opposed to. They told us today that they are even opposed to green hydrogen.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I did not. Chair, point of order. The member is coming in here and lying his head off. He thinks it is a joke to demean parliament like this, to make stuff up again and again. That is absolutely untrue. He is constantly misrepresenting what was said in this House. People watching should not have a person like this who calls himself a member of parliament and who is demonising the institution.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, that is not a point of order. This is a debate.

Dr Woodruff - This is what he thinks about democracy.

CHAIR - I ask that the member for Franklin withdraw the use of the word 'lying' too, please, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - I think I said he was lying his head off, Chair.

CHAIR - Can you please withdraw it, as I have asked you.

Dr WOODRUFF - I will withdraw the word 'lying' if that is offensive to them. It is interesting that he would be offended by me using a word like that when he makes up falsehoods all the time.

Ms O'CONNOR - On the point of order, Chair, my understanding of the previous rulings of the House is that it is not unparliamentary to use the word 'lie'; it is unparliamentary to call someone a liar. Let us do a bit of plain English in here.

CHAIR - What she said, Ms O'Connor, is that he is lying. That is why I have asked her to withdraw the comment.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Chair. Obviously, sorry is the hardest word for the Greens to say. The behaviour really is staggering.

Ms O'Connor - One day, you might even grow up.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, you have your first warning.

Mr O'Byrne - You had your John Howard cup at the hearing, and he is the bloke that could not say sorry.

CHAIR - Order, Mr O'Byrne, first warning as well.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Chair. Through the Government's Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania body, we are really excited about driving that investment into the north west and around the state.

We then talked about the resources portfolio, which is important for my neck of the woods and for young people particularly in the north-west, the west coast and King Island. This industry, which provides 60 per cent of the exports of our state, which provides the materials that go into building the wind farms that are helping to address climate change around the world, the tin which goes into creating the batteries for the electric vehicles that the Greens would so dearly love to be driving, that is what gets mined on the west coast in Tasmania. The investments that have been made in our state in those mines, particularly in the last four or five years, have been transformative for our capacity to respond to some of those challenges. It was interesting that the discussion that goes on in this place can be so toxic.

Around the world, they look at what we do in Tasmania and they say that we have some of the highest standards in the world, that what gets produced in Tasmania, those companies are widely regarded for their environmental and social governance credentials, because we do it probably better than anywhere else in the world. The alternative to tin coming out of the west coast is dredging coral reefs in Indonesia. The alternative to some of our cobalt is effectively child slavery in the mud pits of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We should be proud of the work being done by our miners in Tasmania who are powering all the projects that the Greens will say they like until they decide that they are against them.

It was so heartening to see a reasoned, frank and scientific discussion around the use of paste fill when it comes to potentially managing the waste products from our mines. To put on record, the fact that the experts in mining engineering all agree that at the older mines, particularly at Rosebery, it cannot be done safely, you cannot use a paste-fill process, that a tailings dam, just like the other two tailings dams within a kilometre and half of the Rosebery mine, just like the one that they are planning and building at South Marion oak in scrub there, that that is actually the best way of doing it.

Tailings dams are the way we do recycling in the mining industry. You pull it out, you store it for future generations then a lot of the mines - you look at NQ and Hellyer - they are focused on resource recovery from those tailings dams for the future.

Time expired.

Ms BUTLER - I rise in response to this Estimates committee and to talk through some of the points that I think are worthy of talking about. One that I would like to start off in is Veterans' Affairs, with the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The commission was established in 2021. Nationally, there have been 1585 submissions received to date. Commission hearings are taking place in Hobart from 1 August. It is an extremely difficult time for many veterans, their families and defence personnel, but this inquiry will hopefully provide the insight and assistance, the healing and strategies for how to combat this terrible problem we are currently experiencing in Australia. It is a problem for defence personnel and veterans worldwide.

I understand the minister has done some really good work in relation to this area, so thank you. We asked questions around what kind of supports are in place for Tasmanians. I believe there is something like 14 000 veterans in Tasmania -

Mr Barnett - There are 10 500 veterans.

Ms BUTLER - Fourteen thousand must be with families as well.

Mr Barnett - There are 10 500 veterans plus their families.

Ms BUTLER - Regarding support for people who will be providing submissions to those hearings, it is not just the support prior to giving that information; it is also the support afterwards because that information can be extremely triggering for people. We thank them in advance for the information they will be providing and understand that they are extremely brave and their submissions will make a big difference.

I have received correspondence this afternoon in relation to this. It is from RSL Tasmania CEO John Hardy:

Dear Ms Butler

I am writing to you to express my concern regarding exclusion of veterans as a priority population group under Rethink 2020: A State Plan for Mental Health in Tasmania 2020-25, led by the Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan steering group. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Productivity Commission showed that ex-serving veterans have significantly higher age-adjusted rates of suicide than the general Australian population.

According to the AIHWS's final report to the Independent Review of Past Defence And Veteran Suicides, in a study cohort of 261 640 living and deceased ADF members who served at least one day in the ADF between 2001 and 2018, the age-adjusted rate of suicide was 22 per cent higher for ex-serving male veterans and 127 per cent higher for ex-serving female veterans when compared to the general population.

Rethink 2020, state plan 2020-25, DoH Tasmania, has identified groups it considers at a higher risk of mental illness and suicide as highlighted in reform direction 7: responding to the needs of specific population groups. This is due, in part, to external social factors such as discrimination, stigma, exclusion, lack of access to appropriate and inclusive services, and influences associated with an individual's life stage or other factors. Three priority population groups have been identified as Australian and Tasmanian Government priorities and included in Rethink 2020. Those population groups are youth, Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the LGBTQIA+ group.

The below paragraph from Rethink 2020 indicates that veterans have never been a priority group under a mental health strategy for Tasmania. They certainly aren't taking anything away from those groups; I want to make that clear but they would like to see veterans included in those groups, minister.

Actions to support these priority population groups will be identified in the consultation process and included in the Rethink 2020 implementation plan. While these three population groups will be a priority over the next five

years, activities addressing the needs of the other population groups named in the original Rethink Mental Health documents will continue. These populations are older people, children of parents with mental illness, people with substance use disorders, cultural and linguistically diverse populations and people in contact or at risk of contact with the justice system.

Although veterans have been clearly identified as a high-risk group in the mental health and suicide space, they are not mentioned and indeed, have never been mentioned in this plan. May I ask you to raise this matter, please, formally on our behalf as RSL Tasmania. The health of our island veteran community depends on it.

That was sent to me today. I am not sure whether the minister has received that correspondence as well. You may have. It could be something that we may be able to work together on, because I think they are right; those statistics are extremely high. I am not sure whether it is just an oversight, but I consider they raise a very valid point.

