



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 18 March 2026

REVISED EDITION

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Wednesday 18 March 2026

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Greyhound Racing

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Thank you, Mr President, I give notice that tomorrow I shall ask the honourable Leader:

Further to Premier Jeremy Rockliff's 9 August 2025 announcement that the Tasmanian Liberal Government will phase out greyhound racing by 30 June 2029, can the honourable Leader please advise:

- (1) In relation to the advice informing the Tasmanian government's decision to shut down greyhound racing:
 - (a) Prior to the government's decision to shut down greyhound racing in Tasmania, did the government receive any advice or a recommendation from a regulator that the industry should be shut down, including from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, Tasracing or the Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner?
 - (b) If such a recommendation was received, when was it received and will the government publish that advice on the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania website?
 - (c) If no such recommendation was received, what regulatory advice did the government rely on in deciding to shut down the industry?
 - (d) Has any regulator, including the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, Tasracing, or the Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner, ever advised the government that greyhound racing in Tasmania cannot be regulated to acceptable animal welfare or integrity standards?
 - (e) What data or evidence did the government rely upon to conclude that animal welfare or integrity problems in greyhound racing mean that greyhound racing no longer aligns with community expectations?
 - (f) In each of the past 10 years, how many substandard substantiated breaches relating to greyhound animal welfare were identified by an industry regulator?

- (g) In each of the past 10 years, how many integrity or animal welfare breaches relating to greyhound raising resulted in charges, suspensions or disqualifications or other disciplinary action?
 - (h) Did the government seek advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance before making the decision to move to shut down greyhound racing?
 - (i) What economic analysis or modelling did the government rely upon when deciding to move to shut down the greyhound racing industry?
- (2) Other than legislation, is the Tasmanian government exploring other mechanisms to shut down greyhound racing?
- (3) In relation to licenced greyhound trainers and kennel inspections, over the past five years:
- (a) How many licenced greyhound trainers were there in Tasmania each year?
 - (b) Each year what proportion of those trainers had their kennels inspected by the Tasracing Integrity Unit or the former Office of Racing Integrity?
 - (c) How many greyhound kennel inspections were undertaken by the Tasracing Integrity Unit and former Office of Racing Integrity each year?
 - (d) What proportion of these inspections were unannounced or intelligence-led inspections?
 - (e) How many separate kennel properties were inspected?
 - (f) How many inspections identified animal welfare or racing rule breaches?
 - (g) How many inspections resulted in compliance action, charges, suspensions, or other disciplinary outcomes?
- (4) Since the commencement of the *Racing Regulation and Integrity Act 2024* in February 2025:
- (a) How many complaints relating to greyhound animal welfare or integrity matters have been received by:
 - (i) Tasracing or the Tasracing Integrity Unit; and,
 - (ii) The Racing Integrity Commissioner?
 - (b) How many of those complaints resulted in

- (i) A formal investigation; and,
 - (ii) No investigation being undertaken?
- (c) How many investigations have been self-initiated by the Tasracing Integrity Unit?
 - (d) How many investigations have been self-initiated by the Racing Integrity Commissioner?
 - (e) How many investigations has the Tasmania Racing Integrity Unit undertaken in total?
 - (f) How many investigations has the Racing Integrity Commissioner undertaken in total?
 - (g) How many of the greyhound, animal welfare and integrity investigations resulted in:
 - (i) Disciplinary charges;
 - (ii) Licence suspension or disqualification;
 - (iii) Other disciplinary action; or,
 - (iv) No breach being identified?
- (5) In relation to greyhound euthanasia rates over the past 10 years:
- (a) How many greyhounds registered in Tasmania have been euthanised each year?
 - (b) How many of the greyhounds euthanised over the past 10 years were:
 - (i) Registered to race at the time of death?
 - (ii) Retired from racing but still owned or kept by licenced racing participants at the time of death?
 - (c) How many were euthanised for each of the following reasons?
 - (i) Injuries sustained while racing,
 - (ii) Injuries sustained while training,
 - (iii) Injuries sustained outside racing or training,
 - (iv) Illness or disease,

- (v) Old age, and,
 - (vi) Any other reasons?
- (h) Of the greyhounds euthanised due to injuries sustained while racing or training, how many were:
- (i) Euthanised immediately at the race track or training facility; and,
 - (ii) Euthanised later following veterinary treatment or assessment?
- (i) What process must licenced participants follow before a greyhound they own is euthanised, and is this process the same regardless of whether the dog is registered for racing or retired?
- (6) In relation to the breeding of greyhounds:
- (a) What approval and or notification processes must licence participants follow to breed a litter?
 - (b) How long does the breeding process typically take from the time of application to the birth of a litter?
 - (c) How many litters of greyhounds have been bred in Tasmania each year over the past 10 years?
 - (d) How many individual female greyhounds were used for breeding in Tasmania in each of the past 10 years?
 - (e) What is the average number of litters produced per breeding female?
 - (f) How many female greyhounds produce three or more litters over the last 10 years?
 - (g) What rules or limits exist on the number of litters a female greyhound may produce in Tasmania?
- (7) In relation to the economic impact of the industry:
- (a) What economic modelling has been undertaken by the government or Tasracing regarding the economic contribution of greyhound racing in Tasmania?
 - (b) What is the estimated gross value added to the Tasmanian economy attributable specifically to greyhound racing?

- (c) How much government funding has been provided to support greyhound racing in Tasmania in each of the past five years?
- (d) Of that funding, how much was provided for:
 - (i) Prize money?
 - (ii) Infrastructure and capital works?
 - (iii) Industry development or breeding incentives? and,
 - (iv) Administration and regulatory functions?
- (e) How much revenue to the Tasmanian government is attributable to greyhound racing in each of the past five years, including revenue from:
 - (i) Wagering taxes,
 - (ii) Racefield fees; and,
 - (iii) Licence fees?
- (f) Over the past five years, what is the net fiscal impact on the Tasmanian budget of greyhound racing after accounting for government funding provided and revenue received?
- (g) What has been the total prize money paid for greyhound racing in Tasmania in each of the past five years?
- (h) What is the average annual prize money earned per greyhound trainer in Tasmania?
- (i) In each of the past five years, how many greyhound trainers earned in prize money:
 - (i) Zero dollars,
 - (ii) Less than \$10,000,
 - (iii) Between \$10,000 and \$50,000, and
 - (iv) More than \$50,000?

[11.08 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr President. Can I seek your guidance on Standing Orders and whether this is a series of questions that pre-empts an Order of the Day? Standing Order 50 'Rules governing questions' (b)(iv) says that 'questions shall not anticipate discussion of an Order of the Day'. These questions would seem to do that.

Mr PRESIDENT - I will seek advice on that. I did check that rule.

Ms O'Connor - Was it an Order of the Day?

Mr PRESIDENT - Any member is entitled to ask questions to get information for debate. I don't think in any way that was anticipating a discussion of an Order of the Day. Our rule is slightly different to that in the House of Assembly, but I could not see where the honourable member was anticipating discussion of an Order of the Day. As far as I could see, the member was just asking questions to get information that may be for her wider contribution. That's how I would see it. Any member in this place can ask questions to gather information for any debate. In fact, it should be encouraged if people seek information from the government to base their substantive contribution on any legislation.

Ms O'Connor - It's usually done in the second reading but thank you.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

No. 19 of 2025 - Remuneration of Senior State Servants

Ms THOMAS question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[11.13 a.m.]

Can the government detail the number of and total remuneration figure for (cost of) senior state servants in the public service, including:

- (a) Heads of Agency;
- (b) Senior Executive Service positions, at each classification level (SES 1, 2, 3, 4);
- (c) Equivalent Specialist roles (with included roles described);
- (d) Equivalent Specialist other (with included roles described); and
- (e) Prescribed office holder/statutory positions (with included roles described),

for the point in time as at the last pay period in November 2025, for all such positions substantiated in the payroll list for each Agency and State Authority?

ANSWER

In answer, SES officers comprise 0.7 per cent of Tasmanian State Service positions by headcount. Individual salaries for key management personnel are reported in each agency annual report, and these are published on agency websites.

This answer is not able to provide accurate total remuneration figures for costs of the senior state servants in the public service, as this would require each individual agency to calculate this based on specific categories, which is complex, subject to fluctuation and requires substantial data review.

In addition, this figure is not held centrally and capable of extraction, and it's noted the implementation of a new human resource information system (HRIS) is underway and will enable agencies to report more consistently and accurately across categories of information in the future. With the consolidation of data and processes, the new HRIS, PeopleCentral, will provide a single source of workforce information when implemented.

In addition to the information on headcount and salary ranges contained in the table below, which I'll table, it's noted that at 31 December 2025, two associate secretary roles were filled - one in the Department of Health and one in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Salary payments for associate secretaries are determined in accordance with the established guidelines.

Associate secretaries are not new positions; they are a transfer of an existing SES officer. Importantly, filling an associate secretary role does not increase the overall SES numbers.

Heads of agencies are listed in Schedule 1 - Agencies of the *State Service Act 2000*. There are currently 18 heads of agency: eight secretaries of government departments; eight chief executive officers of state authorities; the Auditor-General; and the chairperson of the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority (a state authority).

Full remuneration packages for heads of agency are reported publicly in each agency's annual report and remuneration packages include salary, motor vehicle and other non-monetary benefits. Long-term employee expenses include long service leave and superannuation obligations.

There is a table, Mr President, and I'll let members know what it is. It's the SES Equivalent Specialist Prescribed, Office Holders and Heads of Agency paid headcount and associated salary ranges as of 31 December 2025.

Mr President, I seek leave to table the document and have it incorporated into the *Hansard* record.

Leave granted.

See Appendix 1, page 51

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[11.17 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

This is for the purpose of the continuation of this morning's briefing.

Sitting suspended from 11.17 a.m. to 12.03 p.m.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)(a)

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That Standing Order 10(2)(a) be suspended.

The purpose of this is to provide for the Premier's Address to be tabled without the requirement for the address to be read again in the Council.

Motion agreed to.

TABLED PAPER

Premier's Address

Ms RATTRAY - I lay upon the table of the Council a copy of the Premier's Address. I move -

That the address be incorporated into the *Hansard* record.

Motion agreed to.

See Appendix 2 on page 52.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Consideration - Message from the House of Assembly Regarding the Bondi Terrorist Attacks Condolence Motion

Mr President,

The House of Assembly having agreed to the following Resolution, begs now to transmit the same to the Legislative Council, and to request its concurrence therein -

'That the House of Assembly:

- (1) Express Tasmania's heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the 15 innocent people murdered at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025;

- (2) Condemn the atrocity which stole their lives, an act of terrorism deliberately targeted at Australia's Jewish community gathering to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah;
- (3) Unequivocally condemn the evil of antisemitism and vows strong action to prevent extremism and keep our state safe, resilient and united;
- (4) Honour the courage, composure and quick action of all the police officers, first responders, healthcare workers and everyday people whose dedication and skill saved lives;
- (5) Acknowledge the trauma of the men, women and children injured physically and psychologically, including those who witnessed the horror; and
- (6) Affirm every Tasmanian's fundamental right to live, work, worship and learn in peace and safety; to participate fully and freely in public life and to gather in community without fear or hindrance, proud of who they are and the contributions they make to our state and our way of life.'

House of Assembly,
4 March 2026
Jacquie Petrusma,
Speaker

Ms RATTRAY - Mr President, I move -

That the resolution from the House of Assembly be agreed to and the blank be filled up with the words 'Legislative Council and the'.

Motion agreed to.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Bondi Terrorist Attacks

[12.04 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - Mr President, I rise to speak to this motion in the shadow of a terrible act of violence at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025, an act that claimed the lives of 15 innocent people and injured countless more.

Before I begin, I acknowledge the deep pain and fear that the Bondi attack has stirred within our communities across Australia, including in Tasmania. Events like this reach far beyond the immediate tragedy, and they strike at the heart of people's sense of safety, identity and belonging. I recognise that many in our community are carrying heavy emotional burdens since this tragedy and that the shock of such violence can leave lasting ripples of distress.

I encourage anyone who may be feeling distressed following the events in Bondi to reach out for support and connection. For those in this Chamber and anyone watching online or reading today's transcript, it's recognised that distressing events like this can affect people in different ways, and it's important to remember that you don't have to manage those feelings on your own. If members of our community are feeling overwhelmed, anxious or isolated, then I strongly encourage you to reach out for support. Access Mental Health is a mental health support triage and referral phone line delivered by the Department of Health Tasmania. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support the Tasmanian community and make it easier to access the Tasmanian mental health system. Anyone in Tasmania can call Access Mental Health on 1800 332 388 for counselling support over the phone, information about the Tasmanian mental health system, and help making a referral to public mental health services.

I want to begin, most importantly, on behalf of the government, by expressing Tasmania's heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of those whose lives were taken. The cruelty of that loss is acknowledged and compassion is extended to those who will live with it for the rest of their lives, acknowledging the wider impact on friends, colleagues, neighbours and religious communities as a tragedy of this magnitude sends ripples far beyond the immediate victims.

Tasmania condemns the atrocity which stole those lives. This was not random misfortune. It was a deliberately planned act of terrorism targeted at Australia's Jewish community as people gathered to celebrate the first night of Chanukah, a moment intended to mark light overcoming darkness and hope over fear. The symbolism of that targeting is both chilling and instructive.

Terrorism does not merely seek to hurt; it seeks to intimidate communities, to fracture social cohesion, and forces people to second-guess their safety in our community. This motion rightly names the evil at the heart of what occurred: anti-Semitism. It is hatred that has followed Jewish communities for centuries and has reappeared whenever societies have become complacent. Regrettably, anti-Semitism is here on our shores. Our parliament must be explicit that it has no place here.

Condemning anti-Semitism is not only about what we reject; it is about what we affirm. Jewish Australians have the same rights as any other Australian: to live openly and confidently, to worship, to celebrate, to grieve, to raise their children, to build community and to live without fear. Tasmania's diversity is not a weakness, it's a strength. A multicultural society enables people of different faiths and backgrounds to share the same streets and schools and workplaces, not by erasing difference but by respecting it.

We also honour the courage, composure and quick action of those who responded and recognise the police officers who moved towards danger; the first responders who treated the injured under extreme pressure; the healthcare workers who worked long hours in circumstances that no clinician ever wants to face; and the everyday people who showed bravery and decency in the moment, helping strangers, guiding others to safety, applying first aid and doing what they could to save lives and to assist.

In times like these, the best of human nature is often seen alongside the worst. We acknowledge those acts of courage, ordinary and professional alike. This motion acknowledges the trauma carried by survivors and witnesses, the men, women and children injured physically

and psychologically, including those who saw or heard the horror unfold. These people will carry the weight of this tragedy for the rest of their lives. We stand with them.

As Tasmanians, we speak about this tragedy with a particular understanding. Many in the state can remember and still carry the scars of Port Arthur. It is ingrained as part of our collective memory - the shock, the grief, the disbelief that such violence could happen here in our state. We remember how trauma reached far beyond Port Arthur into every corner of the state and recall the resolve that followed. Australia wrapped its arms around Tasmania, much as it is happening now with the Jewish community and those in Bondi. That is why this motion's final affirmation is so important. It affirms every Tasmanian's fundamental right to live, work, worship and learn in peace and safety; to participate fully and freely in public life, and to gather across our communities without fear or hindrance.

Those are not just comforting words - they are a statement of what is owed to each other, along with the everyday freedoms that make our society worth living in. In the aftermath of an attack like this, people understandably look for certainty, for explanations, and for someone to blame. The ideology of extremism and the networks that enable it must be targeted with strengthened security where it is needed, without weakening the values we are trying to defend.

Tasmania is a small state, and that's not lost on any of us, but our values are not small. In local communities across Tasmania, people of different backgrounds live side by side. We share schools, sports clubs, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and we know what it is to pull together after tragedy. We know what it is to show up with meals, to donate blood, to check on neighbours, to attend vigils, to hold people in our thoughts even when we have never met them. We know, because we have lived it, that recovery is strengthened when communities refuse to turn on one another. Even the darkest moments can be met with unity, decency and determination.

Mr President, those affected will be supported. Anti-Semitism and extremism will be confronted. This government reaffirms, without hesitation, every person's right to gather in community, to live free from fear, and to contribute proudly to our shared way of life.

Mr President, I commend the motion to the Council.

[12.14 p.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Minister for Education) - I too rise in support of this motion. Mr President, today we remember the 15 innocent people whose lives were so cruelly taken in Bondi on 14 December last year. My daughter was living in Sydney at the time, and even though I knew she was not in the area, as a mother, there was still this absolute moment of fear that maybe, somehow, where I thought she was, she wasn't, and for her friends as well. It was a very strange time to be watching on from Tasmania, knowing that we too have family and loved ones there and wondering if they had somehow been caught up in it.

There were 15 lives that were caught up in this and 15 families whose lives have been forever changed, and each one of them was deeply loved, just as we love our families, their parents, children, a partner or a friend. They were people who left their homes that evening expecting to celebrate a moment of joy and a moment of community, and they never returned.

Across Australia and here in Tasmania, we watched those events unfold with shock, heartbreak and fear. It is impossible to comprehend the grief that's now carried by those families

and by those loved ones who have been left behind. To them, we offer not only our deepest condolences, but our enduring solidarity. As a nation, we mourn with them. We hold them in our thoughts, and we honour the lives that were lost, because behind every number is a life, a story and a future that should have been.

What occurred that night was not only an act of senseless violence, it was an act of terrorism, deliberately directed at members of Australia's Jewish community as they gathered to celebrate the first night of Chanukah. This is meant to be a time of light, hope and faith - a time when families and communities come together in celebration. In Australia, people must always be free to celebrate their faith without fear.

It's an attack not only on those who were present that night, but on the fundamental principle that people in this country should be able to gather, worship and celebrate their identity freely and without fear. Australia is a nation that's built on respect for diversity and freedom of belief. When any community is targeted in this way, it's not just an attack on them, it's an attack on all of us.

I condemn anti-Semitism and the hatred it thrives on to create fear in our communities. I'm deeply saddened when I hear stories about Tasmanian students following the Bondi terror attack feeling fearful about large gatherings, including going to school, a place where they should always feel safe.

Tasmania is an active participant in the national approach to addressing anti-Semitism in Australian schools and we are engaging with the Australian special envoy to combat anti-Semitism, whom I've met with a number of times now, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to have dialogue on this important issue.

I can assure this House that our schools are working hard to address racism and discrimination, and to ensure our young people understand both the power and the importance of a culture of respect for all people, and that respect for all is not the end point, it's the starting point.

A community leaders roundtable has been established to guide and inform strategic actions, and a racially inclusive education pilot has also commenced that supports our commitment to ensuring our schools are respectful and safe places for everyone. We know that by educating young people on the values of acceptance and respect, and by shaping attitudes early, we can have the greatest and most lasting positive impact.

The Australian Human Rights Commission's recently released *Respect@Uni* report identified racism as systemic and widespread across Australian universities. It was disturbing reading, with 70 per cent of surveyed students and staff reporting indirect racism and 15 per cent reporting direct experiences. This must change and 47 recommendations were made. I look forward to working at a national level and a system-wide level to see recommendations progress.

I also want to acknowledge the response from the University of Tasmania, which has established an anti-racism taskforce. I understand the new task force met for the first time last Friday and agreed to an engagement process for co-designing an action plan with people with lived experience of racism. This is an important step towards creating a culture of safety and

respect on our university campus. Anti-Semitism has no place in Tasmania, not in our schools, not in our universities and not in our communities.

It is in the worst of times that we often see the best in people, and that was certainly the case in Bondi. There was Jessica Rozen, a pregnant mother who shielded children from gunfire; Ahmed Al-Ahmed, a Muslim Australian who wrestled a gun from one of the attackers; and then who will forget Boris and Sofia Gurman, a Jewish couple who bravely confronted the terrorists, losing their own lives in the process. Ordinary people showing extraordinary courage in the face of unimaginable danger.

Like others, I would like to acknowledge our first responders, the police officers, healthcare workers and emergency personnel who could never have imagined when they left for work that morning what they would face later in the day. We thank them for their courage, their professionalism and their composure, and for being there when they were needed the most.

Tasmanians know the horror and the trauma that a tragedy like this leaves behind, and this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Port Arthur tragedy, a day forever etched in the history of our state and in the hearts of Tasmanians.

We understand that while physical wounds may heal, psychological injuries can last much longer. Our thoughts are with those who were injured and with those who witnessed the unimaginable, with those who continue to relive the day in quiet moments or in the middle of the night. Be kind to yourselves and seek support whenever you need to.

Every Tasmanian and every Australian has a fundamental right to live, work, worship and learn in peace and safety, to participate fully and freely in public life, to gather in our communities without fear, and to be proud of who we are and the contributions we make to our shared way of life. We must do everything we can to protect those rights for our children, for future generations, for the kind of country we believe Australia must always be. Thank you.

[12.22 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, no words can adequately do justice to the tragedy or the magnitude of the crimes perpetrated on 14 December 2025. I rise today to join those who speak up for the victims, advocate for peace and reason, and condemn unequivocally those who commit acts of such senseless violence or who fail to act to prevent them.

In Australia, we've believed that acts of terror were horrors that happened elsewhere and for many years they did. The events in Bondi on that day reminded us we're not immune to the kinds of violence we've witnessed elsewhere. This motion is not about politics, it's not about foreign policy or domestic law. It's about acknowledging the devastation inflicted on innocent people; those who were killed, those who were injured and those whose lives have forever been altered.

On a day that should have been a celebration of Jewish culture and faith, to which all were invited, the lives of so many were irreversibly changed: 15 people were killed and 40 were injured. Of those killed, victims were aged from 87 years old down to 10-year-old Matilda. There's nothing I can say that can do justice to this loss. I will simply let her name speak for itself. Matilda, aged 10.

The target of this attack was the Jewish community celebrating the first night of Chanukah. Many who died were people who had come to Australia seeking safety, opportunity and the freedom to live and express their beliefs. While I know there will never be any justifiable answer, the absence of any answer to why only deepens the pain and the disbelief.

While we witnessed utter devastation on that day, we also saw the best of humanity. Many civilians, volunteer surf lifesavers and lifeguards, our first responders, police, paramedics, ambulance and countless ordinary people intervened in danger to help others, offering first aid, shelter, protection and comfort. Intolerance and hatred have many faces, but so does bravery. While so many showed grace, courage and kindness on that day, it's important to acknowledge individuals whose actions exemplified courage: Boris and Sofia Gurman, who confronted the gunman and were killed; Reuven Morrison, who attempted to disrupt the attack and lost his life; Ahmed Al-Ahmed, who survived and will bear the physical and emotional scars forever; Gefen Bitton, who ran towards gunfire and was seriously injured; Tibor Weitzen, who shielded his wife, Edith, with both ultimately killed in the attack.

I can't think of a characteristic more central to the Australian identity than the willingness to put oneself in harm's way to help others and to disrupt and try to stop the attack that was unfolding. Of course, many of these people were born elsewhere and made Australia their home later in their lives. That's precisely the point. We are a nation strengthened by diversity, united by shared values of courage, compassion and a steadfast rejection of violence and intolerance. People come to Australia knowing that we robustly protect the right to express one's faith without violence, interference or intolerance. Many people who acted on 14 December believed in those values so strongly that they put themselves in harm's way to defend them and others. It's our responsibility to honour them by doing better, by supporting victims of injustice, confronting intolerance wherever it arises, and working with the determination to prevent such a tragedy from ever occurring again. I note the motion.

[12.26 p.m.]

Mr HISCUTT (Montgomery) - Mr President, I rise today with a heavy heart to acknowledge the profound tragedy that unfolded at Bondi on 14 December. What should have been an ordinary day - people shopping, meeting friends, spending time with family - became a moment of unimaginable grief for our nation. Today, this House pauses to honour the lives lost, to stand with those who were injured, and to extend our deepest sympathies to every family and community member affected.

Words can never truly capture the depth of sorrow that accompanies such a senseless loss of life, but it is important that we come together as representatives of the public to acknowledge that loss and express the compassion of the nation. Each person who lost their life in this tragedy was someone's child, parent, sibling, partner or friend. They were members of their communities; people with hopes, plans and futures ahead of them. Their absence will be felt in homes, workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods across Australia. Today we remember them not for the way their lives ended, but for the lives they lived and the people who loved them. We also recognise those who were injured and traumatised by what they witnessed that day. For many, the experience will leave lasting scars that cannot always be seen. Our thoughts remain with them as they recover, and we acknowledge the long road that healing can sometimes require.

In moments like this, we are reminded of both the fragility of life and the strength of community. In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, countless acts of courage and

compassion were displayed. Ordinary people looked after strangers. Members of the public helped guide others to safety. Medical staff, first responders and police moved swiftly to assist those in need. Many people were being good neighbours. We particularly acknowledge the bravery and dedication of the emergency services personnel who responded to the scene. Their professionalism and commitment in a moment of crisis help further prevent harm and ensure that those affected receive urgent care. Every day these men and women place themselves in difficult and often dangerous situations to keep the public safe, and their service deserves our sincere gratitude.

We also recognise the healthcare workers who treated the injured, the counsellors and the support staff assisting victims and families and the community members who have rallied around those affected. In times of darkness, these acts of kindness and solidarity remind us of the best of our shared humanity. Events like this resonate far beyond the immediate location where they occur. Across Australia, people watched the news with disbelief and sorrow. Parents held their children a little tighter; I know I did. Friends checked in on one another. Communities gathered to pay their respect, laying flowers and messages of support. These simple gestures reflect something fundamental about our country. When tragedy strikes, Australians look after one another. We may come from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs, but in moments of grief we are united by our compassion and our shared sense of humanity.

Today's motion is not about politics or division. It is about remembrance, respect and solidarity with those who are grieving. It is about acknowledging that behind every headline are real people whose lives have been forever changed. To the families who have lost loved ones, we mourn with you. Your grief is shared by millions of Australians who wish they could ease your pain. While nothing can replace the people you've lost, we hope that the knowledge that the country stands beside you offers some small measure of comfort. To those who survived but continue to carry the emotional weight of that day, please know that you're not alone. Your experiences matter, and the community stands ready to support you in the months and years ahead.

As representatives in this Chamber, we also have the responsibility to reflect the values of the people we serve. In times of tragedy, these values are clear: compassion, respect, unity and care for one another. Today, we honour the lives lost. We remember them with dignity, we stand with their families in grief, and we reaffirm our commitment to building communities that look after one another in times of both joy and sorrow. May the memories of those lost and those left behind be honoured, and may their loved ones find comfort in the support of a nation that mourns with them. I commend this motion to the House.

[12.31 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Madam Deputy President, I rise today to speak on this motion with a deep sense of sadness following one of the darkest moments in our nation's recent history. As we are all aware, at Bondi Beach on 14 December, a peaceful celebration marking the beginning of Chanukah was shattered when two gunmen opened fire on more than 1000 people. Fifteen innocent lives were taken, including a 10-year-old child, and dozens more were injured.

This was a terrible act of terrorism on Australian soil and it targeted members of our Jewish community at a moment of joy and cultural celebration. A place that was until now largely associated with happy memories, holidays, sunshine and family became a scene of fear

and chaos, and, as thousands of people were fleeing for their lives, there were many moments of extraordinary courage. Bondi Beach will be a place that is forever changed but should be a place that is remembered for all those acts of bravery above violence and fear.

Jewish Australians have shared the deep sense of vulnerability they now feel - something that should trouble us all and that we must all work to change. As a nation, we must respond consistently. I welcome the establishment of the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion by the federal government and, equally, I welcome the action that we've seen taken to strengthen public safety. A National Gun Buyback Scheme has been established and national law enforcement has intensified its vigilance.

The Bondi terror attack was an assault on the very values that define Australia: freedom of belief, cultural diversity, and the right of every community to live without fear. As Tasmanians, we understand this on a level deeper than most other parts of the country. We understand the long-lasting impact of a mass shooting and the grief that remains deep within a community long after the act itself.

I'm conscious of the reminder this abhorrent act of violence is for many in our community, and my thoughts are with those feeling those deep impacts again now. Our shared experience reminds us of the obligations that come with honouring a loss of this magnitude, the choices that must be made and the shared determination that requires. We must listen closely to those who are suffering most and recognise our responsibility to meet their needs.

For those affected by the Bondi attack, their pain will continue for many months and years to come, long after the media cycle moves on and the early days of public mourning are over. We can't let those people suffer alone. Terror has no place in our country or our state. Antisemitism has no place in our country or our state. Those who have been impacted by this event, the families who lost loved ones, those who were injured, the Jewish community in Australia and Tasmania and everyone who has felt the impact of this violence deserve our thoughts and our words, but above all else, they deserve our action.

Debate adjourned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for Derwent - Mr Farrell

[12.35 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I move -

That the honourable member for Derwent, Mr Farrell, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for the remainder of this day's sitting.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[12.35 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Deputy President, I move -

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

This won't be before 2.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 12.36 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for CHILDREN and YOUTH, Ms PALMER

In August of last year, Tasmania Police received legal advice stating that police officers are not subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme. This means that if a police officer engages in concerning conduct, the matter can't be reported to the Office of the Independent Regulator under that scheme. In November of 2025, the Woolcott Review made a specific recommendation to explicitly include Tasmania Police as a regulated entity subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Last month, the Independent Regulator, Louise Coe, also raised this matter during committee proceedings. She told the Commission of Inquiry oversight committee that she understood the government was looking to fix this issue, which is good, but she was also at pains to say that any fix must apply retrospectively. She specifically cited concerns about:

... significant interactions with young people, period. The regulator will not be able to investigate those concerns unless the reform applies from 1 August last year.

Minister, can you please provide an update on the status of the government's work to ensure the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to Tasmania Police and can you confirm you've accepted the Independent Regulator's recommendation for this change to apply from August of 2025?

ANSWER

I will seek some advice. I thank the member for the question. I think some parts of your question may go to other ministers and some would sit with me. I will take that on notice so I can seek some advice and come back to you.

Supplementary Question

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Acting President, can we have some indication from the minister when that question might be answered?

Ms PALMER - As soon as I possibly can.

Homes Tasmania - Release of KPMG Review

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[2.33 p.m.]

The social housing wait list has reached 5410 and continues to rise. You've admitted that Homes Tasmania has failed and will be folded into government once again. Your government is sitting on a KPMG review into the performance and financials of Homes Tasmania. The report goes to housing delivery and value for money. Surely it will provide some valuable insights into how the state can deliver more homes to Tasmanians who desperately need them at a time when the government is reconstructing the housing function of the government. Will you release the KPMG review today and table it in this House?

ANSWER

Madam Deputy President, I thank the member for the question and yes, quite right, it is a valuable tool, along with the Crawford report into the future of delivering homes. There have been many suggestions through those processes since coming into this role that I've taken on board that are vital to the future of delivering more homes, more efficiently for Tasmania.

The KPMG report is presently with the Department of State Growth being analysed and seeing how that fits. I'm expecting that shortly to come to me and after I've digested and taken it through the proper channels, I will be tabling that as soon as I possibly can. Thank you.

Homes Tasmania - Release of KPMG Review - Actions Taken

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[2.35 p.m.]

Thank you for the answer. My next question is - you said that you've been informed by the report but you haven't received it, so what immediate action has been taken from those findings to reduce the housing waiting list?