One of the other issues which we did raise, which was also brought to our attention by RSL Tasmania, was the placing of the floating stadium, where the Cenotaph is, at the Domain area in Hobart. It is a beautiful space and it is our understanding that there no notification was given to RSL Tasmania upon the announcement of that floating stadium, or the stadium. There is concern that the stadium may cast a shadow on the Cenotaph. We know that the number one rule of cenotaphs, globally, is that you are not to cast a shadow upon a cenotaph. From the plans, it looks like the stadium could potentially cast a shadow upon that Cenotaph. I know they have asked to be briefed about what that design would look like.

I do not know whether the minister was aware before the former Premier made that announcement; it was out of the blue but unless it is dug really deep down into the ground, I am not sure how a stadium being that close to the Cenotaph would not cast a shadow. It is certainly a valid point and needs to be explored. We have not politicised that at all, out of respect for the RSL. We did not jump up and down about it at the time but the number one rule with cenotaphs, globally, is that no shadow shall be cast on one. Here we are, looking at building a \$750 000 million dollar -

Ms O'Connor - Billion.

Ms BUTLER - sorry, billion spend on a floating stadium which would hold 35 000 people and by the looks of it, would probably cast a pretty decent shadow upon the Cenotaph. That would certainly need to be addressed and they would be keen to sit down and find out just what that design or architectural model would be. It would be a matter of respect for RSL Tasmania. You can imagine having the Dawn Service there at Anzac Day with construction going on all around it, and what it could look like. I do not think it has been well thought through at all and it is quite disrespectful.

Another issue which was raised with us was how many veterans are experiencing homelessness at the moment. I believe those figures are not available but it would be fabulous for those figures to be made available, so we can understand the need there, especially in light of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. If our

veterans and Defence Force personnel and families are experiencing homelessness, it is certainly not good enough.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Chair, and the members who have made a contribution with respect to the various portfolios. I was pleased to report to the Budget Estimates Committee on the measures that our Government has taken to strengthen Tasmania's future and to deliver for Tasmanians. We have had a very tough time through COVID-19; all of us in this place know about the uncertainties of those past couple of years. Despite the impact of the pandemic it has certainly delivered, through the measures that we have taken, a strong economy.

There is one principle that I have been familiar with, at least in public life at the federal and state level, and that is that you need a strong economy to deliver the essential services that we all believe are important - for example, health, mental health services, housing services, education and keeping people safe. We need a strong economy. It does not just happen. We have been able to provide the environment in which the economy can grow. As the Premier and the Treasurer have made clear in recent times, the last nine quarters have seen very strong growth in Tasmania - in fact, leading the country.

Congratulations to the leadership that has been provided, and also to the businesses, the workers, and the families who have been part of that economy, to deliver for Tasmania so that we can then invest in those essential services. We have 26 000 more jobs today than when we first came to Government. Retail trade is up. Exports are up - going gangbusters, with record numbers. As I have indicated, business confidence is up and the unemployment rate is down. Another 11 000 additional jobs are expected over the Budget and forward Estimates.

On this side of the House, we want to continue to invest in those essential services; and to do that we need that strong economy. We have got the parameters right, particularly in this Budget. I will share some further remarks about the various portfolios, but I will make one thing clear right up front - it was Groundhog Day for Labor, with no considered Budget response, no Budget reply, no policy, and no plans. They have been in Opposition for 3000 days, Labor still has not produced a costed alternative Budget, and they could not detail how they would do things differently. That has been clear during the Budget discussions and debate this past few days. The Estimates was an abject lesson in purposelessness; no vision, no plan.

In terms of the Greens, I say credit to them for having an alternative budget. I made the point that it was a bit kooky; part of it was certainly an attack on our productive industries, particularly the new mining super-tax and the plans for more lock ups but at least they are consistent and I give them credit for that.

What we have is an experienced team with a proven track record. We want to strengthen Tasmania's future and we are doing it through the Budget. I acknowledge the goodwill in the parliament regarding housing, to getting results for Tasmanians, families in need, vulnerable people and families; people who need that support. I acknowledge the Leader of the Greens, that it is her view that the housing portfolio brings out the best in me - so, I will just take that.

Ms O'Connor - Take it. I mean it. Do better by the wild things.

Mr BARNETT - I appreciate it and I put that on the record - and likewise to Ms Haddad and others. I think there is a sense of goodwill. You asked about the merit of a tripartisan approach. I support that. I want to make a difference on behalf of the Government in this place. I believe we all do, and that is why we are standing here with that goodwill. We may be somewhat daunted but it is a challenge. I am happy to accept that challenge and I know all of us in this place want to pursue that challenge for really good outcomes.

It is a very challenging space but that is why we have delivered the most comprehensive, substantial and ambitious social and affordable housing plan for Tasmania in our history. We do have a plan for 10 000 new homes by 2032; 1500 new homes by 30 June next year. That is a big agenda. Over the forward Estimates, there is \$538 million in capital investment into that social and affordable housing agenda - \$204 million in this coming year. That is a very big investment. We want all Tasmanians to be the best they can be, to achieve their potential, and this investment will help make that happen.

Tasmania already has one of the most integrated housing systems in the country to deliver on this ambitious plan. From my point of view and the Government's point of view, we do not want to leave any stone unturned to deliver on the housing and homelessness services. There has been some discussion about the draft housing authority legislation which has been put out for public comment. I say thank you to the community services sector, the building and construction sector and the other key stakeholders in this place for their feedback since I have been minister. I appreciate the goodwill in that space and I congratulate them on their contribution. They often, as far as I can tell, go beyond the call to achieve outcomes for their fellow Tasmanians.

With respect to that draft legislation, we are doing that because we want to make a difference. We believe this is the right way to go. I am looking forward to the feedback and analysing it, to ensure that we get the best possible arrangements for the future.

We have a whole range of initiatives - both for the long-term, the medium-term and the here and now. During Budget Estimates I mentioned the Headworks Holiday, the Residential Land Rebate, land tax concessions, and stamp duty concessions. We have the HomeShare Program. We want Tasmanians to own their own home, wherever possible. Regarding the need for emergency shelter and assistance right here, right now, we have \$36 million in wraparound services to help those Tasmanians in need. I have visited Safe Space in Launceston and in Hobart - both the Safe Space Night Program and the Safe Space Day Program. I enjoyed my tour in Hobart recently with Harvey, Ewan and Hannah. I caught up with Tracy, who was pleased to have gained support as a result of being at that Safe Space and after six years of doing it tough, has been able to secure housing. I am so pleased for Tracy and her partner. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and hear that feedback. It was very encouraging indeed. We have extended the Safe Spaces for another 12 months, and we will certainly have more to say about that in the months and, no doubt, the years ahead.