ANSWER

Because the CFO of Homes Tasmania is relatively new into the job, there has been a good set of fresh eyes looking at the financials alongside that report. Although I do not have the details exactly out of the report, the CFO is starting to understand what those implications are and communicating with State Growth for that to come forward. I'm happy to be as honest as that report is because alongside what I hinted at the Crawford report and the changes going on about being more efficient and more deliverable, will be a big step in getting things right.

Mr Edmunds - While you're on your feet, are there things that are already starting to come through or is it a matter of whether they will be coming soon?

Mr Vincent - They will come soon. The CFO is starting to understand what needs to happen inside the organisation and how the finances will flow. That will be part of what will come to me with the Department of State Growth recommendations, as I understand it.

Department of State Growth Restructure - Climate Change Office

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[2.36 p.m.]

My question is to the minister responsible for housing, planning, transport and infrastructure, most of which, as I understand it, will come under the new Building Tasmania.

Minister, as you know, the Climate Change Office sits under Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania as part of the current Department of State Growth. I'm sure you'd agree they do critical work in advising the government on how to respond to the accelerating impacts of climate change.

Can you confirm anything that you've heard in your ministerial briefings about the shake-up of the Department of State Growth and its reformation into Building Tasmania? Can you provide the community with any reassurance at all, including the jobs that are on the line in Building Tasmania, whether any jobs in the Climate Change Office are on the line?

Will the office be moved into the new Building Tasmania, as you know it, or another department?

ANSWER

I thank the member for Hobart for her question. The Department of Premier and Cabinet is responsible for the changes and mechanisms that are happening.

We will put that question to the Leader of the House for clarification on details about climate change.

Tasmanian Heritage Council - Appointment of Chair

Ms WEBB question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.39 p.m.]

Regarding the 11 February announcement by the Minister for Arts and Heritage of the appointment of the new Chair of the Tasmanian Heritage Council, can the government:

- (1) detail the advertising and selection process undertaken, including:
 - (a) the timeframe during which the position was advertised and promoted and whether that promotion was solely Tasmanian based or also extended interstate;
 - (b) whether, and if so, how many potential candidates were actively headhunted and encouraged to apply;
 - (c) membership of the selection panel;

- (d) provision of a copy of the selection criteria, and
- (2) detail the application and interview vetting process, including:
 - (a) the number of applications received;
 - (b) whether there was a candidate shortlisted, based upon formal applications;
 - (c) the number of interviews held by the selection panel; and
 - (d) whether all shortlist applicants provided heritage expertise-related referees?

ANSWER

The answers to the member's questions are as follows:

- (a) The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) undertook a public expression of interest (EOI) process to fill the position of Chairperson of the Tasmanian Heritage Council. The EOI opened on 4 October 2025 and closed on 21 October 2025.
- (b) The position was advertised in Tasmania through the three daily newspapers and the Tasmanian Women's Register, as well as promoted interstate via the NRE Tas website and NRE Tas LinkedIn page. All Heritage Council members were provided a link to the advertised EOI and encouraged to share with their networks.
- (c) The selection panel comprised: Mr Will Joscelyne, General Manager of Heritage NRE Tas (Panel Chair); Ms Louise Wilson, Deputy Secretary, Environment, Heritage and Land NRE Tas; and Mr Ben Goodsir, General Manager, Infrastructure Tasmania, Department of State Growth.
- (d) The key selection criteria as outlined in the advertised applicant information package were as follows, and as part of this answer is a table. I seek leave to table the answer to (1)(d) the key selection criteria, and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted; document incorporated.

See Appendix 3, page 61.

Ms WEBB - That was question (1)(a) to (d). Then there's also (2)(a) to (d). Am I getting answers to those?

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Deputy President, I appreciate the honourable member who posed the questions asking for the rest of the answer.

- (2) (a) Five applications were received by the closing date.

- (b) The panel shortlisted all five candidates based on an assessment of the application submitted. One candidate withdrew prior to interviews being held.
- (c) The panel met with the four candidates on 6 and 11 November 2025.
- (d) Referee checks were requested for the four shortlisted candidates to verify the experience, skills and attributes identified in the key selection criteria and discussed during the interviews.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Any further questions, member for Nelson?

Ms WEBB - I'm just interested in further clarification, as that was a very sketchy answer to (2)(d), which was whether all shortlisted applicants provided heritage expertise-related referees and, if so, were all heritage-related referees contacted? I would like an answer specifically to that question. If that's not available now, will the Leader please take that on notice?

Ms RATTRAY - The answer to (2)(d) was: referee checks were requested for the four shortlisted candidates to verify the experience, skills and attributes identified in the key selection criteria and discussed during interviews. I have provided that table, and the honourable member will receive that as soon as my office is able to send that

Ms Webb - Unfortunately, that doesn't answer the question.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Order.

Ms RATTRAY - If there's additional information that is required, then I undertake to find that and provide that. Thank you.

Climate Change Office - Plan

Ms O'CONNOR question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.45 p.m.]

My question follows on from a question I asked Mr Vincent earlier. Given that we now understand the shake-up of Building Tasmania is actually being coordinated through the Department of Premier and Cabinet, can the Leader for the Government outline to the Council:

- the future of the Climate Change Office as it sat under ReCFIT as part of the Department of State Growth;
- whether or not those jobs at the Climate Change Office are safe; and
- where the Climate Change Office will be located, from an administrative point of view?

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Just on that point, the Leader for the Government is unable to respond on behalf of a minister without that question being put in writing to the Leader's office prior to events. To get an answer, I suggest you put it on notice to the Leader's office, or without notice. The Leader's not in a position to answer that, as she's not the minister.

Ms O'Connor - Is it now on notice, though?

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - No, the process in this House is that you put it in an email to the Leader's office, the Leader's office will then pass it on to the relevant minister, the minister will then respond through the Leader's office and Leader will read the answer once it's available. You actually need to email it.

Ms O'Connor - Thank you, I have done that with quite a few. It's just that Mr Vincent said to ask for the Leader for the Government, so I thought I'd take the moment.

University of Tasmania - STEM Business Case

Ms WEBB question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.46 p.m.]

Noting the November 2025 responses provided by the government regarding the UTAS STEM business case have yet to resolve a range of queries surrounding inconsistencies in decision-making processes, I have further questions. Can the government:

- (1) confirm the Tasmanian Government does not intend to make a commitment of \$100 million towards the UTAS STEM business case?
- (2) clarify if the government has no intention of making a commitment of \$100 million to the UTAS STEM business case; if the government has no intention of making a commitment of \$100 million to the UTAS STEM business case, why the government sent the Commonwealth business case in March 2025 predicated on receipt of \$100 million from the state for the land above Churchill Avenue, using a formulation of words that the government's Infrastructure Tasmania's own consultant, Paxon Group, helped formulate?
- (3) why, in documentation provided to Infrastructure Australia by the Premier as late as 16 October 2024, did the Tasmanian government indicate the proposed STEM business case would be a refresh of the 2016 Hobart CBD STEM business case when UTAS's plans had already switched focus to the development of STEM facilities at Sandy Bay campus below Churchill Avenue?
- (4) the government's answer to my previous question about the \$100 million value ascribed to land above Churchill Avenue in the UTAS business case has not been validated in any way. It is a preliminary figure that appears in the business case. However, there's no substantiation in the document or its appendices, and all evidence indicates otherwise. What validation did the government seek of the figure, especially given the UTAS STEM business case states that the money would come from the state government?

- (5) the November answer to my question about the cost of replicating STEM facilities above Churchill Avenue to below Churchill Avenue totally misses the point. I will ask the question again, along with the request that, should the government be unable to provide a direct answer, please state that quite clearly, without misconstruing the question. How much would it cost to replicate the STEM facilities currently above Churchill Avenue to below Churchill Avenue?
- (6) is it correct that the cost of replicating the STEM facilities currently above Churchill Avenue to a location below Churchill Avenue would exceed the sale value of the land above Churchill Avenue, realisable by a market sale by a large amount? What figure has UTAS provided to the government on this?

ANSWER

- (1) The Tasmanian government has not committed any funds towards the UTAS STEM business case.
- (2) The Tasmanian government has not committed any funds towards the UTAS STEM business case, nor has it committed to purchasing the land above Churchill Avenue.
- (3) At the time the submission to Infrastructure Australia for Tasmania's Infrastructure Priority List (IPL) was finalised on 16 October 2024, the UTAS Hobart CBD STEM business case was the only mature business case ready for submission. The IPL submission of 16 October 2024 did, however, identify a proposed STEM precinct in either Sandy Bay or the Hobart CBD.
- (4) The \$100 million figure advised by UTAS represents an estimated value of the land above Churchill Ave that has been identified for rezoning. Once rezoned as inner residential, this estimate reflects its potential market value. This figure will be validated when the land is sold.
- (5) This is a question for UTAS.
- (6) Again, this is a question for UTAS.

Aviation Attraction Fund - Additional or Extended Flights

Ms LOVELL question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[2.50 p.m.]

Almost half of Tasmanians live outside Hobart and Launceston, and two-thirds of visitor nights occur outside Hobart. The government promised its Aviation Attraction Fund would deliver more flights for regional communities, who are doing the heavy lifting for the state's tourist economy. How many additional flights or extensions of flights has the fund delivered to regional airports?

ANSWER

That's a question we might have to put back through the Leader to the minister. That was funded under the Minister for Tourism.

Social Housing - Definitions under *Residential Tenancy Act*

Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

My question relates to definitions of social housing under the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* and, specifically: is the Co-housing Cooperative Hobart declared to be social housing under section 3 of the act? If Co-housing Cooperative Hobart does not currently have social housing status under the act, why is that, and will you undertake to investigate having it declared as social housing?

ANSWER

I normally do not get involved with the specific funds like that, so, I'm happy to take that on notice and find out as soon as I can and report back to the House and yourself on that. I'd need to seek a bit of finer detail on it.

Ms Webb - I appreciate it. We'll send it through.

Youth Justice Act 1997 - Review

Ms THOMAS question to MINISTER for CHILDREN and YOUTH, Ms PALMER

The Department for Children, Education and Young People website states that a review of the *Youth Justice Act* is underway, being reviewed for the first time in 30 years. The page says that a discussion paper will be released soon, with public consultation opened for three months. My questions are in relation to the review of the *Youth Justice Act 1997*:

- (1) When will the discussion paper be released and when will the community be invited to have their say?
- (2) What steps will the government take to ensure victims of crime are meaningfully engaged in the consultation process?
- (3) Will youth justice sentencing outcomes be examined as part of this review?
- (4) Will the effectiveness of diversion programs be assessed as part of this review?

ANSWER

- (1) The government is committed to youth justice system reforms that support reduction in youth offending, support people impacted by youth crime, protect the rights of children and young people, and keep our community safe. The *Youth*

Justice Act review is foundational to delivering a youth justice system that is contemporary and informed by evidence-based practice.

The *Youth Justice Act* review is scheduled to be completed during 2027 in line with the commission of inquiry recommendations' timelines.

The review focuses on being tough on the causes of crime to address youth offending behaviours, to divert children and young people from a path that may lead to time in a custodial facility. The *Youth Justice Act* reform considers three groups together: the rights of the community to safety; the rights of victims to voice and meaningful harm repair; and the rights of children to protection and the opportunity to change.

Accountability remains central to the act review and youth justice system reform generally. Children and young people will be held responsible in ways that change behaviour and reduce repeat offending. This is an investment in our community with community safety a focus.

Detention will remain available as a last resort for a small number of children who pose serious risk to the community. Where a custodial sentence is required, it will be for only a small number of offending children and young people. It must operate in smaller, safer environments focused on structured routines, education, behaviour change, therapeutic support and reintegration. This approach ensures children and young people do not leave more entrenched than when they entered and supports diversion from offending and risk-taking behaviours.

The *Youth Justice Act* reform discussion paper will be released no later than June 2026, with public consultation open for three months.

- (2) As part of the review, victims of youth offending and crime will be invited to provide input formally. An external facilitator or organisation will be engaged to specifically manage engagement with victims of youth crime. This approach ensures the voices of people impacted by youth offending and crime are heard throughout this important review in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- (3) The review scope includes sentencing in line with the government's commitment to implement the commission of inquiry's recommendation 12.15 such as ensuring rehabilitation being the primary focus of reoffending. This reform is about long-term community safety, particularly reducing impact to victims, reducing repeat offending, strengthening local communities and supporting children to change direction and build safer futures.
- (4) In accordance with the diversionary services framework, ongoing monitoring, reporting and evaluation of effective diversionary service provision fosters accountability and supports evidence-based decision-making within services. For example, the Australian Childhood Foundation has been engaged to undertake an independent evaluation of JCP Youth's BEAST program. The BEAST program supports diversion of children and young people away from offending behaviours. The evaluation has commenced and is anticipated to conclude in August 2026.

University of Tasmania - STEM Business Case

Ms WEBB question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.58 p.m.]

I asked the honourable Leader for the Government regarding the UTAS business case appendices, which are now available online, in light of Slattery's cost estimate of the UTAS STEM business case in appendix B, the sole basis for the cost estimate for the project of \$501.5 million, which states that:

This cost plan is based on preliminary information and therefore should be regarded as indicative only of the possible order of cost. All components of the cost plan will require confirmation once further documentation is available. Refer to the accompanying letter for details of basis of cost plan and exclusions from above costs.

Can the government:

- (1) explain how the government interprets the phrase 'possible order of cost', and detail any implications for the government;
- (2) please make available the accompanying letter referred to as it will contain vital information of the validity of the \$501.5 million cost estimate;
- (3) detail why the state government forwarded a business case to the Commonwealth in March 2025 which assumes an 80 per cent funding contribution by the Commonwealth when Commonwealth-state infrastructure funding agreements have moved to 50-50 splits;
- (4) explain why the state government sought an initial funding contribution of \$50 million from the Commonwealth in its covering letter to the UTAS STEM business case of March 2025 without offering any sort of matching contribution?

ANSWER

- (1) The phrase 'possible order of cost' provides an understanding that at the time this business case was submitted the calculated costs for this development were point-in-time estimates. Once final quotes are received, some variation from the initial estimates should reasonably be expected.
- (2) I'm advised that this was standard wording used by the third party on a summary document of this nature. A letter was not prepared in this instance and the reference to it was in error.
- (3) The University of Tasmania's proposed STEM campus at Sandy Bay is a significant project and as such is not restricted to a defined Commonwealth-state funding split. University capital works do not fall neatly under standard Commonwealth-state infrastructure agreements as roads and transport infrastructure do. The business case identified the significant estimated cost of the project exceeds UTAS funding

capacity and it is normal for these significant projects to propose different funding splits between Commonwealth and the state.

- (4) The proposed UTAS Sandy Bay STEM campus would serve as an important tertiary education asset by training students in critical STEM capabilities. An initial contribution of \$50 million would enable UTAS to commence stage 1 of the development.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Bondi Terrorist Attacks

Resumed from page 15.

[3.01 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, I have completed my contribution and commend the motion to the House.

[3.01 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, on 14 December last year, Australia was shattered by an act of wicked and deadly anti-Semitic violence on the shores of Bondi Beach. Our fellow Australians, gathering to celebrate the Jewish festival of Chanukah and the keeping of the light, were gunned down by ISIS-inspired killers without mercy or remorse.

They were members of our community out for a day of connection and celebration. They are mums, dads, grandparents, children doing what we all enjoy doing from time to time, being together with our tribe, in this case for Chanukah, the celebration of light and the endurance of the Jewish people.

Fifteen blameless everyday Australians were taken from their families and from us on that dreadful day, all of them with hopes and dreams and all full of promise. Our sorrow as a nation is profound. On behalf of the Greens, I acknowledge also and express my condolences to members of the Tasmanian Jewish community, who will also be grieving the innocent lives taken on that day.

The attack transformed our nation in both expected and unexpected ways, highlighting the best and worst of what Australia is and who we are. It was not only the murderous terrorism of the two gunmen we saw that day, but also the heroism of Syrian Australian Ahmed al-Ahmed, who disarmed one of the gunmen, along with the bravery of Jessica Rozen, herself pregnant, who shielded a child with her own body - incredible, unthinking, huge-hearted acts of courage, the best of humanity confronting the worst of it. Reuven Morrison confronted one of the gunmen and by getting his attention, was able to draw gunfire away from the others. His extraordinary valour came at the price of his own life.

Boris and Sofia Gurman, who were simply passing by, were among the first to try to stop the shooting. Boris was able to wrestle a gun away from the older gunman; soon after he was shot to death, his wife Sofia ran to help him and herself was gunned down. Their kindness and their courage cost them both their lives.

Compounding the tragedy, if it could be, a member of the Australian Jewish community who survived the Holocaust, Alex Kleytman, was killed in cold blood.

As progressive Australian American Jewish writer Peter Beinart notes, a larger percentage of the Jewish community in Australia are direct descendants of Holocaust survivors than in the United States, meaning they are, as he suggests, 'more traumatised by the experience of the Holocaust than almost any other Jewish community on earth'.

As we know, the unspeakable trauma of the Holocaust has been passed from generation to generation of Jewish people. We hold all those who lost their lives, who were murdered on that terrible day, in our memory and as a reminder that 'never again' was a universal lesson upheld by victims of the Holocaust. 'Never again' for any people has never been more relevant for Australia and an increasingly violent, fractured world.

As important as offering sincere condolences for any community which has experienced such terrible loss is, a condolence motion cannot merely serve as a series of fine words overlooking all the regressive tendencies in Australian political life which have emerged since the murder of innocents at Bondi.

The political fallout from this atrocious event has resulted in considerable controversy, as have the extraordinary intelligence failures over at least six years of our primary security intelligence organisation, ASIO, which serves as a worrying backdrop to the carnage of that day.

As for the political fallout after the condolences given by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and former opposition leader Sussan Ley, who both visited the floral memorial at Bondi, as did Australian Greens Leader Larissa Waters and Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Pauline Hanson and her recent One Nation recruit, Barnaby Joyce, did the same. Everyone expresses their sorrow differently, but I was struck by the terrible irony of One Nation, a party of virulent anti-Semites attending a memorial to Jewish Australians who'd had their lives taken that day.

Labor Premier of NSW Chris Minns decided on a different approach after making sure to snap a photo with the hero of that day, Ahmed al-Ahmed. His subsequent institutional response has been to introduce harsh new anti-protest laws. How exactly effectively banning peaceful marches in Sydney CBD would prevent another Bondi has never been clearly explained. The new laws, supposedly for the purpose of improving social cohesion, have been described as achieving the opposite. Lawyer David Hume SC, acting on behalf of groups including Jews Against the Occupation '48, the Palestinian Action Group and the Black Caucus stated that they 'undermine the objectives of protecting the community and enhancing social cohesion'.

During the visit of Israeli President, Isaac Herzog, the nation and the world saw what the Minns vision for social cohesion meant: the socially cohesive batons of the NSW Police slamming down on the heads of those protesting Herzog's visit. The footage of police violence out of Sydney that day was nothing short of alarming to me as an Australian. Social cohesion is not strengthened by moving us closer towards being a police state. Social cohesion did not receive a boost as a result of Herzog's visit. Unarguably, it divided us more.

Sarah Schwartz, executive officer at the Jewish Council of Australia, saw only a cynical intent behind the repressive laws introduced by the Minns government, and this is what she had to say:

NSW Premier Chris Minns has always wanted to give the police more powers. Now he can criminalise various forms of speech and hide behind the Jewish community. This will have the effect of making Jewish people less safe because they can be blamed for increasing violent, oppressive, antidemocratic state power.

Ohad Kozminsky, also from the Jewish Council, made a strong statement on the risk to Jewish Australian safety after Bondi, declaring that:

Jewish safety is not strengthened by rushed political deals or parliamentary chaos. It will be strengthened by calm, consistent measures to combat antisemitism, and by protecting all communities from racism and violence including Muslims, Palestinians, and migrant Australians who are also being unfairly targeted in the wake of this tragedy.

Is Grace Tame getting targeted by the Murdoch press and having her speaking engagements cancelled for daring to lead a chant of 'globalise the intifada' contributing to genuine social cohesion? Of course not. Advocating for a single democratic state in the ancient lands of the Palestinian people with equal rights for all, as was Tame's intent in using the phrase, is a perfectly legitimate political position.

Dragging Palestinian academic Randa Abdel-Fattah's name through the mud and the dreadful self-inflicted saga by South Australian Labor Premier Peter Malinauskas over participation in the Adelaide Writers' Week did nothing to improve social cohesion either. All it did was expose how terribly out of touch the premier and those who supported his essentially racist course of action are.

In Queensland, to utter the phrase 'from the river to the sea' is now against the law under Premier Crisafulli's LNP government. This was their response to the barbarity and devastation of the Bondi massacre. This policy has already led to the arrest by Queensland police of an 18-year-old woman, Bonnie Carter, who wrote the slogan on her singlet, and longtime Palestine activist Liam Parry, who said the phrase in a speech. The LNP apparently has such a low opinion of Queenslanders that they would apparently have them believe these inane laws will strengthen community safety. They do nothing of the sort, of course, and they aren't intended to. This likely unconstitutional crackdown on free expression is clearly and simply about demonising people protesting in solidarity with the Palestinian people. As it is with the New South Wales Premier's heavy-handed response and the Queensland government's approach, this is about crushing dissent and free expression, no more and no less.

A renewed democratic universalism, as the Australian writer Jeff Sparrow describes it, is what is called for in response to both the Bondi terror attack and how it has been used as a justification for introducing antidemocratic legislation and increasing the state's violence towards citizens ever since. Only a reassertion of the principles of democracy can fight hate, prejudice and discrimination at its roots by practising the values of a genuine, consistent and inclusive democracy. This is the foundation of taking on and defeating hatred, extremism and

authoritarianism in all their malignant forms. Hatred and discrimination in all forms are unacceptable.

We must all, as community leaders and members, be strong voices for all the people we represent: Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist or secularist Australians. We must be their shield, defending the rightful place of all these communities in Australian life against those who threaten them. Just as anti-Semitism has no place in a modern, richly cultural, inclusive society as ours, nor does Islamophobia or racism in any form.

Recommitting to a strong, healthy democratic principle, strengthening our community connections - that will truly honour the spirit of those who were taken that day, those who bravely confronted the killers and paid with their lives or were terribly injured at Bondi. Not rushed legislation, political grandstanding or words that are easily forgotten. Lighting and nurturing those candles, bringing light into the darkness is in the true spirit of Chanukah. In an increasingly darkening world, may we all be guardians of that light.

[3.13 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I would like to, on behalf of the government, extend my thanks to those who have presented very thoughtful contributions to the condolence motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Message to the House of Assembly - Bondi Terrorist Attack - Condolence Motion

[3.14 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting that House accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Premier's Address - Reply

Resumed from above (page 8).

[3.15 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I begin by acknowledging Tasmanians right across our island and the privilege that we have to serve in this place.

This debate, to my mind, is about the state of the state, and about a shared responsibility to keep Tasmania moving forward, focusing on what matters to families, workers, students, volunteers, community groups and small businesses. These are all important parts of the communities that we represent.

Tasmanians expect their government and members of parliament to be practical, disciplined and transparent. They expect them to make decisions that strengthen our economy, improve our essential services and keep communities strong, and they expect us to do it with respect for the fact that every dollar we spend is a dollar earned by Tasmanians.

Cost of living pressures are real, particularly for young Tasmanians.

The demand on health is rising. I recently had the opportunity to attend the Launceston General Hospital and the work that that our people in the hospitals do is just outstanding and they can only be congratulated for what they do.

Madam Deputy President, Tasmanians want confidence in the state's finances and that they are being managed responsibly. I'm pleased to see that the government's focus on regional Tasmania is delivering the services, infrastructure and opportunities our regional communities deserve. Does that mean it's enough? I will talk a bit more about that when I move into some of the parts of my electorate.

I have tabled the Premier's state of the state speech and I don't intend to repeat it in full. However, I do have some reflections on areas that are close to my heart as the member for McIntyre.

The electorate of McIntyre, as I've stated many times in this place, includes all of Flinders Island, all of Dorset, Break O'Day, parts of Kentish, Meander Valley and the northern Midlands. I say this because I represent areas of the state that continue to require the government's focus on regional and rural areas of Tasmania, to deliver those services, infrastructure and opportunities that our communities deserve.

If we want Tasmania to be strong in 10 and 20 years, we must invest in young people now, in early learning, in school and in job-ready pathways. Madam Deputy President, I was recently provided with an example of a school-based learning opportunity, like an apprenticeship, for a grade 10 student, and a potential employer put their hand up at the beginning of the school year to take on somebody who would do three days of school and two days (in this instance) on the farm, and that would be the start of a school-based apprenticeship. It's now getting towards the end of March, and still there hasn't been any contact from the school to that potential employer regarding the opportunity. I asked that potential employer if they'd reached out to the school to see why that was, and they said they had not because they've been waiting to hear back from the school to give some indication of how this process would work.

We may all know people who have undertaken school-based apprenticeships and that it sometimes depends on the school itself as to how efficiently it engages with the potential employer in putting a student who requires that opportunity forward. These arrangements could be standardised into a process that everyone follows, whether it be a farm apprenticeship, whether it be a hairdressing apprenticeship, it could be working with a mechanic, whatever that apprenticeship might look like, there should be a proforma, and somebody at the school should

provide that contact. Those are really important opportunities and particularly for young people who perhaps don't see a future going on to further education and want to already start being engaged in the workforce but certainly still need some of that school-hour contact. It's vital to be able to have that opportunity. I just wanted to share that.

The Minister for Education isn't in the Chamber, but I'll certainly be sharing that with her in the very near future. I also expect that it's something that the Minister for Skills and Jobs may need to have some input into as well.

As to how those two ministers' roles intersect with that opportunity I'd be very interested in having a fuller understanding, because I want to be able to go back to this potential employer and say, 'You should have had something back, certainly before the end of first term,' so that we can put this process in place, because there have already potentially been a couple of days a week where a young student is somewhat disengaged from school and would prefer to have more manual opportunity, like being on the farm, driving a tractor, doing some of the farm work that they see as a potential future, and getting some understanding of that. They may well have missed a couple of days of school because they felt, 'Well, I'm going to be only doing three days in the future and two days with whoever that farmer might be.' We need to have them engaged, so, having those opportunities for young people is really important.

That's why it matters that the government is certainly putting a focus into early years capacity in regional communities, such as the government's investment to build child and family learning centres in places like Longford and Scottsdale.

Interestingly, I've recently had some communication with a group from the Scottsdale community who are somewhat disappointed that their child and family centre was to be a super-sized family centre. To some regret, employing people to work in child and family centres, and certainly in childcare centres, in the Dorset community has been a challenge. There's no two ways about that. To be able to extend and make the child and family centre a super-sized one has been put on hold because at this point in time they can't fill all the places at the current childcare centre in Scottsdale.

We've got a bit of a problem here around having the right people to provide the services, employment opportunities and what we need in child and family centres. But is that any reason not to build looking at capacity in the future? I'd ask the government to come back and reassess that, rather than just saying, 'No, because we haven't been able to fill all the places at the current childcare centre, we're going to downsize what had been promised for the Dorset community.'

I have had some correspondence with the minister responsible around this, but I'm putting it on the public record because there is a high degree of concern around why we wouldn't build the facility that was promised to the community. If we don't need to fill up that particular space at the time, that's okay. We're just futureproofing that particular facility. I'm looking forward to further conversations around that and around the opportunity to at least build the footprint and future-proof the area. We don't know what's going to happen in the future. There might be a flurry of people who want to work in childcare in the future. There might also be an opportunity to fill up the current childcare facility and then a need for further opportunity at the child and family centre. So, I'm keen to have those conversations.

St Marys, in the Break O'Day municipality, is one of my communities seeking early years infrastructure to do just what I've spoken about: to have that opportunity; to have that future-

proofing; to be able to offer families in that area the opportunity to utilise what is so important when we talk about investing in young people and in early learning. It was pleasing to see that the government welcomed new partnerships with the federal government to expand access to early childhood education, including the funded project for a new early learning service at the St Marys District School.

I don't know whether many people have been to the St Marys District School, probably not so many, but whenever I visit that school I'm always pleased to see how engaged the kids are at the school. There's a real buzz around the school and they have a wonderful music program. It's exceptional. Whenever they have end-of-year presentations or any other event during the year, the musical items are just amazing and there is so much talent in that small school.

Delivering additional places for local families to build that early years capacity is one of significant importance and it is one of the Priority Projects identified in the Break O'Day document that I will also refer to a little bit later in my contributions. I have made contact with all my local government areas, the six of them, and have had some pretty positive and pleasing feedback. Mind you, it's a significant request for support in various areas, but it's worth putting on the public record.

The north-east east coast community will greatly benefit from the recently delivered new St Helens police station, replacing the outdated facilities from the 70s, and I mean outdated. They were not fit for purpose in any way, shape or form. Perfect position looking over the water into Georges Bay, but certainly not fit for purpose. Our community now has a modern and fit-for-purpose home for local police, designed to support better responses, better facilities and a stronger day-to-day policing presence.

On a small matter of concern, and I think this will probably be of interest to the member for Huon, was the concern that was raised with me at the official opening was the fact that the new facility has no backup generator. I mentioned this in some public works processes last week, and it won't be new to the member for Huon, but the lack of this important provision presents a question - was it not deemed important or not in the budget allocation? - and a question that I would appreciate an answer to in the government's reply to this debate and, if that's possible, to have that reply.

I'll be asking the appropriate people. I don't have all the answers, and I expect that everyone understands that. I don't have all the answers, but it's a relevant question. That was the one matter that was raised and I'm not going to go on too much about it, but I might just a little.

There's a significant amount of allocation in every public works project that's put forward to the Public Works Committee and the base is \$80,000. We've had some wonderful examples of pieces of art, infrastructure, installations put around buildings. I always ask if there's a practical sense to them. I always think that might be a useful way of using that money, but to have \$80,000 spent on a piece of art installation, or whatever that might look like, but not have a really important piece of infrastructure like a generator on the east coast at a police station begs the question. Obviously, it's something that the Public Works Committee will be looking at in every project in the future. I know it's on my radar, but also it highlights the fact that not everything appears to have a focus when these projects have been undertaken.

In the electorate of McIntyre, parks and natural places are part and parcel of the local economy and identity. Like most of our state, we have plenty of these beautiful areas in my patch and some, or actually quite a lot, consider they're not well maintained. There is still a lack of ongoing maintenance and the question is often asked, are there too many chiefs and not enough Indians undertaking the important work of caring for our parks and our reserves to enable our locals and our visitors to use these areas in safety and with relative ease of access?

It's well acknowledged that investing in access and visitor experiences backs jobs in regional towns and supports local businesses in accommodation and hospitality through our trades and tourism operators. I note in the past a lot of these areas have been able to be accessed because they may well have sat beside a Sustainable Timbers Tasmania area that had road access and often that access was maintained and looked after by STT, formerly Forestry Tas in the good old days. That's not the case in a lot of instances now. That road network has not seen continued maintenance and access because of various matters. Then there's that reliance back on Parks and the Parks maintenance staff to undertake a lot of that work. I would really like to see some allocation, even a priority list from Parks about where they're going to put their efforts with the money that they do have allocated for maintenance into the future. That would be something useful, a bit like road infrastructure upgrades. If you know that your turn is coming, often you know that in two years that stretch of highway or piece of road will see favour of having an upgrade. We need to understand what the priority list might look like when it comes to infrastructure being maintained by the Parks and our reserves around our state.