We have made a further investment in the Private Rental Incentives Scheme, which is very important. There has been some discussion about the National Rental Affordability Scheme, a federal government program. I congratulated Julie Collins on her appointment and I had some discussions with her. I look forward to further discussions with her. I am pleased about the outcome for the constituents - Jean and others at Redwood Village. I was pleased to

meet with Jean and her colleagues. That is a good, positive progress and I have asked the department to look at those other Tasmanians in that program. Although it is a federal program, the Premier and I will do whatever we can to make a difference in the lives of our fellow Tasmanians.

We have set up our Ministerial Reference Group, with the Premier, myself and Lara Alexander, my parliamentary secretary. We look forward to catching up with those community groups, stakeholders and others.

There was reference made during Budget Estimates to the brokerage arrangements. I have asked my department to follow up on that to ensure it is being implemented with the true intent for which it was established and we will follow that up even more.

Chair, there is a lot to get through in these various portfolios. In terms of the Office of Coordinator General, I thank him and his team for the work that they undertake to support development in Tasmania. The office facilitated more than \$382 million of investment across the state in the last financial year, exceeding the target of \$300 million and since 2015-16 over \$2.5 billion in investment. Quite an excellent result. We are blessed in Tasmania in so many ways, with gourmet food and wine, iconic heritage, seasonal climate, the tourism industry going so well despite the challenges, and we have those natural advantages. We want to build on our strengths and make the most of it.

We have the expressions of interest process for the tourism opportunities in national parks, reserves and Crown land. I announced changes to that, an enhanced approach to ensure that there is a ceasing of any potential land banking by the conducting of a review of existing proposals to identify stalled projects and provide short time frames for significant progress or otherwise withdraw the proposals from the process. We are reshaping the membership of the tourism EOI assessment panel but just remember, you have had destinations like the Maydena Bike Park, Derwent Valley to Blue Derby, all tourism EOI opportunities.

There was mention of the 30-year Greater Hobart plan. It is open for public consultation and I made reference to the very positive and productive meeting with the four Hobart mayors just a week or so ago.

There was a reference by Simon Wood to the red tape reduction coordinator. I commend Mr Wood, member for Bass, for his comments and totally agree that that is an area that we need to stay focused on, in terms of red tape, streamlining the process to help our 38 000 small businesses out there and we intend to, and I intend to, continue that effort.

In terms of Energy and Renewables, it is a very challenging environment, right now, right here at the National Electricity Market. I am very pleased to have had those meetings with the federal Energy minister and also my counterparts last week. We have a track record of putting front and centre cost of living and cost of doing business. That is why we want to keep downward pressure on prices and support Tasmanians in need. I will continue to do that.

I do not know the Labor position with respect to why they wish to exit the National Electricity Market. That is a decision for Labor but it certainly will put at risk a whole range

of developments, whether it be Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen but also our economy more generally and the opportunities for renewable energy development. Obviously, it has been made clear in this place that Labor does not appear to have a position with respect to Marinus Link, which has been around for a long period of time. We are totally committed to progressing that very important national infrastructure project, with our plans to go from 100 per cent to 200 per cent and our net-zero status. That is where we want to go.

Chair, there is a lot more to do and I am very pleased to know that the integrated system plan which will be released in coming weeks by the independent regulator and certainly with the feedback, we remain very positive that our plans for Marinus Link and with respect to the jobs and development opportunities in Tasmania will be front and centre. We want to leverage on our competitive advantages, whether it be wind, world-class wind resource, a world-class water resource, our 30 power stations, 50 dams, we want to make the most of that. We have locked in that federal government support now, \$70 million for green hydrogen and the Bell Bay as a hub. I am delighted to be working with the various proponents and the Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing zone and other key leaders in that space to deliver low cost, reliable, clean electricity. That is what Australia wants; that is what the rest of the world wants.

I wanted to speak on the importance of the resources sector. There is no stronger friend and greater supporter of the forestry and mining and mineral processing sector than a majority Liberal Government and 10 000 of them, in fact, in terms of jobs and the lion share of our exports from Tasmania, 60 per cent of the record exports, in fact, from mining and mineral processing. It is fantastic.

I met with the mining industry representatives last Thursday in Queenstown. I went underground at CMT and could see the positivity in the eyes of New Century Resources and know of their positivity with respect to their plans for the future. That was very encouraging. We know about the plans that we have to back in the Minerals Resources Tasmania: \$800 000 over four years to enhance their services and information to support the mining and mineral processing sector, and \$200 000 to address the emerging national wood supply pressures to inform the Government's strategic approach to the long-term sustainable wood resource security.

We are investing. We have \$1 million of the \$2 million to support the King Island Tungsten Dolphin Mine and it was great to be there at the opening. The \$10 million I made reference to during the Estimates for the on-island processing program, we want more value adding downstream processing jobs in Tasmania. That is why we are investing in that. The first \$6 million has delivered a \$23 million return for Tasmania with at least 30 new direct and indirect jobs.

We support our native forest industry. There was some debate by the Greens. They have been consistent now for some time and that is that they want the end to native forest harvesting. We do not. We support it and it should be sustainable and it is. Victoria and Western Australian Labor governments have closed them down or are closing them down. The only way that can occur in Tasmania is with another Labor-Greens government.

I acknowledge the \$200 million new National Institute for Forest Products Innovation to be headquartered in Launceston; \$100 million from the Australian Government and thanks to both the Coalition and the Labor Government for supporting that initiative. It is putting Tasmania front and centre when it comes to sustainable forestry, and it is good news.

I would like to touch on, in the few moments available, with respect to veterans, we stand by them. There are 10 500 in Tasmania. We support them and their families to the hilt. They deserve that respect for their service and sacrifice, for the courage and mateship they have demonstrated for us and for our sake. I put that right up front and, yes, we are backing them with the funding. There was some question about the royal commission and I have made this clear on a number of occasions: it is going to be held here in early August. This is the royal commission into the defence and veteran suicide. I have said before to be prepared as this will be a very sensitive and challenging time for many of our veterans and their families. I want to acknowledge that upfront.

Yesterday I again met with John Hardy, the CEO of RSL Tasmania. We meet regularly. I thank him for his leadership. I thank Barry Quinn, the president, and his committee for what they do. I acknowledge the observations of Ms Butler with respect to the royal commission and the importance of our veterans as well. As I said during budget Estimates, the RSL thanked me for the early engagement with respect to the new Regatta Point Stadium. As the Premier has made clear, a stadium for sport, arts, entertainment precinct and the former premier, I can advise, did meet with Barry Quinn before that announcement so that engagement did occur in advance. The RSL thanked me for the early engagement on that matter.