On a positive note, it was important to see repair works completed and the walking track at St Columba Falls in the Pyengana area reopened ahead of the peak visitor season after the track had sustained extensive damage following a severe weather event. This reopening included new safety features and infrastructure to protect visitors and support the local visitor economy around St Helens and, certainly, the Pyengana pub benefits from people who head up to St Columba Falls.

It's almost a given that you will stop and I'm pretty sure the member for Elwick was directly in that patch only on the weekend?

Ms Thomas - A few weekends ago.

Ms RATTRAY - A few weekends ago, so she would have enjoyed that opportunity. I sent a message on her Facebook page and said, 'Are you coming back my way?' No response.

Ms Thomas - I did reply.

Ms RATTRAY - Oh, did she? Oh, sorry, I must have missed that reply.

Ms Thomas - I said, 'Not this time.'

Ms RATTRAY - 'Not this time'. There you go, might as well have been no response. Parks has certainly invested in better park experiences and facilities, including upgrades that support tourism on Flinders Island. Those works have been undertaken by local contractors, particularly at the Trousers Point area. I've seen, firsthand, the great work and example of works to enhance the visitor experience while on the island and the improvements that help make places like this more accessible. It's already a beautiful part of the world. I know the member for Rumney can attest to that. I think she made her way to Trousers Point when we had our

electorate tour to the island a couple of years ago. It's great to see the local contractors being offered that opportunity to undertake that work. They know their own backyard so well. I'm very pleased to have been able to look over those works.

Ben Lomond has also benefited from upgrades. We know it's a great winter destination. For some unknown reason - I'm not sure why - this wonderful area situated close to the city of Launceston hasn't seen more opportunities developed to be seen even more as a year-round destination. I look forward to whatever might become important to the Ben Lomond area because it shouldn't just be the winter snow season where people take the opportunity to go up Jacob's Ladder. To have that opportunity in the more summery weather times would be a great advantage.

Madam Deputy President, this will not be lost on you. It's clear the financial state of the state is challenging, to say the least: a situation that clearly is front and centre of this government's mind and the minds of ordinary Tasmanians alike. I went through the questions that I come up with and that people talk to me about when I'm out and about in the electorate or even having some lunch at the local bakery at times. Friday lunch at the local bakery is often a staple for my office staff and me. We seem to spend quite a bit of time fielding questions. It's a great way of networking. Often people see you and they say, 'Oh, by the way, while I've got you ...', and everyone's had that experience, I feel sure.

The question is, how did we end up here? What needs to happen to turn the situation around? Do we as Tasmanians have a role to play? Will the changes to the Department of State Growth with projected job losses be enough to turn the situation around? Are there projects that could potentially be delayed, start times pushed out without serious impact on services or financial cost implications? Because that's always one of the issues: if you push a project out, it effectively could increase the costs. But are there some of those? I'd suggest that approach is a fine line to navigate, but the old adage is: if you don't ask, you don't know.

One that, again, has been posed plenty of times in this place is: should there be an increase in taxes and levies across the board? Should it be a more user-pays approach to generate more revenue? It seems to me, again, with the 'no expert' qualification, just having been around here for a while, it needs to be a combination of a number of cost-saving and efficiency measures that could be implemented to ease the forecast escalation of debt projected by 2040 in last week's sobering report from Treasury. I expect that will be the subject of a number of contributions over this debate.

Again, I'm certainly no expert, but there are plenty who are. That's why we have Treasury and others. We, as a state, need to be listening to the experts and attempting to bring together the best and the boldest suggestions on a positive way forward.

It has to happen. There is no alternative. It has to happen - and there have been strong commitments given to members of this place.

That's my overall contribution, but I am going to provide just a brief snapshot from my six local government areas on their priority projects, so that they're on the record. I reach out every year before the state of the state opportunity, particularly so that they have a voice here. Obviously not everything gets funded, and some things are a combination of funding and how that works. Also, it's good to be able to have those meetings with general managers, finance operations, mayors. I do that regularly as well.

Before I launch into Dorset Council, I want to put on the record as well the disappointment that not only the Dorset community felt when the Commonwealth Government made a decision to dispense of a number of their Defence facilities around the state. I know we've probably all got them in our electorates and perhaps some are sitting underutilised - not the Scottsdale Defence facility. It's being used. It's defence and nutrition and has been for many years. There are staff there. It's a working facility, and why wouldn't you have that facility in the heart of where you grow some of the best vegetable produce in the state?

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - A very big call coming from the north-east, but anyway - a bit marginal, that one.

Ms RATTRAY - The sudden decision by the federal government to close the Scottsdale Defence facility is certainly a blow to the north-east. Some would argue that it's a strategic blunder for Australia's defence capability. In the past, sadly, some of the Defence rations were coming from New Zealand.

Again, this is one of the issues that I've often thought about. When we have the opportunity and we have the facility there, here we are bringing in rations for the Defence Force from our cousins across the ditch. There is absolutely no reason. Obviously, there must be a financial reason, but we should be using our own facilities. Not good enough.

I would urge our federal members of this state to start advocating for their communities, for our communities, for the Tasmanian community, to hang on to some of these facilities, and certainly that particular one, because it is a working facility. It has staffing numbers. It had a major upgrade, I believe, only about eight to 10 years ago, so it's not an old facility anymore. It has been well and truly upgraded to be fit for purpose, to do the work that it was put there to do back in 1954.

It has served Australia for seven decades and it has provided Defence food and nutrition science capability and supported cadet training. It has helped to ensure our service personnel are properly fed, healthy, and able to operate in demanding environments including training, peacekeeping and war. That's a pretty important job, so to just have a stroke of a pen say 'you're gone' is not good enough.

I would hope that the federal member for Bass, Jess Teesdale, is all over it, with the support of all other federal representatives from our state.

Dorset Council: we have in Dorset a health hub, and that had three years' worth of funding. Often it has been the case - and I know that other members will have examples of this - where something is funded for a three-year period, gets well embedded in the community, well received, then the funding ceases. What does that particular program, that organisation, do? They go to their local council and say, 'This is really important for the community, for the welfare, for positive change, for what it does - but we need funding.' Just one year's worth of funding or interim funding doesn't work.

To be able to continue the health hub funding - I know there have been conversations with the minister for Health around this, and I thank the minister for Health. I know she met directly with people who are part of the health hub, the management, and there's some work being done - but it's an important aspect of the Dorset community and serves a really genuine need in the community.

Another matter raised with me in Dorset was continued concern over mobile phone coverage, telecommunications. I know we'll probably hear a bit more about that from other members over the time. No, it's not entirely a state government issue, but in the past my Northern Midlands community had been able to encourage Telstra to work with the federal government and the local council to have some upgrades for telecommunication facilities around the Cressy area. It's a really important area for farming and cropping, but the phone service was terrible. Here's another opportunity.

It's interesting that this matter is more of a concern over the weekend because we often have a lot of visitors drive into the Derby area for the mountain bike experience or up to the Weldborough facility. There's not much service in the Weldborough area anyway, and the minister for Infrastructure will know that. If you want to make a phone call, you have to be on the top of the little plain and you have to stop. You can't keep going.

Here's an opportunity to increase the capability for the whole north east, particularly around the Tomahawk, Boobyalla, Gladstone and Winnaleah area. That increased capacity would make a big difference, particularly when there's such a big drain on telecommunications over weekends and special events in the north-east.

The Bridport access for the boat, Southern Shipping access at Bridport, is always one of contention. It continues to receive a lot of discussion in the north east, particularly around getting those timely services in and off Flinders Island. The boat goes into Lady Barron - that's where the deepwater port is. We've had some upgrades on the Lady Barron end, but we still face some significant challenges on the Bridport side, because when the tide is out and the boat has missed the tide, it's stuck, and it's stuck for quite a while. If you have a load of cattle on the boat or a load of sheep - not so much sheep anymore on Flinders - increased cattle, beef cattle on the island, it's a bit of a problem. If they're sitting for eight hours after they've been already on the boat for six, it's not ideal. There's some work to do there. It's not going to have an instant solution, but we need to be working towards what I consider is a suitable outcome for all.

Those are a couple of matters that Dorset has raised. Some councils are very well organised, they have glossies, and the northern Midlands is no exception. It's a large municipality. It's got some terrific parts of it, and I'm very pleased to be able to represent some of those areas. They have a beautiful glossy master plan.

I'll move over from Campbell Town because it's not mine anymore, it belongs to someone else. But Cressy is great little community with a shared pathway connecting to Longford. It's such a close connection to Longford. If you say \$1.7 million quickly, it's not much, but it's one of their priority projects that Northern Midlands Council is looking to upgrade, to provide that connection between Cressy and Longford.

Evandale is looking for some support around additional independent living units. Evandale is a beautiful village community. If there's an opportunity for Housing Tasmania to be able to build on what they have in that area, then, Minister, I think it's an ideal location. It's close to services and it's what I would suggest is an easy living community for anyone who decides to retire there. There's a severe lack of social housing, and here we have an opportunity. Evandale have put their hand up and said, 'We are here.' Again, it's a great little area. A sports oval upgrade would also be appreciated. We have had some work done there in previous years. Morven Park is a great centre and connected to the school, so it has a dual purpose. The school can use the recreation ground and those facilities because it's right next door.

Longford Council would like to progress the transfer of property ownership. This is in relation to a neighbourhood house. We don't have a neighbourhood house in Longford. There are a couple of opportunities to work with government. The old police station, which sits adjacent to the Northern Midlands Council chambers is something that could be repurposed. That's one that I can work on. It's certainly one that's been identified as an opportunity. There's an estimated cost of about \$450,000 to repurpose the former police station and create a neighbourhood house with a service/youth space. Let's get on with some of those things. It'll get that off the government's books. Let's work together and make that happen. I don't think that one is such a large request. The building is there, sitting doing nothing. We need to utilise them.

Perth Primary School is at capacity. We got a terrapin dropped in, so they aren't using the garden shed anymore. They had been using the garden shed out the back for some lessons. Again, I ask the Minister for Education to see if we can't get that one up the priority list a bit quicker than it is, because it is a growing area. Anyone who drives on that bypass now and looks across and sees the development - not only on the end of Devon Hills but also into Perth and along on that left side - will see that it is a growing area. The school is at capacity and the new childcare facility is also at capacity. I thank the Northern Midlands Council for providing what they have there.

Flinders Council: I've touched on a little bit what has been happening there, but obviously the airport is key to whatever happens on the island. As with the shipping, it's their highway, it's either air or it's freight, the same as your King Island, Madam Deputy President. You know how important both those avenues are to your community. Having an upgrade to the airport runways and associated infrastructure is key.

Reliable childcare services and early childhood education facilities and services are also on the priority list, and I have talked about that previously in this place, and we've also heard that when we had our electorate tour. At this point in time, nothing's changed, and it needs to.

There is some reconstruction of sealed work, about 58 kilometres of the main arterial roads that need upgrading, and it's an opportunity to look at the value the Flinders community provides to the Tasmanian economy and beyond. We need to be working collaboratively with council on progressing that. There is an item there for TasWater, and I expect that's on their radar to identify and establish a wastewater solution. I thank the Mayor and the General Manager, Warren Groves, for putting together a very comprehensive document.

Kentish Council: I share some of the Kentish Council with the member for Montgomery, and I know Sheffield is yours, but a lot of the people I represent around the Sheffield area use the Sheffield services, so I apologise if you have this information in your contribution, but if it's said twice, it might have more impact. You never know.

Mr Hiscutt - If it's said twice, it is twice as good.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, twice as good. There's a health hub in Sheffield which is run by Rural Health and it provides wonderful services to the community and operates through the old Infant School, which is now a council-owned building. I have been informed that it's over 60 years old and needs repairs. Kentish Council is in the process of developing a strategic plan for the building with issues identified that need addressing. Once more we're looking at the young people, our youth and those childcare services. There's also a childcare centre in

Sheffield that needs to expand to meet the demand of parents waiting and wanting a safe and reliable centre for the care of their children - another project of importance to the entire Railton, Sheffield area and surrounds. They have provided some really important features, we know that Kentish looks after the Cradle Mountain Gateway Trail, so that's another project that's really important to the council. I want to thank the Mayor, Kate Haberle, for responding and outlining some of those really important needs for the community. I will certainly be sharing other aspects of that.

Break O'Day is always a proactive council and this was put together for the 2025 state election. An alternative route for the St Marys Pass is still on the radar and is still an important piece of infrastructure. I can see the minister for Infrastructure is with me all the way. If you take that road from Scamander and upgrade that, you have an alternative route. It's not that hard, it's ready to go. It just needs upgrading. We will talk about that.

Sitting suspended from 4.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

MOTION

Premier's Address - Reply

Resumed from above.

[4.30 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Just before the afternoon break, I was referring to the Break O'Day Priority Projects, and I wanted to talk about a couple of matters that have been brought forward for consideration.

I've talked about the St Marys Pass, and I see the enthusiasm from the minister, so that's encouraging. The further Tasman Highway upgrades - obviously the area between Dianas Basin and the bottom of the St Marys Pass needs a funding commitment. Again, it's important infrastructure given the growing number of visitors to the east coast, and obviously this trend will continue with the arrival of the new *Spirit of Tasmania* passenger ferries when there's an increased volume in that area. I know that the Break O'Day Council are always proactive in their conversations with the minister and those in Infrastructure. I look forward to the feedback regarding that.

The St Marys Community Health Centre: a commitment to service provision of that facility. Again, it's a really important facility. Even people from St Helens Hospital, when there's an overflow, use the St Marys facility as a place where they might be able to recuperate before they are able to head back home after various matters. It's a really important centre for the community and also has a number of other services that are provided out of the St Marys Community Health Centre. It's one that is keen to work with the community and the council to better understand health needs, so they're looking for a health needs analysis for the Break O'Day community, but this will be one of those key centres around that. I look forward to pursuing those conversations with the minister for Health.

I've already touched on the purpose-built early learning centre for St Marys, which would be centred at the St Marys District School grounds. There's plenty of room there, and co-locating the facility with the school would create an integrated hub for early education and

care. It would certainly improve learning outcomes and be convenient for families if it's a one-stop collection and drop-off. That's always useful as well.

With the population growth and demand for child care rising, the new centre would also align with state government initiatives like the Early Learning for Three Year Olds program. It's considered that this project is critical to supporting young families, boosting employment, and futureproofing the region's childcare needs.

These are all really important projects and the Break O'Day Council, as always, is ready and willing to have further, expanded discussions around that.

There's not a lot of feedback from the Meander Valley Council (MVC). It's got a big base around Meander Valley, particularly when you look at some of the bigger centres in the area and, of course, Deloraine being one of those main ones. I don't know if anyone drives through Deloraine on a regular basis but if you have ever tried to get a car park in the main street of Deloraine, it always seems to be a busy place, even though it's been bypassed by the highway for a number of years, but it still generates - because it's the real hub of the Meander Valley area. Of course, Westbury has the Meander Valley Council chambers and their offices there but still, Deloraine, is a key area.

They're continuing to look at the Deloraine racecourse precinct project and I know that there's been some work. There's been a completion of the construction of stage 1 of that package but there's still more to do in that area. Also, there is the Deloraine pool master plan and they are looking to determine levels of investment proposed for the site. So, again, it's one of those key initiatives that really support the community and what infrastructure is required in the area.

So, it's a bit of a mix there of projects but it's still often around key infrastructure for communities, whether it be in health, in child care, in education or just general community infrastructure; they're all really important aspects of the areas that I am proud to represent. They continue to be respectful in their requests, but also are determined to provide those facilities for the communities. I support them in those endeavours and look forward to further conversations with the responsible ministers, the Premier, whoever that might take and, obviously, if we need to work with the federal government, those federal government representatives as well. I note the Premier's Address.

[4.37 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I rise to respond to the Premier's Address. I cannot help but admire the Premier's ambition in what he sees in the halcyon days in the future of Tasmania. It is a worthy perspective and one that we would all welcome if we can afford it. The Premier focuses his address on the future ahead of the state, discussing opportunities and addressing Tasmania as turning a new leaf into an era of opportunity.

The tone of the Premier's Address was one of excited optimism but not realism. His closing statement, for example, is one which pretends uncertainty and upheaval exists everywhere but in Tasmania. He is right that Tasmania is a land rich with opportunity and possibility, but we must focus on the economic risks on the road ahead and the government must ensure it is doing the right thing by the people.

In the real world, there are learned voices in our community and in this Chamber too, highlighting the perilous state of our finances and the government's apparent refusal to do anything about it, other than to say we cannot afford not to do it. Mismanagement will undermine the potential of Tasmania. Of course, I am not saying that we should not be hopeful for the future, but instead to be realistic about the needs of Tasmanians and the various pitfalls facing this government.

The differences come in how we, as the independent nation state of Tasmania, can grow and support a flourishing economic base and still be able to pay our debts as and when they fall due. It is a simple definition of good governance and it is the defining tenet of any well-run entity, board of directors or - in this case - Tasmania; a Cabinet with the Premier as its head.

Madam Deputy President, I would like to start on a positive note. I can appreciate the efforts that the Premier has made in achieving his vision for the state and genuine attempts at the Tasmanian Government has made to better certain vulnerable areas across the state. Of course, I have concerns about the policy agenda and actions of the government as well as their intentions moving forward, but there are some things that must be recognised as good-faith attempts to address serious issues facing Tasmanians. Considering the recent election fiasco - mind you, a fiasco stemming from prior governmental mismanagement and a fundamental misunderstanding of the concerns in the public arena - the government has managed to push forward with a variety of its proposals regarding healthcare, education and housing. Initiatives to increase housing supply, promote first home buyers, ease healthcare burden and provide funding toward educational facilities are all welcome. These are undeniably good-faith attempts to ease the issues Tasmanians face. Attempts to reduce cost of living, energy bills and concessions are important as well and much appreciated by vulnerable Tasmanians, especially now. For example, funding bulk-billing GPs, funding existing GPs, and attempts to improve health education are so important to our state. Or one can look to the continuous improvements of educational facilities or the recent funding for first home buyers - although the jury's still out on that one.

Whilst the government is, thankfully, backing down on its proposals regarding privatisation, it should be acknowledged that it's commonplace for this government to try to reintroduce legislation, policy and thought bubbles at a time further down the track. One can think of mandatory sentencing and development assessment panels being examples of the way this government operates.

Last time I spoke, I commended the red tape-cutting initiative. I note, of course, the government just recently announced reducing unnecessary red tape from the liquor licensing, and appears to be making inroads in its PlanBuild and other such initiatives. This will hopefully have a direct and positive impact on Tasmanian businesses and businesses in tenders.

The political conundrum is how to accomplish it whilst keeping the community cohesion and support that characterises Tasmania as a state, its people and the ability for our next generation to thrive in the world as it is today. The reference to today is critical. We are in quite a different place to what it was even 10 years ago. Young Tasmanians are very much living in the present and having to make choices with an eye to their future. Long gone are the times of easily affordable housing, cheap transport, and the ability for a single wage to feed a family. We are now in a time where Tasmania's early advantage of low-cost living has evaporated, dried up and turned to dust. It is where memories of low prices are the stuff of legends and

where the ever-increasing cost-of-living pressures are driving our younger generations to the mainland, with its promise of higher wages and proportionally more affordable housing.

How did we get into this position? Conservative political theory loves the ideas of hands-off government and trickle-down economics. It has a view that government should actively support large-scale business with grants, tax breaks and lots of publicity and then get out of the way so that economic good times can flow down into our communities. Business can simply get on with the job of making money with little to no government interference. Well, other than getting the essential subsidy cheque from Treasury, and announceable photo-op from the minister, complete with high-vis vest, safety glasses and a hard hat ready to be spruiked on social media. If only that were true. It does not work and never has.

We have recent examples where businesses have received substantial government subsidies, loans and the like, and yet are struggling to be viable. Think of the Hellyer metals mine and the Liberty Bell Bay manganese smelter as ongoing cases. Add to that the Nyrstar crisis that needed a \$135 million rescue package: \$57.5 million from federal, \$55 million from South Australia and \$22.5 million from Tasmania.

However, there's nothing so needy as a business needing government to support it due to potential closures and job losses, and it's a desperate plea that business has learnt to use to good effect. It's almost as if they can't function unless they get taxpayer funding, and even then, success is by no means guaranteed. In the scheme of things, these sums are small amounts compared to the government's commitments in the last few years, but the same governance principles apply. Are these enterprises viable, and will they be in a position to pay their debts as well when they fall due, or without needing a taxpayer bailout?

Of course, this government has its undeniable issues which have, and will continue to impact, on the wellbeing of Tasmanians. Some things I would like to touch on in my response to the Premier's Address include the broadly incoherent government policy base that is portrayed as somehow bettering our state. However, the government is failing to recognise that Tasmania is, in its economic and welfare setting, moving backward, and the government continues to display a concerning attitude toward proper process. These thematic underpinnings of the government's approach to Tasmania directly impact current Tasmanians and those future generations we leave it to. Without proper management and a coherent policy structure, and proper governance, we cannot hope to have a strong Tasmania in which people will prosper, younger Tasmanians stay and their dreams are realised.

The government has not outlined a clear path forward for Tasmania, Madam Deputy President. Instead, it has a set of stated objectives in the 2030 Strong Plan, disjointed legislation and policy, much of which has been achieved through less-than-savoury political means, manoeuvring and sleight-of-hand politics. Instead of focusing on managing Tasmania for the betterment of Tasmanians, ensuring fiscal responsibility and prioritising those of vulnerable Tasmanians who need it most, the government appears focused on media headlines. The Premier states that exciting days and years are ahead of us and of course, it may be exciting to announce a new stadium, or the *Spirit* being ready. These are great headlines, but they do not acknowledge the impost, financially and politically, which will be carried by Tasmanians for years to come.

There are a set of clear issues that must be addressed by the government, Madam Deputy President. Mental and physical health problems, cost-of-living problems, housing, debt and

stagnant state growth are just a few major impediments to the wellbeing of both future and current Tasmanians. The government does not appear to have a clear path forward to address these; rather, it has outlined a haphazard and disjointed plan for Tasmania.

The Premier speaks with great enthusiasm and excitement about the Macquarie Point stadium and auxiliary AFL facilities projects, with its yet-to-be-finalised billion-dollar-plus bill. He did say that the Marinus project decision was a tough call politically. That was due to it being made during the caretaker period of the last election, and they're still desperately holding out on releasing the unredacted copy of its business case. If the expectation is transparent government, the Marinus project, with its yet-to-be-determined capital costs and expected operational losses that will be borne by Tasmanian consumers, is an ongoing saga of disappointment.

Added to this is the ongoing new *Spirits* farce, then seeing the government and its wholly-owned entities making an absolute pig's ear of that project.

Of course, Madam Deputy President, what should be the priorities for state government have been clearly explained by Saul Eslake, an economist whose advice they seem to heed only when convenient. Some of his footnotes seem to have been accepted, though, in abandoning their privatisation agenda. Unfortunately, it's clear, however, they have not heeded his or many other Tasmanians' calls for governmental fiscal responsibility. Or they have recognised it, but in name only.

The government has, when convenient, recognised the need for responsible spending and adequate prioritisation of expenditure. At other times, it has made massive over-commitments, failed to deliver on important projects and emptied the state coffers on countless missteps. In the process of doing so, it bullheadedly refuses to acknowledge that same fiscal responsibility it just earlier used as its basis for another policy decision. In jumping from responsible to irresponsible, depending on the decision, the government is driving the state into more debt and risking our financial viability.

The fact that only a few months ago the Auditor-General found the TT-Line to be insolvent is a shameful outcome for a state-owned company. Its chairman took umbrage as he virtually said, it can just do an *Oliver Twist* to the government any time it needs with, 'Please, sir, can we have some more?' Then, as if by magic, more money will appear. Sure enough and right on cue, there is an extra \$75 million bailout in last year's interim budget for the TT-Line, and who knows how much else will be in that line item for this one? Can you imagine a Tasmanian family or small business running its finances like that and expecting to be praised and rewarded?

As I said, the Premier and his government are not short of pride and ambition. The greater problem is they have lost the confidence of our community in their ability to manage what should be straightforward projects to be delivered on time and on budget or, dare we hope, under budget. Simply put, Madam Deputy President, the government needs to put forward a united, cohesive front in its policy, legislation and decision-making to achieve outcomes. You cannot be the party of a small government, yet dictate private land sales; be the party of responsible fiscal management, yet commit uncapped funding to unnecessary and disgustingly expensive builds; hold the slogan 'jobs and growth', yet cut 10 per cent off all government jobs. The government cannot flip-flop on its policies and priorities, or else it stagnates and fails to help the Tasmanian situation at all.

What these projects have demonstrated is the Premier's ability to divide and totally polarise our community. The jury is still out on whether that is intentional or just a byproduct of his leadership style. Yes, we all have our differences, but overall we give everyone a fair hearing and try to make the best decision; one that is free of invective, and balances risk with opportunity. Tasmania is a place where we care about our future, we care about our community, and whilst we not always agree, we care about being able to trust our representatives to act in our best interests.

Of course, I can recognise the tight situation that the Premier and the government find themselves in. Tough decisions need to be made and cuts are necessary, but those decisions need to be determined in a greater context of proper state management. The government cannot justify one action by reference to Tasmania's fiscal position and totally ignore it in the next. Such decisions cannot be given and taken. The government should not make a small decision into examples of its 'willingness to make tough decisions', or take massive financial decisions and financial mismanagement lightly.

I'm not sure that a large section of our community genuinely believes that any of our major parties do act in their best interests. It's called trust: all too easy to lose and so hard to regain. Does the average Tasmanian trust the government and do they trust the opposition to be any better? I'm not sure if they do anymore. There has always been a natural scepticism in Tasmania about politics and politicians, and we rely on the Premier to be the Premier for all Tasmanians, not just the ones that agree with him. In his opening, the Premier stated:

It is regrettable that last year's political games resulted in an unnecessary election being forced upon the state.

I would say that is entirely on him and his government. I'm not sure the opposition can claim any credit either. What the result did show is that Tasmanians are looking for an alternative to the main parties. We only need to look to the surging poll numbers for Independents in the last election, and the recent explosion of support for One Nation across the state, which might surely chill the hopes of the Premier, his party, and even the opposition. Tasmanians do not want a government which cannot find a straight path forward. They do not want a government which focuses on headlines above proper governance or their futures.

What are our options? We have exploding levels of state debt that are predicted to top \$130 billion. There is nothing in place to bring that down, and likely, within a few years, we'll be facing interest payments of \$600 million a year that will consume half of our budget. Even that could be accelerated by the knock on effects of the latest Gulf War.

Realistically, we have two blunt options: to reduce spending to match income, or increase income to match our spending. It is my impression that the Premier believes on a third option: to commit us to even higher borrowings in the hope that it can magically put everything right, but I'm not sure it can. In his speech, the Premier talks of bureaucratic reform and to restructure the Department of State Growth into three new entities, a move he will say will mean 250 fewer jobs and save \$250 million over the next five years.

Part of the impetus seems to be the abject failure of Homes Tasmania to meet its founding objectives as a statutory authority with an appointed board of directors. One might think that the ability to accurately count the number of affordable houses it built would be a key part of its fiduciary responsibilities. It seems not. It is being brought back under in house government

control after only a few years of existence. I must ask, Madam Deputy President, if the government can guarantee that this decision will address the now 5000 plus waiting list for housing that Homes Tasmania was designed to solve. Furthermore, given that ongoing tragedy, should the government cut to the chase and put Stadiums Tasmania under the same roof, as statutory authorities with a focus on infrastructure obviously do not work?

The Premier wears rose-tinted glasses discussing the state of the state. He talks about opportunities, exciting times ahead and the potential of Tasmania. While he's right about Tasmanian potential, there is a level of reality which must inform decision making. The budget is in the bin. The government has not put forward an interim budget to set us on the right track but rather continue to spend frivolously with little in mind to the state debt, revenues and proper process.

As I stated earlier, the government seemed to only recognise the dire financial straits of Tasmania when it suits a particular policy they are making. One need only look to the spending on the stadium, the mismanagement of the *Spirit* as well as the ongoing mismanagement of our debt.

The recent credit downgrade of Tasmania's credit rating to the lowest of any Australian state is simply indicative of why economists, Tasmanians and even other Australians have been calling for change in Tasmania. The mismanagement of Tasmania is such a problem. We spend too much, do too little, and Tasmania suffers for it. This is probably due to lacking prioritisation in a cohesive policy base.

Yet to be decided in the separation from the remains of State Growth, Tourism, Events and Creative Tasmania which I will assume will incorporate the arts. I noticed the Premier uses the words 'agile', 'streamlined' and 'client centred focus' which I'm sure the LinkedIn algorithm will love. I'm surprised there was not space for 'innovative', a word that sends fear into the most sensible and clear-headed public servants. If we want the correct use of the word 'innovative' it would be to describe David Walsh and MONA, his gift to us all in Tasmania. I would go further and say MONA is the catalyst that revitalised Hobart as a bespoke centre of the arts and the reason we now have a thriving hotel and hospitality scene in what was a fading regional backwater. It is also probably the reason the AFL is so insistent on having a new AFL stadium at Macquarie Point as it wants to elbow its way into what MONA has created. Ironically, the Premier speaks fondly of the arts and his enthusiastic belief that arts empowers community and is an investment in community development, diversity, creativity and cultural identity, together with a variety of honey-eyed words around the new strategic plan to boost arts and culture in Tasmania.

Efforts to promote Tasmanian arts and culture are also well appreciated. The Premier's announcement of the plan to boost the arts and continue support tourism and cultural development in Tasmania is welcome. These areas have an important impact, not just directly on those businesses which they support, but on visitation to Tasmania, on the lived experience of Tasmanians and to continue to grow the reputation of Tasmania as a premium experience.

Recently I attended, as did you, the wonderful Tasmanian Theatre Awards held for the first time on the north-west coast in Burnie. It was a wonderful night where the theatrical fraternity was on show at its brilliant best - an extremely exciting, diverse and well-organised program, with even *Home and Away* nearly winning in a category. Imagine my disappointment to receive an email last week from the Tasmanian Theatre Company and Mudlark Theatre Inc,

our oldest professional theatre company in Tasmania, that has been forced to close due to lack of government support, closing after 53 years of effort, hard work and talent.

I think other members would have received it but for *Hansard*: [tbc]

In late 2025, the board directors of the Tasmanian Theatre Company made the heartbreaking decision to close the company. Closing the oldest professional theatre company in Tasmania was not a choice made lightly, but a lack of government support left us with no option.'

It is going to mean 20 job losses - losses that will be keenly felt as paid work in the performing arts are hard to come by and even harder to replace, with its final production due to raise its curtain in Hobart at the end of this month and come down for the last time in Devonport on 2 April. Is the government simply going to wash its hands or can't do something to change the situation?

We've had several ministers responsible for the arts since this government came to power in 2014: the late and the honourable Vanessa Goodwin, from 31 March 2014 to 2 October 2017; the honourable Elise Archer from 2 October 2017 to 29 September 2023; the honourable Jeremy Rockliff from 29 September 2023 to 3 October 2023; and the honourable Madeleine Ogilvie from 3 October 2023 to the present day. Surely someone must be responsible and accountable for the decision to not adequately fund the Tasmanian Theatre Company.

I have to look back on the recent decision to cancel a number of the TasTAFE courses in the creative arts and now an updated review and attempt to find \$45 million in savings over the next four years, which will no doubt see even greater reductions to courses in the arts.