In terms of the support for our veterans we are backing it in, not just with the Teddy Sheean VC Memorial Grants but a whole range of initiatives and I am absolutely rapt to be able to be supporting them in the way that we do.

In conclusion, I thank all those who have made a contribution during the process of being accountable and transparent. It is absolutely confirmed where you sit there from 9 until 6 during the day with breaks during the day but basically you get grilled, you get asked all sorts of questions and, yes, you do have support from secretaries and others in the department, but you cannot say it is not open and transparent. It is a hallmark of this Government and this parliament, and it is something to be encouraged and supported. I note that at the federal level, they have Senate Estimate hearings. In Tasmania, we for, various reasons, have Estimates hearings in the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council.

Time expired.

Mr WINTER - Chair, well we can say that the process lacks transparency. I am sorry, minister. I will say it lacks transparency. It lacks transparency because the minister does not answer questions. As I said earlier today, it does not matter if you asked them in a very succinct way. It does not matter if you give a preamble. The same result: you do not get the answer to the question that you asked.

I asked the minister: 'Can you explain when the decision not to delink was made, and by whom was it made?' Mr Barnett went on a discussion that takes up almost a page of *Hansard*, not answering the question. I still do not know when the decision not to delink

from the National Electricity Market was made. I do not know who made the decision, despite having asked a very simple question of a minister that could have been answered presumably by him, but if not, by the public servants that were sitting to his left and to his right. The answers were right there across the table from me. I asked the question and yet I do not get an answer to the simple question.

I repeated the question: 'When was the decision not to go ahead with delinking made? Who made that decision?' Mr Barnett said that I was mis-characterising or confusing the question, 'because we have followed through on our election promise'. They have not followed through on their election promise. That is plainly obvious to anyone, yet the minister still feels comfortable to sit at the Estimates table and say that it is true. It is not true.

When the minister starts talking about the transparency and openness at the end of his contribution, I wonder what he is talking about. He does not answer questions and then he complains in question time. He says we are scared of him. We are not scared of him. We just know we are not going to get any answers.

This morning we did get an answer on Basslink. The Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier a straightforward question about Basslink and why it was not operating. Guess what? We got an answer. We actually got a really clear answer that explains to us what was going on, and we are really happy with that. That is the way the process is supposed to work. Perhaps the minister was upset because the Premier had answered the question. Perhaps he thought he should not have. Did he think, 'Hang on a second, he should not be answering the questions. He should be obfuscating from the topic, talking about something in the talking points, and procrastinating from answering a question'?

The Premier did answer, and we were pleased about that. We asked a follow-up question of the Premier, who I do not think knew the answer, and that was whether the Government supported the decision by Basslink to see us exporting electricity. We asked the minister. I am not sure if he knew the answer or not, but again, he did not answer the question. You can argue the merits of the question, but it is a simple question, and it deserves a simple answer. That is all that is required.

This went on throughout, I assume, I was not there for the whole time, probably the entire day, but certainly through the Energy portfolio, asking question after question after question. Three times. Four times I had to ask about the policy to delink from the National Electricity Market before finally the minister admitted that he was not going to delink from the National Electricity Market.

At the same Estimates table, he told us that he had delivered on his promise. That he had delivered on the policy, and at the same time, he also said he was not delinking from National Electricity Market. These two things cannot both be true. The policy says the minister will delink from the National Electricity Market. That is what the policy says. The minister says he has delivered on the policy, but also says he is not doing it.

Does anyone have any idea what on earth he thinks? Who does he think believes this? Surely there is no-one in that room who thought he was being honest. There were people at the table who are highly credentialed who could have answered questions. In other portfolios with other ministers I was able to get some really detailed information. I was not able to in the Energy and Renewables portfolio. It was disappointing to not get answers to simple

questions. I should not be surprised. I must admit I am not surprised, but I need to point out the simple failure of the minister to answer questions.

I will get to Marinus Link now. The minister had previously said that there was nothing more important than keeping downward pressure on electricity prices, but his statement had come out the week before which said that:

Exiting the national energy market would erode investor confidence in the national energy market, and potentially jeopardise billions of dollars in current and future investment in renewable energy projects including Marinus Link.

He said words to that effect again today. I want to explain what this is. The minister is saying that the project that was first formulated in 2016, Marinus Link, could not coincide with his energy policy that was created two years later, and therefore he had to drop the policy.

Ms Haddad - It does not make sense.

Mr WINTER - Of course it does not make sense, Ms Haddad. That is the argument that no-one believes, yet he is happy to keep saying over and over that the policy that this Government had was to delink from the National Electricity Market. The policy commitment was made after the commencement of the Marinus Link project six years ago yet, now he is saying that his own policy was the reason that he could not deliver on his policy.

Ms Butler - It beggars belief.

Mr WINTER - It does beggar belief. It is extraordinary that we have a minister who is prepared to say these things in Estimates as though he is being 'transparent'. That is the word he used. I asked him about a right to information I had received, and a very interesting letter from former prime minister Scott Morrison on 24 December 2021 to the then premier, Peter Gutwein. That letter says, quoting prime minister Scott Morrison:

Regarding cost recovery of Marinus Link, the Commonwealth remains committed to progressing revised cost allocation arrangements. However, I am advised reform of the current transmission investment network, either through ENCRC or through AEMC rule change, is unlikely to present a viable way forward in time for final investment decision to be taken on the project by 2024.

That is the Prime Minister of Australia telling the Premier of Tasmania that what they are saying they will do cannot happen. That is what it says in black and white in the letter.

I asked him about it: 'Do you agree with the former prime minister, Mr Morrison's assessment?'. The minister went on to explain why he did not accept the offer. Lo and behold, he did not answer the question. He has not addressed the issue that is raised by the Commonwealth that he cannot get his rule change in place by 2024, by investment decision date: 2024 is actually eight years after the commencement of this project. Even under the

scenario that he says that he can achieve, investment decision eight years after the project was first thought up, the Commonwealth is saying that you cannot do that.

Either the minister is going to have to go ahead with an investment decision at the time without knowing what the rule change is, and I do not think he can do that, or it is going to be further delayed. This is a project now that is six years old, that will be eight years old by the time the investment decision is made, and the Minister for Energy and Renewables - thank goodness it is not the Premier - has the gall to say, 'Do you support it?' I ask, 'What am I supporting?' Who is going to pay for it? When is the rule change going to happen?' There is no detail about this because you do not know the answers because you have not done your work.

You have failed to deliver your policy. Your precious project Marinus Link that you are prepared to put Tasmanian energy users - consumers, and businesses - second so you can build project Marinus Link, is all at sea. Under this minister's watch, this project is in dire straits, and the only reason is that this minister has not been able to get a deal struck with the Morrison government - and now, amazingly, he is relying on a federal Labor government.

Time expired.

Estimates of the Minister for Energy and Renewables, Minister for Resources, Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing, and Minister for Veterans Affairs agreed to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Tasmanian Architects Awards

[6.21 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, I rise on the adjournment tonight to talk about the importance of celebrating the work of architects in our state. The Tasmanian Architects Awards were announced on Saturday. The minister, Mr Barnett, was there. I could not be there for the first time in a very long time. The awards are run by the Institute of Architects Tasmanian Chapter and showcase the outstanding efforts of Tasmania's architects and designers, and the high quality of architecture in Tasmania.

Each year when I have a look at the projects that are finalists and the ones that receive awards - there is some amazing architecture that we have going on here. As I said, I could not attend this year for the first time in a long time. I have had a long association with the Australia Institute of Architects as one of their ambassadors, since I was Speaker of the House, which is quite a few years ago now.

As minister responsible for architecture and design under the CBOS part of the safety and consumer affairs portfolio, as well as the arts, I am doubly proud of the achievements of the Liminal Studio team, led by Elvio Brianese and Peta Heffernan, who took out a string of awards at the Tasmanian Architecture awards. Liminal Architecture partnered with internationally renowned Singaporean architects, WOHA, to design the Hedberg - a world-class performing arts and creative facility located in the heart of Hobart - as an integral and contemporary extension of the iconic Theatre Royal. I also oversee that, as minister, and I attend some wonderful events at that facility now - as I have for a very long time at the Theatre Royal.

Alongside a range of awards acknowledging excellence in heritage, interiors, and public architecture, the Hedberg took out the Tasmanian Architecture awards State Medal for 2022, which is the highest honour recognised by the awards. Jointly funded by our Government in partnership with the University of Tasmania and the Federal Government, the Hedberg extends the 185-year story of the Theatre Royal as Australia's oldest continually operating theatre.

The venue houses a range of music and performance venues, incorporating a new home for the UTAS conservatorium for music and other creative workspaces, whilst marrying contemporary architecture with the heritage structures of the historic Theatre Royal - which was built in 1837 - and Hedberg Brothers Garage, built in the 1920's. It is quite an extraordinary facility.

The collaborative design also embeds important Tasmanian historical narratives, including those of our First People, and our performing arts communities with new cultural narratives, celebrated through features like exposed old brick and sandstone walls, juxtaposed against warm contemporary materials. I note that the carpet in the building, although very bright, is quite purposeful and was created with an Aboriginal design. If you have not yet taken notice of the carpet, it was specifically designed and made for the Hedberg facility.

The judges recognised the Hedberg's significance, not only as a performing arts destination but also for successfully stitching together its historical past and for exceptional public access. It is so pleasing to see the incredible local talent of Liminal recognised in this way and I take this opportunity to extend my personal congratulations again to the team and all of those involved in the project. I have already done so through various mechanisms, including social media. It truly is an outstanding, state-of-the-art facility.

In fact, the new state-of-the-art studio theatre is being used by the Tasmanian community and professional theatre and dance organisations to present a diverse range of shows to Tasmanian audiences. I have been pleased to see many local organisations like Terrapin Puppet Theatre Company recently making full use of the space for their Anthem Anthem Revolution preview only a few weeks ago, before they took off for Birmingham. I also note DRILL's truly outstanding Leviathan performance last year, with some of our very young dancers. This facility is an important new addition for the state's performing arts community.

Also, as Dark Mofu enters its second week, it is pretty exciting looking over the lawns at the moment seeing all of the red lights and the first night of Winter Feast. I note the festival has a number of events scheduled in the new studio as part of the Borderlands series.

I welcome the Hedberg occupying an integral and unique place in the sector as arts and culture takes centre stage this week, playing a central role in our state's tourism destination and visitor economy.

I also congratulate Tanner Architects on receiving the Esmond Dorney Award for residential architecture for new houses. Stu, who is the director of Tanner Architects, is also the current Tasmanian Chapter President of the Australian Institute of Architects and it is wonderful to see recognition for someone who has done, and continues to do, so much for the industry. Incidentally, I worked with Stu on the foyer security project here when I was Speaker and he was very committed to that project and took an interactive approach to that.

In my electorate of Clark, I also acknowledge the wonderful contribution of the Goulburn Street housing design by Cumulus, which received the Ray Heffernan Award for Residential Architecture for Multiple Housing. These public housing units in Hobart are filled with natural light through connections to external spaces and clever planning, which create an inner world that is still connected to the city around it.

Architecture is integral to our history and to our sense of place. Architects play a crucial role in developing our built environment by providing innovative and flexible designs to support and enhance our Tasmanian lifestyle. Tasmanian entrants who were awarded a named award or architecture award are now eligible for consideration for a national award, to be presented in November this year. I congratulate each of the award winners and finalists and I wish those who will now be entered in the national awards every success. I am sure we will take out a few.

Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee

[6.28 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee (PESRAC). Remember that thing called PESRAC: something that the Government and the community invested an enormous amount into in 2020 when COVID-19 was first detected here in Tasmania? It pulled together some great minds from across our state to look at how we could implement improvements for our society, our community and our economy and for the Government to adopt those recommendations to effect the changes that had been identified both through the interim report and the final report.

I feel that the Government is completely abandoning the work that commenced under PESRAC. They have not spoken about it in a very long time. I looked through the Budget; there was no mention in the Budget speech. There was no mention of PESRAC once in Budget Paper No. 1 or Budget Paper No. 2, Volume 1 or Volume 2. The only mention of PESRAC was in the Gender Budget Statement, where there is one sentence which says:

Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27 supports the Premier's economic and social recovery advisory committee recommendations, including PESRAC's interim report recommendation 42.

That is the only mention of PESRAC anywhere in the Budget, despite the fact that there are 116 recommendations from both the interim and final reports, and despite the fact that the Coronavirus website says very clearly:

The progress on the delivery of PESRAC interim recommendations will be publicly reported in the first half of 2022.

Mr Speaker, today is 15 June 2022. There has been no public update about the Government's progress on the delivery of PESRAC interim recommendations. The Government has 15 days left if they plan to meet the commitment they made when they said that in the first half of 2022 they would provide an update on progress to implement those recommendations.

This parliament expressed its support for PESRAC, for those 116 different recommendations. The Government has apparently adopted every single one of them and plans to fund and implement every single one of them. The community deserves an explanation from the Government about whether it still intends to do that. I am keen to hear from the Premier on this. Does this new Premier remain committed to PESRAC? Does the Government remain committed to all of the recommendations, and will they deliver on their promise to provide a report to the public in the first half of this year? They have 15 days left and the clock is ticking.