The Premier uses a mantra that his government are builders, not wreckers to people who may have the temerity to disagree with him. For the Tasmanian Theatre Company, the government is very much the wrecker of its legacy, when the Premier, with his professed love of the arts, could be its saviour. If only they could incorporate an odd-shaped ball or two with an umpire's whistle into a production, its future would be guaranteed. Perhaps we'll leave that to the Uni Revue. If we had a new beaut centre of excellence for the arts, as we have recently for cricket, basketball and football, we might still have the Tasmanian Theatre Company functioning. But wait... we actually do have a perfectly wonderful theatrical arts precinct; however, we must provide the funding for the creative community to continue to flourish.

What does this mean for our next generation, which might be looking to a career in the arts? They'll have no choice other than to head to the mainland for the opportunities and training they need, and they'll probably never return. Losing our artistic, enthusiastic and creative talent is such a disappointment for this state, now and into the future. It's all well and good to invest in other artistic and creative innovations, but at what cost to our theatrical heritage?

There is an additional delicious irony in the TasTAFE announcement as minister Ellis, as its overarching minister, when asked about the \$45 million savings move, was quoted as saying:

Like all government agencies, TasTAFE must operate within its allocated budget, as Tasmanians expect.

I think Tasmanians expect the government as a whole to operate within its allocated budget, and not one they can blithely ignore every time one of its favourite projects runs out of money and needs a top up or a doubling of its budget, sometimes before it's even started, such as the Devil's high-performance training centre, which started off at \$65 million and is now \$130 million within 18 months. Every grand idea in the speech that talks of hundreds of millions of dollars of spending, and particularly in the case of the stadium, has a debt meter that is spinning faster than the dollars and cents dials at our local service stations. The problem is that every dollar added to our state debt is an opportunity cost to everything else Tasmania needs.

Indeed not one of our local councils are in the financial spiral that the state government is in and continuing to deny. If the local government authority was in a similar financial position, there would be serious repercussions, more than likely sackings, and that council would go into administration. This management issue permeates everything in government, not only from an organisational level but the merit of good commonsense proposals suffer when one cannot trust the government to manage them. Look at the proposed TasInsure as an example: A state owned insurance company might be a clever idea, it might end up cheaper and might save Tasmanians money in the long run, but it could also do the opposite, ending up another waste of taxpayer money which could otherwise be spent on healthcare, housing, education or any other priority. Such negative outcomes are all the more likely if it is poorly managed. The current government continues to mismanage projects, from the Spirit fiasco to the Macquarie Point development. I'm not even sure people realise the extent to which the cost of the stadium continues to blow out.

These enabling and once in lifetime projects need effective governance, not just a wing and a prayer with a bit of spin to help along the way. There must be clear final costs and fiscal discipline free of bravado and by the product of wolves. What will happen, when the Spirits finally arrive here, is that there will be a big song and dance and fanfare, which there should be, but there won't be somebody saying 'this mismanagement of this project cost the Tasmanian people an extra so many hundreds of millions of dollars'.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - I hope you get an invitation to the opening as the local member.

Mr GAFFNEY - I'm probably doubtful now, which is not to say we need more red tape, and I take the Premier's point about the need to reduce it and simplify regulatory processes, but his government has had an ongoing red tape reduction initiative, and his government does have a history of ignoring or looking to bypass inconvenient regulation, on a when-it-suits-basis. We must only look at the Macquarie Point project and Marinus to see two recent examples. Maybe the Premier is foreshadowing future government actions that we have yet to learn of, but if it can streamline processes while keeping transparency, due governance and genuine, authentic community consultation, it could be a good move.

I would like to draw attention to something that the government has made a hallmark of its practices: the bypassing of proper process. In this last year especially, the government has relied upon obfuscation, bad faith lawmaking and a distinct lack of community engagement in enacting its policy agenda. This will inevitably be to the detriment of Tasmanians. Take, for example, development assessment panels and the Macquarie Point build, DAP has failed multiple times. Each time it gets nicked, it rears its head again in a slightly different form in the hope that people will just accept its existence and ignore such a damaging proposal.

Meanwhile, the stadium bill was rejected at nearly every level. At every stage the state government ignored the result. The people were against it, the council were against it, the state legislation did not allow it, yet somehow it was forced through, and yet most people wanted the team. The current government represents a legislature unwilling to be bound by prior legislation, by executive decision or by public will and instead is brute forcing its way through proper process. Such actions do not fulfil the role of legislative power. The government continue to demonstrate their willingness to use their political power in concerning ways.

Similarly, the UTAS sale of land legislation represents the government co-opting a popular government promise to require all land sales getting parliamentary approval to attempt to sneak through the very sale that is so controversial. Such underhanded lawmaking is not only bad practice, but it's on the nose. If the Premier is looking for spare cash in the budget to fund its preferred projects, I can only imagine the pressure on DECYP and the honourable minister in this place to find savings.

Education is a perennial topic with lots of current ideas on how it's going to work better and several bystanders giving their own running commentary, usually like, 'they could do better', and often said by commentators with no skin in the game. What has been a great interest to us all and to me, is the government's determination in 2014 to offer years 11 and 12 in every public high school. What is especially puzzling is that despite costing what must be close to \$200 million by now, there's been no review of the efficacy of this grand experiment. We do have numerous articles and ministers' comments saying how wonderful it is. However, objective information is hard to come by.

As a context, years 11 and 12 have always been available in our remote and regional high schools. What has changed is the government's insistence that every high school must offer it, even if they are just a few blocks away from an existing college. There are some very good examples. I use Ulverston as an example where it has been very successful and is creating. There are a few schools in my area where there are perhaps three or four kids in year 11 and 12. What does that mean to our resources? In questions in last year's Estimates, the honourable minister replied that there are seven high schools with zero year 11 and 12 enrolments, and eight with one to five enrolments. If we look at the median enrolments per school, it comes out, per high school, as nine in year 11 and five in year 12 across the state. Hardly an overwhelming measure of success for \$200 million.

The other issue is attendance, with some high schools quoted as having its year 11 and 12 attendance rates of just over 20 per cent. At the very least, could the government review the year 11 and 12 high school program in our urban suburban high schools that have readily accessible colleges nearby. We would be looking at roughly 20 schools that have just in total of over 300 year 11 and 12 students, many of which would already have dual enrolments with the local college. The additional year 11 and 12 staffing costs for those schools alone must be close to \$4 million per year as a duplicate to the staff already based in the college. The other issue is the growing shortage of specialist subject teachers for senior secondary subjects, particularly maths and the sciences. It makes sense to consolidate subject classes as a viable size in a central venue and bring the students to the teacher rather than have them chase their tails around every school in the district. A perfect analogy might be this very parliament. Can you imagine having to travel to each of our electorates so that we might individually engage in debates at our convenience?

I could continue to discuss health, but I'm conscious of time. The recent federal developments in additional GP funding for bulk billing, urgent care clinics and mental health hubs are welcome developments, especially with our ageing population that have an ongoing need. As the Premier says health investment takes up \$1 in every \$3 for the entire state budget. Whilst the federal government has stepped up with an additional \$700 million for health services, it is essential that the funding is not used in creative accounting to fill a health budget cut.

We are living in unprecedented times. The pressure of our state debt is compounding by the day, and there seems to be little appetite to address it other than to hold out hope of a federal bailout before we go bankrupt. We are at this stage of needing a miracle. We are, of course, dreaming if we think this could be possible and it may be our only hope - \$130 billion is an enormous number, unless, of course, the Premier can develop the Midas touch from acquiring the Marinus and TT-Line projects.

Farming and farmers are often defined as having hope over experience, as any agricultural enterprise is fraught with an unexpected risk of total failure and financial loss which is the nature of the industry. Successful farmers plan for such failures.

Given the Premier's farming pedigree, it does suggest a certain stoicism in his face of financial risk, which is perfectly fine in its context of a family business with the contained sphere of risk that often has little bearing to the wider community outside of the immediate family.

In our circumstances, we're at an entirely different level. Tasmania is not a single farm business. Tasmania has to balance the reality of experience, which is what we get when we don't get what we want with current reality. In Tasmania's case, it's spiralling debt load from recent and future projects that have blown their budgets, debt that is already overshadowing our future options.

The Premier is a shrewd political operator and has succeeded against expectations and together with a number of policy compromises to form a government. The Premier draws attention to many notable features of Tasmania, labelling it the best state to live, work and raise a family in and with the current world situation, he might very well be right.

Our strong democratic procedure is one such feature, and it is one that requires constant effort by lawmakers to uphold. The people of Tasmania deserve more than a government which will ignore and undermine our system of government. The Premier is a decent and likeable man. I would hate for his legacy to be tainted as the Premier who sends Tasmania out into the world with a begging bowl. It might mean hard choices have to be made regarding infrastructure projects.

In the same note, lack of authentic community consultation that is apparent in various decisions is not good law making. Rather, it is inevitable to result in a disenfranchised Tasmania and disappointed voters.

I do not mention these examples as minor individual rights of the government, rather they represent to me a worrying trend in governmental practices. We need to take care to listen to the people, ensure proper process is followed to a tee and use the power vested in us by the

people in the best of faith. These are the hallmarks of good governance, not doing what you want, forcing your way and ignoring those who voted for you.

The lack of information available on government intentions, law making and policy, not only to the public, to the members of parliament in both Houses, is difficult as well. I can certainly speak for myself, operating with only one full-time staff member.

Of course, I'm not accusing the government of intentional conspiracy to undermine proper process, rather I'm attempting to bring to the forefront the fact that the government must be vigilant in upholding democratic values, acting in good faith and doing right by all Tasmanians. It has demonstrated laxness in doing so, at best.

In acting so flippantly, considering common sense, rule of law and standard democratic procedure, the government is undermining its own prerogative to act in the people's interests. A government must follow proper process, parliamentary convention and be engaged with its constituents, else it risks leaving those constituents behind.

Our recent investment commitments need hard boundaries and fiscal prudence. Tasmanians need to know that the government can deliver what it says without an, 'oh, dear, we were not expecting that as it took us by surprise'. We need the government to demonstrate sound governance so Tasmania can pay its debts as and when they fall due.

In closing, I thank the Premier for his address. He is correct that Tasmania is a beautiful state, wealthy not just in amazing landscapes, but amazing people with ideas, dreams and hopes. I'm glad he's optimistic, but I must also caution against overt optimism. Madam Deputy President, the Tasmanian situation is fraught with risk and our economic situations need strong leadership with a positive, good-faith approach.

Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I note the Premier's Address.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

[5.15 pm]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I move -

That, at its rising, the council adjourn to 11.00 a.m. on Thursday 19 March 2026.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I move -

That the council do now adjourn.

The council adjourned at 5.15 pm.

Appendix 1

Table – SES, Equivalent Specialist, Prescribed Office Holders and Heads of Agency paid headcount, and associated salary ranges as of 31 December 2025

Officer Type	#	Salary Range
Head of Agency	18	\$236,692 - \$668,367
Senior Executive Service (SES)	98 79 27 16 220	SES1 \$156,075 - \$179,322 SES2 \$183,884 - \$211,305 SES3 \$221,729 - \$254,824 SES4 \$266,773 - \$319,906
Equivalent Specialist with SES equivalency Officers classified at the equivalent of a SES level will share some of the attributes and capabilities of the SES, however they will generally be more focussed on the service responsibilities for their Agency and their professional specialist. As such, these officers will not usually be as mobile across Agencies as their expertise will not normally be transferable to SES role. Examples of types of roles include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Forensic Science • Chief Inspector of Mines and Major Hazard Facilities • Deputy Auditor-General • Principal Inspector of Mines • Valuer General 	14	ES1 \$156,075 - \$179,322 ES2 \$183,884 - \$211,305 ES3 \$221,729 - \$254,824 ES4 \$266,773 - \$319,906
Equivalent Specialist - other This category is for other equivalent specialist roles which do not align to SES, as they are	10	\$221,729 - \$544,635
not specifically senior executive in nature but rather require professional specialist skills and knowledge sourced from a highly competitive labour market, where award provisions do not adequately meet the market for attraction and retention. Examples of types of roles include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Psychiatrist • Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner • Coordinator-General • Project Director Macquarie Point Multipurpose Stadium 		
Prescribed Office Holder Examples of types of roles include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Parliamentary Counsel • Crown Solicitor • Director of Public Health • State Litigator 	4	\$191,196 - \$535,493

Tabled & incorporated into the Hansard record 18 March 2026
 Valuer Authority
 Leader for Government Business

Appendix 2

tabled and incorporated
into Hansard.
18 March 2026

Yannik Raltry
Leader for government
Business

HON JEREMY ROCKLIFF MP
Premier
State of the State Address
3 March, 2026

It is with great pleasure that I stand before the House to update members on the state of the state.

I am proud and ambitious about where our state is and where we are heading.

We have exciting days ahead of us, we have exciting years ahead of us, and we are well positioned to seize the opportunities before us and ensure Tasmania remains the best state to live, to work, to invest and to raise a family.

It is regrettable that last year political games resulted in an unnecessary election being forced upon the state.

Work to implement our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future was disrupted, but the people have spoken and we are getting on with the job. We are making up for lost time. We are delivering for Tasmania, building a strong economy and a caring community.

This is a government that encourages enterprise, economic growth, reward for effort and a community that looks out for each other. We are a government of action and a government with a firm eye on the future.

Tasmania may well be a small state in size and population but we have big talent, big ideas and big ambition. We are a state entering a new era of opportunity and the foundations we have laid will build a prosperous future.

This year will be remembered as the year work started on the Macquarie Point stadium. The stadium is much more than a structure; it is an enabler. It brings the multimillion dollar industry of professional football and entertainment to our island. Hard fought for, it will drive tourism, events, hospitality and a jobs boom.

It shows we can get things done.

We can say yes, we can achieve things when we set our minds to it.

As I've travelled across the state over the summer, I've heard loud and clear the positive and passionate voices backing in that decision. They say, 'Good on you and your team and all of those right across the parliament for standing up for what you believe in and making things happen'. 'Good on you for not letting this opportunity slip from our grasp'.

I can say to them that we will get this done and ensure the stadium benefits the entire state.

We are working together with a coalition of peak organisations to ensure communities across this beautiful island share in this once in a generation opportunity.

There is another exciting project not far away from where we are turning an industrial wasteland into a state-of-the-art precinct.

At wharf 6 we are building a permanent home for our flagship icebreaker, *Nuyina*. The redevelopment will cement our place as the global gateway to the Antarctic and a major hub for tourism and trade. Tasmania has a long history of connection with the Antarctic of which we are rightfully proud. It is also an important economic driver for our state. It contributes more than \$180 million a year and employs over 850 people.

Like the stadium, this was a project that may never have gone ahead. Like the stadium, it took a team effort, including strong support from the federal government, to move this along. Again, it shows that cooperation and goodwill across the political divide can achieve great things.

That's exactly what is happening as our state enters a new era of opportunity in energy.

Work has begun on a brand-new connection to the mainland. Like the stadium, Marinus was a tough call politically, but the right one. Marinus is the new chapter of our hydro-industrialisation story. When you consider the benefits, it is hydro on steroids.

More than 150 years ago, the streets of Launceston were lit up by electricity from the Duck Reach power station. Now, the next stage in our proud history of being at the forefront of renewable energy is coming to life in the state's north-west.

Tasmania was built by those who had a vision for hydro power and those who toiled to make it a reality.

Renewable energy has given us an enormous advantage as the world clamours to harness the benefits of the global energy transition. While others argue, we build. Marinus will drive new investment in wind and solar generation and allow us to reap the rewards of being able to store and trade mainland power. That will ensure Tasmanians continue to have the lowest power prices in the nation.

Also in our north, we will be supporting the delivery of Launceston's new convention centre. The project will transform the derelict Kings Wharf and be a game-changer for the north's visitor economy.