Dr Jennifer Sanger - Report on Carbon Sequestration

[6.31 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, we all know that Tasmania has the tallest trees in the southern hemisphere, that these trees grow up to 100 metres high; and we have some of the most carbon-dense forests on the planet. We have native forests that cover close to half of the island and they store up to 4.4 billion tonnes of carbon, equivalent to eight years of Australian's emissions in 2018. If we left our forests as they are, undisturbed, they would continue to store carbon indefinitely but that is not what happens. Forestry Tasmania every day clearfells and burns carbon-rich, biodiverse native forests and the Liberals continue to hide the reality of this climate crime.

The esteemed Dr Jennifer Sanger, who is well-respected for her highly credentialled research, has done an important body of work for Tasmania. She has detailed the carbon trail. She shows us what we have known from first principles but we have never had the evidence to prove so far - which is, that native forest logging in Tasmania is the biggest source of carbon emissions by sector and it is our number one climate issue.

Where do our precious bio-carbon stores end up after Forestry Tasmania logs biodiverse forests? The Government pretends it is a one-for-one replacement scheme, with the emissions released through logging forests simply moving sideways and being stored in a different place, such as in furniture and house framing. That could not be further from the truth. Dr Sanger's research establishes that when forests are logged or cleared, most of the carbon that is stored in forests is released into the atmosphere - two thirds of the carbon is released within two years and the remainder is released over the next 50 years.

In Tasmania, only 6 per cent of the carbon from forests ends up stored in long-term timber products. Just one per cent of our forests become sawn timber for building houses and furniture and that 1 per cent could last for up to 90 years. Just 5 per cent becomes laminated veneer and plywood, which could last an average of 25 years. All the rest of it - 60 per cent of the above-ground forest tree mass - the trunks, branches, leaves and the roots get left on the site and those carbon stores are burned and they are released immediately into the atmosphere - or they are left to rot. Either way, the carbon is released. The rest of that material is turned into short-term products like paper and cardboard.

What would happen if we stopped native forest logging today? We would stop the 64 per cent - the two thirds - of forest emissions that are released in the very short-term and the remaining third of emissions that is caused by Forestry Tasmania's decades of logging would break down and be released into the atmosphere for decades. In other words we have vast legacy emissions from decades of forest destruction sitting waiting to add to our overheating climate for decades to come.

Just how many emissions does Forestry Tasmania contribute? The Government has taken great pains to hide the true emissions from native forest logging. It only reports forest activity under a coverall IPCC category, which includes the emissions from logging and burning as well as the carbon from the forest that is drawn down and stored in the same reporting measure. That means we have a net figure that has not let us know how many greenhouse gas emissions are being released from forestry logging every year.

Until now. Thank you, Dr Jen Sanger. Her research tells us the shocking truth that the native forest logging sector is the largest emitter in Tasmania. The Government-subsidised native forest logging industry releases 4.65 million tonnes of carbon-equivalent gases into our overheating atmosphere every year.

Out of all of Tasmania's sectors, native forest logging is the biggest emitter. The emissions are nearly two-and-a-half times those of the transport sector. That includes all of Tasmania's cars, trucks, domestic aviation and shipping. It is the annual emission equivalent of 1.1 million cars, the annual emissions of 258 000 homes, six times the emissions of the Tasmanian tourism industry, equivalent to 422 000 return flights to London. That is nearly every child, woman and man in Tasmania.

How long does it take to recapture those emissions? What we know is as we gallop towards the Paris target of 1.5 degrees by 2030, the climate is heating up fast. Every day is more urgent than the last, every fraction of a degree counts and every tonne of emissions matters.

What Dr Sanger's report shows is that forests do regrow after logging but it would take centuries to fully recapture the carbon emitted from the forests that are being destroyed today. We do not have decades to wait, let alone centuries. What matters most are the short-term emissions from native forest logging now. Around 60 per cent of native forest carbon is released within two years. At the current rate of logging, that is around 2.21 million tonnes of carbon every year. When the short-term emissions are being released, the regrowing forests cannot keep pace and draw down enough carbon to match, which is creating a huge carbon deficit.

Even worse, Forestry Tasmania also puts clear-felled forest into logging cycles of 40 to 80 years, which means the original amount of carbon is never recovered. Those forests can only ever store a fraction of their potential carbon when they are being continually logged.

What do we do? What do we know? We know that native forest logging is not carbon-neutral. It is a sector that is the biggest source of emissions in Tasmania, that the best use for our native forests is to protect them and allow young forests to keep growing so they can do the work of drawing out huge amounts of carbon in the atmosphere. We know that protecting native forests is a low-cost, effective, immediate way to have real action on climate change. We cannot wait centuries for regrowing forests to recapture carbon that has been lost during logging every day. We need to stop emissions now. We can absorb 76 million tonnes of carbon by 2050 if we protect our forests instead of logging them.

The Greens know what the children of Tasmania want us to do and that is what we are going to do. We are going to do everything we can to end native forest logging. Thank you, Dr Jen Sanger and The Tree Projects, for that excellent report.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Forest Carbon Emissions

[6.39 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, what we just heard was an absolute load of garbage from the Greens. They have no idea about the science of native forestry. They have no understanding of the fact that this is the most sustainable industry there is because wood is a product that is so good that if it did not exist we would have to invent it. It is the only renewable carbon-storing building material we have and the diversity of what you can do with timber, particularly native timber, is unmatched by any material produced in this state.

The people who get up and whinge and complain about the jobs generated in our native forestry sector, particularly the Greens, fundamentally fail to understand what the science says on native forestry. They do not understand that old-growth forests are actually net carbon emitters. They do not understand that the best carbon sequestration comes from a young growing forest. They do not understand that the largest tree-planting organisation in Tasmania is Sustainable Timbers Tasmania. The people who harvest our forests are the ones who replant it, are the ones who grow it for future generations. And why? They have an incentive, because they want their people to be able to go to work in 10, 20, 30 years' time. They want young people in Tasmania to have the same opportunities the peers of Dr Woodruff and Ms O'Connor had when they were growing up, so that they can get a job in Tasmania, earn a good income and start a business in our sustainable native forest sector.

One of the sad things coming from the claptrap and rhetoric from the Greens is the misinformation now permeating through certain sectors of our society. I had someone comment to me the other day, 'Well, you know what they do so wonderfully in Europe and that we are failing to do here in Australia, particularly in Tasmania, is all of their timber comes from plantations', as if that is some kind of more sustainable option. That is completely wrong. It is actually the opposite.