In recent months, we have seen how events and hospitality can drive economic benefit - the Foo Fighters, Festivale and Party in the Paddock. Tasmania knows how to welcome the world, and the north is no exception. We know how to welcome visitors, to celebrate and to enjoy, no matter but where we are in Tasmania.

This year will also mark our new *Spirits of Tasmania* entering service on Bass Strait. We all know the challenges we have faced with this massive undertaking. We said we would sort the *Spirits*, and that's exactly what we have done.

I commend the new team at TT-Line and all those involved in the construction of the new *Spirit* gateway at Devonport for their outstanding work. It's been a big job.

Replacing the company's entire fleet and building two brand new berths all at the same time was a massive challenge, but it also brings massive benefits such as the Antarctic gateway, the stadium and Marinus.

The significant investments we are making in TT-Line will set up the company and the state for decades to come. Our investment will totally rebuild TT-Line, its ships and its port facilities. That will future-proof our vital link to the mainland and allow us to continue to celebrate our *Spirits*.

We will also work to deliver the planned transformation of Wilkinsons Point. This is a fantastic opportunity, unlocking about half a billion dollars' worth of investment. It will include a hotel, family resort, retail spaces and improved waterfront activation.

The project will drive sustained investment in an area that has long remained underutilised. This isn't just about buildings, it's about creating a destination that residents and visitors alike can enjoy for generations.

I say to all people willing to invest here, come to Tasmania, we have an exciting future ahead of us.

That's what drives me and that's what drives our team, building a strong economy and a caring community to ensure our young people have a bright future. We want our kids to live here, work here, stay here and be part of this community.

The redevelopment of Wilkinsons Point is the key to unlocking the potential of the adjoining land at Dowsing Point. Dowsing Point represents one of the most significant opportunities we have to address Tasmania's growing housing needs.

For decades this area has been tied up in Commonwealth Defence holdings, limiting its potential and preventing us from using well-located land to support Tasmanian families.

Today that changes.

We are calling on the Commonwealth to transition surplus Defence land at Dowsing Point into productive community use. By unlocking this land, we can open the door to new housing, new community spaces and new opportunities for growth.

Our plan is to ensure that once this land is released it is developed thoughtfully and sustainably.

We will deliver the infrastructure, services and planning certainty needed to create a vibrant, well-connected neighbourhood that supports families and strengthens our broader housing supply.

This is about taking positive, practical action and ensuring more Tasmanians have a secure place to call home. Dowsing Point can and should play a key role in Tasmania's housing future and today we take an important step forward towards making that future real.

In my state of the state address last year, I spoke of the need to cut red tape and boost productivity, and that's exactly what we have been doing.

For too long, unnecessary regulation and outdated processes have created barriers to growth and innovation. That's why our government is committed to reviewing, reducing and reforming the rules that hold back progress.

We are doing so while still maintaining the protections that keep our community safe and our environment strong.

We're streamlining approvals for housing and infrastructure projects, digitising government services and improving coordination right across government. These changes mean less time filling out forms and more time focusing on outcomes, building homes, creating jobs and supporting a more agile economy. It's not just about making things easier.

It's about making things more affordable. Cutting regulation doesn't just save time, it saves money. Red tape forces up the cost of building new homes, and cutting it makes new homes more affordable.

I would have liked to have made even more progress on this mission to cut red tape.

The election no one needed did put a pause on progress, but that only made us more determined than ever to win our war on unnecessary regulation.

This is particularly important for our small businesses. Small business is central to Tasmania's economic strength, not just providing jobs but ensuring the vitality of our local communities, and this government backs small business 100 per cent.

We will be aided in this mission by the extraordinary opportunities rapidly being unlocked by AI.

Our government is fully embracing the AI revolution. We are harnessing it across the State Service to drive efficiencies and improve service delivery.

For instance, we are incorporating AI into PlanBuild, meeting development applications and permits will be processed much sooner.

We're also ensuring appropriate guardrails are in place to manage the challenges faced in navigating the way forward.

As we enter 2026, Tasmania's visitor economy stands at a moment of real opportunity.

We enter the year with momentum, with confidence and with ambition.

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2025 was a remarkable year for Tasmania's visitor economy with visitation to the state breaking pre-COVID levels. Tasmania welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors across the year, with over \$4.5 billion injected into our economy. Tasmania is not just competing; we are standing out.

2026 is about taking Tasmania's story to the world. With our capital city named Expedia's destination of the year for 2026, Tasmania is firmly on the global spotlight. Access into and around Tasmania is a foundation of our strategy, and our government is partnering with Tasmanian airports to drive increased visitation to Tasmania.

The return of Air New Zealand's direct flights from Auckland to Hobart is providing fast and easy international access. Since it started, more than 80,000 passengers have travelled between Auckland and Hobart.

We've also invested in the first ever direct service between Newcastle and Hobart. In May new direct flights will start from Canberra to Launceston. Launceston Airport passenger numbers have already surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Music to the ears of tourism operators and local businesses alike in northern Tasmania.

Our government has also supported more than 150 events that drive visitation, especially through the quieter months. In 2026, we will continue to invest in events that fill our streets, our venues and our accommodation.

Tasmania's visitor economy supports one in six Tasmanian jobs, and its continued growth is critical to our state's prosperity.

In my inaugural speech in this place more than a few years ago, I said how proud I was to be shadow minister for the arts. Indeed, I said then that investment by government and business in the arts is not subsidising artistic expression, it is an investment in community development, diversity, creativity and cultural identity.

I spoke of my passionate belief that arts empower communities, and I am as dedicated today as I was then.

This government has a strong record of investment in the arts. We are proud of our support for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, for the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery along with theatres across the state. We've also launched a number of exciting new initiatives. They include our incentive scheme to bring more high-budget screen productions to our state and our grants program for youth arts.

We've built the Unconformity Festival into not just a drawcard for the West Coast, but an important cultural event on the national arts calendar, and we will continue to build on that strong record.

Today, I'm also proud to announce that we're developing a new strategic plan to boost arts and culture in Tasmania, making it truly a state of artistic expression and excellence.

Premier, Jeremy Rockliff – State of the State Address

3 March 2026
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Investment in arts and culture is good for our visitor economy. It is good for our regions, it is good for the wellbeing and health of all Tasmanians, and it's good to bring us together for an even more inclusive community.

We are also progressing our election commitment to deliver TasInsure. Our vision is clear. Tasmanians are paying too much for insurance. It means many are underinsured or not insuring at all.

It is a significant contributor to the cost-of-living pressures, and I've been very disappointed with the ongoing attacks on this policy. What is so wrong with identifying a problem facing Tasmanians and tackling it head on? Sure, it's not an easy task, but it's worth working hard to fix it.

We won't be distracted by the usual relentless negativity from the naysayers, or from those seeking to protect their own commercial interests.

We will work with anyone who brings to the table a desire to assist Tasmanians who simply cannot afford the protection that those on higher incomes take for granted.

We are doing this because we care about the cost of living and will do everything we can to help Tasmanians make ends meet.

We do so because Tasmania is a caring community. We look out for each other. We strive to build a community in which we all feel safe and connected. We foster a caring community by listening and supporting those in need. We do so by ensuring we have a strong economy where we have secure jobs and where those who are struggling are given a helping hand.

That's what a strong economy allows us to do. That can be seen in our record investment in health. It is true that meeting ever growing demand is an ongoing challenge.

Health investment now makes up one in every \$3 of the entire state budget.

Our recent landmark National Health Agreement is a big win for our state and is a significant step in the right direction. It means an additional \$700 million from the federal government.

We fought hard to get it. It took two years, but we got there, and we will keep fighting for our fair share, and we must, because increasingly we are stepping in to help support primary health care, something that is a federal government responsibility.

Take for instance GP funding. It is a federal government obligation, but we know seeing a GP is still difficult and expensive for Tasmanians.

Indeed, it costs more to see a GP in Tasmania than anywhere else in the nation, and that's putting pressure on our entire health system, especially our emergency departments in hospitals across the state. That's why we are stepping up and stepping in.

Premier, Jeremy Rockliff – State of the State Address

30 March 2026
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We will soon be announcing another four new 100 per cent bulk-billing GP clinics to reduce out-of-pocket expenses and improve access to health services. That's on top of the one we are opening in the Huon.

We're also providing interest-free loans and grants to support GPs in establishing clinics and attracting doctors. And we're advancing our Virtual ED capacity so that more Tasmanians can receive the health care they need in their own homes.

A particular focus of our government is to improve women's health across our state, including access to vital reproductive health care.

Pharmacies are now providing more health services for Tasmanian women without the need for a GP visit. This means essential services are more accessible and reduce barriers to timely care for women.

We are also prioritising awareness and support for chronic women's health conditions, including endometriosis.

Our IVF subsidy will give more women equitable access to fertility care and help them fulfil their dream of starting or expanding their family. We have demonstrated a clear focus on improving health outcomes for Tasmanian women, enhancing access, affordability and quality of care.

This government knows that education is the key to ensuring Tasmania continues to prosper.

Strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics are essential for every child's future and Tasmania has made this a clear priority.

Through targeted investment, early-intervention programs and a strong focus on evidence-based teaching, schools are better equipped to support students at every stage of learning. Initiatives such as the early-years literacy screening, additional classroom support and professional learning for teachers have helped ensure our kids who need extra help are identified early and supported effectively and, at the same time, high-quality curriculum resources and consistent assessment have strengthened teaching practice across the state.

These efforts are making a real difference in our classrooms: building confidence; improving engagement; and giving students the skills they need to succeed at school and beyond.

By continuing to invest in literacy and numeracy, the Tasmanian government is investing in equity, opportunity and a stronger future for our community. The improvements we have seen in literacy in our schools should be celebrated.

Education is the bedrock for building a better future, and I acknowledge and applaud the efforts of the dedicated teachers and support staff who make such a difference in the lives of our young people.

Premier, Jeremy Rockliff – State of the State Address

3 March 2026
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We were right in changing the law to ensure our young people who were not in full-time employment either stayed in school for years 11 and 12, or undertook vocational training.

Be it as plumbers or professors, we are ensuring young people have the best start in life to become productive members of our community.

Along with highlighting the investments we are making to deliver our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, we've acknowledged the ongoing challenges we face with our budget position.

We are committed to ensuring our state lives within its means. The increase in government investment that saved us from the economic devastation during COVID cannot become baked into our budget. It must be brought back to a sustainable footing.

We will do so in a careful and compassionate manner. We will not slash and burn. We will not send shock waves through our economy that would undermine its strength.

We will continue to ensure that it's not just our state service that should be as productive as possible; we want to see our government-owned businesses follow our lead and find savings to ensure they are delivering the most cost-effective services for the people of Tasmania.

We will, today, be directing government businesses to identify savings, just as we are doing across the state service. In this important task, we must take a Team Tasmania approach.

In line with our election commitment, we will not be introducing new or increased taxes. We will not be punishing people for working hard and seeking a better life. We are a government that seeks to incentivise, not inhibit or demotivate.

As we strive to keep making Tasmania's economy stronger, now is the time to ensure we have the right machinery of government to keep driving growth.

Over a decade ago, the Hodgman Liberal government established the Department of State Growth. DSG was created to aggressively grow the economy and create jobs. Since then, over 50,000 new jobs have been created and the economy has thrived.

Tasmania is today a very different place than it was 10 years ago. Our economy has grown strongly; it is close to 70 per cent bigger than it was when we came to government and, with that growth, now comes new opportunity.

Now is not the time to rest or be complacent; now is the time to do more. Now is the time to keep building Tasmania, not just for the next few years, but for the decades ahead.

A strong state doesn't just wait for the future to happen. It rolls up its sleeves and makes things happen. That's what we do. That's what we will keep doing.

Today, I'm announcing the Department of State Growth will undergo a total transformation: It will be repositioned to make the most of this new era of opportunity that awaits us.

Over the coming months, we will create a new delivery-focused department called Building Tasmania. Headed by Minister Vincent, Building Tasmania will ensure our ongoing infrastructure delivery, so the state continues to move forward.

It will get things built. It will get things done. It will supercharge delivery of the housing, the roads, the infrastructure, our state needs to be fit for the future. Functions within the old DSG will be realigned with our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, including a new economic development entity, to keep driving our growth agenda.

A new entity incorporating tourism, events and Creative Tasmania will also be established to keep forging our state's future as a destination economy and a leader in the arts.

These changes will ensure the state service is best able to support Tasmania and Tasmanian businesses with an agile, streamlined and client-centred focus.

The reshaping of the state service will ensure the appropriate rightsizing of the organisation with a reduction in headcount, in line with our election commitment. It will help improve the budget, freeing up more than a quarter of a billion dollars. Most importantly, it will also help build a more effective and productive state service.

These changes will take place over the coming months, with an absolute consideration to ensure our workforce is involved, supported and respected.

In conclusion, 2026 is a year of delivery. It's a year of opportunity. As the world continues to be a place of uncertainty and upheaval, Tasmania stands proud as a beacon of economic opportunity, of community cohesion, of community connection, of vast beauty, wonder and potential.

Our mission is to support Tasmanians to live their best lives, to encourage, to assist and to ensure that no one is left behind.

We have been blessed to have won the lottery of life and to be living in the best place in the world, and we do not take that for granted. We will continue to build a strong economy and a caring community for our children and for generations to come.

Appendix 3

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QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Hon Meg Webb MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP

QUESTIONS:

Regarding the 11th of February announcement by the Minister for Arts and Heritage of the appointment of the new Chair of the Tasmanian Heritage Council, can the government:

1. Detail the advertising and selection process undertaken, including:
 - a) Timeframe during which the position was advertised and promoted, and whether that promotion was solely Tasmanian-based or also extended interstate?;
 - b) Whether, and if so how many, any potential candidates were actively head-hunted and encouraged to apply?
 - c) Membership of the selection panel;
 - d) Provision of a copy of the selection criteria;
2. Detail the application and interview vetting process, including:
 - a) the number of applications received;
 - b) whether there was a candidate short-list based upon formal applications;
 - c) the number of interviews held by the selection panel?; and
 - d) Whether all short-list applicants provided heritage expertise-related referees, and if so were all heritage-related referees contacted?

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ANSWER:

1. Detail the advertising and selection process undertaken:
 - a) The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) undertook a public Expressions of Interest (EOI) process to fill the position of Chairperson of the Tasmanian Heritage Council. The EOI opened on 4 October 2025 and closed on 21 October 2025. The position was advertised in Tasmania through the three daily newspapers and the Tasmanian Women's Register and promoted interstate via the NRE Tas Website and the NRE Tas LinkedIn page.
 - b) All Heritage Council members were provided a link to the advertised EOI and encouraged to share with their networks.
 - c) The Selection Panel (the Panel) comprised Mr Will Joscelyne, General Manager, Heritage, NRE Tas (Panel Chair); Ms Louise Wilson, Deputy Secretary, Environment, Heritage and Land, NRE Tas; and Mr Ben Goodsir, General Manager, Infrastructure Tasmania, Department of State Growth.
 - d) The key selection criteria, as outlined in the advertised Applicant Information Package, were as follows:

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA	
Applicants are required to have knowledge or expertise in the following areas:	
EXPERIENCE	
ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory decision-making • Operating in sensitive environments and dealing with media enquiries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement and management 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary governance 	
SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	
ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict resolution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic thinker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and responsive

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2. Detail the application and interview vetting process:
 - a) Five applications were received by the closing date.
 - b) The Panel shortlisted all five candidates based on an assessment of the applications submitted. One candidate withdrew prior to interviews being held.
 - c) The Panel met with the four candidates on 6 and 11 November 2025.
 - d) Referee checks were requested for the four shortlisted candidates to verify the experience, skills and attributes identified in the key selection criteria and discussed during interviews.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP
Minister for Arts and Heritage

Date:

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