In Europe there are only nine countries that get any more than 5 per cent of their timber production from plantation. The reason why they do that is because if you allow native forest to grow, you have natural biodiversity, natural water management, you have the kind of species growing in that area, not in a monoculture, but in the natural forest that the Greens so love. Whenever they go into a regrowth forest they are always staggered by the beauty of these 'old-growth forests' until someone tells them that they were actually put there by Forestry Tasmania workers and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania.

In Europe they undertake a program whereby they have as much land for native forestry as possible so that only small parts of it need to be harvested in any given year to meet the timber demands of that continent. They have less forests per person than us. In Australia, we have the third highest amount of forest per capita of any nation on Earth. The only people ahead of us are Russia and Canada, those two enormous countries. Despite having that much forest available to us, despite having that much timber we can use sustainably in our own state, in our own country, we are a net importer of timber. That is madness, that is absolute insanity, particularly because, as I say, it is the ultimate renewable. It is a product so good that if it did not exist we would have to invent it.

The people over there in the Greens who whinge and complain about our native forest sector do not understand the science of that industry, of climate change and carbon sequestration. You need a landscape-scale solution to a landscape-scale problem like climate change. That is the opportunity afforded to us with our sustainable native forest industry in Tasmania. The people who would have it locked up come up with no solutions about how we build our houses, for how we might produce the paper they have in their hands as we speak. They have paper and we are in the Chamber surrounded by timber. Their homes, no doubt, are built with timber. If they are not, they are climate vandals in their own books because the only solutions that are not timber are worse in all measures in terms of carbon emissions.

These people are hypocrites and the worst thing is that they come in here and they lecture us about science, which they do not understand, they lecture us about the wishes and aspirations of young people, which they are not and who they do not understand. They talk to a tiny group of people who want to shut down the native forest industry as their number one priority. I will tell you what the young people in my electorate care about: they care about getting a good job, raising a family, saving up a deposit to buy a house. You know how some of them do it? They do it through the native forestry sector.

I am very proud to back those people and I am very proud to back the science that puts them in a position to help build a cleaner world, to help house Tasmanians. We need to be backing these people and we need to be backing these jobs. The disinformation that comes from those opposite, particularly the Greens, is sending our country down the wrong path. We need better, Tasmania deserves better and that is why Tasmania needs a native forest sector.

Forest Carbon Emissions

[6.45 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Ellis, I have said it before and I will say it again: you are an absolute fraud. You did not listen to a single word Dr Woodruff

read out - a climate scientist and epidemiologist. You did not listen to a word. You still believe in superheroes. We heard that earlier. That confectioned, performative rubbish, Mr Speaker, really said so much about Mr Ellis. His obsession with the Greens, with deriding us: he spends more time on his feet in here talking about the Greens than he does his own electorate of Braddon or any other subject.

Mr Ellis - You are trying to shut down jobs in my electorate. I will not apologise for backing those jobs.

Ms O'CONNOR - The climate and the science could not care less about little Felix Ellis's performances in the Tasmanian parliament. Facts are facts, science is science.

Dr Woodruff read out an analysis of the science. Dr Jen Sanger has laid out the methodology for an extremely robust examination of the facts around our native forest logging sector. The fact is that it is the biggest emitter in Tasmania yet we have this child, Mr Ellis, who until a short time ago was a plumber, who worked then in an electorate office and got elected by accident, lecturing a climate scientist.

I do not have a degree so I am not pontificating about qualifications but the gall of Mr Ellis to come in here and pretend he knows more about the science of forests than Dr Jen Sanger or more about the climate than Dr Rosalie Woodruff, as well as 99 per cent of the world's climate scientists, is embarrassing for him. I feel embarrassed for him, the arrogance, watching this performative, childish, unscientific behaviour, his posturing.

Young people who understand the science, who want an end to native forest logging, would be watching a performance like that in despair. This is the level of debate around climate issues when you have a scientist in this place lay out some facts, some evidence, and get that hysterical performance from Mr Ellis. I am not saying it was hysterical because it was funny.

I do not want to waste too much of my time responding to Mr Ellis because usually I find it best for my equanimity to just leave the Chamber when the verbal diarrhoea starts really flowing, but I could not let that arrogant childishness go unchallenged.

Just on where the future of the industry is, I might go back to a conversation that Mr Barnett and I had at the table about where the value is in forestry in this state. Plantations, according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, ABARES - not sure if this is an organisation that Mr Ellis has heard of - shows that in 2019 the value of hardwood plantation products in Tasmania massively outstripped the value of hardwood native products. Hardwood plantation products, \$229 million, compared to \$66 million for products from native forests, remembering that every cent of that is heavily publicly subsidised.

Anyone sensible about the future of forestry, including all those markets that ask for Forest Stewardship Certification on the timber products they buy, knows that the future of the industry is in plantations. It is in a part of the forestry industry where companies like Forico, for example, are leading the way and being responsible climate citizens.

We now have a paper that has been detailed in this House that lays bare that native forest logging, propped up by public subsidies, on this island is the biggest risk to the climate on this island. Then you have that puerile, sanctimonious, performative rubbish from the child in this room. I just hope when he grows up he has the capacity to turn around and have a look at himself, have a look at the children he was elected to represent, and do better by them.

Do not diss science and scientists because you are trying to impress the Premier or anyone else in here because you want to be a minister, when you do not have the maturity to be a minister. Science is science. Dr Woodruff is a scientist. At the very least, Mr Ellis might learn something if he just stopped to listen and stopped being such a complete idiot on matters of forestry -

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I ask you to withdraw that comment. It is unparliamentary.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is true; and I withdraw it.

Tasmania's Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2020 - Australian Government Report

[6.51 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the contributions of the two Green members. I will also back Mr Ellis and his contribution, which is all about support for a sustainable forest industry that is delivering jobs and a growing economy, and also practical environmental benefits for Tasmania.

A new report has just come out; in fact, there are two reports. One from Dr Sanger, which the Greens have been referring to, and one from the Australian Government. I will speak about the Australian Government report that came out on 9 June, regarding Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions accounts for 2020. They were released on 9 June by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) as part of the State and Territory Greenhouse Gas Inventories 2020. Following a recalculation of Tasmania's emissions profile in the 2020 State and Territory Greenhouse Gas Inventories, Tasmania achieved negative net emissions for the first time in 2014 and has maintained -

Dr Woodruff - I know. We read that out in parliament. It was thanks to our forestry agreement. We read that out.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. Order.

Mr BARNETT - net negative emissions since. Analysis of Tasmania's net emissions over time also demonstrates that since 1990, our net emissions have consistently trended down. Since 1990, our net emissions are 121 per cent lower, while our economy has doubled and more than 60 000 jobs have been created, indicating that we have decoupled economic growth from growth in emissions and I should note that we are now seven years in a row of zero net emissions.

Dr Woodruff - We have not. They do not make that conclusion.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff. If you cannot listen in silence, then I will ask you to leave.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Contrary to the claims by the Greens, net emissions were trending down before the Tasmanian Forest Agreement became law in 2013.

Dr Woodruff - Point of clarification. The minister might be mistakenly misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER - There is no point of clarification. It is not a debate.

Dr Woodruff - No, I think the minister would like to think about what he says because he is misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order. If you cannot listen in silence, Dr Woodruff, you can leave the House. I will allow you to stay at this time, but the next time you say something, you will be leaving.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. By 2013 net emissions were 0.4 mega tonnes, nearly at net-zero and 98 per cent lower than in 1990. In fact, emissions from land use change and forestry sector were net negative, meaning the sector sequestered carbon by 2012, before the Tasmanian Forest Agreement became law in 2013. This new data should put to bed the Greens' claims -

Dr Woodruff - It is because of the GFC and the slow down.

Member Suspended

Member for Franklin - Dr Woodruff

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, you can leave the Chamber. I cannot put up with you constantly interjecting.

Dr Woodruff - Cannot really suffer -

CHAIR - Order. You will withdraw until the end of today's sitting.

Dr Woodruff withdrew.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. It should absolutely put to bed the Greens' claims to the contrary. We know, as they do, that often ideology, not fact, underpins their position. Unlike the Greens, we do not agree that ceasing all native forestry is the best approach for mitigating bush fires and climate change. As Felix Ellis has made clear, wood is good. I have said that before wood is good, it is sustainable, it is renewable; it is the ultimate renewable.

Sustainable forestry management is part of the solution to climate change, not the opposite. This is fact. The International Panel for Climate Change backs that in, backs in the Tasmanian forest management practice regime. A sustainable forest management approach is reinforced by that panel. Our net-zero emissions target does not mean an end to native forest harvesting, unlike Labor in Western Australia and Victoria, or the Greens' perspective on this same matter. The overwhelming majority of trees harvested in Tasmania are plantation and regrowth. However, plantation timber alone cannot provide the full range of products or meet current market demand.

There is still demand for high-value, appearance-grade forest products that can only be sourced from native forests. It cannot be substituted from plantation wood. Native forests are the main source of eucalypt sawlogs and veneer logs. Hard, durable, appearance-grade timber suitable for floors, stairs, construction and building materials for building our homes, just when we desperately need the supply chain to be strong, we need timber to build our homes. There is nothing more important.

To conclude, with respect to the Greens' reference to Dr Sanger's report, Dr Sanger is a well-known Bob Brown Foundation activist, she was a campaign organiser for the BBF's so-called Great Forest Case: a case thrown out by the high court. Dr Sanger was the same author who in 2020 was forced to retract a paper she had co-authored attacking native forest management after errors were found and exposed. The report that the two Green members are referring to was not peer-reviewed, and it is backed by the Wilderness Society. I think that says about all of it with respect to the Greens' reference to that report.

This Australian Government report that has just been released is a factual report and makes it clear, with respect to the benefits of Tasmania's sustainable forest industry.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

[6.58 p.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Minister for Community Services and Development) - Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge that today is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, observed worldwide, each year on 15 June. Almost one in six older Australians who were recently surveyed reported experiencing abuse in the past 12 months, but only about one third of those people sought help. As we know, elder abuse is often a hidden problem and committed by people in positions of trust, but unfortunately, we know that elder abuse is an issue within our community.

Today, hundreds of Tasmanians joined our important funded peak body, the Council on the Ageing Tasmania and other key stakeholders across Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie to raise awareness of this often hidden issue. Participating in these walks is an important way to raise community awareness about elder abuse, and importantly, raise awareness that there is assistance available. As I was not able to join them this year, I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Prosser, Jane Howlett, MLC, for representing the government on my behalf to lead the Hobart walk.

On behalf of the Tasmanian Government, my thanks go to COTA who have organised today's walks. I would particularly like to acknowledge COTA's CEO, Sue Leitch, as this

year will be her last walk as the CEO. We thank Sue for her unwavering dedication to supporting and advocating for older Tasmanians, and her work leading COTA alongside the Tasmanian Government to ensure that older Tasmanians are respected, protected, and cared for in our communities.

We are proud to support the Council on the Ageing Tasmania to organise activities each year to recognise World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. We are taking action on raising awareness and providing supports for those impacted by elder abuse with our investment of \$1.76 million over two years to implement our elder abuse prevention strategy.

Key initiatives under the strategy so far have included the development of a contemporary elder abuse awareness campaign and the development of a standalone elder abuse website.

The 'It's okay to ask the question' elder abuse awareness campaign and our Tasmanian elder abuse helpline provide information, advice, support and referrals to people experiencing or concerned about elder abuse.

As we look forward, we have committed initial development work for a new elder abuse prevention strategy post this year, and I look forward to continuing our work to ensure older Tasmanians feel respected, protected and cared for.

Thank you to Council on the Ageing (COTA), and to all Tasmanians who are taking the stand against elder abuse today, as we all should, every day.

The House adjourned at 7.00 p.m.

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 97-21 of 2022

House of Assembly

*NO. 4 of 2022
NS Law.*

The petitioners ask the House to:

1. Immediately halt plans to relocate the Burnie CBD Courthouse to Mooreville Road; and
2. Commit to redeveloping the Court on the current site or find a new location for the Burnie Courthouse within the Burnie CBD

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

- Our Government notes the petition in respect of the Burnie Court Complex.
- We have listened closely to the Burnie community and there is firm agreement from all stakeholders that the current facilities are no longer fit for purpose and must be replaced, and also that the Burnie Central Business District (CBD) is in need of revitalisation.
- It is therefore, desirable that the Burnie CBD remains an activated and vibrant driver for the community and the local economy.
- Our Government is committed to working closely with the Burnie community to ensure that local court facilities meet the needs of a modern justice system.
- That is why our Government instructed Treasury to conduct a targeted EOI which closed on 18 May 2022 and resulted in a strong response with a number of applications being submitted. For probity reasons it is not appropriate to comment on the number or nature of the bids until after being assessed by Treasury.
- Following an evaluation of all the EOI submissions by Treasury, our Government will be presented with a report that details the current availability of potentially suitable alternate CBD site(s), which will enable us to make a decision on the next steps for the project. It is anticipated that this will occur in June/July 2022.
- The Government thanks the Burnie community, who have made their feedback known and worked through this process with us in good faith.

- We are committed to maximising the benefits of this project for the entire region as it will help provide more local jobs, increased economic activity, and improved access to justice across the entire North West of Tasmania.



Hon Elise Archer MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice

Date: 9 June 2022